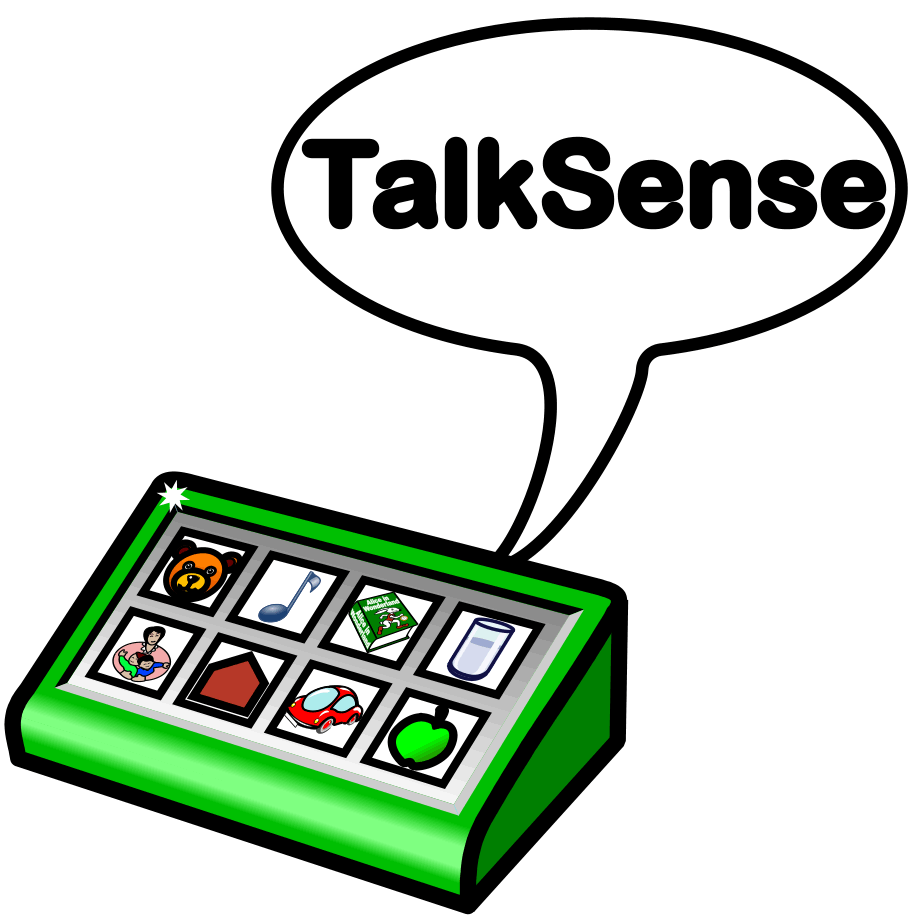
**Talksense M.S.R. Course**

**OOR Stages of Development**

According to Jones, there are five stages of development (Jones A. 1995) which move from being a passive recipient of communication to an active and expressive communicator. Development through the stages can take many months or years and some may never reach stage five.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Descriptors** | **Characterised By** |
| Stage One | Intolerant Difficult to reach  Dependent Extraneous | Individual shows little tolerance of OOR: ignores, drops, or throws it. |
| Stage Two | More tolerant Hard to reach  Dependent Extraneous | Holds/carries OOR but demonstrates little understanding. |
| Stage Three | Tolerant Receptive  Dependent Meaningful | Individual begins to show some understanding of the meaning of one or more OOR. |
| Stage Four | Tolerant Expressive  Dependent Meaningful | Individual will correctly select from two or more OOR with assistance from staff. |
| Stage Five | Tolerant Expressive  Independent Meaningful | Individual selects and uses OOR independently to express a need. |

  
  
**Stage One**:   at Stage One, Learners are intolerant of the OOR. They will not look at it, refuse to hold it, throw it away, ignore it completely, or be completely unaware of its presence or existence. Such Learners are dependent on others. That is, they will not use OOR expressively but will wait passively while another presents the OOR to them. As such, they are dependent on others while working with OOR. The meaning of the OOR at this stage is extraneous; that is, for the Learner, the OOR has little or no meaning and is perhaps perceived as a plaything if, indeed, the Learner has any sensory awareness of it at all. 

No claim is made of Learner cognition during Stage One. The purpose of the stage is to start the process of developing and building such understanding. By definition, Learners operating at this stage are difficult to reach. They may be completely passive or uncooperative with what you are trying to do. They will not understand why an OOR is being presented and, indeed, may unaware of its presence.  
  
Note: Stage One necessarily includes the assessment and development of the skills that enable a person to benefit from the scheme. It is not expected that the individual Learner will be simply 'plunged' into the basic OOR scheme from day one but, rather, that the OOR scheme will include practices that will lead to the development of sensory awareness, tolerance, and person to person interaction skills. Thus, for example, the stage might include more time spent on reducing tactile defensiveness and improving haptic awareness.

  
**Stage Two:**    During stage two Learners become a little more tolerant of the OORs being presented. That does not mean they grasp them with open arms but don't tend to push them away as much or perhaps throw them away less. Staff typically report the task as being a little easier and 'feel' that they 'might be getting through'. In all other aspects stage two is identical to stage one although, perhaps, the Learner is not as difficult to reach but has become just 'hard to reach'. Many Learners will jump straight in at stage two. They will hold and tolerate a presented OOR although they are still dependent on others for its presentation and still have no understanding what the OOR represents. 

**  
Stage Three:**   By stage three, Learners are becoming receptive to the idea of OOR. While they may not demonstrate complete awareness and understanding of their meaning they may, nevertheless, get up and start moving towards the door after presentation (if ambulant) or otherwise indicate some form of partial understanding. If a Learner does move to the door, staff should open it and allow the Learner to lead the way with the staff following (ensuring safety). If the Learner goes straight to the POLE ... celebrate! That is a momentous occasion for both the Learner and the staff. However, this isn't likely on the first attempt. If the Learner goes completely in the wrong direction, staff should re-direct the Learner by barring the way. If the Learner goes in the right direction but doesn't quite reach the POLE staff should provide as much assistance as is required (from each according to their ability. to each according to their need) in order that the Learner achieves success. Other Learners may be helped to progress in this stage by taking them to the POLE door and then allowing the Learner to enter the room unaccompanied. On a subsequent occasion, staff can guide the Learner to a metre further from the POLE door and hope that s/he makes the little extra distance on his/her own. Backward chaining in this fashion, the staff and the Learner keep 'parting company' a little further from the POLE on each subsequent occasion (although the staff member is never too far away). The Learner takes on a more active role and the staff member become very slightly more passive (supportive).  
  
 **Stage Four:**   During Stage Four, the Learner is assisted to become more expressive; that is s/he moves from being a passive receiver of the OOR to one who begins to understand that s/he can exercise control over others by using the objects expressively. This is very unlikely to happen out of the blue (although it has been known) but, typically, requires a catalyst; that is, staff promote the expressive phase through their interactions with the Learner. The catalyst comes in the manner the OOR are presented. Before this stage, it is important that OOR are presented individually:- one object for one POLE. When the object is presented, the Learner should move immediately to the POLE. However, at Stage Four, the Learner can be encouraged to select the appropriate OOR from the place where the OOR are stored. From personal experience, I prefer a bag-based approach with each individual Learner on the scheme having their own bag and objects. Thus, at Stage Four, the Learner can be presented with a choice of two objects in the mouth of the bag, although the 'incorrect' object should be placed behind the appropriate choice, such that the Learner is 'assisted' to make the correct choice of object for the POLE. However, if, by accident, the Learner manages to get the incorrect object, accompany the Learner to the place indicated by the (incorrect) OOR then, immediately present the correct OOR (without choice!) and proceed to the correct POLE. The process of encouraging the Learner to take / retrieve a desired OOR from a bag (or other) is an essential precursor to Stage Five in which a Learner independently selects an OOR and presents it to a member of staff.  
  
**Stage Five:**    It is rare for Learners experiencing PMLD to reach stage five though common for Learners to make progress through the stages. If Learners are working with several OOR they do not typically reach stage five with all of them at the same time. It is usual for just one to be used in this way. At stage five, a Learner will independently retrieve an OOR and present it to a staff member. This should be seen as an expressive act of communication and acted upon as such (even if it were actually accidental). It is a momentous moment in the life of any Learner: it is also a momentous moment for staff. I often joke, on the Talksense training courses, that the establishment should organize a party and celebrate the achievement: it is of that order of magnitude.   
  
Some Learners never reach stage five with OOR because they have moved on to other communication systems such as symbols. This is typically the route taken by Learners experiencing an ASD. Such Learners benefit from the consistency and predictability of an OOR scheme and use it as a foundation in order to move on to a another augmentative communication system such as working with symbols. Some Learners never reach stage five because they have not started on the path towards communication early in life and reach the end of their time at school or at college and move to a place where the scheme is not supported. If they had started while they were toddlers who knows what would have been possible. It is never too early or too late to start but it is better to start early. Some Learners never reach stage five because of the severity of their learning difficulty and physical disability. Staff should never assume that a Learner is incapable of making progress: while it is undoubtedly true that some find it more difficult than others, all can benefit to some degree.  
  
Note that a Learner may enter the scheme at any stage depending on ability.

Each stage is accompanied by a number of objectives that should be met before proceeding to the next level. When all objectives have been met then (and only then) a movement to the next stage can be considered. The objectives for Stage One are set out below. Stage One includes the necessary prerequisites for progression through the following stages. It may take some time to achieve these objectives with some Learners depending on their level of awareness etc. The Objectives below have been written as factual observable objective statements: either a person can do it or they cannot. Objectives should not be written in a subjective manner; 'Johnny understands that ...' how does a member of staff know that Johnny understands? It is subjective and not objective. 'Demonstrates a memory for an object' is another problematic objective: how are staff to know whether an individual has 'demonstrated'? It really is too woolly. We might ask them to record exactly how the Learner 'demonstrated' a memory and then, review the observations of several staff to make a decision as to whether it is believed that the observations fulfil the objective set. The use of video (particularly at this stage) can help clarify if an objective is being met and is also very useful as a baseline to measure the progression made by a specific Learner.

Penny Lacey's 'Scruffy Targets' (see earlier) can assist staff in finding paths to explore ways to reaching objectives. Therefore, you may wish to amend the following, not only to suit the needs of your Learners and your establishment but also, to include some scruffier objectives!

**Stage One Objectives.**  
The Individual will be able to:

1. respond in any way to (varying) external stimuli (change in the environment)(record stimuli, record response);
2. respond to a particular sensory modality (light, sound, feel, smell, vibration, etc)(record modality);
3. respond in any way to presence of another person (record response);  
                -         outside personal space;  
                -         edge of personal space;  
                -         inside personal space;  
                -         close contact;
4. notice object placed in personal space (include rejection of object);
5. respond to object touching skin;
6. demonstrate a fondness for a particular object (repeatedly selects object from a group, for example);
7. tolerate object placed in personal space;
8. tolerate object touching skin for short period (record object, record location, record period);
9. tolerate presence of another in personal space (record specific person[s]);
10. tolerate touch of another;
11. tolerate close contact from another;
12. demonstrate a reduction in the rejection of object(s) placed in personal space;
13. interact in any way with an object (record interaction, record positive and negative objects);
14. explore object in personal space  
                 -         with eyes;  
                 -         with hands;  
                 -         with mouth;  
                 -         with other (record)

Stage One of the OOR scheme is about assessing, developing, and recording awareness, sensory, tolerance, and person to person interaction skills. As these skills form the basis for all areas of development they will not just be addressed as a means to the MSR scheme but in all subject areas. Staff should seek ways of fostering such skills in the pursuit of meeting the objectives in a caring and fun manner.  
   
Stage One focus is primarily on developing sensory awareness of the OBJECT and of other people. Stage One may therefore take a considerable amount of time to achieve for some. It is not a race to the finishing post ... it need not be rushed.   
  
Please Note:  
 - Not all the above objectives with be relevant for some individuals and may

have to be adapted. It is left to your best judgement which to adopt, adapt, or

reject.

* Although the numbered arrangement suggests a particular sequential arrangement, there may be times when one objective is met before another (earlier numbered) one.
* Linear routes may be easier to depict on a website but rarely does life follow text: individuals will progress in different ways by different routes and therefore some flexibility should be built into any system.

**Stage Two**

Stage Two should only be attempted when the objectives from Stage One have been met to the satisfaction of the staff members with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the OOR system.  It may be that a particular Learner begins at stage two (or above) and skips an earlier stage because it is felt that s/he is already operating beyond the level indicated by the objectives that have been specified.  
  
Stage two Objectives are probably not really objectives at all! An objective, by definition has to be quantifiable and many of the items listed below are not: they are more 'feelings' or 'instincts'. A staff member 'feels' that a particular Learner is improving, becoming more tolerant, or less difficulty to work with.  Perhaps the individual is now throwing the OOR on the floor a little less often or is exploring the presented OORs for a little longer and appears to be a little less tactile defensive than previously.    
  
In stage Two, we begin to notice not just increased acceptance and interactions with object but also increased acceptance and interaction with 'others' particularly staff.  The Learner will demonstrate an awareness of the presence of another person by altering their behaviour in some way (it does not have to be positive: if the Learner starts to scream when another person approaches, they are indicating an awareness.  During stage Two there will be a movement towards greater tolerance and acceptance of both Objects and People. The movement will be from behaviour that staff may find difficult in the direction of behaviour that staff find more acceptable.  
  
Also, during Stage Two, there is an increasing focus on developing awareness of the POLE event (Stage One focused on the OOR event). This will be greatly assisted by the use of Door Markers which are identical to the OORs in use and mounted such that they are easily seen and explored by all individuals following the OOR scheme. It may be that the OOR used has some direct connection to the POLE ( a paintbrush for art for example) which, in itself, assists the individual to understand that the OOR represents the POLE. However, while such connections are desirable, they are not essential; even abstract OOR can be successful providing they are used consistently and staff create an environment (environmental engineering) which fosters the development of understanding.  
  
Stage Two focus begins to move to linking Object to POLE  
   
**Stage Two Objectives**:  
  
The individual will be able to:  
  
1.     demonstrate increased tolerance of OOR;  
2.      hold or otherwise explore the OOR for increased period of time;  
3.      interact in any way with a.n.other;  
4.      interact positively with a.n.other;  
5.      demonstrate longer or increased frequency of interactions with a.n.other;  
6.      demonstrate a preference for specific other(s);  
7.      demonstrate some awareness of marker OOR at POLE;  
         -      look at marker;  
         -      reach out and touch/ explore marker;  
  
Staff should begin to direct the Learner's attention to POLE markers and try to demonstrate that the OOR and the marker are the identical items. Staff may:  
       -     Remove the marker from the door and place it alongside the OOR in the

Learner's field of vision;  
       -     Encourage the Learner to explore the marker together with the OOR;  
       -     Use words like 'same' and point out similar attributes (both are blue, both

are round, both are soft ...)  
  
It is NOT expected that the Learner will understand that the OOR and the marker share identical characteristics and therefore the OOR relates directly to the marker. However, staff are creating the environment which will (hopefully) foster this development.  
   
Please Note:  
      -      Not all the above objectives with be relevant for some individuals and may

have to be adapted. It is left to your best judgement which to adopt, adapt, or

reject.  
     -       Although the numbered arrangement suggests a particular sequential

arrangement, there may be times when one objective is met before another

(earlier numbered) one.  
     -      Linear routes may be easier to depict on a website but rarely does life follow

text: individuals will progress in different ways by different routes and

therefore some flexibility should be built into any system.

**Stage Three**

At Stage Three the Learner is taking on more responsibility and beginning to actively participate rather than being a passive recipient of the actions of others. Staff should do all they can to foster and nurture this behaviour and praise the Learner for particular behaviours when it is appropriate so to do. The Learner, by his or her actions, will demonstrate increased awareness of the process. Interactions with both objects and people will generally be positive (it does not follow  that ALL interactions will be positive: we all have our 'off' days!).  
  
A Learner may begin to show signs of anticipation and awareness of the POLE event. The Learner may (if this is possible):

 -      get up and move to the door on being presented with an OOR;  
 -      move towards the POLE area independently;  
 -      choose the correct direction to the POLE when alternatives arise;  
 -      move into the POLE area without being led or prompted;   
  
It should be noted that a Learner choosing or indicating the correct direction towards a POLE from a choice of two is NOT evidence of understanding! It simply may be a chance occurrence   However, if this behaviour was to be repeated consistently then this would strongly suggest an understanding of a relationship between the OOR and the POLE. If the Learner is not ambulant then how can staff ascertain a Learner's awareness of the POLE? They will need to be particularly creative. For example, a staff member could deliberately select the wrong direction in which to go to get to the POLE represented by the OOR. This must be after repeated trips to the POLE using the OOR has had the chance to establish a connection (Stages One and Two) over a period of time. Does the Learner in any way indicate that something is amiss?    
  
Staff will also be expecting the Learner to take the OOR from the OOR bag when the bag is presented. Many Learners will need assistance to do this.  The Bag is presented with the correct OOR protruding from its top.  This process serves, at least, two functions:

     -     it shows the Learner that the OOR 'lives' inside the bag;  
     -     it prepares the Learner for independent retrieval of an OOR at a later stage.

Likewise, staff will expect the Learner to replace the OOR in the bag on reaching the POLE.   
  
It should be noted that the bag is an integral part of the process throughout all stages. While it is not required for staff to present OOR within the jaws of the bag at stage one or two, they should, nevertheless, be taking the OOR from the bag (and, later, replacing it in the bag) in view of the Learner.  
  
Staff should encourage the Learner to begin to make a link between an OOR an it's POLE. For example, on the way to the POLE staff can allow the Learner to lead the way with the minimal amount of assistance possible. It may be that staff allow the Learner to enter the POLE area on their own after seeing them to the room and then just standing back to ensure that they enter. On subsequent trips to this POLE area the staff member may allow the Learner to move unaided to into the room from a greater distance away. In this manner, the staff member is backward chaining learning by gradually increasing the distance the Learner travels independently to the POLE.  
  
**Stage Three Objectives**The individual will be able to:  
  
1.     take any object from (presented) OOR bag;  
2.     replace the OOR in to the OOR bag on reaching the POLE;  
3.     recognize that the presentation of an OOR represents a change in activity by

one or more of the following actions:  
        -     ceasing interacting with prior activity;  
        -     getting up and moving towards the door;  
        -     indicating (pointing, eye pointing, vocalizing, ...) an awareness of a change;  
4.     hold/carry/interact with OOR on route to POLE;  
5.     choose or indicate the correct direction to follow on route to the POLE on more

than one occasion;  
6.     respond to a staff strategy to test awareness of relationship between OOR and

POLE   
7.     move into a POLE area from a short distance before the area without staff

guidance.   
8.     show an awareness of POLE event represented by the OOR by moving

towards or  into the POLE area independently;  
9.     demonstrate increasingly consistent positive interactions with a.n.other;  
  
  
Stage Three focus begins to move to building awareness of process.   
  
Please Note:  
      -      Not all the above objectives with be relevant for some individuals and may

have to be adapted. It is left to your best judgement which to adopt, adapt, or

reject.  
     -      Although the numbered arrangement suggests a particular sequential

arrangement, there may be times when one objective is met before another

(earlier numbered) one.  
     -      Linear routes may be easier to depict on a website but rarely does life follow

text: individuals will progress in different ways by different routes and

therefore some flexibility should be built into any system.  
     -      Staff can be encouraged to suggest ways in which they can assist Learners

to make more explicit links between OOR and POLE.  

As has been suggested, staff can make use of the backward chaining technique to allow Learners to make their way to the POLE area with the minimum of guidance and support. What other methodologies might they also use?

**Stage Four**

During Stage Four, the Learner is assisted to become more expressive; that is s/he moves from being a passive receiver of the OOR to one who begins to understand s/he can exercise control over others by using the objects expressively. This is very unlikely to happen out of the blue (although it has been known). Typically, the process requires a catalyst; that is, staff promote the expressive phase through their interactions with the Learner. The catalyst comes in the manner in which the OOR are presented.   
  
Prior to Stage Four, it is important that OOR are presented individually; one object for one POLE. When the object is presented, the Learner should move immediately to the POLE. At Stage Four, the Learner can be encouraged and assisted to select the appropriate OOR from the place where the OOR are stored from a choice of two. From personal experience, I prefer a bag-based approach with each individual Learner on the scheme having their own bag and objects.   
  
Thus, at Stage Four, you might begin to present Learner with a choice of two objects in the mouth of the bag.  This should be somewhat 'staged'  to ensure that the Learner virtually always chooses the correct OOR. For example, the 'incorrect' object might be placed behind the appropriate choice, such that the Learner is 'assisted' to make the correct choice of object for the POLE. However, if, by accident, the Learner manages to get hold of the incorrect object, don't panic!  Simply, accompany the Learner to the place indicated by the (incorrect) OOR then, immediately, present the correct OOR (without choice!) and proceed to the correct POLE. In this way, the Learner's choice of OOR was fulfilled even though it was not the OOR for the next time-tabled item on the curriculum.  
  
Another technique which can be introduced at stage four is to take all OOR from a Learner's bag leaving only one OOR. The OOR remaining should be the correct OOR for the next POLE. The Learner is encouraged to take the OOR from the bag (rather than from the mouth of the bag). The OOR, thus 'selected', is, of course, the correct OOR for the next item on the Learner's timetable.  
  
During all stages, when the bag is used, it is important that the Learner comes to understand where the bag lives. If it lives on a peg on the wall, then the Learner should be able to see the staff member getting the bag from the peg. If it lives on the back of a Learner's Wheelchair, it is equally as important that the Learner knows that it is kept there. How can a Learner see behind him/herself? Using a mirror is one option. Allowing a Learner to see that other people (who use wheelchairs for mobility) have their bags hanging from the handlebars is another.  However it is achieved, it is important that the Learner comes to understand that the bag is where the OOR live and the bag is always kept in the same place.   
  
The process of encouraging the Learner to take / retrieve a desired OOR from a bag (or alternative) is an essential precursor to Stage Five in which a Learner independently selects an OOR and presents it to a member of staff.

At any stage a Learner may indicate an understanding of a particular object. That 'understanding' should be recorded. Understanding can be shown in a number of ways:  
     -     action (Learner raises a cup OOR to mouth for example);  
     -     name (Learner names  OOR using other AAC system: points to a symbol for

example);  
     -     vocalisation (identifies OOR through sound association);  
     -     movement (Learner moves to correct POLE area);  
     -     other (?).  
   
It is at Stage Four when we expect a Learner to be beginning to make the connection between an OOR and a POLE independently (without staff assistance). Thus, it is always gratifying when a Learner indicates an awareness of the connection by any means whether direct or indirect.   
  
**Stage Four Objectives**The individual will be able to:  
  
1.       select an 'appropriate' OOR from two on request when the OOR are

positioned to 'assist' the process;  
2.       indicate a knowledge of the location of OOR bag;  
3.       take OOR from bag (errorless - 1 item in bag);  
4.       move more independently (than Stage Three) to new POLE on presentation of

OOR;  
5.       identify OOR by gesture (raise cup to mouth);  
6.       identify OOR by sign or symbol;  
7.       identify OOR by vocalisation or other;  
  
Stage Four Focus is on 'helping' the Learner to move from passive communication to expressive.   
  
Please Note:  
     -      Not all the above objectives with be relevant for some individuals and may

have to be adapted. It is left to your best judgement which to adopt, adapt, or

reject.  
     -      Although the numbered arrangement suggests a particular sequential

arrangement, there may be times when one objective is met before another

(earlier numbered) one.  
     -      Linear routes may be easier to depict on a website but rarely does life follow

text: individuals will progress in different ways by different routes and

therefore some flexibility should be built into any system.

**Stage Five**

During Stage Five, the Learner is beginning to use the OOR expressively for him/herself. That is a Learner may take an object from its storage position (for example the OOR bag) and present it to a staff member to request a particular event.  
  
Stage five may not be reached by all who follow an OOR scheme. Some may move onto another scheme before they ever reach this stage. For example, they may begin working with symbols and the OOR scheme gradually is phased out. Some Learners may never use the OOR expressively although, if the scheme is followed, and all Significant Others play their part, there is no reason why, given sufficient time, that any Learner should not reach this milestone.  
  
It is my experience that Learners do not reach stage five with all OR simultaneously: there is usually one or two objects which have the honour of being used in this way. I am not aware of any research which states why this should be the case but I hypothesize that those OOR that are more motivational and are used most frequently (and regularly) are the ones with which the Learner may one day surprise you!  
  
When an OOR is presented in this Stage Five manner, in other words, when the Learner gives a Significant Other an Object, what should the SO do? First of all, they should not get too excited and rush around telling all the other SOs what has just happened. It is really important that the SO acts upon the request such that the Learner can see the power of expressive communication. To do anything else is to negate all the work completed in all the other stages leading to this point! If the Learner presents an OOR to a SO it must be treated as a request by the Learner for the POLE and, thus, the POLE should be provided immediately.  
  
What if the Significant Other believes it to be an accident or a 'fluke'?

It does not matter! The SO must act upon the request an create an active environment (see Jean Ware's work 'Creating and Active Environment'). The SO must not be tempted to get the Learner to 'do it again' to prove that it was a genuine request. If an OOR has been presented by a Learner the POLE should be provided.  
  
What if the Learner is supposed to be at some other place and the request is for a different POLE?

You go with the Learner to the requested POLE. Find some way of sending a message to the other location to say that the Learner will be late. When the requested POE is reached or presented and the Learner has had time to see that his/her request has come to fruition then it is possible to present the OOR for the 'other place'. How long is enough time? How long is a piece of string?! There is no good answer I can give to that question, the SO will have to ascertain if the Learner's request has been fulfilled from the Learner's viewpoint. If the request was to go to the toilet then it should be fairly easy to figure out when the request has been fulfilled! 

What if I have to be someplace else and a request is made of me?

It is more important to fulfill the Learner's request. Do NOT pass the responsibility to another member of staff, the request was made of you so you must enable the Learner to fulfill it. However, it would be apt to get a message to the place where you should be to let them know the current situation.   
  
What if the Learner continues to ask for the POLE in the middle of other sessions?

For the first (let's say) thirty times (with a single OOR in a single session) fulfill the Learner's request. It is vitally important that the Learner understands that s/he can control his/her environment through communication with others. After this, then it begins to enter the realm of pragmatics. People first learn to communicate and then they learn when it is appropriate to communicate and when it is not. Each case must be considered on its merits and any decision made should be by a consensus of a team rather than the decision of one team member. Thus, the first time the multiple request situation occurs, try to fulfill ALL the requests but take the issue back to team to discuss the future strategy. Do not take it upon yourself to make the decision to refuse to fulfill a request because you have already fulfilled the request four times in the last 20 minutes! Rejoice, this is a fabulous problem! The Learner is demonstrating expressive communication for the first time ever. The strategy has worked and the team should be praised for a job well done. It may seem a small step forward for Significant Others but, for the Learner, it is a giant stride with profound implications for that individual's future.  
  
It may be that the request is to go to the toilet repeatedly in one session. While, on the second occasion nothing may occur, that is no reason for refusing to go on the next request. Significant Others must understand that the fulfillment of the request is reinforcing the concept of expressive communication in the Learner's mind. To deny the request is to negate that process and not good practice. So what if the Learner does not want to go to the toilet when you get there? It does not matter; play the game! Try to put yourself in the Learner's shoes. If you suddenly discovered a new power within you, wouldn't you want to do it over and over again? However, remember to take this issue back to the team to discuss.  
  
It may be that the request is for a particular item (for example a drink or a favourite toy). If the Learner already has been given a drink (and, thus, the request has been fulfilled) and another request is made before the drink is finished then take the drink away and top it up. If it has not been touched, treat the request as a sort of a game and keep taking it away and bringing it back (or bring another drink!). The Learner might find this amusing but will also come to understand that s/he has the power to control the actions of others. Again, after that first session when you have been running around fulfilling a Learner's POLE requests over and over, take it back to the team to decide on the next strategy. Please remember that you are all winners! This should not be seen as a problem but rather a cause for celebration.   
  
I do have ideas for what to do in such circumstances but I will not present them here. Please contact me if you wish to discuss options!

What if the Learner requests a POLE that simply cannot be provided?

Suppose there is an OOR for swimming and the Learner loves to go swimming but swimming takes place out of school in a local facility which is only made available once per week. This is not untypical. Now, suppose that a Learner makes a request for swimming at a time when it is not available! It defeats the goal of the system to refuse the request. Such a request should NOT be possible (See rules below). If there are such OOR contained in any Learner's set they must be removed and only made available when a request can be fulfilled. While this is not the optimum situation it is probably a necessary action to avoid the possibility of such an event. If any one has a better idea for such an event please let Talksense know and we will add it to this page.  
  
  
In Stage Five Learners begin to use OOR expressively. Learners are encouraged (and assisted) to present OOR to Significant Others to make a request for a POLE to the point at which a Learner begins to understand that s/he is able to do this for him/herself. It is important that Significant Others immediately respond to a Learner's request so as not to negate all the work that has been involved in reaching this important milestone.  
  
**Stage Five Objectives**The individual will be able to:  
  
1.     select appropriate OOR from a range placed in front of user;  
2.     select appropriate OOR from presented bag (choice of two);  
3.     indicate a need for OOR bag;  
4.     select appropriate OOR from presented bag (choice of  >2);  
5.     initiate communication using OOR;   
6.     repeat the use of an OOR to initiate communication on more than one occasion.  
  
Stage Five Focus is on 'helping' the Learner to become an expressive communicator.   
  
Please Note:  
     -      Not all the above objectives with be relevant for some individuals and may

have to be adapted. It is left to your best judgement which to adopt, adapt, or

reject.  
     -      Although the numbered arrangement suggests a particular sequential

arrangement, there may be times when one objective is met before another

(earlier numbered) one.  
     -      Linear routes may be easier to depict on a website but rarely does life follow

text: individuals will progress in different ways by different routes and

therefore some flexibility should be built into any system.