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Motivating Tweens
and Teens



**Speech and Language
Therapist**

Speech and Language Link

In this workshop, we will....

- Explore the brain changes that occur from age 10 onwards.
- Look at the importance of providing and continuing intervention in KS3.
- Consider the challenges of the content of interventions with adolescents with SLCN.
- Explore strategies to motivate and support adolescents with SLCN.

The Changing Brain

- The role of hormones.
- ‘Sprouting’ and ‘pruning’ of neural links.
- The last brain edit before adulthood.
- Gains and losses.
- The agile brain.



Emotional responses

- Teens brains work differently when processing emotional information. (Yurgelun-Todd, 2007)
- Facial expressions can be misinterpreted and subtleties overlooked due to 'gut reaction' (amygdala) response.
- Rational frontal cortex is not yet matured.
- The teenage brain will misinterpret facial expressions.
- Teenage brain is attuned to reward centres.

Perhaps we should wait?

- No!!
- A golden window of opportunity.
- Combination of brain speed, flexibility and agility.
- Sprouting occurs when ideas are reinforced.



Act now for long term benefit

- Upwards of 50% of children start school with below average language skills (Locke et al 2002)
- 88% of long term unemployed young men have SLCN (Elliott, 2009)
- Three quarters of young people in the youth offending system have below average communication skills (Early Intervention Foundation, 2017)
- 20.3% of pupils with SLCN gained GCSE Grade 4/C or above in English and Maths, compared with 63.9% in all pupils (DfE 2017)
- Early Intervention is key (Bercow 2008)

The teenager with SLCN

- Growing awareness of 'difference'
- Increasing educational demands
- More complex social relationships
- Increased demand to process emotional information
- Shifting parent/child, parent/teacher relationship
- Historical dependence/ 'Learned Helplessness'
- Anxiety about the future
- Learning and attainment differences

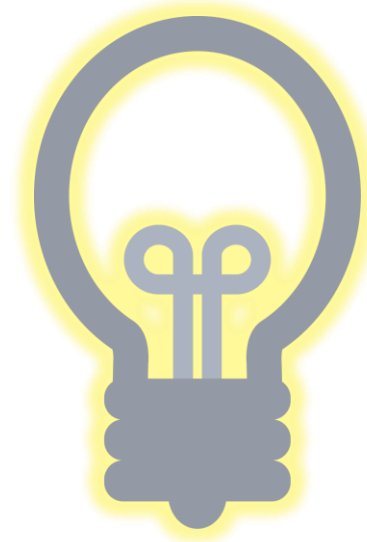


Challenges for School staff

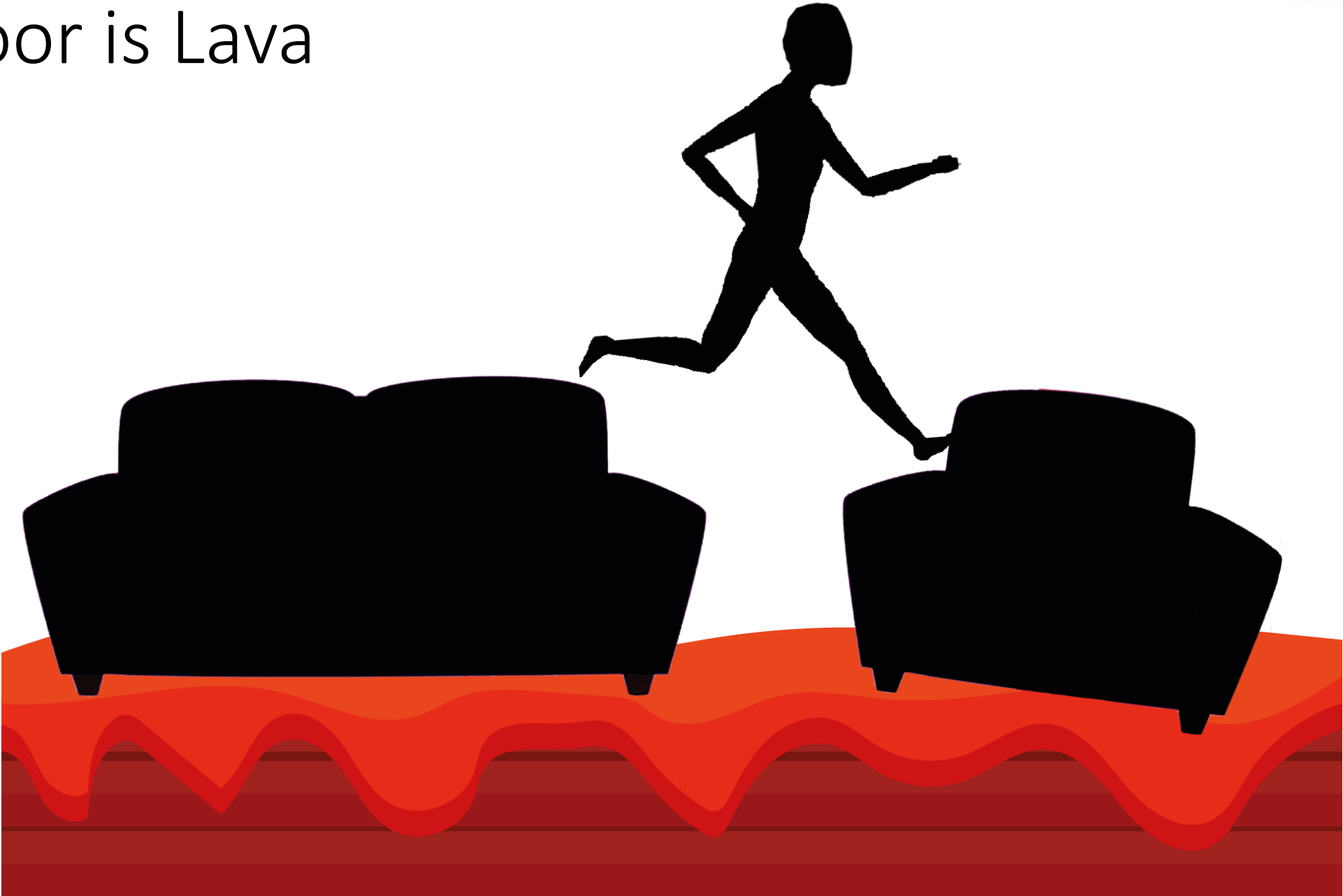
- Managing a mismatch between age and stage
- Subtle differentiation
- Acknowledging and supporting brain and learning differences
- Understanding teen culture – balancing authentic with relatable
- Finding appropriate, motivating resources and rewards

Solutions and suggestions

- Relate it
- Invite to control
- Leave space for independence
- Remember their age
- Focus on functional



Floor is Lava



A worked example: Floor is Lava!

- TV game show which focusses on navigating a themed lava basement. Furniture or artefacts act as stepping stones through the 'lava'
Participants, in teams of 3, have to navigate their way to the exit
- No team work – no win!
- Fail to prepare – prepare to fail
- Requires communication, negotiation, using language to predict, considering cause and effect and following direction and complex instructions
- A language rich, motivating activity!

A wealth of language possibilities....

- Vocabulary – set around a theme
- Inference and prediction – considering the safety of different routes
- Concepts: sequential language – first, before, left
- Following instructions
- Turn taking, team work and social communication
- Decoding emotions using context
- Conditions and exclusions

- For students to understand the vocabulary related to the rock cycle
- For students to use the word 'unless' appropriately in a sentence
- For students to predict the cause/effect of an action

Vocabulary	Unless	What might happen if
<p>The Rock Cycle Compress Sedimentary Igneous Metamorphic Magma</p>	<p>-The scramble net won't release unless one player presses the button - The player won't be able to reach the finish step unless the team mates push him</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The players don't talk to each other - The players don't work as a team - The players don't plan ahead - The players take too long

How can Secondary Language Link help?

- A package which identifies the needs of pupils aged 11-14
- A universal screening tool
- Universal and targeted interventions
- Intervention packages to support students with SLCN
- Tracks progress
- Supports professional development
- Watch for exciting new content in 2021

Web Links

Yurgelun-Todd, 2007 -

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2475802/>

Bercow Report 2008 –

<https://earlyyearsmatters.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/7771-DCSF-BERCOW-Summary.pdf>