USING DECLARATIVE LANGUAGE FOR VARYING PURPOSES & WITH VARYING LEVELS OF DIRECTNESS

There are SO many ways to use Declarative Language (DL), and it can be powerful to change up your speaking style to guide, teach, and connect. First and foremost, DL should be used to foster connection, support individuals in a respectful way, and invite partnership. And, as you get comfortable, you can vary the level of directness and/or learning opportunities you invite based on the individual, and based on the moment. For example, you can use DL to offer opportunities to problem solve, recall information, observe, or infer ... You can use it more directly to guide in the moment when a task is new or your learner feels unsure... Or you can use it to share emotions, memories, and future plans. To follow are some examples of how you could change up the language of one direct idea ("put on your coat"), to create different learning and engagement opportunities!

DEMAND-BASED LANGUAGE (NOT DECLARATIVE)

Imperatives	Get your coat. / Put on your coat.	Questions	What do you need right now? / Where is your coat?

DECLARATIVE STATEMENTS THAT INVITE, GUIDE, & FOSTER CONNECTION

Purpose	Examples
Guide an idea or action specifically	It's cold out today! I think it would be helpful to put your coat on.
Model an idea, action, or plan	I'm going to put my coat on now. I notice it's really cold out today!
Invite partnership.	Let's put your coat on together. I can hold it up while you put your arms through the sleeves.
Invite self-advocacy or asking for help	If you are unsure where your coat is, I think I remember seeing it... and I'd love to help you if you need it. OR If it feels too hard to put your coat on right now, I could help you.
Share emotion	I love how you remembered your coat! OR I'm worried you might be cold without a coat.
Invite observation and a subsequent (inferred) action	I see your coat on the hook!
Create an opportunity to build and use world knowledge.	The seasons are changing! Winter is definitely here and we will need our coat today because it is so cold.
Create an opportunity to pull from one's episodic memory.	I notice it is cold out today. Yesterday was like this too, and I remember you were glad you had your coat on when we got in the car!
Model or teach a strategy to problem solve in future similar opportunities (Future Episodic Memory)	I'm looking out the window to figure out the weather. People walking by are all wearing coats. That tells me it is probably cold out. OR Let's look at the temperature together before we leave to help us decide if we need a coat....

More Direct ↑

Less Direct ↓

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