

Class Activity # 2

“Speaking in Metaphors”

This is another activity which requires students to utilize their executive functioning skills as it relates to metaphorical thinking, information processing, and effective communication with others.

The below statements are littered with metaphors. To understand them adequately, individuals must: (a) have heard the metaphor being used before in various other contexts; (b) have an understanding of its meaning; and (c) be capable of higher-level abstract thinking.

Statement 1:

“Well, young man, you really blew it this time. We are done with talking and now we need to see some action from you. I have no more tricks up my sleeve, so you are going to have to take the bull by the horns and make a plan.”

Statement 2:

“This is the final straw, they are not going to bail you out of any more trouble. Enough people have gone out on a limb for you and they are not going to do it anymore.”

Statement 3:

“In a nutshell, you are in serious kaka. I would give my right arm to help you but your true colours have been showing recently and I think you better just wake up and smell the coffee before you are SOL.”



Directions:

- Provide one statement to each group - it is okay if some groups have the same statement.
- Direct the students to translate each metaphorical sentence into concrete language so that 'anyone' of 'any age' could understand the statement's intended message.
- Give the students 1 minute to complete this activity.
- After, have the students read aloud their metaphorical statement followed by their concrete translation.
- Asks the students how this activity was difficult, as well as how it was helpful to work with other classmates to complete it.

The activity just completed demonstrates the experiences of people with FASD in nearly every social interaction. People with FASD can certainly learn to understand abstract concepts like figurative speech; however, the task becomes much more difficult as they are required to think critically about 'what this means' - moment-to-moment - in our conversations with others.

For example:

John: "Curiosity killed the cat, man!"

Me: "Hmm, is John making a literal statement right now or is he meaning to be figurative? Does it make sense that there would be a 'cat' in the conversation? He has not mentioned one until now. Perhaps, he is making a figurative statement."

By now, roughly 5-10 seconds may have passed after Johnny's comment of "curiosity killed the cat" and he is now confused by your 'thinking' silence and furrowed brow.