

## Communication Partner Instruction for AAC Interactions: A Lifespan Approach

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### Overview

- Background Information
- Partner Instruction: Pediatric Populations
- Partner Instruction: Adult Populations

### WHY DO WE NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT COMMUNICATION PARTNER INSTRUCTION?

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### Nature of Communication

- Communication
  - A dynamic and transactional process
  - Varies based on the context of an interaction
  - Inherently involves participants (i.e., communication partners)

### Communication Partners

- Communication Partners
  - Afford purpose and meaning for communication
  - Play a variety of roles in the lives of our clients
  - Categorization Example – Social Networks
    - (Blackstone & Hunt Berg, 2003):
    - 1. Close Family Members / Life Partners
    - 2. Friends / Other Relatives
    - 3. Acquaintances
    - 4. Paid Personnel
    - 5. Unfamiliar Partners

### AAC Personnel Frameworks

- Beukelman, Ball & Fager, 2008
  - Focused on general AAC needs – specifically for adult clients
- Binger, Ball, Dietz, Kent-Walsh, Lasker, Lund, McKelvey & Quach, 2012
  - Focused on the assessment process for any individual with AAC needs

### Common Partner Communication Patterns

- Communication partners often *(e.g., Kent-Walsh & McNaughton, 2005)*:
  - Take the majority of conversational turns
  - Provide few opportunities for communication
  - Ask predominantly Yes/No questions
  - Interrupt individuals using AAC
  - Focus on the technology, instead of the individual

### Undesirable Client Communication Patterns

- Individuals using AAC may in turn be noted to *(e.g., Kent-Walsh & McNaughton, 2005)*:
  - Be passive communicators
  - Initiate few interactions
  - Respond infrequently
  - Produce a limited number of communicative functions
  - Use restricted linguistic forms

### A Coordinated Approach to Intervention

The diagram illustrates a coordinated approach to intervention. It features three circular nodes connected by mathematical symbols. On the left, a brown circle contains the text 'Direct Intervention with Client'. To its right is a plus sign (+). Further right is a green circle containing 'Intervention with Communication Partners'. To the right of this is an equals sign (=). Finally, on the far right, is a blue circle containing 'Meaningful Communication Outcomes'.

### COMMUNICATION PARTNER INSTRUCTION FOR PEDIATRIC POPULATIONS: SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL PROTOCOL

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### The ImPAACT Program

- Improving Partner Applications of Augmentative Communication Techniques
  - Developed by Kent-Walsh, Binger, and colleagues based on the instructional program guidelines developed by Kent-Walsh and McNaughton (2005)
  - Designed to teach communication partners to facilitate the early language and communication skills of children who use AAC

### ImPAACT Evidence: Involved Partners to Date

- Parents**
  - African-American
  - Anglo/White
  - Latino
- Educators**
  - Educational Assistants
  - Classroom Teachers
  - Support Staff (e.g., SLPs, OTs)
- Peers**
  - Elementary School-Aged Children

### ImPAACT Evidence: Involved Partners to Date

- Individual Instruction**
  - Home Setting
  - School Setting
- Group Instruction**
  - Day Camp
  - School In-Service

### ImPAACT Evidence: Participants to Date

Conditions represented in the grid include: Childhood Apraxia of Speech, Cerebral Palsy, Children Ages 3-12, Down Syndrome, Profound Phonological Disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Developmental Delays, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, DiGeorge Syndrome, and Intellectual Impairment.

### ImPAACT Evidence: Outcomes to Date

Pragmatics	Semantics	Syntax	Morphology
Turn-Taking Skills	Vocabulary Size	Message Length	Use of Bound Morphemes
Communicative Functions	Vocabulary Diversity	Message Complexity	

### ImPAACT Program: A Strategic Approach to Implementing Evidence-Based Skills

### Strategy Example 1

**Interaction Strategy**  
for:  
**Teaching Communicative Turntaking**

On each double-page spread in each book read, you will **READ** as follows:

"Elicitation" Component	"Response" Component
<b>READ</b> + MODEL using AAC system *Pause*	RESPOND to all communicative turns taken by [your student] at any time.
<b>ASK</b> + MODEL using AAC system *Pause*	
<b>ANSWER</b> + MODEL using AAC system	

**READ, READ, READ!**

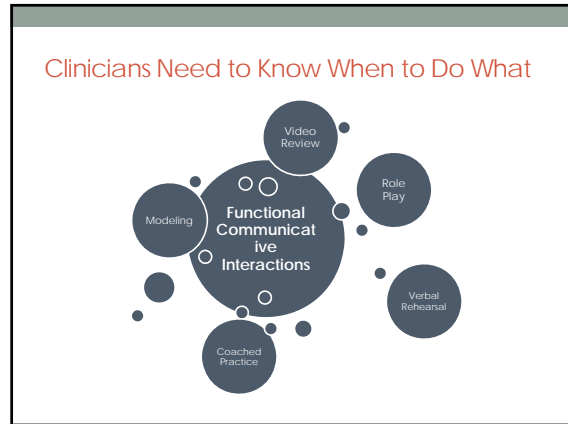
### Strategy Example 2

**Interaction Strategy for Teaching Multi-Symbol Messages**

Until the student uses 2 symbols, you will **EAAC** on each double-page spread of the book:

"Elicitation" Component	"Response" Component
<b>READ + MODEL 2 SYMBOLS</b> using AAC system *Pause*	
<b>ASK + MODEL 2 SYMBOLS</b> using AAC system *Pause*	
<b>ANSWER + MODEL 2 SYMBOLS</b> using AAC system *Pause*	<i>When the student uses 2 or more symbols:</i> <b>RESPOND</b> by using 2 or more symbols
<b>PROMPT</b> (using AAC system) "Show me two" *Pause*	

**EAAC, EAAC, EAAC!**



### ImPAACT Program: 8-Step Instructional Overview

- 1 • Pre-test and commitment to completing instructional program
- 2 • Strategy description
- 3 • Strategy demonstration
- 4 • Verbal practice of strategy steps
- 5 • Controlled practice and feedback
- 6 • Advanced practice and feedback
- 7 • Post-test and commitment to long-term strategy use
- 8 • Generalization of targeted strategy use

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT COMMUNICATION PARTNERS FOR ADULTS WITH ACQUIRED IMPAIRMENT WHO ARE USING AAC?

### Identifying and Including Partners for Adult Communicators

- partners as key personnel
  - consider attitude toward disability
  - response to life changes
  - financial, technological, and emotional resources
- social networks
  - identified with Circles of Communication Partners
  - (Blackstone & Hunt-Berg, 2003)
- needs assessment (Fried-Oken et al., 2006; Lasker, Garrett, & Fox, 2007; King & Lasker, 2013)
  - systematic clinical inquiry
  - who does client talk to, in what context, about what topic(s), using what methods, related to what communicative function, with what degree of success

### What do "good" partners do?

(Simmons-Mackie & Kagan, 1999; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2010)

- focus on the collaborative nature of the interaction
  - **allow** time
  - help control background noise (**create environment** for communication)
  - are **open** to alternative methods
  - **confirm** understanding
  - use **clarification** statements and questions
  - offer systematic **guesses**
  - are **explicit** about the communication process
  - offer **persistence** in the face of breakdowns

### What does research tell us about partners in ALS and aphasia?

- Attention Allocation and Intelligibility
  - (Beukelman et al., 2011)
- Communication Effectiveness and Intelligibility
  - (Ball, Beukelman, & Pattee, 2004)
- Attitudes of Partners Toward Message Generation Techniques (Richter et al., 2003)
- Attitudes of Partners Toward AAC Mode
  - ALS (Richter et al., 2003)
  - Aphasia (Lasker & Beukelman, 1999)
- Attitudes of Partners Toward Topics and Technology
  - (Fried-Oken et al., 2006)
- Partners and "End of Life" Communication
  - (King & Lasker, 2013)

### What Are Some Partner Techniques?

- Augmented Input
- Written Choice
- Tagged Yes/No
- Eye Linking/Pointing
- Partner Dependent Scanning
- Yes/No Hierarchy
- Facial Movement/Gestures
- Alphabet Supplementation

### Example of a "Good" Partner Interaction: Client AA and Clinician

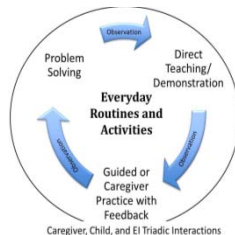
- 69-year-old man
- stroke 15 years prior with multiple ruptured aneurysms in left MCA
- now with chronic fluent aphasia, most consistent with conduction type
- uses multimodal strategies to communicate including:
  - natural speech
  - gesture
  - drawing
  - writing
  - stored information tools (notebook with tabs)
- very competent communicator
- benefits from partner support

### A collaborative interaction

- | What does client do?  | What does partner do?   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• he uses spoken language                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "he called" "I like him" "he's dead"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• combines writing and talking</li> <li>• gestures "brother" to himself to cue writing</li> <li>• uses writing to clarify point                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I liked him but I didn't like him"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• keeps partner's attention                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "but listen"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• gestures "beautiful girl"</li> <li>• gestures shoveling dirt at funeral</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• augmented writing support                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she writes "cousin?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• explicit about communication process                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We'll talk about that at lunch."</li> </ul> </li> <li>• she repeats what AA writes                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "78" "82"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• she offers multiple choices                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• he died "last week? last year?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• references his writing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "who's 74?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• summarizes message so far                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "so he has two brothers?" "he's dead too?"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• asks for clarification                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "so you're switching, was it a man or a woman?" (with finger emphasis)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

### How to Teach Partner Strategies (Woods, Kashinath, & Goldstein, 2004)

- Preparing
  - Conversation and information-sharing
  - Observation
  - Direct teaching
  - Demonstration
- Application and Feedback
  - Joint interaction
  - Guided practice with feedback
  - Caregiver practice with feedback
- Mastery
  - Problem-solving
  - Reflection



### Does partner training work? Conversational Coaching in Aphasia

Hopper, Holland, & Rewega, 2010

- Strategies taught to PWA:
    - Communicate main idea first
    - Use alternative strategies (draw, gesture, write, sound effects)
    - Correct wrong information
    - Indicate "You're close"
  - Strategies taught to partners:
    - Ask main idea first
    - Augment with gesture
    - Write down information and questions
    - Draw pictures of words/ideas to confirm
    - Put "slash" through wrong ideas; circle right ones
    - Confirm yes/no on paper
    - Cue alternative strategies
    - Allow time for response
    - Summarize information frequently
- \*\*Resulted in a greater number of concepts communicated in storytelling tasks and social validation judgments.

### Summing Up:

#### Keys to Successful Communication Partner Instruction

- Identify communication partners and facilitators, and their key roles (we know that many are women)
- identify meaningful and relevant activities
- Identify incongruent decisions (i.e., no AAC technology, but ventilator; willing to accept voice-output or not)
- stress the multimodal nature of communication and the integral role of partners in sharing the responsibility for communication
- connect communication partner with supports
- evaluate intelligibility/utility of unaided methods
- create communication system that provides for multiple methods of formulation (e.g. letter, word, phrase, story)
- teach skills in context
- support and empower partners in adjusting to novel methods and strategies of communication

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