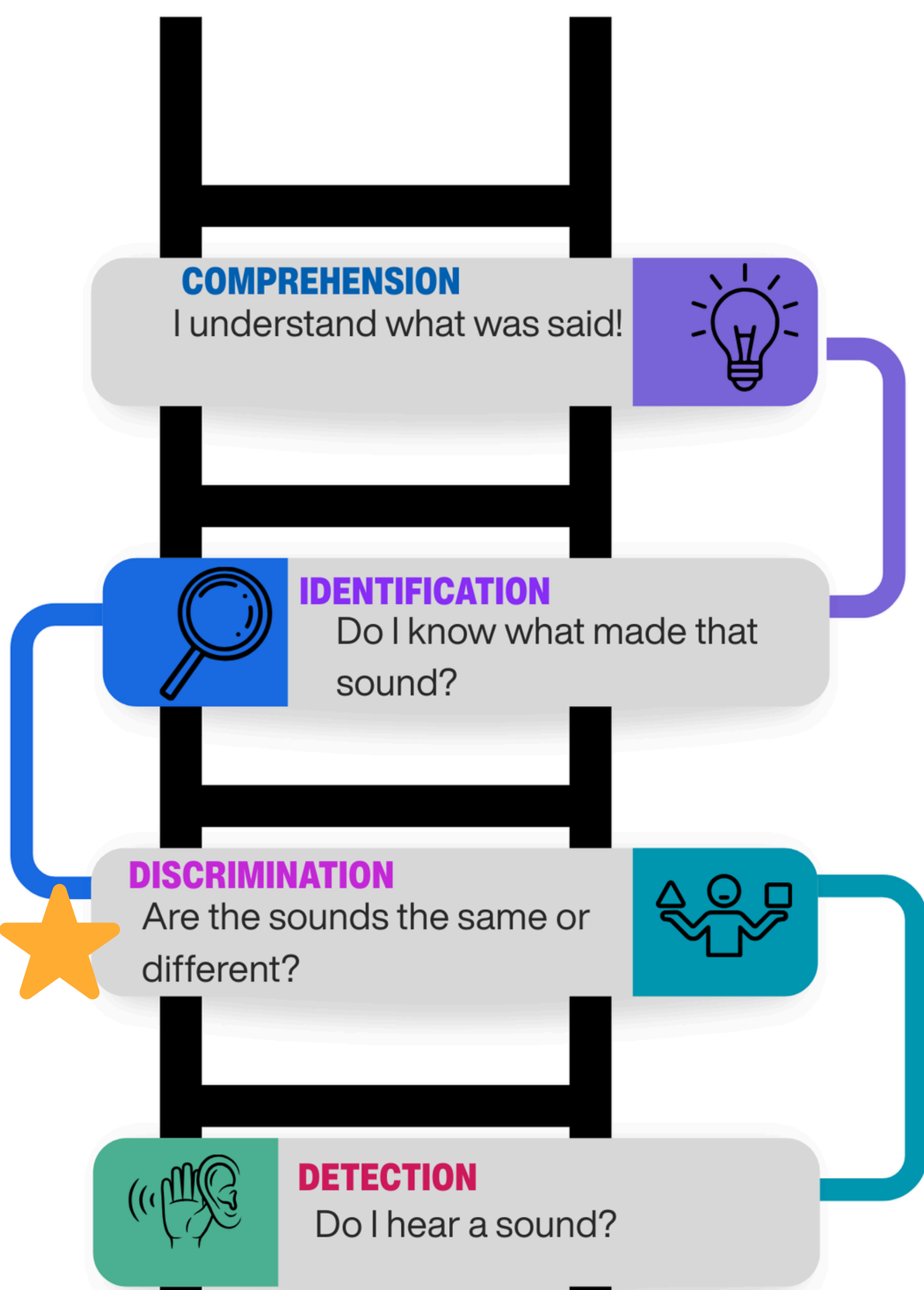


A Minute for Minimal Pairs

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LISTENING LADDER



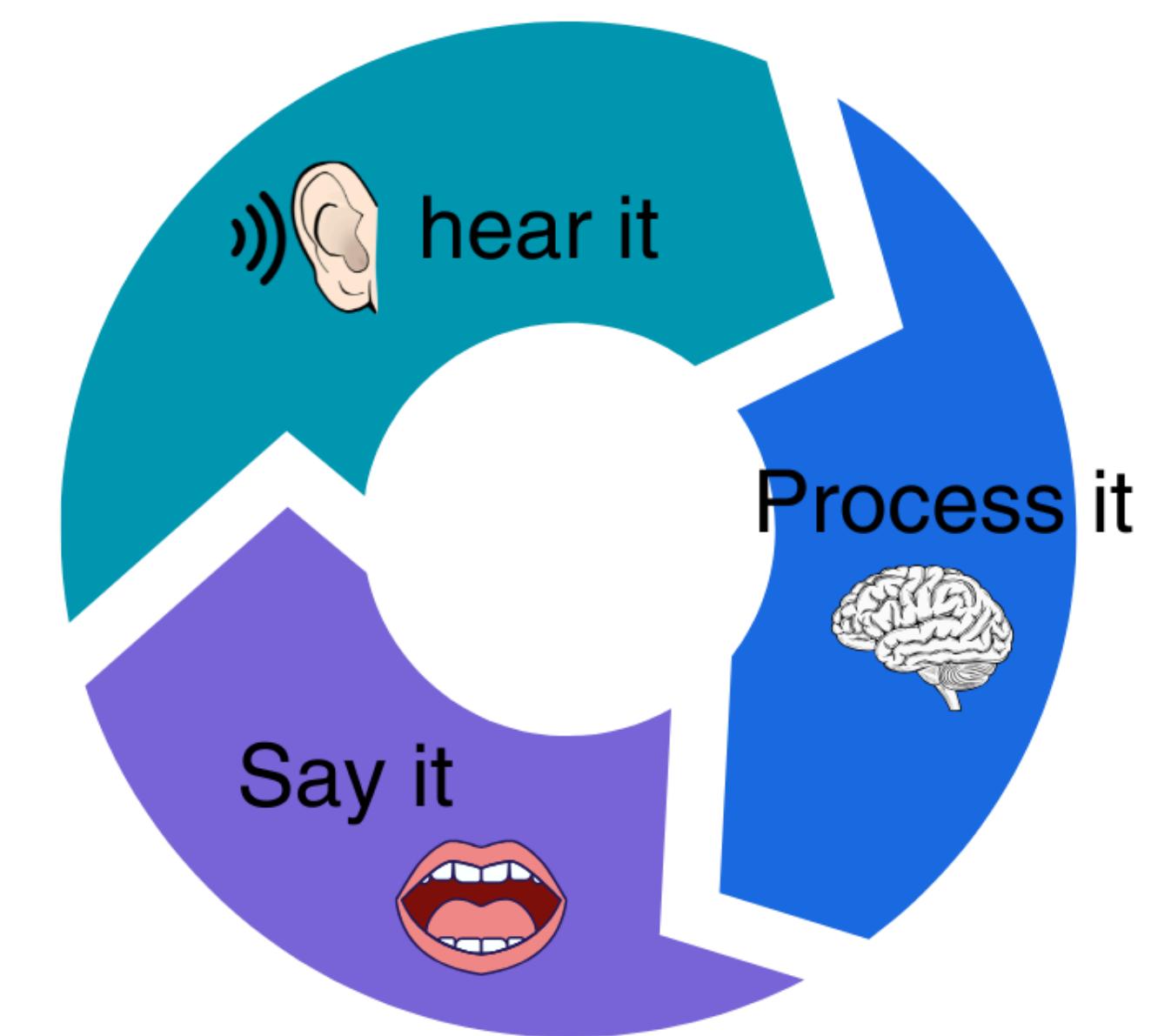
WHY FOCUS ON MINIMAL PAIRS IN A CLASSROOM?

Minimal pairs are words that differ by just one sound (eye vs. ice). The ability to hear the difference in these words is important in discriminating & also producing distinct speech sounds. Children entering preschool have often moved through these auditory development phases and are able to comprehend spoken language. Children with hearing loss who are

- late identified
- have poor device wear time, or
- experience additional disabilities

may be at the level of Discrimination. Building consistent practice of the discrimination of minimal pairs into a child's daily routine in a classroom can help them make progress quickly in order to advance to more complex and practical language skills. Students will often work with speech therapists on these skills, but because they spend much more time in their classroom, targeting these skills as a whole class can provide more opportunities for practice. Minimal pairs can be worked on as auditory & speech targets with the entire class, no matter how many children are working on discrimination.

Auditory Feedback Loop



"Minimal pairs demonstrate to children that they need to make phonemic contrasts in their speech in order to differentiate meanings."

-Saban & Ingham, 1991

BINGO: Play the game with your targeted minimal pair words.



Fly swatter: Post pictures on the wall. Tell the child a word and they swat it with a fly swatter – use this during listening checks!



Hide & Seek: Tape picture cards around the room. The teacher says a word and students must hunt to find the correct word.



Pom Pom Toss: Tape minimal pairs pictures to bowls. Students take turns hearing a word from a teacher and tossing a pom pom in the right bowl.



Cross the line: Use tape to make a line down the rug. Show two minimal pairs pictures on the board. When the teacher says a word, the children jump to the side with the correct picture.

High Five: A teacher says a minimal pair word and the student gives the picture a high five on the way out the door. Each student gets their own word. Use as a transition tool!

Feed the old lady: Tape an old woman's face onto a jar and cut out a hole for her mouth. Practice the nursery rhyme, "There was an old lady who swallowed a..." The children take turns feeding her the correct minimal pair word card.

Odd One Out: The teacher lists three words verbally (cat, cat, cap) and students hold up fingers based on which word was different. No materials required!



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For a printable list of minimal pair words

