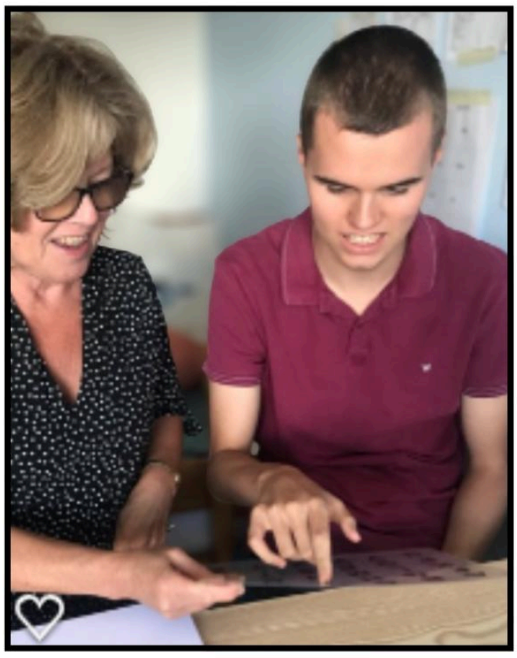
RPM ABC's

Absolute Beginners Course



Sue and Christopher Finnes

Module 1 - Introduction

The course modules are

Module 1 - Introduction

Welcome
Basic principles behind RPM
Sensory Learning Channels
What you are working towards - what an effective RPM session will look like
What a session may look like for a new student
Optional : History and development of SomaRPM

Module 2 - Preparing for Success - laying the foundations

Your attitude and beliefs
Environment and equipment
Video storage
Exposure to written words
Tolerance to your voice
Teach pointing and choosing
Lesson resources
Record Keeping

Module 3 - Creating and delivering beginner choice-based lessons

Why use choices
How to create a short choice-based lesson using the fable, 'the hare and the tortoise'
How to deliver the choice-based lesson
Common mistakes/problems with choice-based lessons

Module 4 - Creating and delivering choices and spelling practise lesions

How add spellings to previously created lesson - hare and tortoise
Performance Field
Prompting
Motor Modelling
Tactile feedback
How to create a new lesson from a children's book - Satellites
Things you need to know before delivering this lesson:
Common mistakes/problems when you start using stencils

Module 5 - Creating and delivering lessons with no choices - just spellings

When to begin with spelling key words (no choices)
How to amend /create lesson in this format - Satellites

Module 1 - Introduction

Common mistakes/problems
Practise opportunities
Nelson Mandela lesson creation

Module 6 - How to make your lessons more effective

Sensory activities
Tiger lesson created from from video
Mozart lesson created from text
How to analyse your sessions
How to build skills .eg. move from stencil to laminated letterboard
Tutorial videos Sue and Alex - complete list

Module 7 - Building the skill of open communication

Steps towards open-ended communication during lessons
Why we don't ask questions relating to Episodic Memory
Ensuring the responses are authentic:
Cautions re word prediction
Cautions re. influencing

Module 8 - Next Steps

Readiness: Motor, Emotional and Sensory
How to stay motivated
Training others
School involvement
Skill development outside lessons
Final thoughts

Appendix - Video examples
Further learning resources

Christopher's book

Module 1 - Introduction

Introduction : What this training course will do

Empower you to implement RPM with your child

By:

Teaching the principles of RPM - developing your understanding so you know what to do and why you do it in a particular way

Demonstrating how to identify resources and to create RPM lesson plans in a time efficient way

Demonstrating how to deliver lessons correctly which gives you the greatest chance of early success and matches your child's current skill level - choices, spelling on stencils, spelling on laminated letterboard .

Providing expert advice based on my knowledge of RPM : gained from working closely with Soma Mukhopadhyay since 2011, from advising thousands of other parents since that time and creating RPM learning resources, and from the personal, practical experience of implementing RPM with my son.

Delivering learning which is self-paced and in manageable chunks for busy parents: 5-10 min videos and practical exercises .

What this training course will NOT do

It will NOT provide an academic curriculum for you to follow. This will be for you to decide based upon the age of your child and your educational preferences .

It will NOT provide a large bank of pre-written lesson plans. There are already many free resources and affordable lesson plan books which can be purchased on Amazon. I suggest you use those written in an RPM style eg. have been written by an RPM teacher or parent . When you understand more about RPM you will be able to expand on these and tailor them to your child.

More importantly though I will show you HOW to create and personalise your own lessons.

Module 1 - Introduction

It is not possible to empower you to deal with every single behaviour/situation which may arise during RPM sessions. I will cover common problems and how to overcome them but there will be times when it will be beneficial for you to schedule one to one video feedback. I have been able to help many people by observing a 5-10 min video and providing feedback.

This parent in particular inspired me to put this course together. She was very conscientious and had to learn to deliver her lessons in Greek to her 8 year old son. She tried her first lesson on Feb 21 and worked with him most days thereafter. She had to translate the lessons for me to understand and I agreed to give her short feedback - mostly by messenger . What was great was that she practised consistently and put into practise everything I suggested.

This timeline shows the progress made by this student. I have to stress though that everyone's timeline will be different . This student was able to sit easily and I felt his pointing accuracy developed quite quickly. His mum did use a lot of educational workbooks for practice.

Jan 21
Thank you so much Sue. I am still reading the files and I have ordered 3 books from Amazon that will probably get here in one month and I am really stressed and overwhelmed, questioning myself if I am going to be able to make it on my own !

Feb 21
Sue I did my first session for 6 minutes I am so happy
I filmed it all I was so nervous I forgot to spell some choices

April 21
Hii Sue, how are you hope you are all well! Rpm is going well is now 2 weeks I am doing it everyday and he seems to be getting better in choosing his tolerance is also much better ! So I am really happy

May 21
I think 50 % of success is for the parent to really understand and be confident to what needs to be done

May 21
just finished this lesson with him and I have used the full alphabet letter board for the first time and I think he has done wonderfully - He got up about 5 times but it's ok

June 21
Okk sometimes I feel discouraged that he will never get the open communication part

15 Jul 21
Hii Sue, I hope you are all well !! I am so happy today we did a lesson without choices. He was spelling the answer directly on letter board ! I think we are on a good path !

Module 1 - Introduction

4 Aug 21
I noticed yesterday that he was answering 2 words but slow ! Thank you so much Sue - invaluable advice ! Short and on the point that is not overwhelming !

17 Aug 21
Hii Sue just to let you know that we are progressing 1. Started giving me 2-3 word answers 2. He is answering by giving me previous knowledge by answering questions outside of the lesson E.g in the story we did today It stated that there were a lot of kids in fantasy land and then i asked him where can we see a lot of kids gather together and he spelled " in school " I asked him if he wants to go to school and he spelled yes ! Yesterday we did music instruments and when I asked him if he can tell me a music instrument other than the accordion that was in the lesson and he spelled piano then I asked him if he can tell me a music instrument that we play with our mouth and he spelled trumpet ! He also gave me answers to riddles that were outside the lesson when we did a lesson on riddles ! I am so excited my son is there and he is very clever and he has not got ID. I want to scream through the rooftops

29 Aug 21
Hii Sue hope you are all well ! We were doing adjectives I read a sentence to him and then he pointed on the letter board to tell me which word was the adjective ! At the end of the lesson I asked him to give me one adjective for his brother and he said yeller for his dad he said he is very good and for me he said I am mean and when I asked him why he said because I shout at him !

1st Oct 21:-
Hi Sue, just a quick update to let you know that we are doing fantastic. He answers everything. I am reborn ! I owe it all to you !

Module 1 - Introduction

Module 1 - Welcome

Welcome to the **RPM ABC's Absolute Beginners Course**

I am so excited that you are here!

RPM was life changing for me and my family. It gave my son, Christopher, a voice and enabled him to express his thoughts and opinions and to write beautiful poems. It also helped us to develop independent living skills and make his life meaningful and purposeful .

Chris sadly died at the age of 24 in February 2023. He had epilepsy and sustained a traumatic brain injury when he fell down stairs whilst having a seizure. I had begun to write this training before he died - it was hard to finish it but I feel this is part of his legacy.

Here are a few short Chris quotes:

' I am intelligent but happen to have a body that does not obey my brain'

' Silent I may be, but stupid I am not - please see autistic people for who they are and not for what they seem '

' Each person each day needs to ride the wave of life '

Who am I/what are my credentials?

Sue Finnes. Before having children I was a senior manager with Lloyds Bank. I worked for many years in the Training division. I developed and delivered many national training initiatives.
RPM and autism :

- I thoroughly understand RPM. I began in 2011 and have a close relationship/friendship with its creator - Soma Mukhopadyay.
- I am in a unique position as a parent who lived with autism 24/7 - so I fully understand the day to day challenges and have researched many therapies/methods.
- I worked with my son, trained others to work with him and am passionate about helping others
- I helped other UK families to get started - running 1:1 sessions and workshops

Module 1 - Welcome

- I organised and hosted UK workshops with Soma Mukhopadyay from 2013 until Covid.
- I have helped 1000's of others sharing information on social media /you tube/videos
- I have helped many people via private emails, phone calls, 1:1s
- In 2013 I created a free private parent learning group on facebook : 'Unlocking Voices- Using RPM' and created files of information /resources to help people to learn
- I have helped Soma (creator of RPM) by editing/organising many of her books
- I am an advisor to HALO (Soma's organisation)
- I established Unlocking Voices CIC in UK in 2014 to help families here.
- I have presented at two of Soma's international RPM conferences and at several UK conferences.
- Everything I have done has been voluntary

Why this course?

Many parents want to do RPM - but are overwhelmed - information, reading requirements, terminology etc.
AND then they hesitate - may have done so many things already and worry about whether this will work for their child?
Then they don't know where/how to get started. There are now many groups and lots of information but it can be overwhelming and expensive.

This course will provide the foundations to empower you to begin

- There will be easy to follow/understand , practical, doable steps
- The training videos are max 5-10 mins
- I aim to gradually build your and your child's skills
- I will share practical examples of what has worked for me and my son and for countless others
- My objective is to empower YOU - to develop your skills so you can help your child . You are their best resource !
- You can do this at your own pace -but as a guide- allow 8 weeks for practise and skill development.
- The course offers flexibility. You can use all or part of this course with your helpers.
- If I do any updates/revisions you will be given free access to updated documents/videos .

Module 1 - Welcome

I must add a huge thanks to Soma Mukhopadhyay in this introduction. She is an amazing lady who has generously shared her learnings in her many books and on social media. Soma continues to learn from her students and develop/enhance her approach. There are now many ‘spelling’ groups/methods which are mostly people who have copied parts of RPM and then claimed to be the creators of new spelling approaches.

This course is NOT intended to be a replacement for Soma’s books. I would encourage you to read them all - at your own pace- to further develop your understanding.

I know that many parents found it helpful when starting out to show their child videos of other children who had learnt to point and spell - sometimes just popping them on a tv/laptop to watch together. In the **appendix** of this document you will find quite a few youtube videos of me with Chris at various stages of tolerance and skill development. You may find it helpful to begin watching these now.

Module1 -Basic principles behind RPM

Basic principles behind RPM

Everyone who comes to RPM does so because they want their child to be able to communicate more than basic wants and needs.

That will happen BUT it is a process .

The fastest way to make progress is to see a trained provider regularly .

That is not always possible - logistically /financially

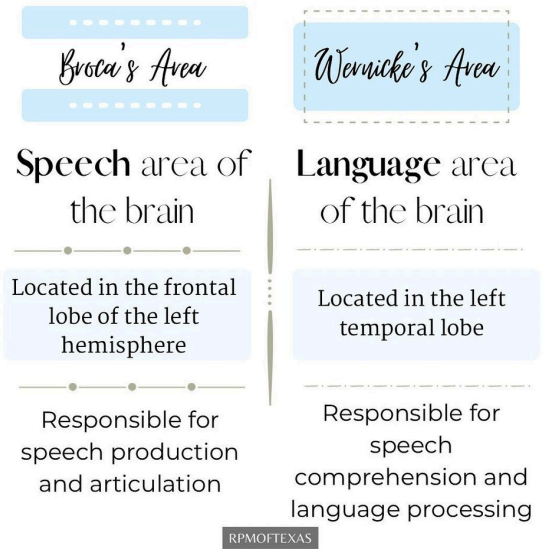
We will do it step by step building your knowledge and skills.

This is the start of your journey

RPM is a teaching method which presumes intelligence and capability of learning if the student is taught in the right way.

People are often deceived about intelligence by lack of /or inappropriate speech

Speech production comes from one part of our brain and language from another - if the connections are not working you can imagine the struggle our kids have . This also helps us understand why minimally and non verbal kids are able to express themselves very fluently using letterboards - the language (cognitive) part of their brain is intact!



Module1 -Basic principles behind RPM

In RPM sessions wherever possible we position ourselves on the students right hand side as this is proven to stimulate the opposite side - the left brain (language area)

Speech production is a motor skill - but think about the complexity involved in making speech sounds - movement of lips, tongue, breath etc . Some autistic people are able to talk - but their speech is rote or scripted - relying on an established 'bank' of learnt words. It is challenging for them to learn to use new words , but this can be achieved with RPM. if you are interested in seeing an MRI scan of the complexities of speech production check out the youtube videos https://youtu.be/uTOhDqhCKQs

Our children's brains have developed/work differently and this affects what they do. In addition to the lack of /unreliable speech they may have sensory challenges , obsessions, behaviours, be unable to follow instructions and have motor challenges. My son told me on his letterboard that his body did not co-operate with his brain.

Being unable to perform tasks does not mean they are unable to think /have opinions . I have plenty of personal examples from my own son - I have many video clips of Chris

The brain grows by use . There is increasing research into brain plasticity , ability to grow , make new connections - but only if stimulated and there are many ways to do this.

This course focuses on giving your child a 'voice' - making the first steps towards expressive language. So we will be talking about **providing stimulation which develops thinking and reasoning skills** . We provide educational topics to help our children develop an understanding of the world around us as without knowledge what is there to discuss, to have opinions about? To quote Soma ' *Even though they have the disadvantage of an incomplete sensory system, persons with autism have minds to be cultivated. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.'*

We want our children to develop a love of learning - instead of being stuck doing repetitive tasks.

You may have seen videos of very regulated students and may hope that your child will realise that this is going to be beneficial and will happily sit with you and listen/spell. This is often NOT what will happen so we need to think about how you will respond when your child is NOT reacting to your teaching in the neurotypical way eg . if they don't appear to be engaged and /or are continually trying to 'escape' ?

Module1 -Basic principles behind RPM

The Attitude/belief of parents/helpers is the Key to success - we will delve deeper in the next module , but please take some time to consider what challenges this presents to you and how you can overcome them. It always helps to know that others have overcome these challenges - I' d recommend you take a look at the Student Stories booklet on the www.UnlockingVoices.com

Have a look at this old clip of me with Chris - you will see he becomes quite intense but I persist calmly and help him to get his message out. (I know that my technique improved considerably over time) https://youtu.be/UpfHDGOZQx0 .Here is another short clip where he was calm and happy! https://youtu.be/2tTKg7W6y-s

You are probably itching to just get started , but I want you to put in this preparation now so you set yourself up for success - don't try to do too much too soon . Be realistic with your goals - we are going to make this manageable and doable.

Actions you can take today -

- Begin to talk to your child about what you are learning. Tell them about how you have found other people like them who are now able to express themselves and that you are excited about this. Show some video clips to your child - maybe part of the lesson clip of my son . Stress this will be a joint learning process - you'll both be learning together.

- Increase your child's exposure to the written word: - put the subtitles on your tv / on his/her ipad /dvds , read the newspaper headlines , read road signs, read shop names as you are driving,

- Increase your child's tolerance to your voice - begin to read an age appropriate fiction book together - just for pleasure. You could begin to do this routinely at bedtime, Do not worry if your child does not appear to be listening .

Many people wonder why in RPM we focus on education - why not just work on daily living skills . I hope this feature written by my son will help you to understand why:-

Short feature written by my son about the benefits of education:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AqeU4XKqqXruMfLMheEJHv54snbgXzf5Gt3YCtEx2OQ/edit?usp=sharing

Module1 -Basic principles behind RPM

In order to help you understand your child's challenges I highly recommend you read Ido in Autismland by Ido Kedar - it is available on amazon.

Optional - https://youtu.be/lqoZkCxxsiM?si=EMn5mm8l3oUyX7dE
History and Development of RPM - Sue interviews Soma Mukhopadyay

Module 1 - Sensory Learning Channels

SENSORY LEARNING CHANNELS

How we learn

The **five senses** of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell are the primary means we use to gain new knowledge. We rarely experience things with one sense alone. Our senses work together to give us a total picture of our experiences.

People of all ages learn best when involved in meaningful experiences- learning by doing (actions/movement). Learning takes place when the mind is able to put together information from all the senses and make a connection with past learning.

Using many senses to gain information helps learning to be more meaningful and useful. Children naturally learn with all the senses. From birth, children are experts at learning with all five senses active. **They have not learned to select the information from any one sense as more important.**

When learning information we also have individual preferences about how our environment and how we are seated- table/chair, lying down and what we need to do eg . make lots of notes, change to picture diagrams, repeat or recite in our head, draw doodles as we are listening, also some of us need quiet/some like background noise.

In Autism the sensory system development is altered. Our children may **see, hear, feel , taste and smell differently - and in some cases may select the information from one sense to be more important or dominant**. One of the early signs of autism in my son was that he used to be obsessed by watching fans and also by spinning objects continuously, eg. toys with wheels were not played with but turned upside down - stimulating his visual channel. I noticed that he looked at tiny details on books e.g. the logos on the back of the covers instead of being interested in the content of the book. I also remember my son smelling and mouthing/licking many things.

KEY POINT= IF ALL SENSES DON'T GET LINKED TOGETHER AND INSTEAD WORK IN ISOLATION CHILD MAY FOCUS ON ONE ASPECT OF SENSORY INPUT – AUDITORY, VISUAL, TACTILE OR KINESTHETIC – SO THE OTHER SENSES MAY REMAIN ISOLATED WITHOUT MAKING A CONNECTION.

How is this relevant to RPM?

In RPM sessions we are working on engaging the student by ensuring that we present information in a way which accesses their open learning channels and then in the longer

term we are also working on helping the student to generalise and integrate their senses - so they are able to use all their senses to learn.

Primary Learning Channels

The Primary learning channels are **VISION** and **AUDITORY**. Most teaching aims to accommodate both – ie.the teacher talks (states) and writes key points on board/or presents visuals.

This is why in RPM sessions the teacher **states and writes** the key points.

The teacher may also make adaptations to cater for the individual sensory differences eg. vision - using a clipboard and holding up a picture/diagram closer to eye level then hand over hand showing the student the different elements of it, when teaching quantities she may draw pictures of 4 apples etc,. eg. auditory the teacher may adjust the volume /tone/rhythm of voice and may tap the table 4 times when teaching the number 4 .

Secondary Learning Channels

In RPM we focus on the **Tactile** sensory learning channel and, although it is not strictly speaking a sensory channel, the **Kinesthetic** channel (to do with movement/performing actions).

When, during RPM sessions, the teacher hands the pencil to the student or uses the stencil she is engaging the tactile channel.

When she writes key words down, as well as engaging the primary learning channels (visual and auditory - noise of pencil writing on paper) she is engaging the kinesthetic channel (watching the movement of her writing). When she asks the student to point she is getting the student to use their kinesthetic channel.

Adaptations to lessons - the teacher may engage tactile and kinesthetic channels by making paper models and get the student to assist - by holding /tearing paper, by drawing part of picture

For each learning channel student can be:

Generalised = no issues -can focus attention appropriately, can tune out background noise and focus on looking at / listening to the relevant details.

Module 1 - Sensory Learning Channels

Global = may see everything or hear everything at same volume, needs help to focus on what is being said/shown. Touches /feels everything. Constantly moving around the room without particular purpose.

Selective = sees/hears 'selectively', certain sounds or visual stimuli may prevent appropriate focus. Eg. watches the same part of the dvd repeatedly , needs to have you repeat /finish repetitive statements , only touches certain things /refuses to touch others , engages in repetitive movements .

You may recognise some of these things in your child . Some are dominant and some change during the day - this will also apply during RPM sessions so it is useful to have this understanding .

Eg . I always thought that my son's main open learning channel would be visual - since he loves watching dvd's , youtube clips etc. However after reading Soma's books, I realised that he was selectively visual as there were certain clips he would watch repetitively and he was resistant if I tried to get him to watch other things . I also found that most of the time he was fine listening to my voice, meaning that for much of the time he had a generalised auditory channel and was open to learning that way . Things did sometimes change - for example he would become selectively auditory at times - needing me to say certain things in a certain way .

Have a go at completing the **sensory learning channel profile sheets** for your child. Your child's stims/repetitive behaviours (often defense mechanisms to calm sensory overloads) may help you to identify any dominant traits. Do not spend too long on this , do not worry too much about the detail - I am just trying to help you gain an appreciation at this stage.

Stims- calming and excitatory

A brief comment about these .

In RPM we never forcibly stop a stim. If your child does something which is calming to them and does not interfere with their learning it can continue during the RPM lesson - eg fiddling with a piece of string .

If the student becomes over-excited (look at facial expression, sounds etc) this will interfere with the learning . The teacher then has to find a way to 'compete' with the stim eg. a student has a book which has been brought into the lesson and is becoming over excited /laughing etc - the teacher must show no emotion, and not contribute to the stim, but instead talk about it rationally to engage in reasoning e.g. why do you find this

book funny, or use a character/topic from the book as part of the lesson. If the lesson is about the water cycle....'Thomas was wondering where the rain came from...'

SENSORY LEARNING CHANNELS Chart

Sensory Learning Channel	How it relates to my child
VISUAL Generalised Selective Global	

AUDITORY Generalised Selective Global	

Sensory Learning Channel	How it relates to my child

KINESTHETIC Generalised Selective Global	

TACTILE Generalised Selective Global	

Module 1 - What is an effective RPM session?

It is important that you have a picture of what an effective RPM session will look like . BUT remember you will take time to build your skills . The expressive communication, which we all want, will come - but not immediately - it is a process.

What an effective RPM session should look like

Each RPM session will be slightly different as it will be tailored to the individual student and adapted to their open learning channels at that time. Some sessions will be at a table, some may be sitting on a couch, some on the floor, some on the move!

- Each session has an **educational topic** which is **age appropriate**
- For new students it always begins with **Teach or State /Ask** (not open communication)
- We **write down and spell the key points**/words as we say them
- There is a **see-saw of interaction** between teacher and student **RIGHT FROM THE START**. So **after EACH sentence** we prompt for the student to initiate a **response.** Here is an example : *Ok, let's talk about your body. As we grow up lots of changes happen in your body. Do we see CHANGES or HISTORY?(asks student to point) Yes changes, Let's spell CHANGE.*
- There are a **variety of responses** (depending upon the skill of the student) - so responses can be paper choices/some spelling/ some discussion about the key words to check existing knowledge.
- The sessions are NOT like a predictable comprehension test : read a sentence /paragraph ask a question, read a sentence/paragraph ask a question. They are more like a **discussion/story style** –'now guess what?...' etc. and we **encourage the student to think** by **expanding on the key words** from the sentence. This is to check understanding or to use as a further teaching point . eg. *if we say "long ago.." we may add in a question /choice – in this example "do you think we are talking about 5 years ago or 5000 years ago"*
- We use **sensory activities** to keep the student engaged and enhance learning– drawing, making paper models, showing diagrams etc
- We build the students confidence and self esteem – ensuring early success by giving **verbal and air prompts** to help with known responses (answers)

Module 1 - What is an effective RPM session?

- We give **specific praise** – *'see how well you do when you hold the pencil this way' instead of 'good job!'*
- We may adjust speed/ tone of voice and/or **change topics** if the student is not engaging
- During **open communication we are very careful not to influence so will only give continuation prompts** eg. 'what next, where, carry on, and ... '

If we encounter behaviours/stims

- We remain **calm and work through the behaviour /OCD / excitatory stims** to help the student to reach his maximum potential

> ***Soma is now specifically working on integrating the senses during RPM sessions - so you will see her using a multi-sensory approach - incorporating handwriting, reading, speech, looking at diagrams during even her early sessions with students. We will try to introduce this as well but in a step by step way . I will focus on teaching you the basic RPM skills first.***

Optional Video - Sue and Chris https://youtu.be/uCD6RcHxmAk (1 hour lesson)

This is to show you what an RPM session may look like when a student has gained the skill of pointing on a laminated letterboard and has the tolerance for sitting for a lesson .

You don't have to watch this whole video at this stage , but it may help your understanding of RPM and may help you to see how the lesson is used to find out what the student's thoughts are. You will see that my son still has challenges which I have to help him with during the lesson - eg. he bites his hand , he stands and would move away if I was not positioned to help him stay in position.

Here is a rough transcript of the lesson -to save you watching the entire video. The capitals are where I asked Chris to respond on the letterboard. Notice in particular how the communication of his thoughts comes from the lesson -I have highlighted them

talking about the ? VICTORIAN era

Module 1 - What is an effective RPM session?

showed picture – what can u see? LADY, A LIGHT – yes it's a famous picture called the lady of the lamp
look she's got white overalls etc . Can you guess what her job is NURSE and now you know she's the lady of the lamp who is she? FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
yes famous nurse – but r u surprised to know she had a real passion for statistics?
YES I ONLY THOUGHT SHE WAS A NURSE, passion for ? STATISTICS
Can you think of an example where statistics used today
AN EXAMPLE IS THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WHO HAVE THE CORONA VIRUS
In Victorian times how would FN have learnt statistics ? I DON'T KNOW .
She was self taught – and her father didn't like it – said it was unfeminine
Let's make a chart feminine/unfeminine, Victorian beliefs
You begin – feminine = CARING FOR CHILDREN , mine = cleaning the house
Unfeminine POLITICS, mine =scientists

Break from lesson .. look at a key word
Passion- FN had passion for statistics .. you ? , .. I BELIEVE EVERYONE HAS TO FIND THEIR PASSION IN LIFE IN ORDER TO FIND TRUE HAPPINESS

FN frustrated lack of numeracy amongst educated people – politicians etc – to overcome this she developed the coxcomb diagram –Crimean war mortalities over all the months - showed picture from magazine – touch the different parts
Which part is the largest ? YELLOW = deaths from disease.
What do you think about the diagram – THE VISUAL IMPACT MAKES IT EASY TO INTERPRET.
Good visual demo that deaths by disease caused 7 times (handwrote 7) more deaths than during battle.
She campaigned for better food, hygiene, clothing, prefab hospital . even went to see Q Victoria and Albert at Balmoral .. told her to come to them if she needed help with politicians VICTORIA SUPPORTED HER
During peacetime she analysed deaths of healthy soldiers aged 25-35 living in barracks= twice as many deaths as civilians – how many? DOUBLE CIVILIAN rate
Again she used coxcomb diagram – (we drew a coxcomb flower diff sized petals) COXCOMB , relationship between death rates, water, sewerage, ventilation , accom, food etc – led to creation of Royal commission on health of army – 1863 her recommendations accepted – lead to 75% reduction in death rates
Held board – THAT IS IMPRESSIVE
Another word from lesson = frustration , what comes to mind?
IT IS FRUSTRATING TO ME WHEN I MEET PEOPLE AND THEY DO NOT REALISE I AM INTELLIGENT . I DO UNDERSTAND WHY THEY MAY THINK THIS BUT IT IS STILL FRUSTRATING do u want to add any more NOT NOW

Module 1 - Example of a session with a new student

This transcript of one of Soma's sessions is from the Unlocking Voices-Using RPM facebook files. This was one of her first sessions with a new student - Mit Pickering - his mum wrote the transcript. This is to give you more of an idea about how a beginners session will be done.

Transcript of a session by Soma with a new RPM student - using choices and stencils :

Fox story

Once upon a time (wrote **once upon a time** as she wrote time she spelled out the letters T_I_M_E, time).....then asked which word relates to time (would you say .. she wrote the choices **clock, shut**);

Once upon a time, there was a fox (spelled and **wrote fox**) . Did I say **cat or fox** (wrote choices) , now lets spell fox. (Spelling is done with 3 stencils; she gives phonetic sound letter makes, prompts letter choice if he hesitates, and **writes each letter down after he points** to it.).

The fox found a jar (wrote **found jar** –spelling J A R as writing it) . Did I say he found a **jar or tree**?(written choices) Now lets spell jar.

The fox was inquisitive.(wrote and spelt **inquisitive**). Gave written choices - Did I say **serious or inquisitive**. Now we're going to spell Inquisitive ---I independent; N independent; Q prompted U prompted I independent; S Independent I independent T independent I independent; I independent; V prompted, E prompted. As he pointed to each letter Soma wrote it down.

The fox put his head into the jar and it got stuck. Wrote **head-jar-stuck**. Now let's think. The fox has his head stuck in the jar. Is this a **BAD situation or a NICE situation**?(written choices) Mit chose NICE. Soma said, very softly…I think it is bad. A bad situation is one that is uncomfortable….one you don't want to be in. So which of these is a bad situation ? It is **SUNNY or you are SCARED**? (written choices) Mit chose scared. Yes, says Soma. So back to the fox. Having his head stuck in the jar….was that a **BAD situation or a NICE situation**.(written choices) Mit chose correctly.

Soma then finished her lesson on the story. (moral, fable, Aesop) then moved on to numbers.

Module 1 - Example of a session with a new student

Observations by Mit's mum *....At one point Mit got up and went to the door. Soma was unperturbed. He wanted fishy out of the truck, so we got him and Mit settled back down to work a few more minutes. When Soma moved a chair in front of him to place his choices on (rather than holding them in the air), Mit draped one of his long legs over it! LOL. Soma was again unperturbed, just kept going in her calm, soothing manner.*

Mid session Soma gave Mit a break and we chatted. I told her he had frequently tried to point to both answers. She explained to take the first choice and remove the choices quickly to minimize this and to break this habit. (As she had been doing during the early part of the session.) He was listening, because when they restarted working, he was no longer trying to touch both answers.

Soma says she never tests…..she presents the material, assuming competence and knowledge, then prompts if necessary. For example, she started straight away with the spelling stencils even though Mit had never been exposed to spelling at all.

Module 1 Quiz

Multiple Choice Questions: RPM Basic Principles

1. What core belief underlies the Rapid Prompting Method (RPM)?
A. Children must first master motor skills before learning language
B. Intelligence and learning ability are presumed when taught appropriately
C. Speech ability determines cognitive ability
D. Only verbal children can benefit from RPM

2. Why can minimally or non-verbal children often express themselves fluently using letterboards?
A. They memorize long scripts of phrases
B. Their language (cognitive) abilities are typically intact even if speech is unreliable
C. Letterboards simplify motor movements
D. The boards stimulate the speech-production area of the brain

3. Why do RPM providers typically position themselves on the student's right-hand side?
A. To reduce visual distractions
B. To accommodate most students' motor difficulties
C. To stimulate the left side of the brain where language is processed
D. Because most children prefer interaction on that side

4. According to the text, what is a key factor in achieving success with RPM?
A. Completing as many tasks as quickly as possible
B. Focusing primarily on daily living skills
C. The parent's or helper's attitude and belief in the child
D. Avoiding educational content until communication improves

5. Why does the course emphasize providing educational topics to the child?
A. To keep the child busy during sessions
B. Because knowledge builds the foundation for thinking, reasoning, and expressing opinions
C. To distract from sensory challenges
D. Because children must first master academics before communication

---

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **C**

Module 1 Quiz

4. **C**

5. **B**

Multiple Choice Questions: Sensory Learning Channels

1. Which statement best describes how we usually experience the world?
A. We learn through only one sense at a time.
B. The five senses work together to give a total picture of experiences.
C. Smell is the most important sense for learning.
D. Children should be taught to ignore some senses.

2. According to the text, people of all ages learn best when they are:
A. Listening quietly without moving.
B. Given only written information.
C. Involved in meaningful experiences — learning by doing.
D. Forced to focus on one sense only.

3. What is a common difference in sensory development for some autistic children?
A. They always prefer taste and smell over sight.
B. They may select information from one sense to be dominant while others remain isolated.
C. Their senses function exactly the same as neurotypical children.
D. They cannot learn from multisensory input.

4. Which of the following is a *primary* learning channel in RPM?
A. Kinesthetic
B. Tactile
C. Vision
D. Taste

5. Why does an RPM teacher both state and write key points during a lesson?
A. To make the lesson longer.
B. To engage the primary learning channels (visual and auditory).
C. To avoid using tactile strategies.
D. To keep the student silent.

6. Which pair are considered *secondary* learning channels in RPM?
A. Vision and auditory
B. Tactile and kinesthetic
C. Taste and smell
D. Emotional and social

Module 1 Quiz

7. An example of adapting a lesson for vision, as described in the text, would be:
A. Increasing the room temperature.
B. Holding a picture closer to eye level or using a clipboard.
C. Asking the child to taste different foods.
D. Playing loud background music.

8. A student described as *global* in a learning channel is likely to:
A. Tune out background noise and focus easily.
B. See/hear everything at the same volume and need help focusing on relevant details.
C. Refuse to touch anything new.
D. Use only one sense to learn effectively.

9. What is the recommended RPM approach to a child's calming stim (self-stimulatory behavior)?
A. Forcibly stop it immediately.
B. Allow it to continue if it doesn't interfere with learning.
C. Always imitate the stim to join the child.
D. Remove the child from the lesson.

10. If a child becomes over-excited by a stim during a lesson, the teacher should:
A. Show strong emotion and shout to get attention.
B. Contribute to the stim to distract the child.
C. Compete with the stim by calmly engaging in reasoning or incorporating the stim topic into the lesson.
D. Ignore the child completely.

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **C**
3. **B**
4. **C**
5. **B**
6. **B**
7. **B**

8. **B**
9. **B**
10. **C**

Multiple Choice Questions: What is an effective RPM Sessions

1. What is the purpose of beginning an RPM session with "Teach or State/Ask" for new students?
A. To immediately start open communication
B. To introduce key words/concepts before expecting responses
C. To test the student's spelling ability
D. To reduce the need for sensory activities

---

2. What best describes the interaction style in an effective RPM session?
A. Teacher-led with no student input until the end
B. A predictable comprehension test format
C. A see-saw interaction where the student responds after each sentence
D. A silent observation session

---

3. Why are sensory activities such as drawing or using paper models included in RPM sessions?
A. To keep the student occupied when they lose focus
B. To enhance learning by engaging the senses and keeping the student involved
C. To replace teaching key words
D. To make the lesson longer

---

4. During open communication, why does the teacher avoid influencing the student's responses?
A. To speed up the session
B. To prevent the student from choosing the wrong answer
C. To avoid leading responses and support genuine, independent communication
D. To limit discussion to only key words

---

5. How should a teacher respond when a student shows behaviours or stims during an RPM session?
A. Stop the session immediately

B. Increase demands to override the behaviour
C. Remain calm and work through the behaviour
D. Ignore the student completely

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **C**
3. **B**
4. **C**
5. **C**

Module 2 - Starting Blocks

Module 2 - Starting Blocks - laying the foundations for success

Your attitude and beliefs

Environment and equipment

Video storage

Exposure to written words

Tolerance to your voice

Teach pointing and choosing

Lesson resources

Record Keeping

Module 2 - Attitude and Beliefs

Your Attitude and Beliefs.

This is the single most important factor in achieving your goal. If you start from a position of 'I don't think it will work but I'll just give it a little try' , you are in a weak position and any hesitations or resistance from your child will prove self- fulfilling. Equally if you need to make your child ‘prove’ to you that he understands from the start you will be ‘testing’ him and building resistance.

I understand how hard it is when you see all the things your child cannot do and when the so-called ‘experts’ tell you that your child has learning difficulties and does not understand . They will point to the evidence :- not being able to follow instructions, not being able to pick up an object , not appearing to understand, not engaging or appearing enthusiastic to learn . Most of the assessments of autistic children do not take into account their motor challenges - and presume that not being able to DO something means a lack of cognition/understanding .

This was true of my son - I spent years trying to teach basic numbers/quantities - asking him to give me 2 out of a group of 5 objects . He could not do it. However when I started RPM I found that he was able to perform maths calculations.

You can actively and purposefully change your beliefs -try saying this out loud 'i know you may not be able to .....(put in example from your child) but I also know (from hearing about many other children like you) that you do understand and that you do have thoughts and opinions just like me . I now know that you experience things differently from me but are capable of learning if taught in a different way and that's what we are going to do together'. You can simplify the above by adding the word YET after you may not be able to do ..

Take a look at these two features :
https://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-c1-autismland-20131222-dto-htmlstory.html Feature about Ido Kedar
http://idoinautismland.com/?p=501 Article on skill building by Sue and Chris

Optional further reading: Ido in Autismland by Ido Kedar (I highly recommend this)
Optional learn more about self limiting beliefs and how to overcome them
https://choosehappiness.net/wp-cms/

Module 2 - Environment and equipment checklist

Set yourself up for success by creating the optimum environment for your sessions

Checklist

- [ ] **Quiet /distraction free room /area**
- [ ] **Table and 2 chairs (student chair 'boxed-in', feet able to touch floor or step)**
- [ ] **Time timer /clock/ app on phone**
- [ ] **Sharpened pencils (small supply) plus sharpener**
- [ ] **Eraser**
- [ ] **Some wax crayons**
- [ ] **Plain paper A4**
- [ ] **Sellotape in a solid dispenser**
- [ ] **Hand sanitiser**
- [ ] **Clipboard A4**
- [ ] **Filming equipment - phone /device or camcorder* on fixed tripod/stand**
- [ ] **Set of 3 large alphabet stencils, number stencil, a-z stencil, 2 laminated letterboards**
- [ ] **Prepared RPM lesson plan with print outs of any images/pictures**
- [ ] **Atlas / print outs of world map**

Optional

- [ ] **Cushion for chair to encourage sitting**
- [ ] **Music stand for your lesson notes**
- [ ] **Post it notes**
- [ ] **Drink /snacks for student**

*** I have found a camcorder to be most useful. My son used to get obsessive about phones/ipads but doesn't bother with the camera . It is also great for longer recordings - choose one which can be set to low definition as this will be faster to upload. The one I am currently using has an SD card and a low definition setting called VGA.**

Module 2 - Video storage

How to store your video recordings

I have been using youtube for many years and share many of my videos publicly - my channel is called suefinnes . Here is the link
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMtrorkbUiDMIwvY2-W5GhQ

Youtube offers an easy and free way of storing your videos and you can set the privacy so that you can choose who can see the videos.

How to set up a youtube channel :-

1. Sign in to YouTube on a computer or the mobile site.
2. Click on your profile picture. Create a channel.
3. You'll be asked to create a channel.
4. Check the details (with your Google Account name and photo) and confirm to create your channel.

How to upload videos to your channel

From a phone - open the youtube app , select the + at the bottom of the screen , then select upload video and choose the one to upload .

You will then be able to give your video a **title** (I suggest the date and a short heading) , and set the **privacy**(i recommend unlisted to begin with as only those you give the link to will be able to view

From a laptop - open youtube and select the video camera icon with + in it at the top screen. You can then select the video from your laptop files or direct from an SD card drive if you have used a camcorder.

I am not very computer savvy and I know there may be other ways of doing this . If you find a simple way please do email me so I can share it with others.

Module 2 -Written word exposure

Increase exposure to written words

These are activities which I believe helped my son to become effective with RPM more quickly. You are effectively beginning to teach reading skills and are demonstrating a belief in your child.

When you are out and about draw attention to and chat about any written words - eg. **shop names, signposts**.

When **reading books** take your child's hand along the words as you read .

Put the **subtitles on** the TV , youtube and DVDs so that your child is seeing the written words as well as hearing them.

Label things around the house - maybe 5 things and then change labels after a few days.

Have paper and pencil handy around the house .Get your child **used to seeing you write things down** - don't worry about whether they can actually read the words - just the action of you writing.

Write down what the plans for the day are eg .order of activities (I found this to be a helpful technique if Chris was anxious/agitated - let me write it down - first we are ... then we will go to ... this slowed things down and the act of me writing it seemed to calm him /reassure him that it would happen - more than me just saying yes we'll do it later. After writing i would also take his finger and read along all the words)

I also did some short word/picture matching activities - 5 mins max - start with 3 pictures and hand over hand give help , then gradually add in more. I began on the floor then used velcro and stuck up pictures on our playroom walls - I gave a word to Chris and he would find the picture and stick it on . I used packs of flash cards which are designed for young children for this .

Optional - particularly for younger children - this programme is not connected to Soma RPM , but I believe it would be helpful . It provides materials for a 6 month reading programme
https://doman-learning.teachable.com/p/reading-before-school?_ga=2.183215471.872137524.1634551296-14076629.1634551296

Module 2- Tolerance to voice

Increase child's exposure/tolerance to your voice

When you realise that your child does understand you will talk to him more and differently .

Things you can do NOW

Begin to **read age appropriate fiction books** -eg. bed time stories . Even if your child does not appear to be listening you will be building up auditory tolerance to your voice. I have read Greek mythology, Spy Dog books, Harry Potter. I didn't worry about whether Christopher appeared to be paying full attention as I now know he was taking things in even when he looked totally disinterested or distracted. When I began he was often underneath the duvet ! Interesting that a friend's son will listen to auditory books - but only in a dark room.

Aim now to do some reading with your child everyday - an age appropriate story, a feature from a newspaper or magazine - start to work on their tolerance to listening to your voice and to sitting with you .

ALWAYS include your child in the conversation NEVER talk about your child in his/her presence as if he/she is not there. If you are saying something about your child in their presence do it respectfully/mindfully - knowing that they are listening and understanding everything you say.

Talk to your child in a conversational way speaking your thoughts out loud eg. when in the car - 'gosh there is a lot of traffic today - have you noticed that this seems to happen whenever it is raining - everyone travels by car instead of walking'.

Practise using your voice in different ways
You will be presenting from your lesson plans and you need to do it in an interesting and engaging way - not just coldly reading facts. I see many people when they first start doing exactly that !
So before starting RPM lessons have a practise - read out some sections of the newspaper, or an encyclopedia - think about your tone of voice and try to **add in some 'discussive ' words** so it sounds less stilted and more natural eg 'oh wow i didn't know that' , 'this is interesting', 'guess what'. Assess how your child responds when you adjust your voice - eg. if your child is making noises instead of speaking over them it can often be more effective to lower your voice and speak in a whisper.

Module 2- Tolerance to voice

RPM lessons with your child will be like having a discussion , and you should be offering your opinions . So it is important to think about this from the start to get you off on the right foot .

Module 2 -Teach pointing and choosing

Begin to teach your child how to purposefully point and choose

Involve your child in purposeful activities around the house which involve choosing/pointing and using the body in a purposeful way.

During the day, be constantly looking for opportunities to involve your child in any activity which can be used to teach the skill of purposeful pointing and choosing and also general activities which help to develop motor skills. This will help with RPM but also help your child to become more independent in future.

Examples :

Preparing food - say 'these are the potatoes and these are the carrots' (you can also write down the words).
Then you can teach the skill of how and what to choose: ' Can you pass me a potato please - which ones are the potatoes?' point and practise hand-over-hand- do it twice hand over hand saying this is how you choose the potato then immediately ask again can you pass me another potato please. This time do not do it hand over hand instead give help and encouragement by pointing to the potato pile and gesturing - ' yes that's right pick it up and pass to me'.
In this example you are using some of the RPM techniques which we will discuss later - motor modelling (hand over hand, twice then independently) and prompting - verbal and gestural .

If you have written the word you can also talk about the letters/sounds 'Look potato begins with the letter P - makes the puh sound and carrot begins with a C makes the cuh sound - cuh for carrot . '

Cleaning work surfaces - hand over hand use this action to wipe - now you have a go

Getting dressed - pick up your pants, tshirt . Put your arm in here . Put your foot in here. Give as much help as is needed and reinforce that this is just practise. Remember that being unable to 'perform' correctly does not mean there is a lack of understanding.

Getting showered/ dried - as you help your child talk about all the body parts eg now we will dry your left arm -this one , now your right arm - this one , now your back - your left shoulder blade etc . I taught Chris left and right in this way - every time I helped him put on his shoes/coat I said this is your right foot /arm etc . This was really helpful when I

took him for horse riding lessons - the instructor was able to ask him to pull the left/right reins

Key point to remember - many of our children are unable to imitate us , that is why we initially do things hand over hand - the objective is to show the child how it **feels** to perform the action (what muscles have to engage, what the motor planning is for that action). This is one of the techniques you will use in RPM sessions - called motor modelling . You demonstrate the action hand over hand to model it - twice ,then verbally and with gestures prompt the child to perform the action **independently.**

Module 2- Gathering Lesson resources

Lesson resources

You will be giving age-appropriate short lessons .

You can begin to gather resources now - do not spend lots of money -there are lots available on the internet .

It is best to start with short interesting topics - don't begin with a formal 'curriculum'.

It is worth looking at your printer - getting a deal on ink - as it is likely that you will be printing more things out (eg. HP printers have deals offering a monthly fixed fee)

There are many books of lesson plans available to purchase on amazon, but I believe it is better to learn how to create your own in order to develop your own skills and knowledge. There are some good free lessons on some provider websites eg. www.rpmconnections.ca

Wonderopolis is a good site ,or use google - eg. 'history of /story of ' unusual animals. When introducing poetry you could use familiar nursery rhymes and show they are poems, or use pop song lyrics.

Charity shops and ebay are a great source of books and children's encyclopedias can be great if you prefer to use those . In this course I will show you how to create lessons from a book and from internet searches.

Once I had got a few lessons under my belt I found it good to have a series of lessons/a curriculum to follow. I used my daughter's Biology workbooks - this made lesson planning easy for me as I did not have to think about what the next topic was going to be.

Below is a link to an old post on the Unlocking Voices facebook group where parents shared resources they have used for lessons.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/627199673958985/posts/1263178637027749

It is also possible to use AI to create lessons . It takes practise but you can now use free apps eg. ChatGPT and put in simple prompts to create lessons. Even if you use this approach I would advise that you still spend some time adapting and personalising the lessons.

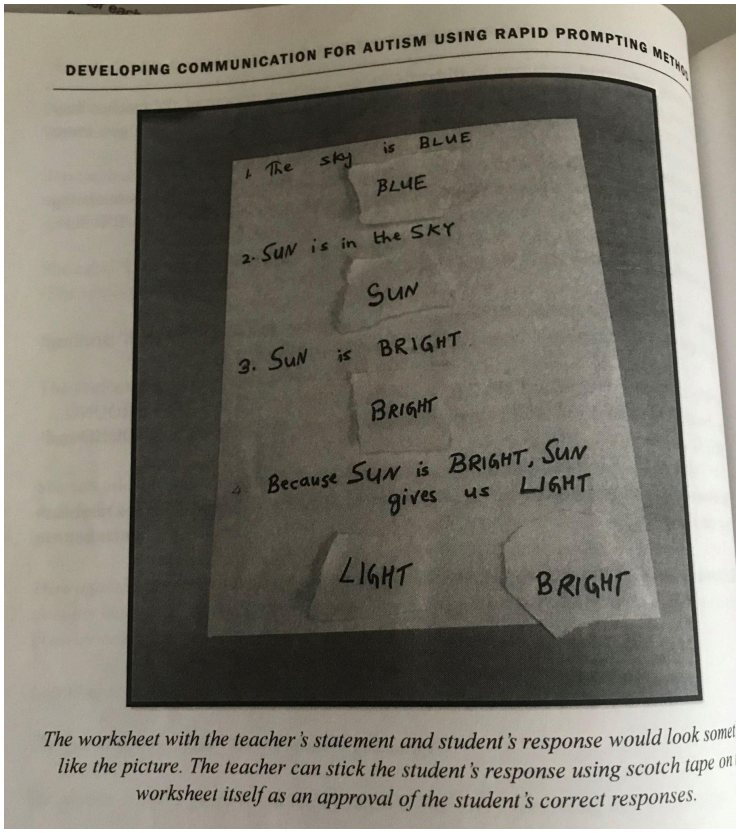
Module 2 - Record keeping

Keeping a record of sessions/progress

The way you keep records is a personal preference and it will probably change over time, but I encourage you to start to keep records straight away . You will then be able to track skill progress and keep a record of topics covered.
I always had to keep fairly detailed records in order to be able to demonstrate progress to my Local Education Authority. I had home visits from their Educational Psychologist each year to review progress.

Ideas:-
After each session date the worksheet - staple with the lesson plan and put in wallet in file or in a scrapbook. See example worksheet below from Soma's green book.
Add brief notes eg. how long lesson was, how well child sat,pointing ability, any challenges
If videoed, upload to youtube. Set to privacy to unlisted. Put date and lesson title and add any notes you wish to put into the information on the youtube.

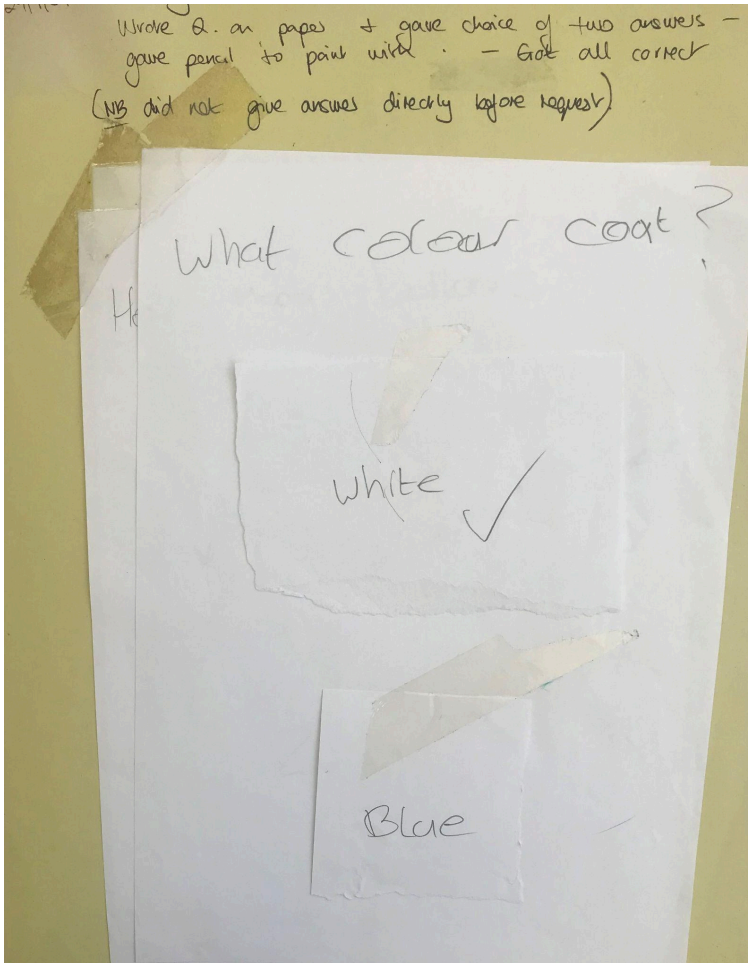
If possible set up computer records. If you have time you can type up notes or make it easy for yourself eg. take photos on your phone - email them to yourself, then copy from the email into your dated document and add the youtube video link .



The worksheet with the teacher's statement and student's response would look somet like the picture. The teacher can stick the student's response using scotch tape on worksheet itself as an approval of the student's correct responses.

Module 2 - Record keeping

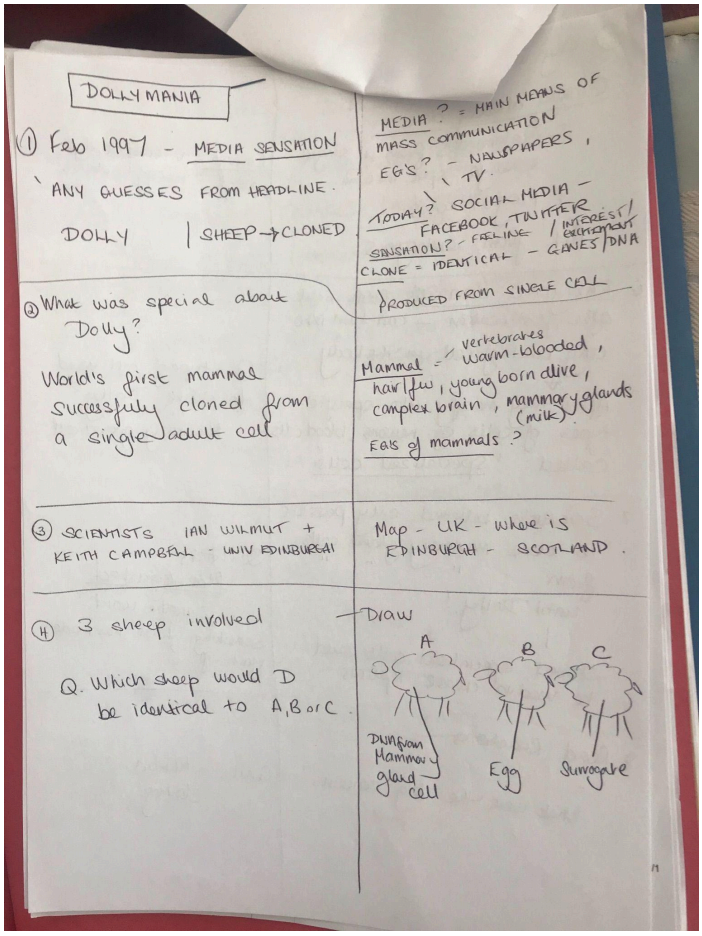
This is the start of my scrapbooking from 2009 - when i was experimenting with choices - from seeing a video of Soma on youtube



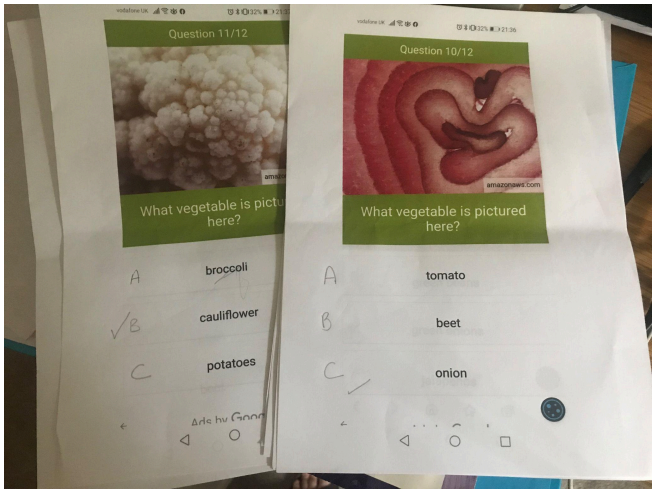
Module 2 - Record keeping

I kept a scrapbook for many years (in addition to computerized records). I put my hand written lesson plans in there and examples of other activities as it was great for pulling out and showing the Ed Psych when she visited.

Dollymania lesson plan :



Fun activity- name the vegetable



Module 2 - Record keeping

I also kept a record of the RPM sessions - I particularly liked to ensure I kept a record of Christopher's communicative outputs - I put all his pointing in capitals .

Here is an example from my computer :
7.9.20 Sea Squirts at Table pointing slow , but handwriting really good
https://youtu.be/1CPQqNv1Wsw
Showed picture on a book cover – pointed to it – guess is it a plant or an animal PLANT
Actually it's an animal and IT EATS ITS BRAIN
Any q's HOW THE HECK DOES IT DO THAT ?
Handwrite sea
Like a sponge – SOFT when removed from rocks squirts? WATER
Classification Latin name Phylum Chordata – (type ,cord)
Same classif as humans !... type of cord ? SPINAL
Looked at life cycle charts – read the descrips , drew a mature one
Handwrite eggs .. another eg of something that lays eggs – SNAKES
Looked at pic of larva – looks like TADPOLE
See it has a spinal cord – handwrite cord
Then attaches to rock with its MOUTH
Not move – SESSILE, brain gets absorbed when it STOPS MOVING
Conclusion – THE BRAIN IS NOT NEEDED ANYMORE
Only needed for SWIMMING
Book conclusion = when WE MOVE WE DEVELOP A BRAIN

Lets take the word brain – what comes to mind
MY (BRY) BRAIN IS ALWAYS (ARP) ASKING MY BODY VERY COMPLEX QUESTIONS. SOMETIMES I CANNOT GAIN ANA ANY CONTROL IN MY MUSCLES. AT THE MOMENT THE SCAB ON MY HAND IS TOTALLY BEING A NUISANCE

Module 2 - RPM progress Record Sheet

Example RPM Progress Record sheet - basic

Name /Date started RPM

Date /by whom/ length of session Topic /cognitive objectives Skill Tolerance Communication Key observations /things to build on	
Date /by whom/ length of session Topic /cognitive objectives Skill Tolerance Communication Key observations /things to build on	
Date /by whom/ length of session Topic /cognitive objectives Skill Tolerance Communication Key observations /things to build on	

Module 2 - RPM progress Record Sheet

Module 2 Quiz

Attitude and Beliefs : Quiz Questions

1. What is described as the single most important factor in achieving success with RPM?
A. Using the correct materials
B. The child's initial skill level
C. The parent's or helper's attitude and beliefs
D. The length of each session

---

2. Why is it unhelpful to expect a child to "prove" understanding at the start of RPM?
A. It makes sessions too long
B. It turns learning into testing and creates resistance
C. It prevents the teacher from giving key words
D. It limits the use of sensory activities

---

3. What common mistake do many assessments of autistic children make?
A. They focus too much on academic skills
B. They assume motor challenges equal lack of cognitive understanding
C. They rely too much on parent feedback
D. They do not include enough math tasks

---

4. What did the author discover about her son after beginning RPM?
A. He could follow instructions better than expected
B. He did not enjoy learning
C. He was able to do maths calculations despite earlier difficulties
D. He preferred tactile learning over auditory learning

---

5. What is one recommended way to actively change your beliefs about your child's abilities?
A. Avoid discussing challenges out loud
B. Only focus on what your child cannot do
C. Verbally affirm that your child understands and can learn when taught differently
D. Wait for professionals to confirm progress first

Answer Key

Module 2 Quiz

1. **C**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **C**
5. **C**

Quiz Questions : Exposure to written words

1. Why is increasing a child's exposure to written words considered helpful for RPM?
A. It replaces the need for spoken language
B. It begins to build reading skills and shows belief in the child's abilities
C. It teaches children to memorize signs only
D. It is required before starting any RPM lesson

---

2. What is one recommended way to increase exposure to written words at home?
A. Only read silently in front of the child
B. Label a few items around the house and change the labels every few days
C. Avoid using subtitles because they are distracting
D. Remove all books until the child can read independently

---

3. How can writing down daily plans help a child, according to the text?
A. It makes the child complete tasks faster
B. It reduces the need to talk to the child
C. The act of writing and reading together can calm and reassure the child
D. It ensures the child remembers the schedule without assistance

---

4. What is the purpose of short word/picture matching activities?
A. To test the child's reading accuracy
B. To keep the child busy without learning
C. To help the child connect written words with visual meaning
D. To replace all other forms of RPM practice

Answer Key

Module 2 Quiz

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **C**
4. **C**

Quiz Questions : Tolerance to your voice

1. Why is it helpful to read age-appropriate fiction to your child even if they seem disinterested?

A. It teaches them to memorize stories
B. It builds auditory tolerance and they may understand more than they appear to
C. It ensures they sit still for long periods
D. It replaces the need for conversation

---

2. What guideline does the text give about speaking in front of your child?

A. Only talk to them during lessons
B. Avoid speaking when they seem distracted
C. Never talk about the child as if they are not present
D. Only speak in short sentences

---

3. Why should parents practise using different tones of voice before starting RPM lessons?

A. To speak louder than the child at all times
B. To make the lesson sound more engaging and natural
C. To ensure the child memorizes information
D. To avoid needing lesson plans

---

4. What is one suggested way to make your reading or speaking more engaging?

A. Read facts in a monotone voice
B. Avoid expressing any opinions
C. Add discussive words like “oh wow” or “guess what”
D. Speak quickly to keep the child’s attention

Module 2 Quiz

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **C**
3. **B**
4. **C**

Quiz Questions : Teach pointing and choosing

1. When learning RPM, what is the main purpose of involving a child in everyday activities like cooking or cleaning?

A. To keep the child occupied
B. To teach purposeful pointing, choosing, and general motor skills
C. To test how quickly the child can follow instructions
D. To reduce the need for RPM later

---

2. What technique is described when an adult performs an action hand-over-hand with the child before the child attempts it independently?

A. Passive learning
B. Motor modelling
C. Visual prompting
D. Gesture imitation

---

3. In the potato and carrot example, why does the adult perform the action hand-over-hand twice before asking the child to do it alone?

A. To reinforce that the child must copy perfectly
B. To show the child the motor movements needed for the action
C. To speed up the task
D. To avoid giving verbal prompts

---

4. What key reminder does the text give about children who struggle to perform actions correctly?

A. They usually lack understanding
B. They should not be given help
C. Difficulty performing an action does not mean they don’t understand
D. They should practice only when they can already imitate

Module 2 Quiz

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **C**

Quiz Questions : Lesson Resources

1. What type of lessons should you begin giving to your child?
A. Long, formal curriculum-based lessons
B. Age-appropriate short lessons
C. Only lessons from school textbooks
D. Only lessons created by professionals

---

2. What is recommended when gathering lesson resources?
A. Spend a lot of money on brand-new materials
B. Avoid the internet because resources are unreliable
C. Use low-cost or free resources such as websites and second-hand books
D. Only use materials provided by teachers

---

3. Why is creating your own lessons encouraged?
A. It is faster than using pre-made lessons
B. It helps develop your own teaching skills and knowledge
C. It guarantees higher academic results
D. It prevents the need for internet resources

---

4. What is suggested once you have experience creating a few lessons?
A. Stop planning lessons and improvise each day
B. Move on to advanced university-level topics
C. Create or follow a series of lessons, such as using a workbook
D. Only teach poetry and stories

Module 2 Quiz

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **C**
3. **B**
4. **C**

Quiz Questions : Record Keeping

1. Why is it recommended to keep records of RPM sessions from the beginning?
A. To prepare lessons more quickly
B. To track progress and document skills and topics over time
C. To compare your child with other children
D. To avoid having to create lesson plans

---

2. What is one suggested method for organizing written records after each session?
A. Memorize the details and write them down once a month
B. Date the worksheet, staple it to the lesson plan, and store it in a file or scrapbook
C. Throw away old worksheets to save space
D. Only keep records if the session went well

---

3. What is one benefit the author experienced from keeping a scrapbook of lessons and activities?
A. It made lessons shorter
B. It was useful for showing progress to the Educational Psychologist during visits
C. It replaced the need for computer records
D. It helped avoid printing anything

---

4. What additional type of record does the author keep that highlights communicative progress?
A. A list of favorite classroom materials
B. All of the child's video transcripts typed in full
C. Written records with the child's pointing responses in capital letters
D. A chart of lesson lengths only

Module 2 Quiz

Answer Key

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **C**

Module 3 - Choice-based Lessons

Module 3 - Creating and delivering beginner choice-based lessons

Why use choices

How to create a short choice-based lesson using the fable, ‘the hare and the tortoise’

How to deliver the choice-based lesson

Common mistakes/problems with choice-based lessons

Module 3 -Why are choices helpful?

Developing thinking and reasoning skills

Using choices helps you to develop your child's thinking and reasoning skills - so they can deduce what the answer may be. This can be best illustrated with a maths example,

If I tell you that 1+5 = 6
And 11+5=16
What would 21+5 be …. 26 0r 28

It can be used in spellings eg. Do you think that ball would begin with the Buh sound or the Tuh sound?

You can also use choices at an early stage to ask your child's opinion about things - eg do you AGREE or DISAGREE with this

I used choice-based lessons for many months with my son. I had seen a short videoclip online and basically copied the process realising it was a way of involving him in learning. I still remember beginning by reading short pieces of information from a children's encyclopedia about Pandas. Chris was lying on the floor . I asked him 'what did i say that Pandas eat' - and wrote the choices as I said them 'was it BAMBOO or ICE CREAM' I can remember being shocked when he chose bamboo!

I now know that even if he had chosen ice cream that would have been a great start - he would have been showing that he could make a choice.

It is important to know that your **child does NOT need to be able to read in order to participate in choice-based lessons**. He will know how to select the answer not by reading the words but by hearing them as you write and place the paper choices.

When you should NOT persist with choice-based RPM lessons

If you try choices and you **experience difficulties** eg. constantly choosing answer on the same side, constantly choosing the last choice, it is better to not waste time and to move to a lesson format which does not give choices but instead goes directly to the spelling practice of the key words.

If your child has **echolalia** it will probably be better to go straight to spelling lessons as described in Module 5.

Module 3 -Why are choices helpful?

If the student is **very anxious** you should also leave out the choices stage for now. Soma explains more in this short video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6ezLxP7bJ8

I think it is still valuable for you to read through all the following sections to gain an understanding of the processes and I will show you how to write and deliver a lesson without any choices in Module 5.

In order to help YOU to build your skills step- by- step I will break the lesson planning process down. It is important to note that if you see a skilled teacher they will quickly assess your child during their first session and move to a more advanced stage.

Firstly, to teach the skill of **how to choose** (by pointing) and **what to choose** (correct answer) we can create a lesson plan with just choices as responses . (It is similar to what we described in an earlier module - pass me the potato).

I have created an example of how to do it using a Fable : The Hare and tortoise - see next document .

You can use my example, but then also have a go at creating your own short choice-based lessons.

To begin with you can aim for 10 mins.

You can present Age appropriate **new** information which may be related to interests/ interesting information or it can be a story eg. a fable (which should be adapted so it is appropriate for older children).In your plan you will write it out broken into sentences, with the key words in CAPITALS and then a question underneath

At the right hand side of your paper write 2 choices of answers . One correct/one incorrect and make sure you vary whether you put the correct one choice first or second so there is no regular pattern.

Module 3- Creating a Lesson plan using choices

I did an internet search to find this fable :

The Hare & the Tortoise

A Hare was making fun of the Tortoise one day for being so slow.

"Do you ever get anywhere?" he asked with a mocking laugh.

"Yes," replied the Tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. I'll run you a race and prove it."

The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the Fox, who had consented to act as judge, marked the distance and started the runners off.

The Hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the Tortoise feel very deeply how ridiculous it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he lay down beside the course to take a nap until the Tortoise should catch up.

The Tortoise meanwhile kept going slowly but steadily, and, after a time, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping. But the Hare slept on very peacefully; and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the goal. The Hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

Moral - Slow and steady wins the race

How to write a lesson plan with CHOICES as responses

You will see that I have broken the fable into sentences, capitalised the key words and put the choices at the right hand side. I did also add an introduction to give context and explain what a fable was. When you deliver the lesson you would write the key words as you say them - creating a worksheet.

1. We are going to look at a type of STORY called a FABLE

FABLE or POEM.

2. A fable is a short story which has a MORAL (means learning point or lesson) TRUTH or MORAL

3. Fables are especially appealing to CHILDREN as they use ANIMALS as the characters and they are able to TALK
Who do you think would most like to hear a fable? ADULT or CHILD

4. This fable is called The Hare and the Tortoise . It has a HARE (who can run very FAST) and a TORTOISE (who moves very SLOWLY).
If a hare runs fast and a tortoise is slow, who do you think would win a race . The FAST HARE or SLOW TORTOISE

Well let's see what happens in this fable ….

5. One day a Hare was making FUN of the Tortoise for being so slow.

"Do you ever get anywhere?" he asked with a mocking LAUGH.

Ask ; was the hare CRYING or LAUGHING

6. "Yes," replied the Tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. I'll run you a RACE and prove it."Ask : how would you describe a race - would you think it is like a fun WALK or is it a COMPETITION

Now try to carry on creating the lesson yourself - highlight the key words and write the choices. You will see my suggestions in the next section.

7. The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the Fox, who had

consented to act as judge, marked the distance and started the runners off.

Ask ;

8. The Hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the Tortoise feel how ridiculous it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he lay down beside the course to take a nap until the Tortoise should catch up.

Ask :

9. The Tortoise meanwhile kept going slowly but steadily, and, after a while, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping.

Ask:

10. The Hare slept on very peacefully and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the end. The Hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

Ask:

11. The Moral of this fable is - Slow and steady wins the race

Ask :

Module 3 - Presenting the Hare and Tortoise choices lesson

Watch and carefully study this video where Alex Hopwood and I explain how to present the choices .

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slfnouqFqnE

Key points -

Tearing the paper is an auditory prompt - do not pre-prepare torn paper

Use a pencil - it makes more noise as you write

State/spell and write choices

Positioning of choices - equidistant to where pointing hand would fall (not immediately in front of child),

The one you say first is always placed on the left (as we read from left to right)

Place pencil in hand to prompt response and remove pencil after response ,

Take care that it does not appear to be a test and never say no that is wrong.

Remember that if necessary you may need to motor model (hand over hand twice, then independently) how to choose and what to choose .eg . The clouds are in the sky , what did i say is in the sky - clouds/ trees - child chooses trees , you say oh that was good pointing - now I said the clouds are in the sky this is how you would point to clouds (twice) now you touch clouds .

Tape the answer onto the worksheet (see p 88 Soma's green book)

Presenting the Hare and Tortoise lesson

I have added in some notes about how I would deliver the lesson. You will see that when asking the questions I try to make it conversational/discussive - so it does not seem as if I am testing the student.

I suggest that you have a practice with an imaginary student - or with a willing friend before doing this with your child.

Module 3 - Presenting the Hare and Tortoise choices lesson

Remember to set up your camera to film !

State and **Write** the key words :

1. We are going to look at a type of STORY called a FABLE (spell the word as you write it) f-a-b-l-e.

Ask : we are looking at ?, what did I say ? tear paper into 2 ask and write answers
Did I say we are looking at a FABLE or POEM.

Take care with positioning - the one you write and say first always goes on the left.
Prompt to respond by placing pencil in hand and give verbal prompt 'touch it' 'show me' .
If incorrect do not say no that is wrong - instead praise the attempt and then motor model(hand over hand) how to touch the correct answer,
Say 'that was good -you used the pencil to touch the paper -now let's practise touching the right answer . I said fable - this is how you would touch fable' - then hand over hand help him to touch it twice so he feels how to perform the movement and then immediately remove your hand say 'now you touch fable'

2. A fable is a short story which has a MORAL m-o-r-a-l (means learning point or lesson)

Ask : The learning point or lesson in a fable is called the... ? what did i say - was it the TRUTH or was the MORAL

3. Fables are especially appealing to CHILDREN c-h-i-l-d-r-e-n- as they use ANIMALS as the characters and they are able to TALK

Module 3 - Presenting the Hare and Tortoise choices lesson

Ask :who do you think would most like to hear a fable? Take a guess - an ADULT or a CHILD ?

4. This fable is called The Hare and the Tortoise . It has a HARE (who can run very FAST) and a TORTOISE (who moves very SLOWLY).
Show printed pictures of a hare and a tortoise both on one a4 sheet (use a clipboard) and hold up in performance field. Ask student to touch/point to the animals. Optional - touch different parts of the animals . Hand over hand label them H for hare and T for tortoise

Ask : if a HARE runs FAST and a TORTOISE is SLOW, who do you think would win a race? The FAST HARE or the SLOW TORTOISE

Well let's see what happens in the fable ….

5. One day a Hare was making FUN of the Tortoise for being so slow.

"Do you ever get anywhere?" he asked with a mocking LAUGH.

Ask ; was the hare CRYING or LAUGHING at the tortoise? And the type of laugh was mocking - not a nice thing to do!

6. "Yes," replied the Tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. I'll run you a RACE and prove it."

Ask : how would you describe a race - would you think it is like a WALK in the park , or is it a COMPETITION you want to win. *Mention any races which student may be aware of eg. olympics*

7. The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the FOX, who had consented to act as JUDGE, marked the distance and started the runners off.

Ask ; The animal who was judging the race - did I say it was a FOX or a DOG?

And would you say a judge is someone who makes sure the race is FAIR, or someone who also RUNS in the race .

Maybe mention I wonder if you have heard of other judges (eg Judge Judy TV) - we have judges in law courts to ensure people get a fair trial

8. The Hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the Tortoise feel how RIDICULOUS it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he lay down beside the course to take a NAP until the Tortoise should catch up.

Ask : another word for ridiculous would be .. INTERESTING or SILLY

The hare lay down to? ... take a NAP or to look at the SKY

9. The Tortoise meanwhile kept going SLOWLY but steadily, and, after a while, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping.

Ask: At what speed was the tortoise moving at ..., SLOWLY or QUICKLY

Reinforce by walking your fingers slowly across the table

10. The Hare slept on very PEACEFULLY and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the END. The Hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

Module 3 - Presenting the Hare and Tortoise choices lesson

Ask:

When you think of peaceful - do you think of NOISY or QUIET places

When the hare woke up the tortoise …. Had already FINISHED the race or was NEAR THE END

Who won the race HARE/TORTOISE

11. The Moral of this fable is - SLOW AND STEADY wins the race

Ask : which would you say best describes ‘slow and steady ..

Run as fast as you can or keep plodding along

Give examples - persistence, keeping going . will be like our RPM journey!





Module 3 - Common mistakes /problems with Choices and how to address them

When NOT to begin with choices

Echolalia - if a student has echolalia it is often better to NOT begin with choices as they are likely to always choose the 2nd choice and it will be a difficult habit for you to break. There will be options to introduce choices later eg .you can write answers down as ABC, or 1,2,3 and ask the student to point to the letter/number to choose or just ask for the first letter of an answer.

Very anxious students - in this video Soma - talks about very anxious students, stating that in order to reduce anxiety it is better to begin by working on the motor skill of spelling instead of the reasoning skill of choices https://youtu.be/_6ezLxP7bJ8

Mistakes:-

Placement of choices - ensure positioned using students pointing hand not trunk of body

Swapping choices round after saying them - always place the one you say first on the left ,

Not prompting for response- placing the pencil in the hand is the prompt - add a verbal prompt 'touch it'/'show me' . If will not use the pencil ask student to 'grab it'

Not removing the pencil from the child's hand after responding - it can otherwise become a distraction

Either choice could be correct - make sure that one of your choices is always incorrect.

Correct answer always on left or right- the correct answer needs to be randomly given first or second - check your lesson plan

What to do if :

Student does not respond -restate and tap both answers then prompt again . If still no response motor model twice and then ask to touch

Student chooses wrong answer - just say .. i said x - this is how you would choose x -motor model twice and ask to touch

Module 3 - Common mistakes /problems with Choices and how to address them

Student touches both - say that's good choosing now show me the right answer by just touching one . restate and prompt again . If still no response motor model twice and then ask to touch

Student always chooses one side- deliberately put the right answer on the non preferred side for a few statements and make the incorrect answer a nonsense answer eg. the sun is hot/ tuesday , or the sun is hot /the sun is ~ (draw a squiggle)

Student unable to hold pencil to point - ask to point with finger or to pick up answer, or hold the answers up , brush the students hand as you say the choices and then ask them to grab the answer

Student unable to initiate action to point /lift arm - hold up the choices brush student hand with the choices as you say them so selection can be made with a slight finger movement

Re- watch our video on how to do choices https://youtu.be/slfnouqFqnE

From Soma's red book :--

Motor planning problems are seen in muscles and joints of arms – and usually are accompanied with incomplete visual perception and ability to manipulate bodies in space. Components are :-

- *Proximal muscles – move the shoulder*
- *Ball and socket joint of shoulder*
- *Distal muscles in hands/fingers*
- *Hinge joint elbow*
- *Gliding joint of wrist*
- *Hinge joint – knuckle*
- *Hinge joint- finger*

Module 3 - Common mistakes /problems with Choices and how to address them

If good control of all above will be able to do a task well with hands , and if also good visual percept will be able to judge distance – reach out etc.

Need to adapt RPM to make it successful for the students :-

-if primitive hand movement BUT good shoulder movement place choices at student's arms length

-if little range of motion (shoulder to elbow fixed on body) choices to be placed in close proximity and close together

-If tendency to pick up both choices (because hands are used in unison) the pencil is useful as it makes the learner aware of which hand to use to choose.

Module 3 Quiz

Quiz : Why use choices

1. What is the main purpose of using choice-based lessons in RPM?
A. To teach the child to read independently
B. To develop the child's thinking and reasoning skills
C. To reduce the need for spelling practice
D. To make lessons longer

---

2. How can a child participate in choice-based lessons even if they cannot read?
A. By memorizing all words in advance
B. By listening to the words as they are spoken and selecting the answer
C. By pointing randomly until they guess correctly
D. By waiting until they can read independently

---

3. When should a teacher avoid using choice-based lessons?
A. If the child is interested in the topic
B. If the child constantly chooses the same side or is very anxious
C. If the lesson is only 5–10 minutes long
D. If the child enjoys hearing stories

---

4. What is one suggested method to create a choice-based lesson?
A. Present a story or interesting information broken into sentences, with key words in capitals and two answer choices
B. Only ask the child to spell words without providing context
C. Give a long list of words and ask the child to choose all correct ones at once
D. Focus only on one subject, ignoring the child's interests

---

5. Why is it important to vary the placement of the correct answer in choice-based lessons?
A. To confuse the child
B. To make the lesson easier for the teacher
C. To prevent the child from choosing answers based on pattern
D. To speed up the lesson

Answer Key

Module 3 Quiz

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **A**
5. **C**

Quiz : Presenting the choices lesson

1. Why is it important not to say “no, that is wrong” when a child makes an incorrect choice?

A. It encourages the child to guess randomly
B. It maintains a positive learning environment and allows for motor modelling
C. It shortens the lesson
D. It prevents the child from touching the paper

---

2. What is one purpose of using hand-over-hand motor modelling in RPM lessons?

A. To make the lesson longer
B. To show the child how to perform the action physically, twice, before asking them to try independently
C. To teach the child to memorize the key words
D. To avoid giving verbal prompts

---

3. When presenting choices on paper, where should the first spoken and written choice be placed?

A. On the right side of the page
B. Randomly, with no pattern
C. On the left side, following left-to-right reading habits
D. Directly in front of the child

---

4. In the “Hare and Tortoise” fable lesson, which of the following questions helps teach reasoning skills?

A. “What is a fable?”
B. “If a hare runs fast and a tortoise moves slowly, who do you think would win a race?”

C. “Spell the word TORTOISE.”
D. “Which pencil should we use?”

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **C**
4. **B**

Quiz : Common mistakes when pPresenting the choices lesson

1. Why is it often better to avoid starting with choice-based lessons for students with echolalia?
A. They will refuse to participate entirely
B. They are likely to always choose the second option, creating a difficult habit
C. They cannot understand spoken instructions
D. They prefer reading instead of pointing

---

2. What should you do if a student does not respond to a choice prompt?
A. Move on to the next question without prompting
B. Restate the choices, tap them, prompt again, and if necessary, motor model twice before asking the student to touch
C. Tell the student they are wrong
D. Remove the choices from the table

---

3. How should the correct answer be presented in choice-based lessons?
A. Always on the left side
B. Always on the right side
C. Randomly on either left or right, as planned in the lesson
D. On a separate sheet of paper

Module 3 Quiz

4. If a student has limited shoulder and elbow movement, how should choices be placed?

A. At arm's length for the student
B. Close together and within easy reach
C. On the floor far from the student
D. Only use verbal choices, no physical pointing

---

5. What is the purpose of placing a pencil in the student's hand during choice-based lessons?

A. To make them write the answer
B. To act as a prompt for the initiation of the pointing and to help focus which hand to use
C. To teach handwriting skills only
D. To test the student's grip strength

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **C**
4. **B**
5. **B**

Module 4 - Choices and Spelling Lessons

Module 4 - Creating and delivering choices and spelling practise lesions

How add spellings to previously created lesson - hare and tortoise

Performance Field

Prompting

Motor Modelling

Tactile feedback

How to create a new lesson from a children's book - Satellites

Things you need to know before delivering this lesson

Common mistakes/problems when you start using stencils

Module 4 - Creating lesson plans to include choices and spellings on stencils/letterboards

Adding spellings into the choices lesson

After the student has made their choice of answer we are simply going to ask them to spell the key word by pointing to the letters on the stencils or letterboard.

Most importantly we do not want to cause any stress so lots of prompts - verbal/ gestural and encouragement will be given. You may also sometimes take turns at spelling the words.

There are a few videos to watch about technique which we will get to shortly, but to give an overview, you may begin one letter at a time using the large stencils (alphabet broken into 3 , A-I, J-R, S-Z) . So if the word was HARE you would hold up the A-I , and say find the H (remembering to point to the letter and motor model if necessary). Then remove the pencil and write the H on the paper, then hold up the A-I again - now the A etc . If the child is accurate you can ask for two letters at a time if on the same stencil. Many students are able to begin on the full A-Z stencil. Do remember that this is to PRACTICE independent pointing where the word has already been given. It is NOT testing and it is not open communication so it is fine to be very directive - this is the H now you touch it.

It is important that you understand that in RPM we always look for ways of adapting to meet the needs of the student. I would always suggest that if things do not seem straightforward it would be best to see an experienced practitioner who may try different approaches eg. If a student cannot hold a pencil they may begin using a full a-z letterboard, they may have 3 laminated letterboards, they may use a rolled letterboard to display one row of letters at a time or they may put sticky tape on the letterboard. I have also heard recently that a teacher has had great success using a hard letterboard and a clicky pen .

The key thing to work on at this stage in your lesson planning is to ensure that the lesson does not become too boring /predictable in its format . You need to ensure you add in discussion, questions to develop reasoning skills and sometimes you can progress straight to the answer without giving the choices

To begin with let's look at the lesson we created previously - the hare and the tortoise and amend it to include spellings. You will see that the format becomes **STATE /ASK/ SPELL.**

Module 4 - Creating lesson plans to include choices and spellings on stencils/letterboards

Completed fable lesson -with CHOICES and SPELLINGS as responses.

1. State : We are going to look at a type of STORY called a FABLE (spell the word as you write it) f-a-b-l-e.

Ask : we are looking at ?, what did I say ? tear paper into 2 ask and write answers
Did I say we are looking at a FABLE or POEM.

Spell :Let's practise spelling fable on here (use large stencils/a-z or letterboard - hold in performance field and give lots of prompts, one letter at a time - write down the letter after he has pointed. Use Soma spelling to guide the student through the spelling.)
Fuh for fable
A for able
Buh for ble
Luh for le
And finally E

2. State: A fable is a short story which has a MORAL m-o-r-a-l (means learning point or lesson)

Ask : The learning point or lesson in a fable is called the... ? what did i say - was it the TRUTH or was the MORAL

Spell : let's spell moral together - first letter is M for moral -i ll touch it , then your turn O for oral , my turn R for ral , your turn A for al , and i'll finish L

3. State: Fables are especially appealing to CHILDREN c-h-i-l-d-r-e-n- as they use ANIMALS as the characters and they are able to TALK

Ask :who do you think would most like to hear a fable? Take a guess - an ADULT or a CHILD ? You can try this choice on the stencil /letterboard- would it be A for adult or C for child

Spell : Yes, C then H then I then L then D .

4. State: This fable is called The Hare and the Tortoise . It has a HARE (who can run very FAST) and a TORTOISE (who moves very SLOWLY).

Show printed pictures of a hare and a tortoise both on one a4 sheet - hold up in performance field and ask the student to touch/point to the animals. Optional - hand over hand label them H and T , discuss the pictures eg. hare has long powerful legs good for running - compare to tortoise

Ask : if a hare runs fast and a tortoise is slow, who do you think would win a race? The FAST HARE or the SLOW TORTOISE

Spell - just for practise let's spell FAST

Well let's see what happens in the fable ….

5. State: One day a Hare was making FUN of the Tortoise for being so slow.

"Do you ever get anywhere?" he asked with a mocking LAUGH.

Ask : was the hare CRYING or LAUGHING at the tortoise? And the type of laugh was mocking - not a nice thing to do!

Module 4 - Creating lesson plans to include choices and spellings on stencils/letterboards

Spell ;let's spell FUN and just for practice we will spell LAUGH- as it's a very strange spelling so we need to learn and practise it.

6. State : "Yes," replied the Tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. I'll run you a RACE and prove it."

Ask : how would you describe a race - would you think it is like a WALK in the park , or is it a COMPETITION you want to win. Mention any races which student may be aware of eg. olympics

Spell - the tortoise said he was going to win the ? hold up the stencil - if necessary prompt and say find the R,A C E

7. State : The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the Fox, who had consented to act as judge, marked the distance and started the runners off.

Ask ; The animal who was judging the race - did I say it was a FOX or a DOG?

Spell -Just for practise let's spell FOX on here

Ask -And would you say a judge is someone who makes sure the race is FAIR, or someone who also RUNS in the race .

Maybe mention I wonder if you have heard of other judges (eg Judge Judy TV) - we have judges in law courts to ensure people get a fair trial

Module 4 - Creating lesson plans to include choices and spellings on stencils/letterboards

8. The Hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the Tortoise feel how RIDICULOUS it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he lay down beside the course to take a NAP until the Tortoise should catch up.

Ask : another word for ridiculous would be .. INTERESTING or SILLY

Spell hold up stencil - let's find the S for silly, I for lly, for ly and y

Ask :The hare lay down to? ... take a NAP or to look at the CLOUDS. You can show me on here N for nap for C for clouds

Spell - yes N A P - means a short sleep

9. State : The Tortoise meanwhile kept going SLOWLY but steadily, and, after a while, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping.

Ask: At what speed was the tortoise moving at ..., SLOWLY or QUICKLY

Reinforce by walking your fingers slowly across the table

Spell - lets spell SLOW , explain the ow together make the 'oh' sound

10. State: The Hare slept on very PEACEFULLY and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the END. The Hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

Ask: When you think of peaceful - do you think of NOISY or QUIET places

When the hare woke up the tortoise …. Had already FINISHED the race or was NEAR THE END

Module 4 - Creating lesson plans to include choices and spellings on stencils/letterboards

Spell - yes he was near the .. hold up stencil ,you find the first letter END

Ask: Who won the race HARE/TORTOISE

11.State: The Moral of this fable is - SLOW AND STEADY wins the race

Spell : let's practise STEADY

Ask : which would you say best describes 'slow and steady ..

Run as fast as you can or keep plodding along

Give examples - persistence, keeping going . will be like our RPM journey!



Module 4 - Creating lesson plans to include choices and spellings on stencils/letterboards



Module 4 : Performance field

Understanding Performance field

This is how we physically position things in order to give the best chance of success for your child.

When teaching to point at letters on a stencil/letterboard the performance field will not be flat on the table immediately in front of the child - it is usually at a more vertical angle so that the child is reaching forward using their shoulder and elbow joints - but not too high.

Think about when you are taking notes - do you have the paper in a perfectly square position on the table ? Maybe it is at an angle, maybe it is balanced on your leg ?

You will need to experiment with stencil positioning to find out what works best - and it can be good to video a session and ask a senior RPM teacher for their opinion on your board positioning .

You are aiming for a position where the child can easily access all 4 corners of the board . Often at the beginning of a session I would directly ask Chris to touch A, E , U , Z to see how I needed to position the board (and to check on his accuracy on that day).

A very common mistake when starting out is to hold the board too high (at eyeline) so the child is having to reach upwards.

You will have to reset and reposition the board during the session as the child moves in his/her seat.

Over time you will be building your child's skills/accuracy and working towards being able to point to a letterboard on a flat surface, and then onto a fixed position device .

Module 4 : Prompting

Why prompt?

A facilitator provides appropriate prompts to enable the student to **initiate a response**.

You must assume that your child's problem is not a lack of understanding , but that they cannot get their body/brain to do what they want it to – in this case move their finger/pencil to point to the choice or letter they want. So you are treating your child as if they have a physical disability rather than a mental one.

It may be necessary to build up muscle strength in the shoulder, elbow and wrist areas to enable accurate pointing and this can only be achieved with practise. With a younger child you will also have to teach spelling. This is easy to do using the RPM Method as you are verbally spelling out the key words regularly and using 'Soma spellings'.

How much prompting do you give?

The role of the facilitator is to provide the **minimum level of prompt needed to enable the person to be successful**.

More detailed information can be found in Soma's books , but when she first worked with Christopher we saw her very quickly move from him using the pencil to select from written choices to using the pencil to then spell by pointing to letters on a stencil. She constantly told Christopher that she knew he knew the answer and that this was just practice.

Her prompting involved re-putting the pencil into his hand , repositioning the stencil , tapping his elbows, saying up if he needed to move to a top line letter, giving 'air' prompts with her other hand and also helping to keep focus by giving encouragement and specific praise. **She did NOT give any hand over hand support or nudge his arm** – it is important that the child learns to do it independently.

Module 4 : Prompting

Over time the objective is to reduce the amount of prompting given with the ultimate aim being to achieve independent typing. You begin by getting the child to spell out the word that he/she has chosen on the paper choices and then eventually you can move to not giving the paper choices – just asking the question. This builds the child's confidence for 'known' answers. Only when accuracy is achieved without prompting do we move to open-ended responses.

Key points

- Objective is to provide appropriate minimum prompts to enable the student to initiate an independent response
- New students - Focus on making student successful, building their confidence and self esteem
- So initially give LOTS of prompts - but do not physically touch/help (unless motor modelling)

Examples of prompts:

Holding up letterboard/stencil,

Placing the pencil in students hand

Pointing to the letter to be touched

Placing sticky tape on letters/pictures

Gesturing /waving to show which side of the board to move to (called an air prompt)

Verbalising - touch it, move your elbows, up

Mistakes to avoid Teacher moving the stencil/ letterboard or physically pushing/holding/supporting arm to help student get to the letter. This creates a reliance on physical support and is not RPM.

Module 4 : Motor Modelling

Understanding Motor Modelling

We have already covered this during choices - so just a quick recap here :-

For many students we have to teach them how to perform an action by helping their body to 'feel' that action .

This is what we call motor modelling . You would say we are going to spell blue , this is how you touch the b - and **hand over hand** help them to do it , - **do this twice** (you are modelling the movement) then **immediately ask him to perform the action independently -** say now you touch it . Give lots of prompts (verbal and by pointing to the letter) but remove your hand so the child learns to make the movement independently .

Also start to get into the habit of doing this for any actions outside RPM lessons which your child struggles with . eg. wiping a surface, passing you an item . I remember having to explain this to Chris's personal trainer. He expected Chris to be able to imitate/copy to learn movements, but we found we had to help his body to feel the action.

It is important that when your child cannot do something you maintain the strong belief that - he/she cognitively understands what I am asking but the brain and body are not co- operating so I am just helping to establish the brain/body connection . With practice this connection will become stronger.

Module 4 - Tactile feedback

What do we mean by tactile feedback

The use of the stencils provides the student with tactile feedback - they can feel when they push the pencil through the letter.

It is often helpful for you to give additional feedback - so when the pencil is in the letter you can use your wrist to flick the stencil inward towards the student - helping to increase the tactile feedback - so they know that they have done that letter and it is now time to move to the next one . This is a very useful technique to use if you notice that your child is slow. You may understand this more iIf you hold up your own arm and push back on your hand you will feel the muscles engage higher in your arm - this is the type of feeling the pushback can give.

This pushback technique can also be used with the laminated letterboard (a good reason for having a robust and stiff board). Be very careful though - wait for the child to touch the letter before giving the pushback - otherwise people will say you are just moving the board for them.

Another technique to give increased tactile feedback is to use rolled up tape on the laminated letterboard - this gives a sticky feel when the student touches it and is also a visual clue to improve accuracy. Sometimes having tape on every letter can help, or using it to visually guide the child by placing it on one or two letters at a time.

A UK student who was resisting the stencils has recently had great success using the clicky end of a pen on a stiff letterboard . The pen click gave her a nice tactile feedback.

Key points :-

- Stencils provide tactile feedback (students can feel when they push the pencil through the letter). Helps to develop accuracy .

- Teachers can give additional tactile feedback using the stencils - when the pencil is in the letter - by flicking wrist to push the stencil towards the student. The can help students to learn when it is time to move to the next letter which is useful to do if a student is very slow when pointing. It can help to create a rhythm.

- Teachers can also give this ‘pushback’ tactile feedback using the laminated letterboard - this is why it needs to be stiff/rigid

Module 4 - Tactile feedback

- Rolled up tape can be used on the letterboard to give tactile feedback - to help accuracy (has sticky feel and gives visual clue)

- Experienced RPM teachers will be creative and always find ways to help students become successful eg. clicky pen on stiff letterboard

Module 4 : Creating a short lesson plan from a book

Watch our short video :

Preparing an RPM session from a book – for beginners

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmGo0aWMHKI

I used a book from a charity shop :- 'My first book of questions and answers - Spacecraft '

I took the 3 short paragraphs about Satellites and made a lesson plan

Below are the headings / sentences taken directly from the book - have a quick go at breaking this into numbered lesson points, highlighting key words, thinking about questions you may ask to develop reasoning skills and any activities which could be added before looking at my lesson plan .

What is a satellite?

A satellite is any object which orbits (travels round and round) the earth . The earth's natural satellite is the moon . The first man- made satellite was Sputnik1, which was launched in 1957.

What do satellites do

Satellites do lots of jobs .Some take pictures of earth to tell us about the weather or to spy on other countries. Communications satellites bounce television and telephone signals back to earth

How do satellites use the sun

Satellites can carry on working for a long time because the sun gives them energy. Satellites have solar panels, like wings , which soak up light and heat from the sun, and turn them into electricity

Module 4 : Creating a short lesson plan from a book

In the plan which follows I have highlighted the key words which I would write and spell.

What is a satellite?

We are talking about ?…. Satellites / Stars

1. A satellite is any object which orbits (travels round and round) the earth .

Draw circle for earth then hand over hand draw circles around to demonstrate orbits - or hold up pencil - take students hand to circle it

Our planet is called ? …. Pluto / earth
Let's spell earth

2. The earth's natural satellite is the moon .

The moon is the earth's natural ? … radar / satellite

When something is natural it has been created by nature not by man

Option - make a table 2 columns natural /man made - ask a few questions and make a list

Eg Would you say a flower is …..natural / man- made

Yes - but this table is man made How about these chairs ? natural / man- made

And the moon is ?…….natural/man- made yes - created by nature

Spell moon

Finish this sentence .. the moon orbits the ?…… sun/ earth

3. The first man- made satellite was Sputnik1, which was launched in 1957.

In 1957 the name of the satellite which was launched was? Halo 1 / Sputnik 1

Module 4 : Creating a short lesson plan from a book

Just for fun let's spell sputnik and lets find 1957 on here (number stencil)

Option- from the name , would you guess that sputnik was … Russian /American

Option - i happen to know that Sputnik 1 was a round satellite the size of a beach ball = let's draw a ball .

What do satellites do

4. Satellites do lots of jobs .

Some take pictures of earth to tell us about the weather or to spy on other countries

An example of something a satellite does is to tell us about the weather by taking ?... pictures / temperatures

Spell picture

5. Communications satellites bounce television and telephone signals back to earth

Draw simple diagram - satellite - earth -tv broadcast station - home tv - when we watch some tv channels the signals are sent to us via satellite

What type of satellite would send tv signals? … weather satellite/ communications satellite

Yes the signals are bounced back to earth .
Something that bounces? … ball / phone

Spell Ball

How do satellites use the sun

6. Satellites can carry on working for a long time because the sun gives them energy .

Where do satellites get energy from ?…. Sun / moon

Spell sun, spell energy

Module 4 : Creating a short lesson plan from a book

When I say a ‘long time’ in this context would you think that would mean ? 5 weeks / 5 years

7. Satellites have solar panels, like wings , which soak up light and heat from the sun, and turn them into electricity

Option draw satellite with wings

The electricity needed to power satellites is made by the ? ….solar panels / battery

Option - we see solar panels to capture energy from the sun on some houses - where would they be - on roof/ on front door

Now have a go : Present the lesson on satellites using choices and stencils/letterboard

There is lots to think about in this lesson .

Practise first with an imaginary student

Take your time

Explain to your child that you are learning too.

Set the table up to make it easy for yourself eg . child positioned where can’t just walk away if you are a little slow

Work on making your child successful - building self esteem and confidence

Think about :- Performance field, Prompts, Motor modelling, Tactile feedback

Module 4 - Common mistakes/problems when you start using stencils/boards

Please watch your video and look to see if you make any of these mistakes . Remember this is a skill development process for you as well as for your child!

Holding stencil too high - holding at child's eye level so child has to reach up to point to letters.

Not prompting enough - when you first begin you may need to prompt , prompt and prompt some more ! Remember you are not testing spelling ability or pointing ability . You are simply building pointing skills . You can show where the letter is by directly pointing to it yourself . You do not say 'middle row third letter' ! You can give verbal prompts - move to the top . You can give gestural or air prompts - wave your hand over the stencil to indicate the direction of the letter.

Not motor modelling - if the child cannot get to the letter they may need to know what it 'feels' like to make that movement . Just say let me show you how to touch the E - and hand over hand do it TWICE - this is how we touch the E , then immediately release your hand and quickly say now you touch it - giving lots of prompts .

Not removing pencil from students hand - initially it is best to do one letter at a time and remove the pencil after each letter . This gives the student a break and also gives you the opportunity to hand the pencil again when the hand/arm is in a good position .

Not repositioning - if the student has moved you may have to reposition the stencil/board . If he is inaccurate you can experiment by putting it in different positions - eg holding more vertical , or at an angle and lower.

Not giving tactile feedback - this is more important when the student is pointing to more than one letter at a time . a slight pushback on the stencil can help the student to initiate the movement to the next letter

'Helping' the student by moving the stencil - we all want our children to be successful - but moving the board does NOT HELP to develop the independent motor planning skills. Instead of moving the board, always increase your prompts .

Watch our short tutorial videos

How to spell responses on large stencils

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gvKz2YtxEw

Module 4 - Common mistakes/problems when you start using stencils/boards

How to prompt. Verbal and air prompts. When and how to motor model

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5zwn_13ad4

Prompting - when and how to reduce

https://youtu.be/OuKEnRzcoVw

Letterboard issues :Stabbing /slipping/wandering/light touches

https://youtu.be/dCxCovlv8-8

Problems sitting at the table, poor pencil grip, throwing the pencil

https://youtu.be/lggkOp-79sw

Student pokes thro lots of letters before getting to the right one

https://youtu.be/ekuq7apjbn4

Common mistakes people make – what you should NOT do.

https://youtu.be/FnwA1LYOQrk

Bad habits on the laminated board -eg. swiping

https://youtu.be/0akNMn3ttfU

Module 4 Quiz

Quiz: Adding Spellings into the Choices Lesson

1. After a student makes a choice, what is the next step in the lesson?
A. Ask a new question immediately
B. Begin spelling the key word using stencils or a letterboard
C. Move on to another story
D. Stop the activity and give praise only

---

2. How should the teacher introduce spelling with the stencils?
A. Ask the student to spell the whole word without guidance
B. Present one letter at a time with prompts and motor modelling if necessary
C. Write the word entirely on paper and ask the student to copy
D. Only ask the student to say the letters out loud

---

3. Why is it acceptable to be directive when asking the student to spell a word in RPM?
A. Because spelling practice is independent of open communication
B. Because the child already knows all the words
C. To make the lesson shorter
D. To test the student's memory

---

4. What is one way to adapt the lesson if the student cannot hold a pencil?
A. Skip spelling entirely
B. Use a full A-Z letterboard, multiple laminated boards, or a rolled letterboard for pointing
C. Only spell words verbally
D. Ask the student to guess letters without prompting

---

5. What is the overall purpose of adding spelling to the choices lesson?
A. To test reading and writing skills strictly
B. To practice independent pointing and reinforce the chosen key words without causing stress
C. To make the lesson more competitive
D. To reduce the discussion and reasoning aspects of the lesson

---

Answer Key

Module 4 Quiz

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **A**
4. **B**
5. **B**

Quiz: Understanding Performance Field

1. How should the performance field (letterboard/stencil) be positioned for optimal pointing?

A. Flat on the table immediately in front of the child
B. At a vertical angle so the child reaches forward using shoulder and elbow joints
C. Held at the child's eye level
D. On the floor next to the child

---

2. Why is it important to experiment with the stencil positioning?

A. To make the lesson look more professional
B. To find the position where the child can easily access all four corners and point accurately
C. To reduce the number of letters on the board
D. To make the child reach as high as possible

---

3. What is a common mistake when positioning the board?

A. Placing the board at a slight angle
B. Using a large stencil
C. Holding the board too high at eye level
D. Asking the child to touch multiple letters

---

4. How can you check if the board is correctly positioned at the start of a session?

A. Ask the child to touch the first and last letters only
B. Ask the child to point to letters in all four corners (e.g., A, E, U, Z)
C. Watch the child without giving any instructions
D. Place the pencil on the board and let the child move it

Module 4 Quiz

5. What is the long-term goal for the child regarding the performance field?
A. Always keep the board at a vertical angle
B. Be able to point to a flat surface and eventually a fixed position device
C. Never move the board during the session
D. Only practice on paper, not on a board

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **C**
4. **B**
5. **B**

Quiz: Prompting

1. What is the primary reason for providing prompts in RPM?
A. To test whether the child understands the answer
B. To help the child initiate a response when their body/brain cannot perform the action independently
C. To speed up the lesson and finish quickly
D. To show the child how smart the facilitator is

---

2. How should a facilitator treat the child's difficulty with pointing or spelling?
A. As a lack of understanding
B. As a physical disability rather than a mental one
C. As disinterest in the activity
D. As an inability to follow instructions

---

3. Which of the following is an example of an appropriate RPM prompt?
A. Physically moving the child's hand to the letter
B. Holding up the letterboard or stencil
C. Shaking the child to get attention
D. Nudging the child's elbow

Module 4 Quiz

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4. How should prompting change over time in RPM sessions?
A. Increase the number of prompts gradually
B. Maintain the same level of prompting throughout
C. Reduce prompts gradually to encourage independent responses
D. Eliminate verbal prompts immediately

---

5. Which of the following is a mistake to avoid when prompting?
A. Placing the pencil in the student's hand
B. Physically pushing or holding the child's arm to reach the letter
C. Using verbal prompts like "touch it"
D. Gesturing with an air prompt to indicate direction

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **C**
5. **B**

Quiz: Understanding Motor Modelling

1. What is the main purpose of motor modelling in RPM?
A. To test whether the child can guess the answer correctly
B. To help the child's body 'feel' and learn how to perform an action
C. To make the lesson faster
D. To allow the facilitator to demonstrate their skills

---

2. How many times should a facilitator model an action hand-over-hand before asking the child to do it independently?
A. Once
B. Twice

C. Three times
D. Until the child gets it right

---

3. When performing motor modelling, what should the facilitator do after modeling the action?
A. Continue holding the child's hand while they complete the task
B. Immediately remove their hand and prompt the child to do it independently
C. Stop the lesson and move on to a new activity
D. Repeat the modeling several more times without independent practice

---

4. What belief should a facilitator maintain when a child cannot perform an action?
A. The child does not understand and needs more explanation
B. The child cognitively understands, but the brain and body are not yet cooperating
C. The child is refusing to participate
D. The action is too advanced and should be skipped

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **B**

Quiz: Understanding Tactile Feedback

1. What is tactile feedback in the context of RPM lessons?
A. A verbal explanation of the letter
B. Feeling the physical sensation when interacting with the stencil or letterboard
C. Watching the teacher point to letters
D. Listening to the sound of the pencil

---

2. How can a facilitator increase tactile feedback when a student is pushing a pencil through a stencil?
A. Move the stencil away from the student

Module 4 Quiz

B. Flick the stencil inward using the facilitator's wrist after the student touches the letter
C. Tell the student verbally that they have completed the letter
D. Ignore the movement and continue

---

3. Why is it important for the stencil or laminated letterboard to be stiff or rigid?
A. So it looks more professional
B. To allow the pushback technique to give tactile feedback
C. To make it easier to store
D. To prevent students from touching it

---

4. What is an alternative method to provide tactile feedback on a laminated letterboard?
A. Use rolled-up tape on letters
B. Speak loudly while pointing
C. Only use verbal prompts
D. Rotate the board randomly

---

5. What is the main purpose of tactile feedback for students?
A. To make lessons longer
B. To help students know they have selected a letter correctly and develop accuracy
C. To distract the student
D. To replace verbal instruction

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **A**
5. **B**

Quiz: Common Mistakes with Stencils and Letterboards

Module 4 Quiz

1. What should you do if the child cannot reach or point to a letter?

A. Move the stencil for them
B. Tell them the letter verbally and move on
C. Motor model the action hand-over-hand twice, then have them try independently
D. Stop the lesson

---

3. Why is it important to remove the pencil from the student's hand after each letter?

A. To prevent the pencil from being lost
B. To give the student a break and allow proper positioning for the next letter
C. To teach the child to hold multiple pencils
D. To make the lesson longer

---

4. What is an example of an appropriate verbal or gestural "prompt" when using a stencil?

A. Say 'one off' as the child moves to touch the adjacent letter
B. Move the stencil closer for the child
C. Say "middle row, third letter"
D. Ignore the child's hand movements

---

5. Why should you not move the stencil for the student?

A. It creates reliance and does not help develop independent motor planning
B. The board may fall
C. The child will learn faster
D. It makes the lesson shorter

Answer Key

1. **C**
2. **B**
3. **A**
4. **A**

Module 5 Spelling Lessons (no choices)

Module 5 - Creating and delivering lessons with no choices - just spellings

When to begin with spelling key words (no choices)

How to amend /create lesson in this format - Satellites

Common mistakes/problems

Practise opportunities

Nelson Mandela lesson creation

Module 5 :Creating a lesson - just using spellings

When you should leave out choices and go straight to spellings

If you struggle with choices /accuracy of answers and are unable to get to see a practitioner it is better to go straight to spelling responses on the stencil and build up the pointing skills that way

If your child has echolalia it is better to go straight to spellings as they have a hard wired response which is to repeat the last word - so will habitually choose the last word.

If your child is very anxious it is better to go straight to spellings - watch this short video of Soma explaining why https://youtu.be/_6ezLxP7bJ8

You will be able to come back to choices later so it is not a bad thing to start this way .

Watch the short tutorial video:

How to get started when no success with written choices- how to go straight to spelling on stencils

https://youtu.be/IKEuKsqu63g

Basically you will be reading out a **short statement** and picking a key word to practise spelling. The tricky thing is to keep the session discussive so it does not appear like one long comprehension and spelling test . So try to add variety, make it discussive and do not always just say ‘Spell x’.

In the adaptations of RPM you may see lessons which have a long paragraph of information and then questions which seem to test recall /or assume the student is able to recall the facts. There is also the assumption that students already know how to spell so they do not teach the phonetics.

I recommend that if you use these lessons you spend time adapting/writing them into an RPM format which is discussive and has a see-saw of interaction between the teacher and the student.

Module 5 :Creating a lesson - just using spellings

For practice we will look at the previous lesson - The Hare and the Tortoise and show how this can be adapted .

In the lesson plan below I have included additional notes about how to present the lesson. I suggest that you read it out loud and deliver it to an imaginary student - then see if you can finish the lesson in your own words.

The Hare and the Tortoise

State and write key words :

1. We are going to look at a type of STORY called a FABLE (spell the word as you write it) f-a-b-l-e.

Spell :Lets practise spelling fable on here (use large stencils/A-Z or letterboard as appropriate - hold in performance field and give lots of prompts, one letter at a time - write the letter after he has pointed)
Fuh for fable
A for able
B for ble
L for le
And finally E

2. A fable is a short story which has a MORAL m-o-r-a-l (means learning point or lesson)

Ask/spell : So the learning point or lesson in a fable is called the... ? let's answer this together - the first letter is M for moral -i ll touch it , then your turn O for oral , my turn R for ral , your turn A for al , and i'll finish L

3. Fables are especially appealing to CHILDREN c-h-i-l-d-r-e-n- as they use ANIMALS as the characters and they are able to TALK

Ask/spell :who do you think would most like to hear a fable? Take a guess - an ADULT or a CHILD ? You can try this choice on the stencil - would it be A for adult or C for child . Yes, C then H then I then L then D .

Module 5 :Creating a lesson - just using spellings

4. This fable is called The Hare and the Tortoise . It has a HARE (who can run very FAST) and a TORTOISE (who moves very SLOWLY).

Show printed pictures of a hare and a tortoise both on one a4 sheet - hold up at an angle and ask student to touch/point to the animals. Optional - hand over hand label then H and T , discuss the pictures - hare long powerful legs good for running - compare to tortoise

Ask/spell : if a hare runs fast and a tortoise is slow, you would imagine that the hare would win a race. Let's spell FAST

Well let's see what happens in the fable ….

5. One day a Hare was making FUN of the Tortoise for being so slow.

"Do you ever get anywhere?" he asked with a mocking LAUGH.

Spell ;let's spell FUN … and just for practise we will spell LAUGH- as it's a very strange spelling so we need to learn and practise it.

6. "Yes," replied the Tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. I'll run you a RACE and prove it."

Discuss : some people love racing - they are competitive and like to win. Mention any races which student may be aware of eg. olympics

Spell - the tortoise said he was going to win the .. ? hold up the stencil - if necessary prompt and say find the R,, A C E

Now try and carry creating the lesson yourself

7. The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the FOX who had consented to act as JUDGE, marked the distance and started the runners off.

8. The Hare was soon far out of sight, and to make the Tortoise feel how RIDICULOUS it was for him to try a race with a Hare, he lay down beside the course to take a NAP until the Tortoise should catch up.

9. The Tortoise meanwhile kept going SLOWLY but steadily, and, after a while, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping.

10. The Hare slept on very PEACEFULLY and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the END. The Hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

Module 5 -Example lesson - just spellings

Look back at the lesson plan on Satellites from module 4.

This is how you could deliver it without using choices (highlighted words are those you would write as you talk)

Have a practice at presenting this session. Try to keep the session discussive and personalise it - add in personal comments 'I found this interesting ' , did you know ..etc
Remember to use one 'shared' pencil and remove it after the child has pointed
Include joint actions eg. drawing circles for orbits, lines to show message transmissions. You can also show pictures

Satellites lesson plan - just spellings on stencils

Satellites

We are talking about - let's spell it on here …. SA -TELL -ITES

What is a satellite?

1, A satellite is any object which orbits (travels round and round) the earth .

Draw circle for earth then hand over hand draw circles around to demonstrate orbits - or hold up pencil - take students hand to circle it

Our planet is called earth , Let's spell EARTH

2. The earth's natural satellite is the moon .

I said the moon is what type of satellite? .. a NATURAL satelitte

When something is natural it has been created by nature not by man

Option - make a table 2 columns natural /man made - ask a few questions and make a list

Module 5 -Example lesson - just spellings

Eg. a flower is …..natural spell NATURAL

but this table is man made, and chairs would be MAN MADE

And the moon is natural . Just for the sake of it Spell MOON

Now let's finish this sentence .. the moon orbits the (I'll start it) .. E ARTH

3. The first man- made satellite was Sputnik1, which was launched in 1957.

In 1957 the name of the satellite which was launched was Sputnik1

Just for fun let's spell SPUTNIK and lets find 1957 on here (number stencil)

From the name , I m sure you can guess that sputnik was … Russian - lets practice RUSSIAN

Option - i happen to know that Sputnik 1 was a round satellite the size of a beach ball = let's draw a ball .

What do satellites do

4. Satellites do lots of jobs .

Some take pictures of earth to tell us about the weather or to spy on other countries

An example of something a satellite does is to tell us about the weather by taking... pictures
Spell PICTURE

5. Communications satellites bounce television and telephone signals back to earth

Draw simple diagram - satellite - earth -tv broadcast station - home tv - when we watch some tv channels the signals are sent to us via satellite (student can help you draw the connecting lines - hand over hand if necessary)

A communications satellite sends ? TV signals

Yes the signals are bounced back to earth . Something else that bounces would be a ball

Spell BALL

How do satellites use the sun

6. Satellites can carry on working for a long time because the sun gives them energy .

satellites get energy from …. Sun
Spell SUN , spell ENERGY

When I say a long time in this context that would mean years rather than weeks . Long time would be YEARS

7. Satellites have solar panels, like wings , which soak up light and heat from the sun, and turn them into electricity

Option draw satellite with wings

The electricity needed to power satellites is made by the what panels ? …SOLAR panels

Option - we often see solar panels to capture energy from the sun on the top of some houses - we can have a look as we walk around our neighbourhood - where would the panels be - on ? TOP - yes on the roof - lets practise ROOF

Module 5 - Spelling lessons - no choices

Common mistakes /problems when you start using stencils/letterboard for spelling lessons :

Student needs to build confidence so you need to make them successful -

Positioning of stencil; holding stencil too high or directly in front of student

Lack of tactile feedback

Not prompting enough - verbal and air

Not removing pencil

Not writing down the letters as the student points

Not repositioning stencil into students performance field

Not motor modelling if student is struggling

Teacher moving the stencil instead of teaching the skill of pointing to the letter

Not making session discussive/joint - robotic spell this /that - spelling test

Student moves away /not engaged as has to listen to large chunks of information

Rewatch learning videos now - when and how to prompt
https://youtu.be/OuKEnRzcoVw

Module 5 - Spelling Practise Opportunities without preparation

Simple lessons

If you haven' t prepared but want to have a short practice you can use your existing knowledge to create **simple factual lessons** , writing the key points on your clipboard and spelling out the key words as you go along . You would obviously tailor this to your child's age , but can expand and lengthen very easily

Let's look around the room - what can we see - I see a table TABLE, let's talk about it, - 1. it is made from wood, WOOD wood comes from ? TREES if you look you can see the grain . Many different types of trees - examples used for furniture are PINE and OAK . Can you think of any other things which are made from wood - (point to door) DOORS , CHAIRS etc

2. this table has how many legs - 4 LEGS , something else which has 4 legs - animal DOG, HORSE, CAT

3. this table is a RECTANGLE shape . let's draw a rectangle. Something else which is a rectangle is a (look around room) ... DOOR, BOOK. PICTURE, IPAD, TV . Notice a rectangle has 4 CORNERS which are all the same - they are called RIGHT ANGLES. Another shape which is similar is a SQUARE - this has SIDES which are all the same length.

4. Can you think of any other shapes ? (draw them and discuss) CIRCLE , OVAL, TRIANGLE . point to items of those shapes eg. CUPS, PLANT POTS. PLATES

Fun practise opportunities

This is a chance for you to practise using the stencils . Be careful that this does not become a spelling test - you are not testing spelling ability, you are building skills - yours and your child's .

Have a clip board /paper and try to make it into a joint activity - a kind of game you are playing together, so you can take turns.

I spy something beginning with... things in the room which you can see

Let's think of as many words as we can which end in AT , ANT , ART etc

Word puzzles - have some jumbled letters which you make words from

Module 5 - Spelling Practise Opportunities without preparation

Create lists of groups - give clues /take turns eg. colours , clothes, animals , weather, fruits, family members/relatives etc

Teach and play opposites - opposite of down is ...etc

Read a short story/book/poem - practise key words as you do it

Module 5 - Nelson Mandella lesson

These facts are taken from BBC bitesize . Have a go at making your own lesson plan using just spellings as responses.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zjkj382/articles/zj3p8xs

Nelson Mandela was a famous leader. A man who went from being a prisoner to a President and became an inspiration to people all over the world!

Mandela was born in 1918 in South Africa.

Most South Africans were black but some were white, Asian or mixed race.

White people were in charge of the government and set up an unfair system of laws called Apartheid.

Apartheid meant that white and black people led separate lives.

They couldn't marry or even eat together and the lives of white people were much better.

Black people couldn't change things because they weren’t allowed to vote.

Mandela thought Apartheid was wrong.

He joined a group who wanted to end it.

At first he tried to persuade the government with peaceful protests.

When this didn't work, he used violence.

He blew up things like electricity pylons and buildings. But he didn't want to hurt people so did this at night.

In 1962, Mandela went to jail for almost 30 years. He was in three different prisons for 27 years in total. The most famous one is Robben Island, where he spent 18 years

There were protests against Apartheid and calls for his release around the world.

In 1990, Nelson Mandela was set free.

"Today the majority of South Africans, black and white, recognise that Apartheid has no future."

The South African government listened and they got rid of Apartheid!

When he left prison he was not angry, instead he worked to bring peace and friendship between white and black people.

In 1994, aged 77 he became the first black President of South Africa. He worked hard to bring all South Africans of all skin colours together.

Module 5 - Nelson Mandella lesson

Nelson Mandela died in 2013, aged 95.

Over his long life, he changed a nation and helped people all around the world understand that everyone should be treated the same.

Module 5 Quiz

Quiz: When to Go Straight to Spelling

1. Why might you start with spelling instead of choices for some children?
A. To save time during the session
B. Because choices are always too difficult
C. If the child struggles with choices or accuracy, or cannot see a practitioner
D. To make the lesson shorter

---

2. Why is it recommended to go straight to spelling with children who have echolalia?
A. They enjoy spelling more than making choices
B. They habitually repeat the last word, which can interfere with choice accuracy
C. They cannot see the letters clearly
D. They do not understand spoken words

---

3. How should you keep spelling lessons engaging when leaving out choices?
A. By reading a long paragraph and testing recall
B. By keeping the lesson discussive and adding variety instead of just saying “Spell X”
C. By only focusing on one key word for the whole session
D. By using a single fixed order of letters

---

4. What is a key benefit of starting with spellings before choices?
A. It replaces the need for choice-based lessons entirely
B. It builds up pointing and spelling skills first, allowing a return to choices later
C. It tests the student’s memory of facts
D. It avoids having to use tactile feedback

Answer Key

1. **C**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **B**

Quiz: Common Mistakes in Stencil/Letterboard Spelling Lessons

Module 5 Quiz

1. Why is the positioning of the stencil important?
A. To make the lesson look neat
B. So the child can reach all letters comfortably and access their performance field
C. To reduce the number of letters used
D. To prevent the teacher from moving

---

2. Which of the following is a mistake when giving spelling lessons with a stencil?
A. Using tactile feedback to guide the student
B. Handing the pencil to the student and removing it after each letter
C. Moving the stencil for the student instead of prompting or motor modelling
D. Giving verbal and air prompts

---

3. What happens if you do not prompt enough during spelling lessons?
A. The child becomes too confident
B. The child may struggle to initiate pointing and feel frustrated
C. The child will spell faster
D. The lesson becomes more engaging

---

4. Why is it important to write down the letters as the student points?
A. To make the teacher's handwriting neat
B. To provide a record and reinforce the student's learning
C. To take up more time in the session
D. To show off the lesson plan

---

5. Which of the following can reduce engagement during a spelling lesson?
A. Making the session joint and discussive
B. Using small chunks of information with prompts
C. Presenting long paragraphs then asking questions
D. Providing tactile feedback and motor modelling

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **C**
3. **B**
4. **B**

Module 5 Quiz

5. **C**

Quiz: Creating Simple Lessons and Practice Opportunities

1. What is the main purpose of simple practice lessons around the room?
A. To test your child's spelling ability
B. To build skills for both the facilitator and the child using everyday objects
C. To complete formal curriculum requirements
D. To keep the child quiet

---

2. When discussing objects in the room, what is a good way to expand learning?
A. Only name the object
B. Talk about its material, count, shape, and other related items
C. Ignore shapes and focus on spelling only
D. Let the child memorize the words silently

---

3. Which of the following is a recommended fun practice activity?
A. I spy something beginning with…
B. Long formal reading comprehension exercises
C. Testing spelling without discussion
D. Giving only multiple-choice worksheets

---

4. Why should spelling with stencils be treated as a joint activity?
A. To turn it into a competitive test
B. To build skills and engagement
C. To make sure the child learns the alphabet perfectly
D. To make lessons longer and more formal

---

5. Which type of activities can you include to extend vocabulary and reasoning skills?
A. Word puzzles, making lists of groups (colours, animals), teaching opposites
B. Only reciting words in alphabetical order
C. Only spelling random letters without context
D. Only reading silently without interaction

Answer Key

Module 5 Quiz

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **A**
4. **B**
5. **A**

Module 6 Improving Effectiveness of Lessons

Module 6 - How to make your lessons more effective

Sensory activities

Tiger lesson created from from video

Mozart lesson created from text

How to analyse your sessions

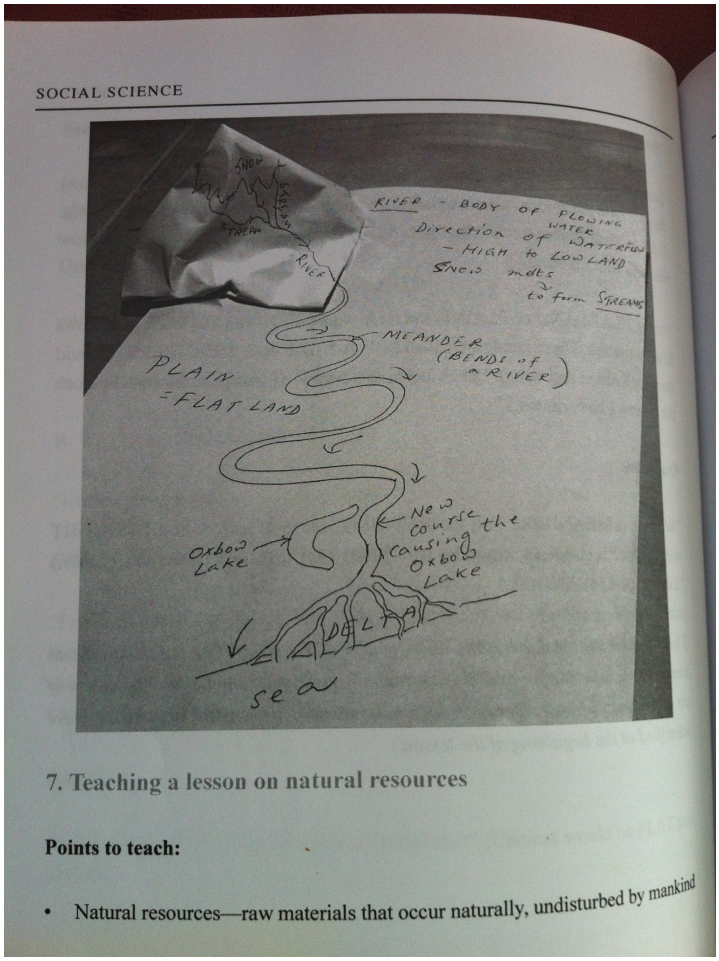
How to build skills .eg. move from stencil to laminated letterboard

Tutorial videos Sue and Alex - complete list

Understanding Sensory Activities

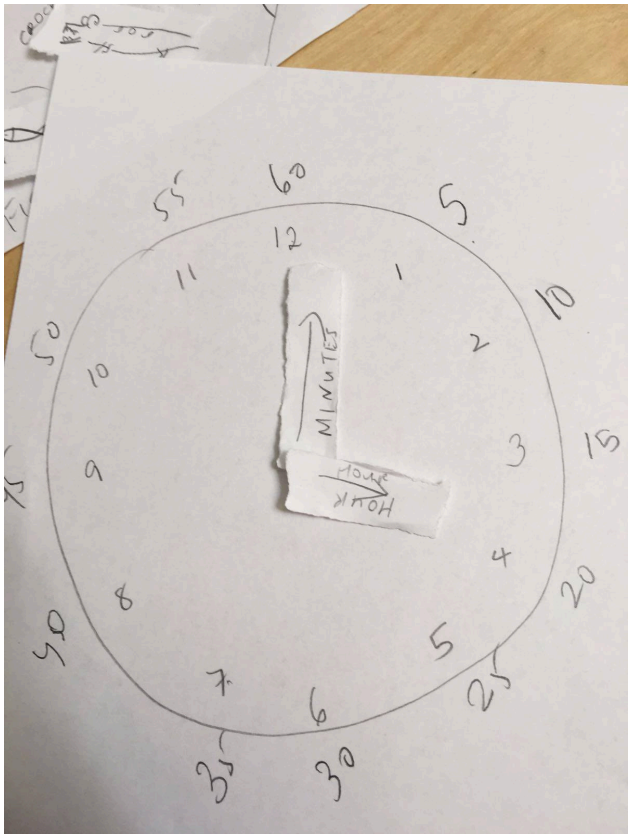
Sensory activities are used to engage and involve the student - enhancing your RPM lessons. They can include simple drawings, handwriting, showing pictures , models.

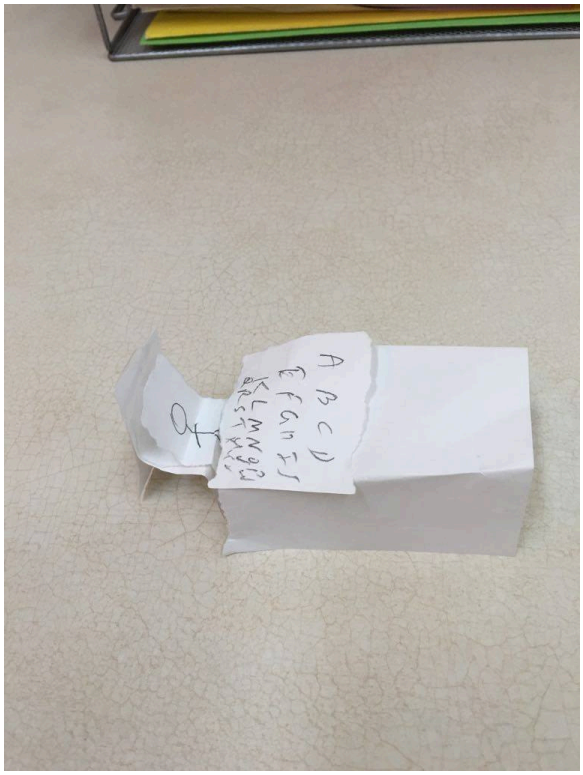
Anyone who has attended one of Soma's workshops will have seen how creative she is using paper to make models etc - it involves the students more , engages their learning channels and it is more effective than, for example, just showing a pre-printed picture. My favourite example is the picture from her orange book (river), and here are some others:-a science lesson (stairs v slope) , a labyrinth,a clock. Soma also uses the paper to help overcome challenges eg. a model man with a letterboard for a student who was very resistant to pointing on the board - Mr Role Model, a paper mask for herself when a student did not want to see her face .






STOP
Start


MINUTES
HOUR



Module 6 - Creating a lesson from a video - Tigers

How to create more in-depth lesson plans

Here we will look at how to take a piece of text or a video , split it into key facts and decide how to deliver it as a lesson .

As you build your students' tolerance you will be able to deliver longer lessons.

It is a good idea to create numbered lesson points and to have 2 columns .
Left column = the lesson point , right column = additions / expansion/discussion points, pictures, sensory activities. This enables you to be flexible during the lesson and to keep track of where you are upto.

When creating a new lesson, even before getting into the content I always look at the title and ask myself some questions :-
What do I already know about this topic / what may my child already know about this topic. What would I want to learn /what questions would I want to find answers to.

Then as I am looking at the key points I keep thinking in this way - sometimes it will lead me to google a bit more information .

Then as I am planning the lesson I am thinking about the variety of responses/ways to engage my son - eg. sometimes spelling responses on letterboard, sometimes having a try at handwriting, sometimes reading large font text , sometimes looking at a diagram/picture or jointly creating a diagram, sometimes making a paper model

It is important to be disciplined - not to spend hours and hours planning one lesson. Make a decision on a topic , find a resource and get on with the plan . Over time it will become a lot easier . Now I am able to do many lessons without a detailed plan eg. from an article/feature- but I still find that when I have spent time creating a detailed plan the lesson is much more effective so at least once a week I aim to create a detailed lesson plan.

Tigers Lesson plan

Module 6 - Creating a lesson from a video - Tigers

In this example I ‘ve used a youtube channel called free school to get the information and the topic - I chose tigers. https://youtu.be/jEQaRY4YpVo

I watched the video - pausing it to make notes and highlight key words -which are in the left hand column . The highlighted words are those which I will use for choices / spelling practise. I spent time thinking about expansion points , how to make the lesson more discussive and noted sensory activities to be included. I prepared this plan when my son was able to openly communicate so you will see that the communication objectives at the end would not be appropriate for a student who is not yet accurate. I think it is good to start to think about this now - ready for the future and you could share any ideas that you have with your child.

Here I discuss the first 4 lesson points .

https://youtu.be/qHbJqiY76-Q

Please now have a look at the plan and note your own ideas about how you could expand on the other lesson points.

Then have a look at my ideas

https://youtu.be/EeiF9jkShYc

Tigers	
1. Easily recognisable by black and orange stripes	Show picture of tiger - what stands out . you’d recognise by it’s? spots/stripes Any other animals with stripes ? zebra/ cow
2. Largest species of cat on earth Male reach length of 11feet (3.3 metres) Weight 660llbs 300kg	What is a species?- common characteristics . Can you name another type of cat - found in the wild (lion, leopard, lynx, cheetah) Give context eg room size

	Domestic cat = 3.5 kg -tigers nearly 100 times more
3. They are mammals :- Warm blooded Covered in fur Feed their babies milk Have a backbone *(i added this point)*	Feel our skin - warm - we are mammal Fur - or hair - show our skin Like humans Feel backbone Other mammals - eg dogs
4. They are carnivores:- Eat meat	Eat Vegetables = vegetarians - elephants, giraffes
5. Apex predators Top of the food chain (no other animals hunt them – except humans)	Eg . of others great white shark, salt water crocodile , lions . What is a food chain?
6. Hunt by night , travel many miles to find buffalo, deer, wild pigs and other large mammals May eat smaller mammals – monkeys, wild boar, lizzards, porcupines	Why by night ? easier to stalk prey . night vision 6 times better than humans . Others with good night vision ? Owl, foxes - nocturnal
7. Powerful and fast over short distances but cannot outrun fast animals like deer over long distances – so instead they stalk their prey relying on stealth to get close enough to attack from behind	Speeds upto 50 mph , can jump 30 feet (this house) Stalk - follow . Attack very quickly - cat -like reflexes watch cat in garden - sensory activity- fingers

	When we need cat like reflexes - eg playing snap
8. Native to Asia :_ India, China, Bhutan Siberia	Show map
9. Variety of habitats – jungles, swamps, snowy pineforests, grasslands Need Places to hide, plenty of water and food (animals to eat)	Habitat = where you live So both hot and cold climates . If hot swim to cool down -
10. Unlike lions who live together in prides , tigers live alone except when mother has cubs - live together 2 years	Any other animals who have cubs - lion, wolf, fox
11. Tiger can purr like pet cats , but they can also roar – can be heard more than one mile (2Km)away	Roar to mark out territory -also roar at a frequency which humans can't hear (may look like a yawn) Katie Perry song roar Eye of the tiger song -in the wild, seeing the "eyes" of the tiger **signifies death**, because right before a tiger attacks, it turns its ears forward so that the spot on the back of each ear faces nearer its prey. The "eye spots" on the back of a tiger's ear serve to confuse predators and reduce the risk of attack from behind.
12. Love water (unusual for cat species) – go swimming to cool off	

13. They are endangered – only 3-4 thousand remain on earth . 100 years ago more than 100,000	Possible lesson starter Endangered means -may become extinct.
14. Why decline? Hunted by humans for their fur or if they get too close to villages	
15. Habitat being destroyed by humans for cities and farms – need a lot of wild land to live in and hunt	
16. People working hard to save tigers from extinction by protecting them from poachers, increasing and improving their habitats, and teaching people how to avoid conflicts with tigers	Communication objectives : Your ideas of how to protect tigers .Short feature for magazine . Poster Day in the life of a tiger Key words from lesson - habitat , food, destroy, - what comes to mind Acrostic poem TIGER Future lessons - William blake Tyger

This information was obtained from an internet search. You will see that there is a lot of factual information. I have converted it into a lesson plan in the notes which follow.

Mozart lesson information

Would you like to travel the world playing music? Well, that's exactly what the 18th century Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart did when he was just a child! Mozart's musical career began at the age of six, and he is known as one of the greatest composers of all time. Wolfgang was born in Salzburg, Austria in 1747 and was the son of another musician, Leopold, who taught him how to play the violin, organ and harpsichord (an instrument with a keyboard; a bit like a piano). Leopold quickly realised that Wolfgang and his older sister Nannerl were unusually talented. So, in 1762 (when Wolfgang was just six years old!), he started taking them on tours to play for some of the richest people in Europe. Everybody the young siblings* met, including the Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, Maximillian Joseph, was amazed by these musical children. Wolfgang wrote his first piece of music when he was only 8 years old. He was in Paris in France and he'd just given a concert for King Louis XV. The piece was called "Sonata in C for Keyboard and Violin". A sonata is a composition in three or four movements* (much longer than your average pop song!), often for an instrumental soloist (a musician playing on their own). This alone would be an amazing achievement for an 8-year-old. However, later that year, after Wolfgang had moved to London in England for the next leg of his tour, he wrote a whole symphony! A symphony is a composition for a full orchestra, also written in three or four movements; an orchestra is a large group of people who play different instruments together as a big band! Wolfgang continued to visit other European countries throughout his childhood. From the age of 13, he was chosen to be Concert Master for the Prince Archbishop n Salzburg. This meant composing for and conducting the Prince's court orchestra. Imagine that, Mozart was only a few years older than you are when he was composing for the royal court; it would be like you writing music for the Queen a few years from now! When Wolfgang was in his early 20s, he moved to Vienna. There, he wrote some of his most famous pieces of music: the "Symphony No. 41", the "Mass in C minor", and the operas "The

Marriage of Figaro" and "Don Giovanni". An opera is a drama, a bit like a play, but set to music and sung instead of spoken. He also met and married the opera singer Constanze Weber, and they had six children together. Although he sometimes struggled with money, incredibly, he managed to support himself and his family almost entirely by writing music. He had many wealthy patrons, who were people with lots of money who paid Mozart for music that was dedicated to them. Wolfgang died young, aged only 35, and nobody is sure quite what he died of. He passed away before he was able to finish one of his most famous compositions: the "Requiem". A requiem is a piece of music for a choir – a group of singers – and orchestra, that is associated with funerals and death. It is fitting, therefore, that this was his last composition before he died.

Mozart lesson plan

The lesson plan is written up with lesson points on the left hand side and questions/interactions around each point on the right .

We each develop styles which work for us and over time/with practice you will reduce the notes needed for each lesson .

Having the lesson points numbered helps the teacher to keep track - and makes it easier to keep the lesson moving . If you have the whole lesson written longhand you have to keep looking back through it to see where you were upto .

Unless there is a really easy piece of text which I can cut and paste into this format I prefer to handwrite my lesson plans - using block caps, different coloured pens / highlighters etc. It takes me much longer to type up a lesson plan - and if I am only going to use it once it is not really worth the effort .

Key point = write plans in a format which works for you - they can look messy - but if you understand them it's fine .

Would you like to travel the world playing music? 1. Well, that's what the 18th century AUSTRIAn composer Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART did when he was just a child!	Talking about Wolfgang Amadeus ? . Mozart/ Jones spell MOZART show picture From which country ? France/Austria spell AUSTRIA Map of Europe – point to some of the countries, find Austria
2. Mozart's MUSICAL CAREER began at the age of SIX, and he is known as one of the greatest COMPOSERS of all time.	A career is – what do u think ? hobby / Paid work spell CAREER His career was a composer - means ?Writing music / singing songs , spell MUSIC.He began as a child – how old was he 20/6 let's find number 6 on here.

3. Wolfgang was born in SALZBURG, Austria in 1747 and was the SON of another MUSICIAN, Leopold, who taught him how to play the VIOLIN, ORGAN AND HARPSICHORD (an instrument with a keyboard; a bit like a piano). 4. Leopold quickly realised that Wolfgang and his older sister Nannerl were unusually TALENTED. So, in 1762 (when Wolfgang was just six years old!), he started taking them on TOURS to play for some of the richest people in Europe.	Let's find Salzburg on the map – draw a line – label it M for Mozart Mozart's father, Leopold, was a ? Painter/<u>musician</u> Show pictures of violin, organ and harpsichord – point to the organ Would you say a harpsichord is most like a ? <u>Piano/</u> drum Would you say a talented person is someone who is <u>naturally good</u> at something/ finds things difficult? Spell talent I wonder what you think – has everyone got a hidden talent which we just need to find / or is it just a few people who are talented ? Give

	examples of talented people – singers/footballer etc At age of 6 M was taken on a? Tour/holiday, spell tour . A bit like pop groups who go on tour nowadays- being paid to perform
5. Everybody the young SIBLINGS met, including the Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, Maximillian Joseph, was AMAZED by these musical children.	Is a sibling a brother/sister or cousin Give personal example eg . your sibling is ?? Everyone who saw them was ? Shocked/amazed, spell amaze
6. Wolfgang wrote his FIRST PIECE of music when he was only 8 YEARS OLD. He was in Paris in France and he'd just given a concert for King Louis XV. The piece was	First composition was called a ? Chorus/sonata spell sonata And written when only aged 8 –imagine that ! lets

called “SONATA IN C FOR KEYBOARD AND VIOLIN”.	find number 8 on the stencil .
7. A SONATA is a composition in THREE OR FOUR MOVEMENTS/SECTIONS (much longer than your average pop song.	Would you say that a sonata is? A short piece of music /<u>a long piece of music</u> Spell long
8. This alone would be an amazing achievement for an 8-year-old. However, LATER THAT YEAR, after Wolfgang had moved to London in England for the next leg of his tour, he wrote a whole SYMPHONY!	Lets just practise S-Y-M-P-H-O-N-Y Now take a guess do you think a symphony will be <u>longer</u> / shorter than a sonata
9. A symphony is a composition for a FULL ORCHESTRA, - a large group of people who play DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS together	Symphony is played by A single musician/<u>an orchestra</u> Lets think of an example of a musical instrument

	which may be played in an orchestra? Give clues and prompt …eg Tap table – this one begins with D, lets find the D , now the R .. do you think next letter would be U to make drum , or A to make drum
10.Wolfgang continued to visit other European countries throughout his childhood. From the AGE OF 13, he was chosen to be CONCERT MASTER FOR THE PRINCE ARCHBISHOP IN SALZBURG. This meant composing for and conducting the Prince's court orchestra. Imagine that, it would be like you writing music for the Queen!	Look at map – point to some European countries – comment – I'd love to go there etc. Remember Salzburg = birthplace we labelled One problem though with touring so much – being away from home , do you think it would be Hard/easy to maintain friendships.. Maybe music more important to him than friends. How old was he when given the job of concert master for the prince archbishop? 20/13 – lets find the 1 and the 3

11. When Wolfgang was in his early 20s, he moved to VIENNA. There, he wrote some of his most FAMOUS pieces of music: the "Symphony No. 41", the "Mass in C minor", and the OPERAS "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Don Giovanni".	Lets practise VIENNA and find Vienna on the map Famous means <u>well known</u> / insignificant
12. An opera is a drama, a bit like a PLAY, but SET TO MUSIC AND SUNG INSTEAD OF SPOKEN.	Spell OPERA An opera could be described as An old fashioned pop concert /<u>A musical play</u> All words are SUNG – lets spell it
13. He met and married the opera singer Constanze Weber, and they had SIX CHILDREN together. He managed to support himself and his family almost entirely by writing music. He had many wealthy PATRONS, who paid Mozart for	How many children ? <u>Six</u>/ three spell six Would you say a patron is someone who <u>helps to support you</u> / someone you pay money to

music that was dedicated to them. 14. Wolfgang DIED , AGED ONLY 35, and nobody is sure quite what he died of. He passed away before he was able to finish one of his most famous compositions: the "REQUIEM". 15. A requiem is a PIECE OF MUSIC FOR A CHOIR – A GROUP OF SINGERS – AND ORCHESTRA, that is associated with FUNERALS AND DEATH. It is fitting, therefore, that this was his last composition before he died.	died aged 35 – would you think this was <u>young</u>/old to die . spell young practise REQUIEM Requiem is for a single singer/<u>choir</u> And is associated with <u>funerals</u>/weddings Funerals are sad occasions when people say goodbye to loved ones – would you guess that a requiem would be fast paced or <u>slow</u>

Module 6- Analysing sessions

Importance of filming and analysing your sessions

You will only improve if you practise and are able to analyse your sessions . Have a look at the checklist which follows and watch your filmed session , then identify 2 things you want to focus on to improve your next session.

Do not expect to be perfect /not to make mistakes. You can teach your child a valuable lesson -'it's ok to make mistakes, we all learn from these . Most importantly be a good trier and keep learning and developing.

You could also schedule a zoom feedback with myself or another RPM provider .

I also found it a very useful discipline to write up notes from my session immediately afterwards including all Christopher's responses in capitals . This helped me to realise that sometimes I was doing too much talking - it also helped me to see that if Chris was getting restless I needed to respond more quickly by getting him to DO something - eg. spell a word.

Go back and re-read 'What an effective RPM should look like' from Module1then use this checklist to analyse you sessions

Analysing your early RPM sessions - checklist

- ☐ **educational topic and age appropriate**
- ☐ begins with **Teach or State /Ask**
- ☐ **write down and spell the key points**/words as said them
- ☐ **see-saw of interaction** between teacher and student **RIGHT FROM THE START**. **After EACH sentence** we prompt for the student to initiate a **response.**
- ☐ **variety of responses** (depending upon on skill of student) - so some paper choices/some spelling/ some discussion about the key words to check existing knowledge.
- ☐ **Choices (if used)** positioned correctly
- ☐ Stencils /letterboard in child's **performance field**
- ☐ **Pencil** handed/removed correctly
- ☐ **Motor modelling** used when needed
- ☐ **discussion/story style** –'now guess what?...' etc. **expanding on key words** from the sentence to check understanding or to use as a further teaching point .

eg. *if we say "long ago.." we may add in a question /choice – in this example "do you think we are talking about 5 years ago or 5000 years ago"*

- ☐ **sensory activities** to keep the student engaged and enhance learning– drawing, making paper models, showing diagrams/pictures etc
- ☐ build the students confidence and self esteem – ensuring early success by giving **verbal and air prompts** to help with known responses (answers)
- ☐ **specific praise** – *'see how well you do when you hold the pencil this way' instead of 'good job!'*
- ☐ adjust **speed/ tone/volume of voice** if the student is not engaging
- ☐ remain **calm and work through the behaviour /OCD / excitatory stims** to help the student to reach his maximum potential

Module 6 - List of short tutorial videos - Sue and Alex

Please revise by watching/rewatching these videos as appropriate and watch No 19 about analysing your sessions.

1- How to do written paper choices – basic principles

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slfnouqFqnE

2. How to spell responses on large stencils

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gvKz2YtxEw

3. Preparing an RPM session from a book – for beginners

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmGo0aWMHKI

4. What if my child just copies my written words:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv8Q_Y3SRGc

5. How to prompt. Verbal and air prompts. When and how to motor model

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5zwn_13ad4

6 .What do we mean by skill goals? examples

https://youtu.be/oFsSCrBBW6M

7. How to identify and work on skill goals

https://youtu.be/5dtW4AS_fL4

8. Prompting - when and how to reduce

https://youtu.be/OuKEnRzcoVw

9. How to be flexible with RPM topic if student has other interest

https://youtu.be/o0QMlWfTS9U

10. How to make lessons interesting

https://youtu.be/cD0qnLHZKEY

11. How to work with a child who moves around a lot

Module 6 - List of short tutorial videos - Sue and Alex

https://youtu.be/i1udMg5Zyws

12. Letterboard issues :Stabbing /slipping/wandering/light touches

https://youtu.be/dCxCovlv8-8

13. How to get your sessions 'moving' from the start

https://youtu.be/RGUyFvKxmJU

14. Personalising lessons to different students

https://youtu.be/cAQGHjFVh0s

15. Problems sitting at the table, poor pencil grip, throwing the pencil

https://youtu.be/IggkOp-79sw

16. Common mistakes people make – what you should NOT do.

https://youtu.be/FnwA1LYOQrk

17. Problems with accuracy of YES/NO responses

https://youtu.be/PmDvbGucix8

18. How to get started when no success with written choices- how to go straight to spelling on stencils

https://youtu.be/IKEuKsqu63g

19. Analysing an RPM session – NB . first watch this nonRPM clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGQmdoK_ZfY then watch our video link below

https://youtu.be/WT3a-p1nIMs

20. Why is my child successful with an RPM teacher but not with me?

https://youtu.be/ZRP6HhmIZJ0

21. Student pokes thro lots of letters before getting to the right one

https://youtu.be/ekuq7apjbn4

22. Bad habits on the laminated board -eg. swiping

Module 6 - List of short tutorial videos - Sue and Alex

https://youtu.be/0akNMn3ttfU

23. Skill development - where next when fluent on laminate – eg. do you aim for a 'held' device

https://youtu.be/sGnubcq5u8Y

24. 24. Verbal students -should you use voice output devices?

https://youtu.be/GVE56WIYFgM

Module 6 Quiz

Quiz: Understanding Sensory Activities

1. What is the main purpose of sensory activities in RPM lessons?
A. To replace spelling and choice lessons
B. To engage and involve the student through multiple learning channels
C. To make the lesson more challenging and formal
D. To reduce the facilitator's workload

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2. Which of the following is an example of a sensory activity?
A. Reading the information for the lesson
B. Making a model from paper to demonstrate a concept
C. Giving a multiple-choice worksheet
D. Reading silently without interaction

---

3. Why does Soma use creative paper models during lessons?
A. To avoid teaching spelling
B. To engage students learning channels and add variety to the lesson
C. To make the lesson longer
D. To show off artistic skills

---

4. Which of these is an example mentioned in the text of a sensory activity?
A. A clock made from paper
B. Writing letters on a whiteboard only
C. Flashcards without interaction
D. Spelling tests on paper

---

5. How do sensory activities affect student learning in RPM?
A. They make lessons less effective
B. They distract students from the main activity
C. They enhance engagement and effectiveness by involving multiple senses
D. They are only used for very young children

Answer Key

1. **B**

Module 6 Quiz

2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **A**
5. **C**

Quiz: Filming and Analysing RPM Sessions

1. Why is filming your RPM sessions important?
A. To create videos to share publicly
B. To analyse your own practice and identify areas for improvement
C. To avoid doing lesson planning
D. To test your child's memory

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2. According to the text, what should you do immediately after a session?
A. Put all materials away and take a break
B. Write up notes including the student's responses and any observations
C. Film the next session right away
D. Give the child a multiple-choice test

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3. What is a key benefit of writing notes after a session?
A. It replaces the need for prompts
B. It helps identify if the facilitator is talking too much or needs to adjust the pace
C. It ensures the session is a spelling test
D. It teaches the child to write faster

---

4. Which of the following should you look for when analysing your early RPM sessions?
A. Variety of responses, correct positioning of choices, and performance field setup
B. How quickly you finish the lesson
C. Whether the child memorised all facts
D. The number of pages covered in a book

---

5. How should the facilitator handle mistakes during a session?
A. Avoid mistakes at all costs
B. Model that mistakes are okay and learning comes from them
C. Stop the lesson immediately
D. Ignore the mistakes and continue without reflection

Module 6 Quiz

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **A**
5. **B**

Module 7 Open Communication

Module 7 - Building the skill of open communication

Steps towards open-ended communication during lessons

Why we don’t ask questions relating to Episodic Memory

Ensuring the responses are authentic:

Cautions re word prediction

Cautions re influencing

Module 7 - Moving towards open communication

Overview

First we build accuracy in pointing skills and tolerance using the teach/ask method. When pointing accuracy for known answers has been achieved on the full A_Z stencil or letterboard we can slowly we move towards open communication - ie. the student being able to express something which has not been stated in the lesson

We begin open communication with **ONE-WORD answers** and the only important thing is that the word is a REAL word. We want the person to be **successful** and **not to become disheartened** so we may initially give some directive help.

KEY POINT - WE NEED TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND SUCCESS SO WILL START WITH QUESTIONS WHERE POSSIBLE RESPONSES HAVE BEEN NARROWED DOWN . Some call this semi-open or emerging open communication.

Think of this first step towards open communication as **MAKING WORDS TOGETHER**.

Example : You can jointly create words beginning with a letter(s) at the end of the session eg. after session on poem Twinkle Twinkle Little Star :-
'Now we are going to make **three words beginning with ST**'.

Give prompts to help with the ST then keep thinking to yourself 'what next letter will make sense?' and give prompts to help as necessary – if the student is heading to the Z you could prompt them to the Y – then the word is STY. You may have 'forced' the word but you have stated that you are making words together so this is not a problem. This could be extended to some turn- taking - so prompt the student to point to ST then say 'my next letter would be I' (and prompt student to touch it) , then ask 'what could come after I – to make a word'. Be thinking in your head what the options could be eg . CK, FF, LL, M, NK, R, so if the student is hovering near those letters give verbal encouragement - yes that would be good . You would then begin to work on reducing prompts and seeing if the student can create words totally on his own.

More single word examples :

Single rhyming words - pick a few words from the session you have done - and ask for a rhyming word - keeping it very simple to begin with to maximise success. If you have talked about a cat , you could ask for a word that rhymes with CAT , explain it will end in AT .... you could hold up A-I board (or cover some of the letters on the full board)

- you know that he could choose B, F or H -- if he doesn't , just say oh GAT isn't a word, but look try the F - that makes FAT which does rhyme.

Single word answer - 'name a wild animal' give clues/co-ordinates eg. beginning with T,
Single word answer - fill in the blank / complete a sentence . the cat sat on the ___

Single word association . You can then move onto selecting a word from the lesson and asking ' any word that comes to mind when I say CAT.'? It is important that you accept any real word eg . if child points to SKY - 'oh yes that would be so funny seeing a cat in the sky'
After a session about the poem Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star ask 'what is the **first word that comes to mind** when you are thinking about a STAR'. Imagine the first letter the child shows is T – you may in your head guess that the word is going to be twinkle so the next letter will be W. If your child is heading to the R (which happens to be just above the W if you are on the full stencil/letterboard) you may be saying 'down , down' and giving air prompts towards the W and so leading to the word twinkle. It is quite possible though that the child initially did intend to touch R and may be thinking about the star on the top of a xmas TREE. So as long as it may lead to a real word I would always let the student carry on. You could always check through written choices – eg. ' i wasn't quite sure then whether you meant W or R '.

What to do if the word does not make sense?
If your child were to touch K as the second letter then you would simply say that this would not make a word/make sense and ask him to try again, maybe also confirming that he did want the T as the first letter. As soon as the word makes sense you give lots of encouragement and can prompt if the child gets stuck – 'yes that would make a great word' – even if the word seems unrelated to the topic eg. child points to T-A-B – 'oh i think TABLE would be a good word, let's finish it with the L and E . I'm thinking about when we drew a star sitting at this table. Maybe you remember it too! .' So you can see that the main focus here is on helping the child to be successful in creating a real word - building their self confidence !

If the student keeps hearing 'No that doesn't make sense ' repeatedly it will be demotivating and he will be less inclined to try. So just at this initial stage you may give more verbal and air prompts to 'force' a real word or you may say 'my turn' to give the next letter and create the word together. This may not be the word the student originally had in mind – but the success of being able to produce a word will outweigh this fact.

Module 7 - Moving towards open communication

There are many examples where you have to keep an open mind and can get unusual answers eg. you may ask about a colour and the student begins with a J which could be for JASMINE. Other unusual colors may be given eg. russet, copper, coral

Next stages of open communication

You will gradually request longer responses. eg where a single word response has been given you can ask to put it into a short phrase or sentence.

When a child is able to give single word/short phrase responses it is a great opportunity to show them that they can create a piece of work. Take a key word from the lesson and create an acrostic poem.

You could also create a short story/poem - where you take turns to each write a line .

During your lessons you will gradually ask for longer responses by wording your questions differently eg. by asking more ‘w’ questions - why, who, what, where, when and how.

Why do you think this is important
What would you be thinking if you were there
How would you have dealt with this situation

Then you can work towards longer outputs eg.a speech , a feature for a magazine , constructing arguments for and against . You will see that the communication here is related to the lesson.

Module 7 - Episodic Memory

What is episodic memory and why is it important

Episodic memory is real 'episodes' or events which have happened eg. what the student had to eat the previous night, where you went for a walk etc, . In RPM SESSIONS YOU SHOULD **NOT** BE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT EPISODIC MEMORY . This aspect of RPM can be very confusing to people - particularly when the student seems willing to chat .

Any discussions should RELATE TO THE TOPIC YOU HAVE TAUGHT in the session and the learning/ thoughts /opinions etc. related to that.

Why?

Our children's **SENSORY CHANNELS work DIFFERENTLY** – meaning that their memory of an event may be VERY different from ours.

Example of an altered sensory system:

Tito used to refuse to wear a certain coloured shirt – 'saying' it hurt him. Most people would say this is a behavioural issue – but Soma was able to have tests done where he was 'wired up' and when he touched this colour the part of his brain which activates when real pain is felt was activated – so to him it was REAL PAIN. Imagine how this could distort memories of events (episodic memory) eg. if a teacher at school asks you to wear a protective overall for art, which happens to be the colour blue, could be remembered as 'the teacher hurt me'.

Episodic memory is very different from cortical memory (being able to recall what has been learnt – facts etc) .

I have seen this many times with my own son – I got false yes/no answers when I asked about what he has done/where he has been and incorrect answers if I asked 'which horse did you ride today'. Equally sometimes I did get correct answers. The key point here is that you CANNOT RELY ON EPISODIC MEMORY WITHOUT CORROBORATION.

Soma has written about this

'When I was beginning my work - I did many experiments like retrieving memory - cortical memory (learned facts), episodic memory (including the sensory experiences).

Module 7 - Episodic Memory

The differences in the sensory experience (if there is selective visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic sensitivity) may lead to different episodic memory because of the selective experience.

Memory is not stored in one place - components of emotions, components of vision , auditory etc. and components of beliefs (every memory is further interpreted through our individual beliefs) are all stored in different places. When they have to be fetched - they are assembled in the hippocampus and then translated into words. If the sensory system begins with a varied sensory experience then the interpretation can be based upon the selectivity. Hence it is necessary to cross check any episodic memory.

Factual memory is different - one doesn't have to go through the selective sensory system. ‘
Often episodic memory can vary even for typical people from person to person. If we sat in a room and later each one had to recall what they remembered -
One would remember A, B, C of visual component,
M, N, O of auditory component;
Something from tactile component;
Something else from the kinesthetic component.
In people with autism - with a combination of either/and/or selective/global/generalized - Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic and Tactile open learning channels they 'experience' a whole different sensory 'feel' of a situation.

THERE IS A DANGER THAT SOMETIMES WHEN CHILDREN START USING OPEN COMMUNICATION WE FORGET THOSE SENSORY CHALLENGES AND BEGIN TO IGNORE THE SENSORY DIFFERENCES – ALLOWING THE CHILD TO TALK ABOUT EVENTS AND TAKING LITERALLY EVERYTHING THE CHILD SAYS AS EXACTLY HOW AN EVENT HAPPENED – when actually it will be their UNIQUE SELECTIVE MEMORY .

That is the reason we practice 'teaching' then ‘asking’. We get reliable answers to factual memory and open ended creative writing generated on the basis of factual memory (like a composition on importance of education etc.) or imagination (story/ poetry writing).
I know it is a little different. But autistic people may have an intact mind (no doubt) but the sensory difference makes them experience the world in a different way.’

Here are the links to the two clips of Soma discussing this issue:-
https://youtu.be/EkZQucqGuEY

Module 7 - Episodic Memory

https://youtu.be/bKO_in6aAgE

Just as an aside, I found this interesting article about memory and neurotypicals:-
MEMORY - NEUROTYPICALS

How aware are you of your surroundings? Could you accurately remember your surroundings in an emergency situation? According to researchers from Kent State and Harvard University, you may be less cognizant than you understand. Seventeen years ago, scientists singled out various people walking through the campus of a college to understand more about the types of detail that they noticed about the immediate surrounding area.

This experiment used actors who posed as people who were lost and asked for directions. As the person who was stopped gave the actor information, a large door made of wood carried by two people passed in between the actor and the person giving directions. This door blocked the view of the actor and the participant for more than two seconds. As this door blocked the view of the participant, the original actor would swap places with a new actor. But this new actor would have different physical characteristics—height, weight, voice, and clothing, among other features. Astoundingly, more than half of the participants didn't notice that the first actor was replaced by a completely different person.

In some scenarios, individuals may fail to perceive crucial changes to the world around them, especially if the switch occurs when the person involved in the scenario experiences a circumstance that impedes their vision. This particular study was able to show correctly how the phenomenon of "change blindness" worked in a real-life situation. Change blindness helps us understand how particular we are about the information that we receive from our immediate environment given what we see with our eyes. Moreover, these scientists were able to prove that **we tend to use what we think we can remember through pattern recognition to make sense of the world rather than use actual details, and that we make these errors much more frequently than we sometimes know (or care to admit).**

Module 7 - WORD PREDICTION - open communication

We must be extremely careful NOT to predict what our children are trying to ‘say’.

We all have a responsibility to make sure that any communication from them is indeed their words, not what we think they may want to say.

When they are able to openly communicate even if pointing is slow please allow them to finish.

RPM sessions and emerging open communication ,

We have previously discussed building confidence using single word responses .

When you progress to writing sentences which are expressing personal thoughts/opinions it becomes much more important to ensure that there is no doubt that the words are the students. It would be tedious to attempt lengthy open communication using the 3 boards , so in most cases it is better to work on accuracy of pointing first on the full A-Z stencil/letterboard using lots of teach/ask (with known answers) .

When the student is confident on the full stencil you can attempt more sentences– but be VERY CAREFUL to keep your mind clear and not to predict what he/she may want to say. Do NOT give verbal or air prompts to a letter unless there is **total certainty** about the next letter eg. the student has pointed to ABSOLUTEL –then breaks off - you know the next letter MUST be a Y so you may prompt by saying ‘and down for the Y’ .

During open communication the verbal prompts should be kept to ‘where?, ‘which one?, next?, keep going?,tell me more?

If during open communication things don't quite make sense you can either ask the student to go back to a previous word and start again from there , or tell the student that you aren't sure what he is saying but to carry on for a bit longer to see if you can figure it out.

Comments by other parents
‘My son has definitely proved me wrong. When I think I know what he is saying, I'm patient, and not often correct’

Module 7 - WORD PREDICTION - open communication

‘Great reminder! My son used typing and AAC via his iPad first, which had built in word prediction and auto correct. He was always (still tends to be) impulsive, so would hurry to select the words. It was suggested to me at a training I attended that we remove these and now that we have, accuracy has improved and we are headed towards more open communication. A few months later the school AAC specialist commented that she wished she had thought to remove these earlier’

‘Many times, my son uses words that I have not been sure of, typically it turns out that they are better words than I would have even thought of! Example, when discussing Grapes of Wrath he kept spelling TRAVAILS .... I asked him if he meant TRAVELS, again he spelled TRAVAILS. Turned out that TRAVAILS more accurately described what he was talking about - but I had to look up the definition in order to figure that out!! Staying open minded is so important when dealing with our kids!’

‘So true. The other day I was showing my son (6, using 3 stencils/rolled board) a picture in a story we were reading and asked him how the man felt. In the picture he was crying, mouth turned down, etc. I handed him the S-Z stencil and he chose U. I was trying to prompt him to touch S, because I was thinking obviously the man was sad. He touched U again and I prompted S again. He said "U! U! U for UPSET!!!" Oops.’

Module 7 - Influencing - open communication

Influencing can happen by you **moving /positioning the boards** and **prompting** in open communication. It is particularly important for you not to do this and not try to pre-think/predict what a response might be.

How and what you say, what questions you ask, your tone of voice and how you respond emotionally can all influence things. There are many subtle signs which your child may be picking up which you are unaware of eg. a slight nodding/movement of your head. Keeping a **neutral voice** and when things don't quite make sense being confident enough to **pause, verify or go back a word** or two will all help.

If your child **always** 'says' things which you already had in your mind and **never surprises you** with their output there is a big chance that you are **unintentionally influencing** their response. In this case go back to teach/ask for a while and then to single word open communication. Most importantly, video your sessions and seek feedback from a senior RPM teacher.

Factors to consider:

Your emotional response

Imagine you are doing some **creative writing** with your child – helping them to write a story. You may be quite **animated** – ooh that sounds exciting!,I love stories like this!, i wonder what happens next,... and may even lead the story –where did they go, what did they see etc. There is nothing wrong with this – it is encouraging and helping your child to think creatively.

HOWEVER if your child is **telling you something or expressing an opinion** it is important that you **remain very neutral** and do NOT do those things. So instead you would keep your focus on the work area , keep your **face /voice unemotional** and just say things like ... I see, any more? carry on, mmm, and? .
Imagine that your child points out ...I WANT TO DIE and breaks off - what would your reaction be? You must not make predictions/assumptions - so just say 'carry on, tell me more'.... it could turn out to be I WANT TO DIET, or a mis-spelt I WANT TO DIE MY HAIR.

Is the communication part of a lesson /is it an episodic memory question?

There have been instances where students have communicated things to teachers in school - many times the teacher is not doing an RPM lesson but instead holding the

board up for a chat. This is exerting an adult influence and expectation and can be dangerous as younger students in particular may feel pressured to say something - even if it is not true. Teachers need to be trained and skilled in RPM to know not to do this. I have heard of two cases - MY DAD HIT ME - teacher referred to social services - stressful home visits , interviews etc - mum told me dad had been teaching son to hit a ball with a tennis racket - maybe if the sentence had been finished it could have been WITH A TENNIS BALL

Are you helping your child to develop their own opinions which are independent from yours?

This applies to neurotypical development ' Children are not little adults. Until they reach the age of 15 or so they are not capable of reasoning as an adult'.

Why is this so important in RPM?

If you are asking for thoughts/opinions from your child you must be aware that the **outputs will be heavily influenced by what they have been exposed to.**

In the neurotypical 'world' the main influences in pre teen years will be parents (the child will have the same values/beliefs as parents and will not question), then during teenage years peers become more important (we see a strong need to conform with peer group, also rebellious teenagers and the emergence of questioning about things previously accepted). Then as we develop into adulthood we are able to form our own opinions based on logic and by selecting and weighing up information .

It is important to bear this in mind in RPM sessions. To help our children to develop their own thinking and reasoning skills we need to provide information/perspectives from different sources. Also we need to be aware of their age and understand that their views are likely to change as they develop. We must also remember that they will not have the same experiences of peer exposure during their teenage years – so may continue to be very heavily influenced by parents' views. Some children may ask us to share their writings/work and we need to consider very carefully whether this is a decision they are 'able' to make or whether they may be embarrassed or regret it in future.

The key point here is to **let our children be children, and let them make adult decisions when they are adults.**

I believe that we have a strong responsibility to educate and ensure that we help our children work to the 'adult' stage where they are able to form their own opinions and

where they feel able to disagree with the dominant adult's view. So to do this **consider how you present topics during your sessions, make sure you present different viewpoints and that you are teaching that it is ok to disagree**. Consider whether your child may be saying something to 'please' you or because he thinks it is the 'expected' response.

Comments that other parents have made about this:-

.....I think from an open communication standpoint that it is not the worst thing if the RPMer is not truthful all the time - it might be age appropriate. My daughter one time admitted to not telling the truth because she stated she didn't think we would be happy that she had eaten what she ate - and she was right

.... even neurotypicals can easily be influenced and want to 'please' . I can remember when a lot younger I would 'pretend' that I liked a certain band - just to fit in with the crowd. Exactly the same can apply to our children - they can respond in a way which they know will please the other person. We have to be so careful not to lead conversations!

....My son admitted that one time, he lied to me so I can feel sorry for him because he didn't want to do anything that day and he felt sometimes I push too much.

.....I think kids may spell/tell adults different things, sometimes geared towards what they think that particular adult may want to "hear." I also think parents and professionals have to be very careful about how questions are worded, because inadvertently, kids can be led towards an answer which may or may not reflect what the child would have said otherwise. That's part of why generalizing the skill of communicating with any person can be complicated. Sometimes adults misinterpret. Sometimes adults ask leading questions. Sometimes kids tell adults what they think adults want them to say. Sometimes kids lie. Sometimes unscrupulous adults over-predict or over-assume what they expect kids to say. Open-ended letter board use needs a lot of care, from both sides of the board.

....Yes It is so important to remain neutral and unemotional , to not interrupt or make assumptions. The focus must just be on helping the child get his/her words out. This happened recently with me and my son - I had to work really hard not to get emotionally involved/stop give him big hugs etc -- it was an emotional topic but I just carried on - no eye contact ,no questions, except 'any more?' etc,

....That is one reason why lessons are so important. It is easy to inadvertently lead kids on the boards, to make it clear what you want to "hear", to pepper their open ended responses with questions which may divert their communication in a different direction. RPM is not an interrogation method....it is an education and communication method. The kids' thoughts, opinions, interests will emerge in their creative writings and responses to questions in lessons. It is so important to be respectful of that process!

.....I've found that often my daughter uses double negatives or syntax which differs from expectation so if her sentence gets cut off before she's completed the thought, the entire meaning gets lost. It might be a question as simple as "do you want eggs or something else for breakfast". She might point "eggs" as her first word, but if allowed to continue, finish it in sentence "are not what I prefer to eat today." I think most people would stop at eggs and presume that to be her answer. But I've learned that most communication spelled she has to answer in full sentence.

....you can have fun during lessons but personal thoughts you have to be neutral. Soma told me if a child starts saying something personal and hesitates then you should stop. Hesitation could indicate a child is not clearly indicating their thoughts or doesn't really want to say what they're spelling. This same issue can happen with 'neurotypical' kids but something we should always be aware of. The other thing is students will talk differently with different people. If a student says very opposing ideas...perhaps they are just talking, but cross check. That's why it is best to stick to academics and let open ended come from the lesson.

...."RPM is not an interrogation method...it is an education and communication method. The thoughts, opinions, and interests will emerge in the creative writings and responses to questions in lessons."

.... This is a great reminder for me to watch my tone and body language. I do want to hear my son's true beliefs, not something he thinks I want to hear.

SOMA's COMMENTS:

‘ Many times when people forget the student's age / exposure to education and yet want them to be successful, they may place the board unintentionally at the probable answer without even realizing it. Many times it is questioned as mind reading. That is why a person 'trained' in RPM must resist the temptation to ask a student something that is not taught. We would like RPM to be realistic and not something unnatural.

..Like if a 12 year old student is over patronizing a teacher anyone can see that it is not natural or age appropriate to spend ten valuable minutes of session time in this praising.

..Again if a 12 year old has this extensive knowledge of calculus / religion without getting the right classes one may wonder about the unintentional influencing.

That is why once the student is fluent on the letter-board we try to move their skills towards holding the board themselves and spell.

The symbiosis (mutualism) of the process raises a lot of eyebrows and if communication is unrealistic people will not take RPM seriously. ‘

Module 7 Quiz

Quiz: Steps Towards Open Communication

1. What is the first step towards open communication in RPM?
A. Writing full sentences independently
B. Building accuracy in pointing skills and tolerance for known answers
C. Asking the student to create a story immediately
D. Skipping spelling practice

---

2. What is the focus when introducing one-word answers in early open communication?
A. The word must rhyme with other words in the lesson
B. The word must be a real word to ensure success
C. The word must be exactly what the facilitator expects
D. The word must be written on paper before pointing

---

3. What is "semi-open" or "emerging open communication"?
A. Asking the student to write paragraphs without help
B. Narrowing possible responses so the student can succeed while beginning to create words
C. Giving no guidance and expecting full independence
D. Using multiple-choice questions only

---

4. How can a facilitator help the student create a word together at the end of a session?
A. By forcing the student to choose letters randomly
B. By giving prompts for initial letters and turn-taking to build the word collaboratively
C. By only asking the student to spell letters independently
D. By providing no hints or support

---

5. How should a facilitator respond if a student selects letters that do not create a real word?
A. Say "No, that's wrong" repeatedly until the student gets it right
B. Stop the lesson immediately
C. Encourage the student to try again and take turns to ensure success, giving verbal prompts to help create a real word
D. Ignore the attempt and move on to a new topic

Module 7 Quiz

6. What should the facilitator do if a student creates an unusual but real word?
A. Correct them immediately
B. Accept it and encourage the student, linking it to the lesson if possible
C. Ignore it
D. Ask them to try a more common word

---

7. After mastering one-word answers, what is the next stage in open communication?
A. Long essays without guidance
B. Short phrases or sentences, gradually increasing length and complexity
C. Multiple-choice tests
D. Only spelling lessons without discussion

---

8. What is the overarching goal of steps towards open communication in RPM?
A. To ensure the student memorizes key words
B. To develop the student's ability to create meaningful, real words and gradually express longer ideas
C. To finish lessons as quickly as possible
D. To limit responses to one-word answers forever

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **B**
5. **C**
6. **B**
7. **B**
8. **B**

Quiz: Understanding Episodic Memory in RPM

1. What is episodic memory?
A. Memory of learned facts and concepts
B. Memory of real-life events or episodes, including sensory experiences
C. Memory that only stores words
D. Memory that is always reliable and factual

Module 7 Quiz

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2. Why should RPM facilitators avoid asking about episodic memory during sessions?
A. It is too easy for students to answer
B. Students' episodic memory may be inaccurate due to unique sensory experiences
C. Students are not capable of memory recall
D. It is irrelevant to the lesson topic

---

3. How does episodic memory differ from cortical (factual) memory?
A. Episodic memory is always visual; cortical memory is always auditory
B. Episodic memory relies on sensory channels and subjective interpretation, while cortical memory stores factual information
C. Cortical memory is unreliable; episodic memory is always correct
D. There is no difference

---

4. What can affect a child with autism's episodic memory of an event?
A. Selective or atypical sensory processing (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic)
B. The day of the week the event occurred
C. Their ability to spell words
D. The number of people in the room

---

5. What is the risk if facilitators take everything a child says about past events literally?
A. They may teach spelling incorrectly
B. They may overestimate the child's factual memory and misinterpret their experiences
C. The child will become fluent in open communication immediately
D. Nothing—children's memories are always accurate

---

6. Why is the "teach then ask" method used in RPM?
A. To avoid teaching new concepts
B. To rely solely on episodic memory
C. To get reliable answers to factual memory while supporting open-ended creative output
D. To test memory of recent meals or outings

---

7. Which of the following is an example of an altered sensory experience affecting episodic memory?
A. Forgetting a poem

B. Feeling real pain when touching a shirt of a certain color
C. Being unable to spell a word
D. Not understanding instructions

---

8. How should discussions in RPM sessions relate to memory?
A. Focus only on what the student did yesterday
B. Focus on events outside the lesson topic
C. Relate to the topic taught and the learning, thoughts, or opinions about that topic
D. Focus solely on factual memory of daily routines

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9. What is "change blindness," as described in the neurotypical memory study?
A. When a person forgets their own address
B. When a person fails to notice changes in their immediate environment due to limited perception
C. When a person cannot spell words correctly
D. When a person has perfect recall of visual scenes

---

10. What is the key takeaway regarding episodic memory for children with autism in RPM?
A. It is always reliable and can be used to teach new concepts
B. It may be unreliable without corroboration, so lessons should focus on factual memory and creativity based on known information
C. It should replace factual memory exercises
D. It is the only type of memory used in RPM

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **A**
5. **B**
6. **C**
7. **B**
8. **C**
9. **B**
10. **B**

Module 7 Quiz

Quiz: Word prediction

1. Why must facilitators avoid predicting what a child is trying to say during open communication?

A. Because it takes too long to finish the sentence
B. To ensure that the words truly come from the child, not the facilitator
C. Because children cannot spell independently
D. So the session moves faster

---

2. What is the recommended approach when the child's pointing is slow during open communication?

A. Finish the word for them
B. Allow them to finish at their own pace
C. Skip the word and move on
D. Correct their spelling immediately

---

3. Before attempting sentences expressing personal thoughts/opinions, what should be the focus?

A. Teaching advanced grammar
B. Accuracy of pointing on the full A-Z stencil using teach/ask with known answers
C. Asking about episodic memory
D. Using word prediction tools

---

4. During open communication, when is it acceptable to give a verbal or air prompt for a letter?

A. Anytime the facilitator guesses the next letter
B. Only when there is total certainty about the next letter. Eg. last letter of word
C. At the start of the session
D. For every other word

---

5. Which verbal prompts are appropriate during open communication?

A. "Spell it this way"
B. "Where?", "Which one?", "Next?", "Keep going?", "Tell me more?"
C. "I think you meant to get this letter"
D. "Up, Up , over .."

Module 7 Quiz

6. What should you do if the student's word doesn't initially make sense?
A. Immediately stop the session
B. Ask the student to go back to a previous word or encourage them to continue briefly
C. Correct them verbally to the word you expect
D. Remove the stencil

7. In the example of the picture of the crying man, what mistake did the facilitator almost make?
A. They gave too much tactile feedback
B. They tried to prompt the child to choose a letter based on their own assumption
C. They removed the pencil too early
D. They didn't give any verbal prompts

---

8. What is the overarching principle when facilitating emerging open communication?
A. Predict what the child wants to say to speed up the session
B. Prioritize speed over accuracy
C. Stay open-minded and ensure all communication is genuinely the child's own words
D. Focus mainly on grammar and spelling correctness

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **B**
5. **B**
6. **B**
7. **B**
8. **C**

Quiz: Influencing

1. Why must facilitators avoid moving or positioning the board during open communication?
A. To save time during sessions
B. To prevent unintentionally influencing the child's responses
C. Because the child cannot reach the letters otherwise
D. To make spelling faster

Module 7 Quiz

2. Which subtle behaviors from a facilitator can influence a child's responses?

A. Tone of voice, emotional reaction, nodding, facial expressions
B. Wearing bright colors
C. Writing letters on a separate sheet
D. Timing of snack breaks

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3. If a child ALWAYS provides responses that match what the facilitator expects, what does this indicate?

A. The child is fully independent
B. The facilitator may be unintentionally influencing the child
C. The child cannot spell
D. The session should be skipped

---

4. During open communication, how should a facilitator respond to statements of personal opinion?

A. Be animated and offer suggestions
B. Remain neutral and unemotional, with minimal verbal prompts like "carry on" or "any more?"
C. Correct any grammatical errors
D. Complete the sentence for the child

---

5. Why is it important to consider whether communication is part of a lesson or an episodic memory question?

A. To keep the session on schedule
B. Because episodic memory may be unreliable and can be influenced by adult expectations
C. To assess the child's storytelling ability
D. To practice spelling longer words

---

6. How can facilitators help children develop independent opinions in RPM sessions?

A. By always agreeing with the child
B. By providing multiple perspectives, avoiding leading questions, and respecting the child's age and experiences
C. By predicting what the child wants to say
D. By focusing mainly on episodic memory questions

---

7. What risk exists if open communication is done outside a structured lesson without a trained facilitator?

A. The child may write too slowly
B. The child may feel pressured and give responses that are not their own
C. The child may become overconfident
D. The board may be positioned incorrectly

---

8. What is an example of an inappropriate facilitator reaction during sensitive communication?
A. Saying “carry on, tell me more”
B. Making facial expressions or animated sounds to show approval
C. Pausing to verify unclear words
D. Asking neutral questions like “any more?”

---

9. According to Soma, why is it important not to ask questions outside of what has been taught?
A. Because it wastes time
B. Because it may lead to unrealistic or influenced communication
C. Because children cannot spell complex words
D. Because it slows down the lesson

---

10. What is the overarching principle when facilitating RPM open communication?
A. Predict and guide the child’s answers to ensure success
B. Focus on teaching spelling above all else
C. Ensure all communication comes from the child’s own words, with neutrality and minimal influence
D. Emphasize speed and efficiency in responses

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **A**
3. **B**
4. **B**
5. **B**
6. **B**
7. **B**
8. **B**
9. **B**

Module 7 Quiz

10. C

Module 8 Next Steps

Module 8 - Next Steps

Readiness: Motor, Emotional and Sensory

How to stay motivated

Training others

School involvement

Skill development outside lessons

Final thoughts

Module 8 - Readiness :Motor, Emotional and Sensory

When your child makes progress with open communication it is tempting to want them to be able to use the letterboard anywhere and with multiple people. It must be remembered though that each student is different and you must not put too much pressure on them based on unrealistic expectations.

My son was able to 'discuss' all sorts of things with me using the letterboard BUT he did find it very tiring and did not want to use it all the time.

The notes which follow are taken from the international Unlocking Voices facebook group and offer an explanation about the things we need to consider in order to reduce stress for our children.

MOTOR, EMOTIONAL AND SENSORY READINESS

Soma is very concerned that some students are experiencing unnecessary stress and anxiety which then affects their performance and behaviours in a negative way. She is aware of some students for whom this is so extreme that parents have taken their children to the doctors – the children are spelling out that they are sad/depressed and they are being prescribed medication. As Soma is working with more students she is learning more about the origins of the students' stress.

Let's explain further in the context of RPM. (quotes are from Soma):-

MOTOR READINESS: 'this is simple - the student is getting better with generalized movements and is fluent with the two dimensional surface'.

EMOTIONAL READINESS: 'this is when the student feels emotionally ready and wants to try new things. So for example, the student's tolerance has been built up, so the student begins to spell more words on a two dimensional surface and the student expresses his desire to move his skill forwards.'

SENSORY READINESS: 'This is the big hurdle and it needs some explaining ! Any visual, kinesthetic or tactile stress can create a sum total of sensory stress for the student.'

Soma has explained in detail in her Red book that autistic people have altered sensory systems which mean they will experience the world differently from neurotypicals. This is why in RPM we adapt the way we deliver lessons to match the sensory learning channel at that instant of learning. Quick recap:-The main learning channels are Visual, auditory, tactile, kinaesthetic and these can be global, selective or generalised.

To explain further, I've been thinking about some examples relating to my son. He goes to a Special Olympics club each week and they have regular events at other locations. Chris has told us that he wants to participate and attend the events – he has good social skills and is a good runner. I remember the first time we took him, I talked about it all to him and arranged for Alex to come as well , but when we got to the stadium it was overwhelming. It took at least ½ hour to coax him into the stadium and then he sat by the exit – not being able to go and join his team – even though his dad was there (major motivation). It was at least another ½ hour before we could move to join his friends. So in this instance he had the motor readiness (can run and had practised), was emotionally wanting to do it but did not have the sensory readiness. He did eventually manage to participate in an event on that day but could not make himself run – had to walk, stop, look around and have me at his side .

When I have taken Chris to doctors appointments I always have the letterboard with us –I prepare and talk to Chris beforehand and always try to respect his wishes. I usually have a note of the answers Chris has previously given to me when I have asked him about the issue at home. However I am very aware that these situations put him under a lot of sensory stress –the new environment, with new people, having to wait etc. Then there are also the emotional aspects – he has 'said' that he wants to talk to the doctor , but what if in that moment he is unable to 'perform' - how will that affect him emotionally – will he be upset with himself , will he feel he has let me down etc. So in this instance he has the motor readiness (able to use the letterboard), appears to have emotional readiness (has said he wants to talk to the doctor) and in most cases he has been able to do this (has the sensory readiness). However I always feel nervous about these situations!

Soma explains a bit more ...

'The older the student gets, the sensory anxiety manifests in a more prominent way. So a teacher MUST NOT FORCE A NEW ACTIVITY in such cases EVEN THOUGH THE STUDENT SPELLS HE WANTS IT. The Sensory stress can create defensive actions - rigid performance, self injury etc. and also create unwanted motor pathways and we wouldn't want that

It can be confusing - the things which the student does /behaviours he displays will be the same whether he is experiencing sensory or emotional stress ie. the motor manifestation is the same.

For example, the student may not have an emotional reason to be sad but he may be battling against a sensory overwhelming feeling. So a student seems happy outside the session but the moment the letter board is produced the student throws a sensory fit.'

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

As parents and teachers we must be sensitive to our child/student's needs. We must look out for behaviour changes and consider whether they are being caused by emotional/sensory stresses. We must be careful not to push students to do too much too quickly – even if they are saying on the letterboard that is what they want. I am not saying do not have long term goals – but make the short term goals realistic! If your child has said they want to attend a mainstream school – you can work towards this, but slowly and carefully. If they say they want to attend/participate /speak at conferences consider very carefully their readiness and the possible implications – imagine how bad they would feel if they attended but were unable to 'perform'/cope .

Just to re-emphasize why this is so important ...

This is from the National Autistic Society in the UK ....

Anxiety disorders are very common amongst people on the autism spectrum. Roughly 40% have ***symptoms*** *of at least one anxiety disorder at any time, compared with up to 15% in the general population. Understandably, this can lead to sadness or depression – one reason why a mixture of anxiety and depression is common.*

It is thought that a combination of factors, leading to vulnerability to stress, is likely to explain why anxiety disorders are so common in autistic people. Biological differences in brain structure and function, a history of social difficulties (leading to decreased self-esteem and a tendency to think of threats as greater than they are) and problems with finding flexible responses to apparent threats are all likely to contribute.

Module 8 - Staying Motivated

Module 8 - Staying Motivated

It can be hard to stay motivated - life gets in the way and there are always other important things to be dealing with.

I found it best to have a fixed routine/timetable and a designated place in the house which was quiet and distraction free. In my situation I had already been running a home programme so had a ‘room’ set aside for this. Once I had made the decision to properly learn RPM I was determined to give it a good go - not just dipping my toes in . I did everything I could to develop my own skills and to learn the techniques - even though there were very few resources available.

I had other people helping/employed on my home programme and it did help that we were all learning RPM together. I did feel strongly that I could not ask/expect others to do anything that I could not do myself with my son so was determined to learn myself.

When I began there were no providers in the UK but I heard that another parent had arranged for Soma to come to London in 2011. I drove each day from Birmingham with my son to see Soma for six sessions over three days and then we did the same in 2012. I then scheduled zooms with Soma and arranged for her to come to the Midlands annually to run workshops for my son and other families from 2013. Each year I learnt so much from her - observing her working with my son and with other students. This was highly motivating for me. One of my son’s helpers - Alex Hopwood went on to intern with Soma at her clinic in Austin, Texas and became a level 4 provider in 2014. My son continued to have regular sessions with Alex until his death in 2023. I also learnt a lot from observing Alex’s sessions, particularly when we had some very challenging times during puberty.

Possible reasons for your motivation falling:

‘I don’t feel that my child is making progress’

Do remember that each person will progress at different rates. This means that for some progress is rapid but for others it can take months/years to see tangible progress.

Firstly I would suggest that you video and analyse your own sessions- as described in Module 6.

Then you should schedule a consult with an experienced provider. If it is possible go for a face to face session and schedule regular sessions - otherwise film your session and

arrange a zoom/regular zooms. Observing a face to face session by a skilled provider will enable you to see what you can do to improve your sessions. An experienced provider can often see simple things you are /are not doing which can make a huge impact on the effectiveness of your sessions.

It is also important to set realistic and achievable short term tolerance, skill and communication goals. Often having a short term goal can help to improve your focus and motivation - having a long term goal of 'independent typing' is not motivating on a day to day basis. An experienced provider will be able to help you to set realistic skill goals.

It can be upsetting if you feel that progress is slow and/or you see a regression in skills. I know how hard this is as Chris had many seizures and they had a negative impact on his motor skills. It seemed that everyday we were working very hard to try to just maintain his skills. I knew that doing nothing was not an option - it was important for him to see that we were doing everything possible to help him.

'My child resists doing sessions with me'

I have experienced this. I had difficulties with aggression during puberty and at times I had no option but to take a break from sessions as I was likely to be attacked. What was interesting was that Chris would be fine doing sessions with his other helpers at this time. I did not give up and helped him by working on other skills at that time eg. going for walks and learning to stop and sit , physical exercise, taking him to horse riding lessons where I would work on his speech sounds. I would also read to him without making any demands. I will add that Chris was also experiencing health issues - epilepsy - and trials of medications caused all sorts of behaviours which made things very challenging.

It would have been easy to just carry on like this but as his parent I knew I had to be involved - particularly in order to enable him to communicate with me. I would try changing my sessions - doing shorter ones and different types eg. using pictures and magazines. When lockdown hit us I had no help and told Chris that I was his key resource and we would have to continue practising together. We established a new routine and did two sessions a day - sometimes connecting by zoom to his other helpers in order to keep in touch.

'I find it hard to prepare lessons'

Module 8 - Staying Motivated

I have been guilty of wasting a lot of time on this- spending too much time pontificating and researching rather than getting on with the lesson preparation.
It may help you to follow a curriculum book - then you have the content of your lessons prepared and you can focus on how you will present them in an rpm style. You could use the free lessons available or purchase lesson plan books - see Module 2 lesson resources. Also think about varying lessons eg. discussing a picture/photograph/painting. I found the chapter on picture reading Soma's green book very helpful. You can maintain interest and engagement by varying the requests you make during the lesson - spell, handwrite, point to picture, fold this paper, help me draw etc.

I can assure you that over time and with practice it gets a lot easier. Even when you are experienced as an absolute minimum you should always prepare by reading through the content , highlighting key words and if you are using choices deciding what they will be.

A useful shortcut/tip is that when you are working on open communication you can say - 'let's just take a quick pause from the lesson to look at this word'. You can take a word from the lesson and expand on it in many ways depending upon the student's skill eg . can you think of a word that rhymes with x? Give me a word that comes to mind when you think of x, tell me about a time when you have felt this way etc.

An example of something you can eventually work towards is this. I found it very easy to create many practice opportunities without preparation when teaching the skill of reading with Chris. When we progressed to reading large print books I would read while Chris pointed to the words, then I would ask questions about the text and he would visually scan to find the answer. I could then also select key words for expansion /open communication using the letterboard.

What if I can't do lessons everyday

Your child is only going to improve with regular practise. I would normally say that quality is more important than quantity - but when you are getting started do not seek perfection. Get practicing even if just for 10 mins ! You could have a bank of short lesson ideas - it could be simple sayings and you do a few a day just for fun eg. a stitch in time saves nine. I hope you can see it would be easy to talk about this in an rpm lesson style.

Module 8 - Training Others

How to train others to work with your child

There are many factors to consider and I suggest you search/post on the international unlocking voices facebook group for more information. Many families want to get lots of people working with their child , including the school, if applicable, but do not fully understand the potential implications. I will write a separate section about schools so here will focus on training another person(s) to work with your child under your supervision.

Unless you are starting out with an existing team of known/trusted helpers I suggest that you wait until you have achieved progress yourself before training others. My situation was that I was already running a home programme so there were initially three of us who were learning together. Over the years I recruited and trained many others - some people worked out and others did not. It is important not to overwhelm your child by introducing too many new people at any one time.

When training it was always necessary to go back to teach/ask sessions for new people. You cannot expect they will be able to work with your child at your skill level. They will need to learn about performance field, prompting etc - all the things covered in the early modules of this course. It may sound obvious but good reading, spelling and grammar skills are required

I arranged for new helpers to observe sessions and then, with my son's permission, to have a go at presenting lessons with him. Everything was recorded and observed . I gave detailed feedback after every session and slowly helped them to work towards open communication.

One of my helpers - Penny Kay wrote this description of her learning process for our UK workshop in 2013. I hope it is helpful.

How to learn to use RPM :By Penny Kay :June 2013

I began working with Christopher about 12 months ago and RPM was a totally new concept for me. I loved watching Christopher work with his mom and his other helpers but the thought of doing it myself was extremely daunting to say the least!

The analogy it reminded me of was driving. So many different elements, actions and considerations that at first it is just overwhelming. How am I ever going to indicate, change gears, steer and pay attention to everything at the same time!

In RPM I thought, how am I ever going to run through my lesson, remember all my

stuff, choose a 'teach ask' moment, use the stencil, write down the response, respond to the child, consider my tone of voice etc etc! So please don't worry if at first you are also overwhelmed. I believe it's a bit like sky diving or trapeze artists, the best way is just to go for it. Each time you get better and better!

So what really helped me to progress my skills in RPM and empower myself to facilitate and help Chris to communicate?

Observing myself. Obviously it did really help to watch other people's sessions too and get a good sense of how a session runs, but filming and watching myself was invaluable. I could see how I was presenting, how Christopher responded to different things that I did, how, in hindsight, I could have done it differently. The benefits really are huge. So shake off that fear of seeing yourself on screen and soak it up!

Preparation. At first i wrote my session notes up in full. This may seem excessive but it really helped me to devise my sessions and meant that I didn't have to worry about knowing my subject and finding the time to 'ask' in between teaching because I already had it planned in. This meant I could concentrate on focusing on Christopher and the stencil and my other techniques. You really don't have to do this for very long but it gave me a great basis to gain confidence and learn how to structure a session effectively.

Belief. When I first started I was unable to work with Chris on open questions. In the 'teach ask' part we were successful but the minute I didn't know where Chris was going we were unable to work together. I don't have this problem any more. The reason I don't think I have this problem is because I believe in myself. I totally believed in Chris but doubted whether I could do this. The minute I believed I could and became empowered in my own ability (which came from observing myself, preparing fully and taking on board the training I was lucky enough to receive) we were off! But it's not easy so please don't be downhearted if at first you don't succeed in open questions, opinions, thoughts. Keep going with the 'teach ask' - you are both learning and this method sows seeds greater than you would imagine.

Letting go of perfection. I felt that the session should be perfect. That I shouldn't make mistakes. When I stopped worrying about this I found that I was able to be more myself and move within the subject more freely so I was less robotic which meant I was more engaging and could keep Christopher's attention for longer and inspire him to want to learn about my subject!

Evaluating. As well as observing, typing up my session in full as I had said it (mistakes and all!) really helped me to assess my session. See where I had maybe talked for too

long. How I could have rephrased an 'ask' so that it was not a question. Where I could do things differently. And of course it will be a fabulous record of all the absolutely fabulous things you will be doing with your child.

Avoiding assumptions. Christopher could show behaviours that you could wrongly assume meant he didn't want to do 'the work' in the RPM sessions. However Christopher has told his mum that he does enjoy the sessions and that he has to move his body to let his thoughts come out. Again believing in the method and yourself and the child, and avoiding taking body language at face value, made a huge difference to me and how i approached my sessions.

In a RPM session I have planned for Christopher on the power of the unconscious mind it also used driving as an example. Did you know that you use up to 30 specific skills when you drive but most of them you are unaware of? I'm sure when you first learnt you probably did know that! But now, it's second nature. This is how RPM feels. I obviously have so much still to learn but in just 12 months some of the skills are more like second nature. Had you told me that 12 months ago, I don't think I would have believed you!

For those totally new to RPM I hope this helps. I am absolutely so grateful that I was given the opportunity to work with Christopher and his mum - every day it is a privilege and every day Christopher blows us away. As much as I love and admire him, I also do not believe that he is one of the few who can do this. I believe you and your child can too. Happy learning and empowering!

Module 8 - School involvement

How do I get my child's school to use RPM

This topic has been discussed many times on the international Unlocking Voices facebook group - please search this group for more information. .

My advice is to proceed very carefully when approaching a school. It seems to work best if YOU are able to recruit and train the 1:1 helper who attends school with your child. That way you have control of the training and you can regularly monitor/develop the skills of the helper. Although my son did not attend school, when he was older he did go to a day provision a couple of days a week with one of his trained helpers. This worked well as he was able to communicate with the other young adults and participate in group activities and quizzes.

I have heard of many examples where students have become exhausted in school settings because of overuse of the letterboard and then become resistant and/or experience sensory overload. Unfortunately I have also heard of cases where minimally trained teachers/aides use the letterboard outside lessons to have 'chats'. This has resulted in all sorts of problems for the parents. To give one example - a child was asked about what he had been doing at the weekend - he responded 'my dad hit me' , the school had to then take action, involving the various authorities, interviews with parents etc. This child's father had been trying to teach him to hit a tennis ball - so perhaps the sentence could have been finished 'my dad hit me with a tennis ball' .

If the school is genuinely interested I recommend involving an experienced, Level 3-4 practitioner at an early stage. The school /teachers would need to be prepared to undertake RPM training and have regular feedbacks from the practitioner including video feedbacks).

Module 8 - Skill Development outside RPM lessons

There are many things you can do outside RPM lessons which will develop your child's skills.

One of my son's helpers was not very academic but she was full of enthusiasm and belief. I asked her to do any activities which would work on 'purposeful body movement'. Examples included: going to the supermarket and pushing the trolley, putting items in, playing games involving simple actions like connect 4, shut the box, magnetic darts, learning some basic dance moves, learning basic yoga positions, catching and throwing a ball etc etc

I also found a great personal trainer. I went along to sessions and gave training in how he should work with Chris - explaining how he could not imitate but would need motor modelling. This worked really well - Chris had a great male role model and the gym work helped to build his core strength.

Outside RPM lessons I began to use choices as much as I could and taught others how to do this . eg. Do you want to go for a walk in the park or by the river? Should we go down this path or that one? It was a way of giving some control to Chris - making him feel empowered and a way of empowering others to communicate with him. I taught him to respond to choices given using my hands and fingers so I did not always have to write the choices down.

Sensory curriculum

Soma has written a great book called **Growing Sensory Tolerance using RPM**. This book can help you to develop a sensory curriculum. It is packed with practical ideas and activities to work on specific skills. I highly recommend it.

Quote from Soma Mukhopadhyay' book Growing Sensory Tolerance Using Rapid Prompting Method :-

'Autism can isolate a person due to their sensory challenges. This book was written to help the autistic person adapt better to the environment using their sensory learning channels- vision, auditory and tactile- which are the doors to the sensory world. The kinesthetic channel is the output of how our sensory channels access the environment.'

The notes below give you a brief idea of the topics covered in this book

VISUAL

Issues your child may have :-

Module 8 - Skill Development outside RPM lessons

Your child does not seem to enjoy looking at books/magazines independently –you need to develop the sensory tolerance to look at them.

Your child cannot/ does not accurately point to show you things when out and about

Your child is unable to visually focus when outdoors – e.g you point to show them something and they are 'unable' to see it. Your child doesn't ever point to things to show you when you are outside

Your child cannot go and get an object without becoming distracted

Your child cannot /does not appear to be able to read

Your child cannot /does not select a book from a bookshelf

Your child is stuck watching the same videos/clips over and over- does not participate on watching programs on tv with the family

AUDITORY (language)

Issues your child may have:

Your child does not seem able to/ want to listen to you

Your child gets easily distracted and is impulsive eg runs off

Your child repetitively does the same things – eg tapping/kicking table enjoying the sound

Your child repetitively watches /scripts from videos/youtube

Your child interrupts and wants you to complete verbal scripts in a certain way

TACTILE

Issues your child might have:-

Your child's visual and auditory channels may be distracted by any of the components of touch – pressure seeking, feeling different surfaces, pain, temperature,

Module 8 - Skill Development outside RPM lessons

Your child may pick at his skin until it bleeds

Your child may lick surfaces

Your child may struggle to sit on certain furniture or the toilet

Your child may have difficulties with the change of seasons

Your child may have difficulties with new clothes/shoes etc

Module 8 - Final thoughts

I see so many parents burn out because:

- they learn as much as they possibly can as quickly as possible,

- then they expect themselves to have the perfect set up quicker than it is realistic to do

- they jump head first into their program and hold themselves to standards that are not humanly possible.

These unrealistic expectations set us up for disappointment in ourselves which drains us even further. Then the guilt sets in.....

This happens to us all at times !

Set backs will happen - family difficulties, health difficulties - you /family/ your child. each time you can reassess the priorities :-

- what is most important at this time ,

- how can I keep things ticking over ,

- who can I ask for help.

RPM is a long-haul journey. We are working on integrating all the senses and putting in place stepping stones to help our children lead meaningful lives and develop independence in every area that is possible for them.

Remember that **you are not alone**. I urge you to use the international facebook group to search for and answer your questions. You may be a trailblazer in your location but there is now an ever- growing global community of like-minded families.

Please look out for/sign up for any Soma zoom workshops. They are advertised on her facebook and instagram channels - she is an absolute genius at finding ways to help our children. Also please buy and read her books - they are available on amazon.

Module 8 - Final thoughts

Do not waste any more time - now is the best time to start!

Dedication to Christopher Finnes

This is one of the many poems which Chris wrote. I hope it inspires you to carry on.

Time determines opportunities for everyone

Make the most of your life

Wasted minutes turn into

Wasted hours and days

Which become wasted years.

Time is too precious to lose.

Savour each moment

As if it were a mouthful of a delicious meal.

Reap the pleasurable seeds which will grow

When you find a purpose in your life

And learn to love it.

Module 8 Quiz

Quiz: Readiness and Reducing Stress in RPM Sessions

1. Why must parents and facilitators avoid putting too much pressure on a child to use the letterboard everywhere?

A. Children may lose interest in spelling
B. Each child has different levels of motor, emotional, and sensory readiness
C. Letterboards are only for classroom use
D. It is easier for the facilitator

---

2. What does motor readiness refer to in RPM?

A. The child's desire to try new activities
B. The child's ability to perform generalized movements and fluently use a two-dimensional surface
C. The child's emotional willingness to communicate
D. The child's knowledge of spelling

---

3. What is emotional readiness?

A. When the child can use the board without prompts
B. When the child feels emotionally prepared and motivated to engage with new tasks
C. When the child has no sensory sensitivities
D. When the child can remember past events

---

4. Why is sensory readiness considered the biggest hurdle?

A. Because the child may not understand instructions
B. Visual, tactile, kinesthetic, or auditory stress can create cumulative sensory stress, affecting performance
C. Children refuse to communicate verbally
D. Sensory readiness is not important in RPM

---

5. In the example of Chris attending the Special Olympics event, why was he initially unable to join the team?

A. He did not want to participate
B. He had motor readiness but lacked sensory readiness in the new environment
C. He did not know how to use the letterboard
D. He was distracted by his friends

Module 8 Quiz

6. What is Soma's recommendation regarding forcing a student to do a new activity even if they spell that they want to?

A. Always encourage them to try immediately
B. Never force new activities; consider sensory and emotional stress
C. Ignore their emotional state
D. Test their spelling first

---

7. Why might a student display similar motor behaviors whether experiencing sensory or emotional stress?

A. Because stress manifests physically in similar ways regardless of its source
B. Because they have learned the behaviors in sessions
C. Because they are copying others
D. Because the facilitator moves the board

---

8. What should parents/facilitators consider when a child expresses long-term goals like attending mainstream school or giving a presentation?

A. Push the child to achieve it as quickly as possible
B. Carefully assess motor, emotional, and sensory readiness before working toward the goal
C. Focus only on spelling skills
D. Let the child decide independently without preparation

---

9. According to the National Autistic Society, what percentage of autistic people experience at least one anxiety disorder at any time?

A. 15%
B. 25%
C. 40%
D. 60%

---

10. What is the key takeaway for supporting students with RPM and open communication?

A. Focus only on letterboard accuracy
B. Build long-term goals quickly to challenge the student
C. Be sensitive to motor, emotional, and sensory readiness and set realistic short-term goals
D. Avoid using letterboards outside of structured sessions

Answer Key

Module 8 Quiz

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **B**
5. **B**
6. **B**
7. **A**
8. **B**
9. **C**
10. **C**

Quiz: Staying Motivated

1. Why is it helpful to have a fixed routine and designated quiet space for RPM sessions?
A. It ensures the student never gets distracted by family
B. It helps the facilitator stay motivated and maintain consistency
C. It allows for longer sessions without breaks
D. All of the above

---

2. What was one of the main motivating factors for the author to learn RPM?
A. Availability of many resources in the UK
B. Desire to be able to teach her son herself and lead by example
C. The sessions were very easy
D. She preferred watching online tutorials only

---

3. Why should you video and analyse your own sessions?
A. To publish them online
B. To see where you can improve and track your child's progress
C. To avoid doing live sessions
D. To check the lighting in your session space

---

4. How can setting short-term goals help with motivation?
A. They make the sessions longer
B. They help maintain focus and provide achievable milestones
C. They replace the need for long-term goals
D. They are less important than teaching every letter

Module 8 Quiz

5. What should you do if your child resists doing sessions with you?
A. Force them to participate until they comply
B. Take a break and work on other skills or shorter/different types of sessions
C. Stop RPM altogether
D. Only practice reading without using the letterboard

---

6. How can lesson preparation be simplified?
A. Spend weeks researching unrelated content
B. Follow a curriculum or lesson plan book and focus on RPM-style presentation
C. Make up random topics each day
D. Only practice spelling with no context

---

7. Why is it important to vary activities during a session?
A. To make the session longer
B. To maintain interest and engagement using different channels (spell, point, draw, fold, etc.)
C. To confuse the student
D. To avoid focusing on key words

---

8. What is a practical way to create open communication opportunities without extensive preparation?
A. Pause the lesson to explore a word from the text, asking for rhymes, associations, or personal connections
B. Ignore the lesson content and improvise
C. Only focus on spelling and writing letters
D. Ask unrelated personal questions

---

9. When starting out, how long should a session be if daily practice is difficult?
A. Only 10 minutes is sufficient to begin
B. At least 2 hours every day
C. Skip sessions until a full hour is available
D. Only once a week

---

10. What is the key message regarding consistency in RPM practice?
A. Perfection is essential; sessions must be flawless
B. Quality is more important than quantity, but regular practice is necessary

C. Sessions can be skipped indefinitely if the child is tired
D. Only long-term goals matter

Answer Key

1. **D**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **B**
5. **B**
6. **B**
7. **B**
8. **A**
9. **A**
10. **B**

Quiz: Training Helpers in RPM

1. When is it best to start training new helpers to work with your child?
A) Immediately, as soon as you buy the letterboard
B) After you have achieved progress yourself
C) Only after the child is fluent with open communication
D) Whenever the school requests it

---

2. What is an important first step for new helpers learning RPM?
A) Giving the child complex tasks immediately
B) Observing sessions before trying themselves
C) Designing their own lessons from scratch
D) Asking the child to teach them

---

3. Which skills are essential for a helper to have before starting RPM sessions?
A) Artistic skills and music knowledge
B) Reading, spelling, and grammar skills
C) Sports coaching experience
D) Typing speed

Module 8 Quiz

4. Why is it recommended to record and review sessions with new helpers?
A) To catch mistakes for punishment
B) To provide detailed feedback and guide improvement
C) To create a video portfolio for social media
D) To compare the child with others

---

5. According to Penny Kay, what is one key factor in successfully learning RPM?
A) Belief in yourself and the child
B) Avoiding observation of other sessions
C) Expecting perfect sessions from the start
D) Skipping the teach/ask phase

---

6. Why should you avoid interpreting a child's behavior at face value?
A) Children's behaviors are random and meaningless
B) Behaviors may indicate the child needs movement or time to express thoughts
C) To make sessions faster
D) It is better to assume what they want to say

---

7. How can initial session preparation help a new helper?
A) It allows the helper to memorize all possible answers
B) It structures the session and frees mental energy to focus on the child
C) It ensures the session lasts as long as possible
D) It removes the need for observation

---

8. What is the recommended approach to mistakes during learning RPM?
A) Avoid mistakes at all costs
B) See mistakes as part of learning and an opportunity to improve
C) Only correct the child, not the helper
D) Restart the session each time a mistake happens

---

9. Why is learning RPM compared to learning to drive?
A) Both are dangerous if done wrong
B) Both require multiple skills simultaneously and become easier with practice
C) Both can be mastered in a single day
D) Both require formal testing

Module 8 Quiz

---

10. What is the main goal when training new helpers in RPM?
A) To make the child complete lessons as quickly as possible
B) To ensure the child's communication is genuinely their own and empower them
C) To reduce the number of sessions
D) To allow the helper to take control of the lesson

Answer Key

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. A
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. B

Quiz: Developing Skills Outside RPM and Sensory Curriculum

1. Why is purposeful body movement important outside RPM lessons?
A) It improves academic performance directly
B) It helps develop motor skills and engages the child physically
C) It replaces RPM lessons entirely
D) It is only for entertainment

---

2. Which of the following is an example of a purposeful movement activity?
A) Watching TV quietly
B) Going to the supermarket and pushing a trolley
C) Reading silently in a corner
D) Listening to a lecture

---

3. How did the parent incorporate choices into daily activities?
A) By making all decisions for the child
B) By giving simple options, e.g., walk in the park or by the river

Module 8 Quiz

C) By letting the child do whatever they want without guidance
D) By asking the child to memorize long lists of options

---

4. What is the role of motor modelling in physical activities?
A) To copy the child's movements exactly
B) To demonstrate actions for the child to imitate
C) To make the child memorize routines
D) To correct mistakes immediately

---

5. According to Soma, what is the kinesthetic channel?
A) The way the child sees things visually
B) The output channel for how sensory input is accessed and expressed
C) The ability to hear and process sounds
D) A method of reading books

---

6. **Which of these is an auditory (language) issue?**
A) Child avoids looking at books
B) Child repetitively taps or kicks to enjoy sound
C) Child struggles with new clothes
D) Child cannot select a book

---

7. What are some tactile challenges a child may experience?
A) Distracted by repetitive sounds
B) Difficulty with temperature, clothing, or surfaces
C) Prefers certain TV shows
D) Cannot point to objects outdoors

---

8. Why is it important to develop a sensory curriculum?
A) To force the child to conform to neurotypical behavior
B) To help the child adapt better to the environment using their sensory learning channels
C) To make lessons shorter
D) To replace RPM lessons entirely

Module 8 Quiz

Answer Key

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. B
6. B
7. B
8. B

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

Over the years parents have told me that they found it helpful to observe my sessions with Chris. Some have viewed the videos with their child as a way of showing what they are working towards. There are many videos available on my youtube channel @suefinnes UCMtrorkbUiDMIwvY2-W5GhQ

In the video descriptions on my channel I have usually added a rough transcript of the session. In the examples given here I have included a couple of short extracts specifically showing how communication can come from the lesson. Chris's pointed words are in capitals.

Here is a selection of videos :

Very first session with Soma 2011
https://youtu.be/-dBLgcSSv2E 4 mins

This is from May 2011 - the very first part of the first session with Soma.
She gave a short piece of info , then asked and practised spelling the key word. She positioned the stencils in a 'friendly' way to ensure success when he pointed.

RPM progress 2009-2014 7 min
https://youtu.be/BfxRjEtCVXU

This video begins in 2009 when I had a go at some written choices. I had read out some information about the history of Bonfire night and then used paper choices (I did not really know what I was doing but had seen a video of Soma doing paper choices !). Then is the first session with Soma in 2011 - written choices and 3 stencils, then a lesson with Alex 2012 using the full A-Z stencil, then me in 2014 using a laminated letterboard and beginning to work on independent pointing (board flat on table /self holding the board for known responses).

April 2012 - Part of Acid Rain lesson (one of the first using the stencil) 9 mins
https://youtu.be/J15lNH9iKt4?si=i878s4O_33XDplRC
Chris was moving around and biting hand

May 2012 Graphs lesson based on Soma's orange book 14 mins.
https://youtu.be/XHP1MuD8vL4
May 2012 Used method from Soma's book:-(orange book p76)
We're going to learn about graphs ..... GRAPHS yes,
Suppose on Monday we watch dvds -- how many would you watch -- pick a number =5. Wrote Mon = 5 on paper , then on Tuesday how many? =7 ..what day would you watch 7? TUESDAY, and Wed -- maybe one... spell 1 ONE, . We could show this in a diagram -- called a graph.. How ould we draw a graph -- like this -- i drew the axis on paper and took his finger to trace over them. Which letter does this look like -- L or P he pointed to L on stencil. Now a

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

grapg has two lines --drew horizontal -- this one is called horizontal -- what did i say its called HOROZONTAL - called the X axis (I wrote on folded papr and help in front of him) showed vertical line -- what's this called VERTICAL and wrote y axis on folded sheet. Now on the xaxis we mark 3 points and label the M T W (did this on paper on table,) and then the vertical needs to go to how many? =7 yes, . No we plot the numbers Monday -- how many -- he pointed on the graph and hand over hand we plotted it. Where would turesdays go -- he pointed to 7 on graph -- helped him plot it, same wed.- then i joined up graph.
So what do we use graphs for -- well they show us trends -- so eg Geography we could look at temperatures and climate -- what did i say geography ....CLIMATE, How about finance -- can you tink of a use -- we could look at PRICES yes prices of what FOOD , anything else? GOODS. Oh yes -- I see if we look at the price trends of food and goods we are looking at the retail price index -- have you heard of this -- Y/N -- pointed to Y. Ok -- so the RPI is used to measure something -- what is it .. INFLATION -- yes it is used a s a measure of inflation.
Last thing -- what did you think about learning about graphs = GREAT…

April 2016 -Message for parents - RPM has given me a voice 3 mins
https://youtu.be/lR_Y9AI694Y?si=VyUogUfincMTCgpq

Oct 15, 2015 Message for Challenging Behavior Foundation 9 mins
https://youtu.be/FwFAwDtVVRQ?si=nugAlVILFgfyOmLy

You will see there is lots of handbiting and 'moaning' while he does this
I AM HAVING A GOOD DAY TODAY. NOT ALL DAYS ARE LIKE THIS. MY BODY GOES OUT OF CONTROL EVEN WHEN I TRY HARD TO CONTROL IT. IT IS NOT MY FAULT

March 2020 Lady with the lamp lesson -60 mins
https://youtu.be/uCD6RcHxmAk

I took a couple of key words from the lesson eg. -Passion- Florence nightingale had a passion for statistics , .. I BELIEVE EVERYONE HAS TO FIND THEIR PASSION IN LIFE IN ORDER TO FIND TRUE HAPPINESS
Another word from lesson = frustration
IT IS FRUSTRATING TO ME WHEN I MEET PEOPLE AND THEY DO NOT REALISE I AM INTELLIGENT . I DO UNDERSTAND WHY THEY MAY THINK THIS BUT IT IS STILL FRUSTRATING do u want to add any more NOT NOW

Sept 2016 Pompeii lesson- 16 mins (first part of lesson with Alex)
https://youtu.be/c4Rdoq5U-Y8

Even though there were earthquakes they were unprepared/unaware of what might happen

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

You tell me a time in your life when you felt unprepared – or a short story
..ONE DAY I WAS UNPREPARED FOR A SEIZURE SO IT WAS A BIT OF A SHOCK.

March 2020 - picture of Victorian children - lesson 30 mins
https://youtu.be/b22FjMRGy34?si=9yg35uL7NMT3ILKD

October 2020 - magazine feature Dollymania lesson - 59 mins
https://youtu.be/wMYMQyvCCNI

Scientists flabbergasted - another word SURPRISED.- yes shocked . Can you think of a time when you were flabbergasted WHEN A THUNDERSTORM WAS OVER OUR HOUSE I COULD NOT BELIEVE HOW NOISY IT WAS . IT SCARED ME !

November 2020 - Reading the book - story of the tempest lesson 34 mins
https://youtu.be/yg0wOwz86j4?si=TbmiMHoPo372eQfm

Lets take the word magic. If you had magical powers what would you do ? I SHOULD MAKE A DIFFERENT TYPE OF SOCIETY. IT WOULD BE ONE WHERE PEOPLE WERE ALL TREATED EQUALLY REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACE RELIGION OR DISABILITY.

March 2020 Skill development - Creating a picture 17 mins
https://youtu.be/XR7RL_euQAM?si=9T99l53eAQ7ZhkLV

June 2020 - Chris initiated creative writing - a poem - think about your soul 50 mins
https://youtu.be/Gj0cPMF3sg0?si=9X0uHk2dX0yDe8Bh

https://youtu.be/b22FjMRGy34
Lesson created from a photograph
Photo of children playing pitch and toss. worked on skill of touching things on picture, describing it and then playing pitch and toss.
just for practise PICTURE
is the picture modern/old ? VICTORIAN TIMES
children are playing PITCH AND TOSS
two things about the picture
THE CHILDREN ARE NOT WEARING ANY SHOES
GETTING THE FEELING THAT THE CHILDREN ARE POOR.
yes cant afford shoes how else can you tell THEIR CLOTHES ARE SCRUFFY - yes rolled up trousers and sleeves on jackets - handed down clothes too big. trousers ROLLED UP .
lets practise handwriting up
what do u notice about the road ? IT HAS COBBLES

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

Lets talk more about pitch and toss. Played with COINS ,
we are going to draw it . imagine this is a wall we put a mark on it and try to throw our coins as close as we can . lets have a go with pencil - drawing them on . how many do we have ? 4

then another variation - one coin is the marker and we have to get other coins to land on top (or close) . C drew the marker then we took turns to cover eyes and draw coins
then we had a go on table with real coins .. what is the problem ? FOR YOU TO KNOW THE WINNER YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER WHO THE COINS BELONG TO . yes they get all mixed up - how could you solve this ? MAYBE PUT A MARK ON YOUR COIN . yes good idea .. how many coins in my hand ? 6
then we moved to play the game throwing the coins across the room - practising releasing the coins from his hand

https://youtu.be/XR7RL_euQAM

Creating a picture
Gave a bubble choice of activities – reading/painting/Victorians (police) /something else
He chose painting . Asked him what he would like to paint using letterboard – PAINT A PICTURE OF FLOWERS .
Suggested we could make it into a card for grandma
Split page in 2
Would u like flowers growing wild or in pot/vase POT
Then we constructed the picture side by side – a line at a time and then chose colours and painted it

https://youtu.be/77pdvrcWIsY
Playing connect 4
Dawn uses letterboard for Chris to select column and then prompts to ensure he puts it in the one he has chosen . (We have stuck numbers on the top of the columns). This is because he will point accurately on the letterboard when it is held in his performance field- but putting the counter into the static board is more difficult and he may place it into a column he did not really want .

https://youtu.be/jNaj8p71LUo
A lesson about current affairs
16.3.20 Talking about CORONA VIRUS
Type of virus makes you feel unwell – another word SICK
Like a GERM – would only see inder a microscope – needs to live inside another creature – gets inside our CELLS.

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

Do viruses always live in creatures ? I KNOW THAT SOMETIMES VIRUSES CAN INFECT COMPUTERS --- how ? BY SENDING ATTACHMENTS TO EMAILS . yes I have proection on my computer McAffee , some have NORTON
Why called corona – from latin for CROWN – who wears ? KING
Showed picture and drew – spikes sticking out from sides
Something else with spikes = HEDGEHOG – why TO PROTECT
What are the symptoms
Do you know any ? TIREDNESS , yes like flu, cough and fever – what happens YOU FEEL VERY HOT
Most people will get mild version , but People who are sick, and elderly affected more.
Disease is called COVID –(handwrote) ? 19
Originated in CHINA , city called? WUHAN . showed map of the world – pointed to different countries
Think it came from bats – handwrite bat then to another animal and passed to humans
How does it get into our cells?
Cells in our noses = special doorways – remember spikes = keys to open doors – used pencil to open paper door
Drew cells on paper – got c to draw some – once in cells it multiplies – breaks out and infects other cells – drew arrows from the cells - stops working properly then we get sick.
Most people mild ?weeks 2, but some seriopus PNEUMONIA- serious infection – hospital.
Showed picture of lungs, alveoli etc – pointed to picture.
Our immune system is like an ARMY –protects us and FIGHTS THE ENEMY. Symptons show we are fighting – headache, runny nose etc
Test for it – snot – swab nose … how ? MUCOUS IN YOUR NOSE
What can we do ?
Wash hands for ?20 secs – we practised with hand sanitiser – sang happy birthday
and avoid touching face, mouth eyes etc
Use TISSUE and ELBOW – practised
Implications for us? I MAY HAVE TO STAY AT HIME AND NOT BE ABLE TO GO SWIMMING AND NOT GO TO STEPPING UP CLUB
What could we do instead
I COULD CLEAN THE KITCHEN AND TIDY MY BOOKS … great idea
PERHAPS I COULD HAVE A GO AT SOME MEDITATION .. yes I ve been doing that – did u hear me talk to Catherine about it ? YES – IT MAY HELP … finished or more ? F

https://youtu.be/syt6QnV_6vA

March 2017 - Lesson about Mental capacity

A ;Before we start , do you mind the camera being on for this session
C;I NEVER MIND
A;If you have a problem at any point you can just tell me/us eg if something personal etc
–C; OKAY

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

A;You may have heard your mum talk a bit about this , As you get older you'll start to hear the term 'mental capacity' more and more.... what is your understanding of this?
C:IT IS ABOUT IF THE PERSON HAS THE CAPABILITY AND INTELLIGENCE TO MAKE DECISIONS PERTINENT TO THEIR LIVES.
A:Very good...what type of decision do you think, give me an example of a decision?
C:WHERE THE PERSON WANTED TO LIVE .
A: Do you think sometimes people assume people with autism don't have mental capacity (eg I've come across people who were deemed not to have mental capacity but actually did..)
C; THE CAPABILITY OF THE BODY AND MIND ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT
A; I like that point – eg look at S Hawkins his body vs his mind
Do you think that's why a lot of people struggle/confuse the two?
THEY CAN'T GET PAST OUR BODIES
Yes i believe that's called cognitive dissonance -describes phenonema when you've believed something for so long and something comes along that is so opposite it is totally too much for the brain to handle)
C; FEELING PROUD THAT I AM SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN ME,
A: that's interesting tell me why you chose the word proud
C; I AM PROUD TO KNOW SO MANY GREAT PEOPLE
A; How about we do 7 more minutes .. As you get older you are entitled to make more decisions about your life, finanaces etc, eg. you may decide to use an accountant .. I wonder how you feel about entering this phase of life , how do you feel about it?
C; IT IS EXACTLY WHAT I AM READY FOR
A: yes make you feel more adult – anything else you want to say about that?
C: WILL I HAVE TO PROVE MY CAPACITY
A; Possibly , i had one person who was your age , talked a bit more about some experiences i have had where Tests were done or psys visited). Omeone would come and ask you a few questions i think
C: THAT'D BE FINE
A; Then people might start asking you all sorts of questions about your finances, where you want to live etc , and here's an interesting one, they may ask you about the cameras in your room – you are at an age know where you can decide if that is appropriate / or no i don't want them here anymore. What do you think
C;THEY HELP MUM KNOW HOW I AM DOING AFTER A SEIZURE OR A SLEEP SO THEYRE IMPORTANT
A; anything else you wanted to say?
C; I AM SUPPORTIVE OF THEM AND THEY'RE ONLY ON FOR TRAINING PURPOSES AND TO CHECK ON ME FOR SEIZURES
A; anything else you wanted to add
C :NO

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

A; Are you happy for this footage to be shared with mum and for her to share with others who may be interested – fine if not!
C; HAPPY TO SHARE ALL MY CLIPS WITH OTHERS
A ; Okay- if you ever change your mind – you can say so during the session

https://youtu.be/iHyAmr2yB9c
Poem - Emily Dickinson
Working on skill of independent pointing - flat letterboard or held by Chris - also IPAD keyboard

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all

And sweetest in the gale is heard
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm

I ve heard it in the chiliest land
And on the strongest sea
Yet never in extremity
It asked a crumb of me

Did a couple of lines at a time – sometimes getting him to practise the word sometimes asking questions
HOPE is the thing with feathers so what does the poet liken hope to ? BIRD
That perches in the soul and perches means? SITTING ON A BRANCH yes like a bird in a tree.. Soul is interesting – not a physical part of us – how would you describe it SOUL IS THE PERSONS KNOWLEDGE AND THOUGHTS – yes its like the ESSENCE of the person. Can you remember the name of the poetic device used when you liken something to something else ? METAPHOR

And sings the tune without the words – like a bird continually tweeting -
And never stops at all means – GOES ON AND ON. So what do these 2 lines say about hope? HOPE (LEB – not sense) ETERNAL - yes i agree..

Appendix - videos of Christopher's RPM sessions

And sweetest in the gale another word for gale? WIND – type of wind? STRONG is heard - yes so the wind carries the tune
And sore must be the storm – what does sore mean in this context HURTING
That could abash the little bird – abash =old fashioned word meaning here? - DESTROY
That kept so many warm . So the meaning here is IT MEANS THAT NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ARE NO GOOD

I ve heard it in the chiliest land –chiliest means/ COLDEST -- C getting agitated asked him what's going on –I FEEL OUT OF SORTS .. o just a few more mins and we can take a break
And on the strongest sea
Yet never in extremity
It asked a crumb of me so no payment/price for hope it exists everywhere for everyone, everywhere
Tell me one thing you hope for ....can be anything..
A CHANCE TO PROTECT SOME OF THE WORLDS CREATURES SO THEY DONT BECOME EXTINCT.

Appendix - Further Learning Resources

I encourage you to continue to develop your skills and those of your child. There are many groups and websites - I have highlighted just the main ones here.

Soma always says that she continues to learn from each student she works with and she generously shares her learnings with us via her trainings, workshops, books, and on social media. She teaches how to use RPM principles to help students to develop skills and hobbies and lead more independent lives.

In recent years Soma has also been helping her students to develop purposeful speech - beginning by encouraging verbalisation of the letters when touching them on the letterboard. She is seeing success even for students who were previously non-speaking.

I highly recommend that you read Soma's books. I have been honoured to help her organise/edit them in recent years. The full list is available on her website www.halo-soma.org . Her son, Tito Mukhopadhyay, has also authored many books which can help you to understand your child's challenges . I particularly enjoyed 'How can I talk if my lips don't move.' Soma and Tito's books are also available to purchase on amazon.

In 2013 I set up the Unlocking Voices - Using RPM International private facebook group to help parents to learn RPM. There are many files of information and you can search for topics /posts. Soma has shared many videos and information on this group over the years. You can also post your own questions on this group.

Unlocking Voices- Using RPM International Learning Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/627199673958985/

Unlocking Voices - Proud Moments and Successes, International Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1398228017064499/

Soma's public page
SOMA RPM (@rpmsoma)

Soma's organisation
HALO Helping Autism through Learning & Outreach

UK not-for-profit 'Unlocking Voices UK CIC' (I am a director)
www.unlockingvoices.com

Appendix - Further Learning Resources

I have produced this course as a free resource for anyone wanting to learn SomaRPM.

If you have found the course helpful and would like to make a donation to help others please use the donate button on

www.unlockingvoices.com

Or

www.halo-soma.org

Christopher Finnes

This self-learning **RPM ABC's -** Absolute Beginners Course is dedicated to my son Christopher.

His life was enriched when we met Soma Mukhopadhyay in 2011 and we learnt RPM (Rapid Prompting Method) from her. It was not always an easy journey and we had many challenges along the way but it was so worthwhile.

Chris was passionate about wanting to help others and he gave me permission to share many videos of our sessions.

Chris sadly died in February 2023. He was aged 24 and suffered a traumatic brain injury caused by a fall during a seizure.



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Christopher Finnes

Christopher began to write this book during lockdown. I regret that we did not get around to finishing it together and I have found it is too emotional for me to do any more work on this. All of the capitals are the words which Chris pointed out using the letterboard.

I do hope that this will provide some motivation and helpful insights for parents who are learning RPM.

2.4.2020

1.Introduction

I AM ESPECIALLY EXCITED TO SHARE MY PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND INSIGHTS WITH YOU. ALL MY LIFE I HAVE WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO NOT HAVE A DISABILITY.

I EXPECT THAT A NUMBER OF YOU WILL OFTEN ASSUME THAT PEOPLE LIKE ME THINK OUR LIVES ARE EASY. THIS IS NOT TRUE. IT CAN BE A HUGE STRUGGLE TO EVEN SIT STILL. CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT?

I HAVE MANY IDEAS I WILL SHARE IN THIS BOOK. I HOPE IT IS HELPFUL IN GIVING YOU A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE INTO A PERSON'S LIFE WITH A DISABILITY CALLED AUTISM

Took 36 mins

9.4.2020 am

2. Moving to adulthood

I AM AT A HUGE TURNING POINT IN MY LIFE. MOVING INTO ADULTHOOD IS A CHALLENGE. I AM WORKING HARD TO BUILD MY SKILLS IN ORDER TO BE MORE INDEPENDENT. I AM MORE DETERMINED NOW THAN I HAVE FELT I WOULD BE ABLE TO BE. I KNOW THAT I HAVE TO GROW UP AND NOT BE RELIANT ON MY PARENTS FOREVER. I KNOW I WILL ALWAYS NEED A BIT OF HELP BECAUSE OF MY POOR MOTOR SKILLS - SO EXPECT THAT EVERYDAY PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO HELP ME EG. COOKING MEALS, GETTING DRESSED.

Took 35 mins

Mum – I have always believed that it is best to be honest with Chris , encouraging him to have a positive attitude and to continually strive to improve himself , but also to set shorter term goals which are realistic and achievable.

9.4.2020 pm

3. Believing in myself

ONE DAY I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO LOOK BACK AT THIS TIME OF MY LIFE AND FEEL PROUD. I EASILY AM COPING WITH CHANGES I WOULD HAVE FOUND IMPOSSIBLE WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. THIS IS INSPIRING ME TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF. I ACTUALLY AM FEELING VERY POSITIVE ABOUT MY FUTURE. SEEING HOW OTHERS DO ALSO INSPIRES ME - (ASKED DO YOU MEAN OTHER NON VERBAL AUTISTIC PEOPLE OR ANYONE ELSE WITH CHALLENGES)- HERE I AM TALKING ABOUT ANYONE WHO OVERCOMES THEIR DISABILITIES

Took 31 mins : here is the video clip. You will see that I have snacks for him to eat which help to keep him sitting and that I position myself to 'block' him from impulsively walking away. Also watch that at 18 mins he impulsively stands up and thereafter he works so hard on stopping his hand biting and standing. https://youtu.be/DGl2eUuBep8

Mum- Over the years we have read many biographical books written by people who have overcome adversity. These include from disabled athletes, people who have suffered injuries and injustices. I felt it was important for Chris to not feel alone with his disability and to know that it is possible to go on to achieve many things. I recall him stating on his letterboard 'my autism does not define me'.

10.4.20

4. I will share practical ideas which have helped me

I ANTICIPATE THAT PEOPLE READING THIS WILL BE LOOKING FOR PRACTICAL IDEAS WHICH THEY CAN USE WITH THEIR CHILDREN. SO I WILL SHARE WHAT HAS HELPED ME . I WILL ASK OTHER PEOPLE WHO KNOW ME TO CONTRIBUTE BY WRITING ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH ME . (asked who this would include, we can always add more later) MUM, DAD, CATHERINE, ALEX, DAWN, KAREN, SEAN, BOB AND LISA.

Took 27 mins

We did not finish this part

10.4.20

5. first advice- talk in a way which assumes understanding

FIRST PIECE OF ADVICE IS THAT YOU TALK TO YOUR CHILD IN A WAY THAT ASSUMES THEY UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING. EVEN WHEN I DON'T APPEAR TO BE PAYING ATTENTION I CAN TELL YOU THAT I AM. I MAY BE WATCHING TELETUBBIES ON YOUTUBE BUT I AM LISTENING ALL THE TIME. I ALSO CAN UNDERSTAND ADULT LANGUAGE SO DO NOT LIKE BEING SPOKEN TO LIKE A TODDLER.

Took 25 mins

6. 12.4.20 Movements and actions

I HAVE STRONG, IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL MOVEMENTS AND IMPERFECT ACTIONS. AUTISM AFFECTS MY BODY AS WELL AS MY BRAIN. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND AS IT CAN BE EASY TO MISINTERPRET MY ACTIONS. EG. WHEN I BITE MY HAND PEOPLE WHO DO NOT KNOW ME ASSUME THAT I AM ANGRY AND BACK OFF. THE BITING CAN MEAN MANY THINGS AND SOMETIMES IT IS JUST A HABIT THAT I NEED HELP TO OVERCOME. BREAKING LONG ESTABLISHED HABITS TAKES A LOT OF EFFORT AND PATIENCE FROM THE AUTISTIC PERSON AND THEIR PARENTS OR HELPERS.

Took 39 mins

Nb during this sect he was constantly verbalising and pointing to his toe – he had become obsessive about it last night and pulled toenail off – very sore . also an example of handbiting in this section.

7. 13.4.20 Having the right people to help me

HELP IS NEEDED ALL THE TIME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE IMPROVEMENTS IN MY SKILLS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I HAVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO HELP ME EVERYDAY. PEOPLE NEED TO PUSH ME TO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE NEW GOALS BECAUSE OTHERWISE I WOULD SPEND MY DAYS PLAYING ON MY IPAD.

Chris needed more continuation prompts today ..next letter etc and encouragement to point - his hand seemed to freeze sometimes .tried changing to use alphabet stencil for part of this. This happens on some days following overnight seizures. At end mum asked - you found it hard today - was it right for me to carry on or should i have stopped - RIGHT TO CARRY ON

Took 32 mins

8. 16.4.20 – I need people with determination

THE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT MY HELPERS IS THAT THEY ARE ENCOURAGING. I NEED PEOPLE WITH DETERMINATION. I KNOW THAT IT CAN BE VERY CHALLENGING WORKING WITH SOMEONE WHO CONSTANTLY WALKS AWAY. YOU SHOULD NOT GIVE UP - CALL ME BACK, CHEER ME ON, PRAISE MY TRIES. IF I CANNOT DO SOMETHING DON'T WORRY - JUST BREAK IT DOWN INTO SMALL STEPS. ADDITIONALLY MY SEIZURES CAN AFFECT MY SKILLS FROM DAY TO DAY SO DON'T EXPECT ME TO ALWAYS BE ABLE TO DO THINGS I PREVIOUSLY COULD DO . Mum discussed possibility of her writing comments from her perspective after each of his sections in the book and asked what Chris thought .. I THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA.

Took 37 mins

9. 19.4.20 – Knowledge about how the world works

MY LIFE IS A HAPPY ONE. A LIFE FILLED WITH ACTIVITIES AND STIMULATION. I LIKE THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HOW THE WORLD WORKS SO I CAN DISCUSS ABOUT INTERESTING TOPICS (asked if i should edit to have discussions about interesting topics) YES. THIS IS NOT SOMETHING JUST FOR ME. I BELIEVE ALL AUTISTIC PEOPLE LIKE THIS KNOWLEDGE SO SHOULD BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO LEARN

Took 31 mins – *but had started on one thought and then changed track* .

10. 20.4.20 – Tangible benefits may not be not seen straight away

THE TANGIBLE BENEFITS MAY NOT ALWAYS BE SEEN STRAIGHT AWAY. ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT WE ARE TAKING EVERYTHING IN EVEN THOUGH IT MAY NOT APPEAR SO. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS BELIEF IN ME. EXPECTATIONS ARE THE KEY SO ALWAYS BEAR THIS IN MIND AND EXPECT GREAT PROGRESS (more or finished F)

Took 30 mins - *Chris was finding it challenging today - more handbiting etc, his thoughts didn't seem to flow as much as usual. . After we finished filming he did lay down and requested pressure on his tummy - so had had some pain. I will give him the opportunity to edit this next time we look at it to see if he wants to change anything*

11. 23.4.20 – I am thankful all the opportunities

I AM THANKFUL FOR ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES I HAVE BEEN GIVEN. IT WOULD BE EASY TO THINK THAT IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO TAKE ME TO CERTAIN PLACES, HOWEVER, I NEED TO EXPERIENCE NEW THINGS SO ADVISE THAT OTHERS MIGHT NEED THE SAME. I REMEMBER HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS GOING TO MY FIRST PARTY. I EXPERIENCED EXTREME ANXIETY - JUST TAKING THE FIRST STEPS INTO THE STRANGE BUILDING TOOK ALL MY ENERGY BUT I AM SO GLAD I WENT. NOW I LOVE BIRTHDAY PARTIES AND WAS HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO HOST MY OWN 21ST .

We discussed this - how he asked friends to all film birthday messages and how he wrote a speech which was played at the party. Asked how he felt). IT WAS THE BEST BIRTHDAY EVER.

Took 42 mins

12.30.4.20 – Obsessions

Mum suggested he write about this as Chris has a large collection of dvds and last Sunday one was broken - mum has ordered another and he is waiting for it to arrive)

I CAN GET OBSESSED THINKING ABOUT DVDS. WHEN ONE IS BROKEN IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO STOP THINKING ABOUT IT . I NEED A REPLACEMENT AND I TOTALLY CANNOT FOCUS ON ANYTHING ELSE PROPERLY UNTIL IT ARRIVES. I HAVE BEEN PLEASED THAT I HAVEN'T LOST MY TEMPER. ON OCCASIONS LIKE THIS IT

HELPS ME TO HAVE LOTS OF VERBAL ENCOURAGEMENT FROM MUM AND DAD TO HELP ME TO STAY CALM.

During this session he was eating avocado and then began to obsess about a mark on his t shirt - we managed to carry on and straight after the session changed his t shirt

Took 27 mins

13 .1.5.20 – Annoying habits

I HAVE MANY DRIVERS AND ANNOYING HABITS. IT IS SO HARD TO EXPLAIN HOW THE HABITS TAKE HOLD. ONCE THEY BECOME ESTABLISHED IT CAN BE VERY HARD TO STOP. BITING MY HAND IS AN *EXAMPLE - I WISH I COULD JUST STOP! EVERY DAY I NEED TO TRY TO CONTROL MY IMPULSES*

While spelling this Chris grabbed me roughly . I asked him what happens when you grab mum roughly - will i get hurt or .., he responded HURT *and then do you mean to hurt me* NO. *What might help you to control the impulses?* HAVING REMINDERS FROM YOU HELPS.

Took 29 mins

14. 15.5.20- Believe I am still capable of learning even when it does not appear so

ON DAYS MY HANDS ARE NOT CO OPERATING I STILL LIKE TO LEARN. IT IS IMPORTANT TO BELIEVE THAT I AM STILL CAPABLE OF LEARNING EVEN THOUGH IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT

Took 18 mins

Context - I had explained to Chris about sharing his lesson a few days ago where he was having extreme challenges pointing - and that many parents had thanked us for sharing this. Gave options of things we could do today.

This was the session we shared https://youtu.be/oBklTP5dEyY

Sometimes following seizures Chris loses his pointing skill (and other purposeful movement skills) - becomes very slow and hard to initiate movement . I know that he is still able to listen and take in information so in this short session I carried on and gave him an opportunity to participate with short answers - yes/no, agree etc. We also sometimes used a pencil and the stencils and sometimes had to do just one letter at a time and then give a tactile break .

Even though it was so hard for him Chris did still want to participate and he did have a go at some longer answers eg would you like to be famous or a nobody MAYBE SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE. What would you like to be famous for . FOR ASKING PEOPLE TO CHANGE THEIR PERCEPTION OF AUTISM

15 18.5.20 -I don't waste time thinking about what might have been

Christopher Finnes

I CHANGE MY BELIEFS ABOUT STRANGE THOUGHTS WHICH POP UP IN MY MIND. SOMETIMES A THOUGHT OF NOT ASKING FOR HELP WHEN I NEED IT MAKES AN APPEARANCE. I KNOW IT EXPLAINS NOTHING BUT I CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHAT I WOULD BE LIKE WITHOUT HELP.

IT MAY BE A VERY DIFFERENT LIFE.

NO ONE WOULD KNOW I WAS INTELLIGENT. THEY WOULD SAY I DID NOT UNDERSTAND AND JUST SING SILLY HELLO SONGS EVERY DAY .

Mum said this is confusing because you still like me to sing some nursery rhymes – can you explain more I STILL ENJOY SOME FAMILIAR SONGS.

Re read first sentence – can you explain more?

I NOW DO NOT WASTE MY TIME THINKING ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN. I FOCUS ON THE PRESENT AND TAKE EACH DAY AS IT COMES.

Took 46 mins