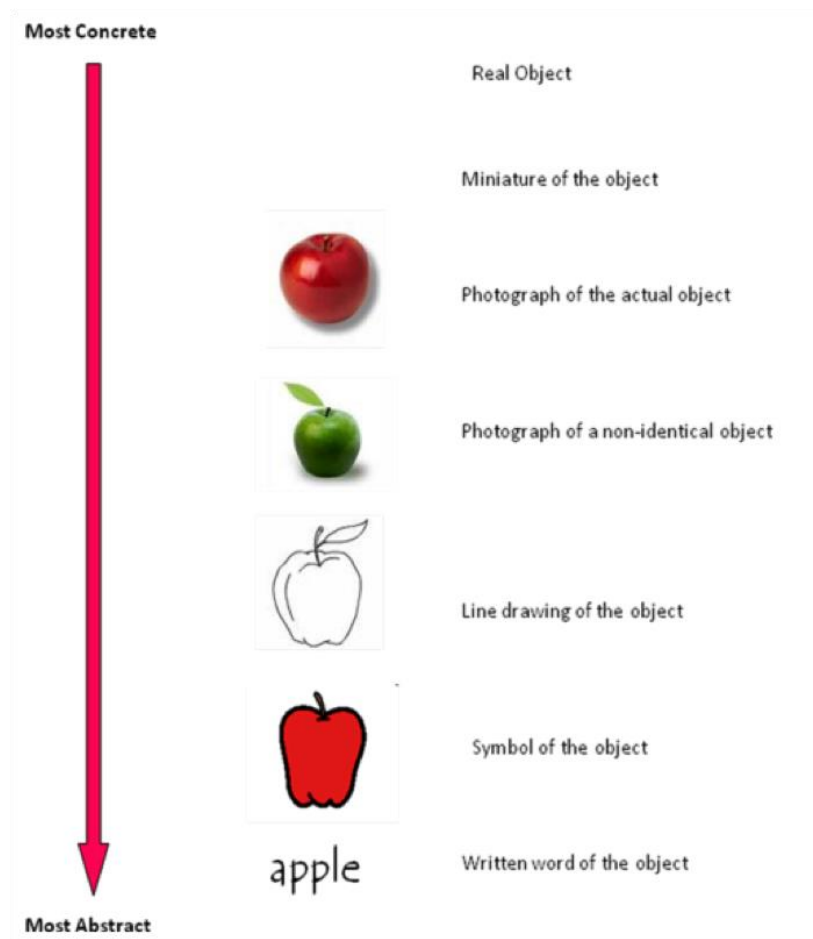




Symbolic development

Visual information

Symbolic development can be explained as the learner's development of understanding visual information.



Our symbolic development starts at the most concrete level e.g. Real Object level. This is because we have a range of sensory inputs we can draw upon to determine what an object is, including sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.

Throughout our childhood we begin to identify objects in a 2D picture form e.g. by looking at and reading books, when colouring pictures, food labels, etc. Through education we learn to identify more abstract material including written text.

Some learners with learning disabilities, working at an early developmental level, have not developed through the stages of symbolic development and may only recognise more concrete visual input such as objects. It is vital to understand what level of symbolic development the individual learner has.

This will help us to create accessible information. Using the diagram above we can then decide if the visual information should be presented at an:

1. Object Level (real object and then a miniature of the real object) – in this case we are likely to use object cues (real objects that form a part of the activity itself), objects of reference systems or visual timetables using objects
2. Photographic Level (of the actual object and then a non-identical object) – information on a range of visual aids will be presented using photographs only
3. Symbolic Level (line drawing of the object, then a symbol and finally the printed word) – Symbol systems such as Boardmaker, Widget or Makaton Symbols can be used, and of course the printed word

This information has been adapted from:

<http://integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/our-approaches/speech-therapy-approaches/symbolic-development/>

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Additional and Specific information about *pupil's name*:

Date: