



Math Sentences

Use the sample script below as a different approach to engaging students with language-based learning disabilities in classroom discussions.

Example

(Kate has expressive language difficulty, while Fred and Sam do not.)

Teacher: *Can anyone give me a definition of the word circumference? Kate?*

Kate: *Um, yeah... oh, yeah, that thing (10-second pause as Kate gestures a circular motion with her right index finger). Like a ...ball...(5-second pause) equator thing.*

Teacher: *Right. That is a part of the answer. I'm going to ask you to expand on your definition after we discuss the idea. (The teacher writes the word "circumference" on the board.) Fred, what shape is the equator?*

Fred: *The equator's a circle around the globe.*

Teacher: *Great. The words around and circle are important parts of the definition of circumference. (The teacher writes "circle" and "around" on the board.) If you were to start at one point on the equator and measure the distance (The teacher writes the word "distance") around the globe, what would that distance be called? Sam?*

Sam: *Would that be the circumference of the globe?*

Teacher: *Yes, it would. Kate, can you give me another definition for circumference that uses the words written on the board – circumference: distance around circle?*

Kate: *Circumference... is the distance around...a circle.*

Teacher: *That's a wonderful definition, Kate. The circumference is the distance around a circle.*

Can you imagine Kate functioning well in a flash card, oral question – and answer exercise? Obviously, she would not. Kate would learn simply to disengage herself from classroom discussion.