

P A M M A R S H A L L A



THE **FOUR STAGES** OF **IMITATION**

Facilitating Sound & Word Production
In Young Children Who Are Non-Verbal

ONE-HOUR SEMINAR

THE **FOUR STAGES** **OF IMITATION**

Facilitating Sound & Word Production
In Young Children Who Are Non-Verbal

by Pam Marshalla, MA, CCC-SLP
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The Four Stages of Imitation: Facilitating Sound and Word Production in Young Children Who Are Non-Verbal

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Pam Marshalla, MA, CCC-SLP, completed a Master's Thesis in phonology in 1976 and worked with clients of all ages and ability levels for over 35 years. For decades, Pam taught continuing education workshops around the United States and Canada. She is celebrated as a "clinician's clinician" whose practical books and seminars successfully integrate research data and clinical experience.

Financial Disclosure: Pam Marshalla was the owner of Marshalla Speech & Language (MSL), through which this lecture was originally published and from which she received a monthly salary. Pam Marshalla passed away in 2015; this course continues to be published by MSL.

Much of the information presented in this lecture is from Pam's book, *Becoming Verbal With Childhood Apraxia*, which is also published through MSL.

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INTRODUCTION

In this hour-long lecture, Pam Marshalla describes the four stages of imitation development as defined by Jean Piaget, focusing on how the stages can be used as a basis for developing sound and word imitation in young children who are non-verbal or nearly non-vocal. Many of these children appear unable or unwilling to imitate sounds and words.

In this video, Pam shares the specialized methods that she has developed for speech-language pathologists who are working with clients such as these, based on the original writings of Jean Piaget [see page 30].

The following slides are part of a video production and should be viewed along with the accompanying video of the same title.

Client: Damien

Slide 1

- Two-year-old, completely non-verbal, normal in all other ways.
- Two months of S/L with no response using standard model-imitate methods in playful activities.
- He just would not or could not imitate sounds and words for his therapist or anyone else.

QUESTION

How can we help any young child begin to imitate sounds and words when they will not imitate?

Slide 2

Imitation

Definition: To copy, mimic, or duplicate

Speech/Language: To copy a sound, word, action, or gesture

ADULT SAYS	CHILD SAYS
Say, <i>bye-bye</i> .	Bye-bye #

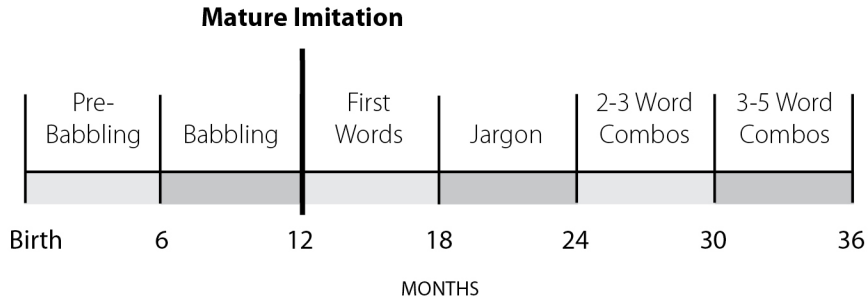
CHARACTERISTICS

- Adult initiates by modeling.
- Child responds by imitating.
- Child can say a sound or word he has never said before.

Emergence of Imitation

Slide 3

The ability to imitate emerges by 10-14 months of age and allows a child to produce his first words.



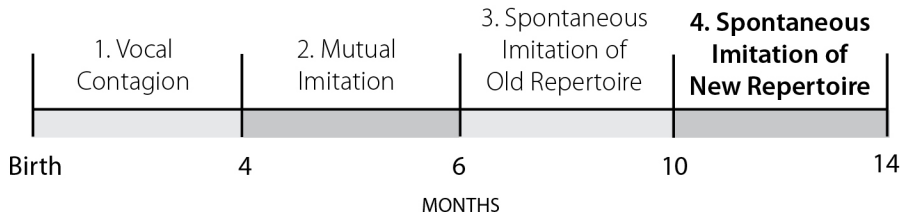
Slide 4

Stages of Imitation



Jean Piaget 1896-1980

- Swiss philosopher, natural scientist and developmental theorist.
- Known for his work studying children and his theories of cognitive development.
- Founder/director of the International Centre for Genetic Epistemology in Geneva.



Stage 1: Vocal Contagion

Slide 5

Spontaneous Sound, No Turns, and Synchronicity

- Birth–5 months of age.
- Makes sound to self.
- Solo play for self entertainment and discovery.
- Piaget: Purposeful and repetitious sound play.
- Makes more sound when no one is paying attention to him to entertain himself.
- Sometimes child makes more sound in the presence of speech. Called *vocal contagion* or *synchronicity*.

Solo Play

ADULT	INFANT
Uninvolved	Spontaneous Sound

↔

No Turns

ADULT	INFANT
Models sound or word	Looks back in silence

↔

Synchronicity

CROWD	INFANT
Crowd Noise	Spontaneous Sound

↔

Slide 6

Clients

- Non-verbal clients often operate as if they are in stage one.
- Absence of turn-taking is common. They say sounds and words when they are in the mood.
- Many say sounds/words spontaneously: *pop-out sounds/words*.
- Stress, emotion, and sudden interest seem to cause sounds/words to spring forth.

A	ADULT	CHILD
Can you say, <i>shoe</i> ? →		Silence #

B	ADULT	CHILD
Do you want juice? Say, <i>juice</i> . →		Silence #

C	ADULT	CHILD
What does the cow say? <i>Moo!</i> →		Silence #

D	ADULT	CHILD
Ignoring child. →		Calls out to get attention
Attends ↙		

Stage 1 Goals

Slide 7

What's emerging? Sound! Lots of sound.

Goal 1: To make sounds (any sounds).

Goal 2: To make more sound per unit of time.

Goal 3: To eliminate the need for turn-taking.

Goal 4: Attend all the child says or does spontaneously.

- Don't ask questions.
- Don't tell him to say words.
- Don't ask for sound or word imitations.
- Provide opportunities for sounds and words to pop out.
- And simply engage in sound play.

Slide 8

Basic Activities

Vestibular Stimulation

Running, hopping, tossing, swinging, sliding, cuddling, bouncing, squeezing, chasing.

Oral Stimulation

Putting hands, fingers, toys, foods in the mouth; using blow toys.

Hand Stimulation

In water, sand, play dough, lotion.

Light Touch Stimulation

Tickling, blowing, light touch to the bare skin.

Fun!

Silliness, unexpected circumstances, anything that causes laughter.

Acoustic Chambers

Closets, cabinets, forts, boxes, bowls, hallways, stairways.

Being Left Alone/Ignored

Leave child alone if he is making sound in the car, crib, highchair, etc..

Synchronous Sound Play

Singing, laughing, crying, shouting, animal/environmental sounds.

Stage 2: Mutual Imitation

Slide 9

Create turns by imitating the child's spontaneous sounds.
Teach the child to imitate by imitating him.

ADULT		INFANT
		Bah-bah!
Bah-bah!	→	Bah-bah!
Doh-doh!	→	Bah-bah!
Bye-bye!	→	Bah-bah!

- 5–7 months of age.
- Child makes sound and begins to repeat himself over and over for self entertainment and discovery, e.g., babbling.
- **Child is learning to imitate himself**, to do the same thing many times in a row.
- Child will do this alone and within dialogue frames that we create.
- Turns are established but child cannot follow adult lead.

Slide 10

Stimulating Mutual Imitation Dialogue

DIALOGUE

Looking at an animal picture book.

ADULT	CHILD
	Moo.
Moo. That's a cow.	(Silence)
(Silence)	Doggie.
Doggie! Woof! Woof!	(Silence)
(Silence)	Bird.
That bird's flying.	(Silence)

- Babies do this with sound.
- Our clients do it with pop-out words.
- Child initiates / adult follows.
- Use a pregnant pause to create the dialogue frame.
- Develop rhythmic back-and-forth exchanges.
- Be patient! It can feel like you are doing nothing.

Mature Mutual Imitation Dialogue

Slide 11

DIALOGUE
Making cookies together.

ADULT	CHILD
	Cookie?
Cookie. Lots of cookies.	Cookie?
Not now cookie.	Eat.
Eat? Not now.	Cookie?
Cookie later.	Mmm.
Mmm... We like cookies.	Cookie.
You like cookies?	Cookie.

- Wait for the child to say something spontaneously.
- Echo it back to create the dialogue frame and add more.
- It is more important to rehearse what he can say in turn than it is for him to say new sounds and words at this stage.
- He is learning how to take control of the things he is saying spontaneously.

Slide 12

Stage 2 Goals

Creating the Dialogue Frame

Goal 1: To establish turns.

Goal 2: To increase the number of turns taken back and forth.

Goal 3: To improve the rhythm of the back-and-forth exchanges.

BASIC ACTIVITIES

- No specific activities are necessary at this stage. Anything that causes the child to speak spontaneously will do.
- You are creating back-and-forth dialogue routines no matter what is going on.

Stage 3: Spontaneous Imitation – Old

Slide 13

Spontaneous Imitation in Old Repertoire

Teach the child to imitate his own sounds or words on demand.

- 7-10 months of age
- A child's old repertoire is the set of sounds/words he already says.
- These are the things that "pop out" here and there throughout the day.
- For example, he sees a car and says, "Car!"
- We now can begin to get him to say these words on demand.
- We teach him to imitate his repertoire.

PARENT	CHILD
Are you ready to <u>go</u> ?	Go.
Okay let's <u>go</u> .	Go.
Here's your <u>bear</u> .	(Silence)
Say, " <u>bear</u> ."	Bear.
Good job. Go get your <u>coat</u> .	Coat?
Yes. Coat. Go get it. <u>Okay</u> ?	Okay.

Slide 14

Stage 3 Goals

Goal 1: To produce old repertoire words multiple times every day.

Goal 2: To establish practice routines.

BASIC ACTIVITIES

- Dialogues anywhere anytime.
- Practice cards.
- On-demand practice.
- Devise repetitive games/activities.

Inventory the Old Repertoire

Slide 15

Chart what the child expresses and how he expresses it.

SPOKEN WORDS	SIGNED WORDS	MEANINGLESS SOUNDS	MEANINGFUL SOUNDS	PICTURED WORDS
Apple- a Bird- bo Cat- tae No- mo Mom- mah Dad- dah All done- duh Up- p Eat- t	All gone Telephone Shoe Bath Night-night Cookie More	Cry Whine Fuss Bah-bah... Nah-nah... Go-go-go... Bi-labial Rasp Glottal Rasp Nasal Snort Laugh	E-e- Mouse Growl- Lion Oo-oo- Owl Thhh- Snake H-h-h- Dog	Milk - 4/09 OJ - 5/09 Cookie - 7/09 Cracker - 8/09 Cheerios - 10/09 Grandma - 1/10 Bus - 3/10 Outside - 4/10

Slide 16

Make Practice Cards

Practice old repertoire words every day.

CARD FRONT
Target Word & Image



CARD BACK
Write How Child Says Word

Poo - 9/3/10

CARD BACK
OVER TIME

Poo - 9/3/10
Poo Duh - 12/5/10
Poo Tuh - 3/6/11
Uh Poo Tuh - 7/2/11
Kuh Poo Tuh - 12/9/11

This is like Nancy Kaufman's materials.²

On-Demand Practice

Slide 17

Use a variety of pragmatic functions to broaden the child's use of his repertoire.

TYPE OF STIMULI	ADULT		CHILD
Command	Say <i>car</i> .	→	Car!
Q-A-A	What is this? Car?	→	Car!
Fill-in-the-blank	I see a.....	→	Car!
Fill-in-the-sequence	Boat, train, bike.....	→	Car!
Challenge	I bet you can't say <i>car</i> .	→	Car!
Reverse Psychology	No, no! Don't say <i>car</i> !	→	Car!
Amazement	Are you going to say <i>car again</i> ?! →		Car!
Awe	I can't believe you can say <i>car</i> !	→	Car!
Insistence	This is not a car!	→	Car!
Acting Stupid	Are you <i>sure</i> this is a car?	→	Car!
Repeat	Say it again.	→	Car!
Alter the prosody	Louder!	→	Car!

Slide 18

Stage 4: Spontaneous Imitation – New

Spontaneous Imitation in New Repertoire*Teach the child to imitate any sounds or words on demand.*

- Imitation reaches maturity.
- 10-14 months of age.
- The child now can try to imitate any gesture, sound, or word that he so chooses and that are within his basic motor abilities.
- This does not mean he does his imitations perfectly.
- But he understands what he is to do and he is willing to try.

*Imitation becomes fun!**It's about getting the child in the **mood**.**Mood is created with the pragmatic functions.*

ADULT		CHILD
Say bye-bye to grandma.	→	Bye-bye.
Yeah! (Smiling, clapping)	↙	(Smiling, clapping)
	→	

Activities

Slide 19

These are well-known basics for general language stimulation.

- Select new words of high value.
- Create the mood.
- Watch for appropriate moments to teach new words.
- Bring in new words as situations allow.
- Teach others how to do this.
- Don't expect new words to come out right away.
- Introduce all kinds of new words one after another.
- Begin to request words.
- Keep track of new words that emerge as long as you can (until the number gets to big to track).
- Assign new meanings to old sounds.
- Practice, practice, practice.

Slide 20

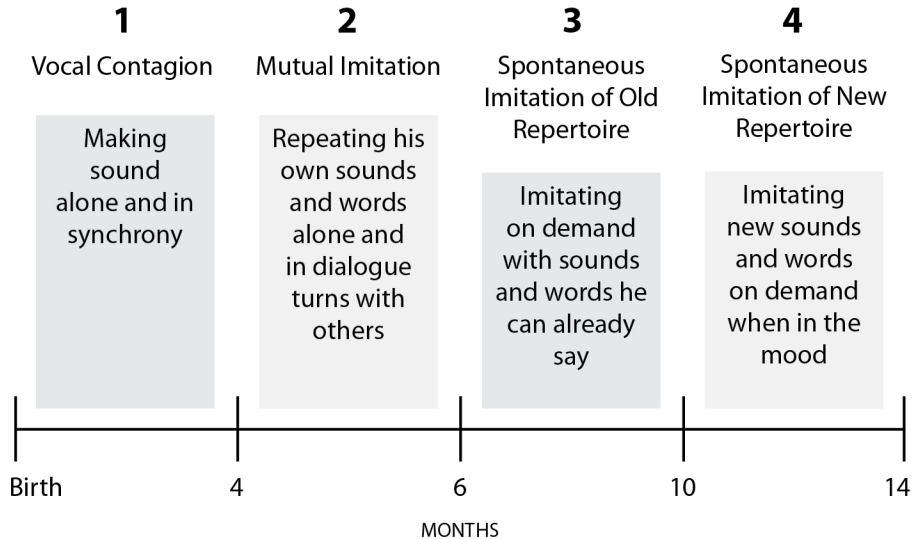
This Takes Time

- Reaching the final stage of imitation doesn't happen overnight.
- It takes the average child about 12 months to get here.
- If it takes the average little kid 12 months arrive at mature imitation, how long does it take a child with a severe speech-language disability?
- Patience. Work the steps. Be mindful of what step you're working at.
- Working through the stages of imitation becomes the broad palate on which all other skills are painted.



Summary: Stages of Imitation

Slide 21



Slide 22

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