Repetition and Extension

Repetition and Extension are language stimulation techniques that teachers can use to keep conversations going. They can also increase children’s vocabulary.

Using **Repetition**, the adult listens to what the child says and then restates or re-phrases the child’s words. The adult listens to the child, then uses the child’s words in a more complete phrase or sentence.

Child: Box.
Teacher: Oh, you’re painting the box blue.

Child: Car fast.
Teacher: Yes, your car is going very fast.

Child: That her dolly.
Teacher: That is her dolly!

Using **Extension**, the adult first re-states the child’s words into a sentence, and then adds another sentence on the child’s topic to extend the conversation further.

Child: Box.
Teacher: Oh, you’re painting the box blue. It’s a good box for your rocks.

Child: Car fast.
Teacher: Yes, your car is going very fast. It’s coming around the corner.

Child: That her dolly.
Teacher: Yes, that is Miya’s dolly. She looks like she’s hungry.

**Repetition and Extension helps to keep conversations going by focusing on the child’s language.** The intent behind Repetition and Extension is to increase the child’s expressive language. By repeating what the child says, the adult is providing positive reinforcement and recognition of the child’s words. Through extension, the adult is adding more language and vocabulary. The adult is also extending the child’s topic further which can lead to more language and more play.

**Repetition and Extension is effective when the child has emerging language and is beginning to speak using a few words or incomplete phrases.** When the child is nonverbal, Self Talk and Parallel Talk increases the child’s receptive language by “showering” the child with words and language. When the child is beginning to talk, Repetition and Extension increases the child’s expressive language by reinforcing what the child has said, extending the child’s language, and modeling language.

John Gunnarson, 2018  johngunnarson@gmail.com
Provide “wait time” for the child to continue talking. After repeating and extending what a child has said, the adult is silent and provides time for the child to speak. Avoid slipping into Self Talk or Parallel Talk in which the adult is doing all talking.

The success of Repetition and Extension depends on the adult’s ability to understand not only the child’s words, but also the child’s intent--- and to add information which is of interest to the child. The adult listens carefully to what the child is saying and responds by expanding the child’s words into more complete phrases or sentences. The child determines the topic. The adult follows the child’s lead, adding more content to the conversation, new vocabulary, and new sentence structures. Conversations that are not child-centered usually end prematurely, while child-centered expansions lead to increased conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child-centered Repetition and Extension</th>
<th>Adult-centered Repetition and Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult: Wow, you do have new shoes! I’ll bet you can run really fast in them.</td>
<td>Adult: Oh, you have on new shoes. What color are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult: Yes, the truck is broken. The gas station where they fix trucks is open.</td>
<td>Adult: Oh no! The truck is broken! Someone should have been more careful. Who broke it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult: Here’s your birthday cake! Happy birthday to you! I love to eat birthday cake.</td>
<td>Adult: Oh, a birthday cake. How nice. What shape is it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For dual language learners the strategies of Repetition and Extension are effective when the child begins to use expressive language in the second language. The adult carefully pays attention to what the child says and then validates the child’s efforts by repeating and reinforcing the child’s words.

Child: [Child is putting on his jacket.] “Zipper?”
Teacher: “Yes, that’s the zipper. I can help you zip your jacket.”
Child: “Gimme juice.”
Teacher: “You want me to give you some juice? Here is a cup of apple juice.”