

Communication Partner Instruction for AAC Interactions: A Lifespan Approach

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Laura Ball, Ph.D., MGH Institute of Health Professions
 Cathy Binger, Ph.D., University, of New Mexico
 Susan Fager, Ph.D., Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
 Joanne Lasker, Ph.D., Emerson College
 Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Ph.D., University of Central Florida

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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?

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



COMMUNICATION PARTNER INSTRUCTION FOR PEDIATRIC POPULATIONS: SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL PROTOCOL

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

Childhood Apraxia of Speech
 Cerebral Palsy
 Children Ages 3-12
 Down Syndrome
 Profound Phonological Disorders
 Autism Spectrum Disorders
 Developmental Delays
 Prader-Willi Syndrome
 DiGeorge Syndrome
 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

Functional Communicative Interactions

- Increased Responsivity
- Expectant Delay
- With-Question Asking
- Verbal Prompts
- Aided AAC Modeling

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
READ + MODEL using AAC system *Pause*	RESPOND to all communicative turns taken by [your student] at any time.
ASK + MODEL using AAC system *Pause*	
ANSWER + MODEL using AAC system	

READ, READ, READ

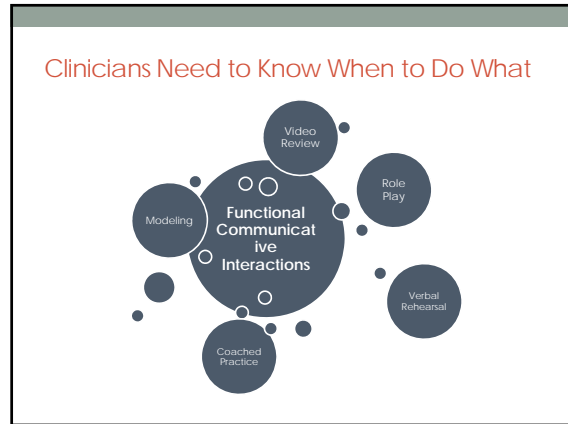
Strategy Example 2

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
READ + MODEL 2 SYMBOLS using AAC system *Pause*	
ASK + MODEL 2 SYMBOLS using AAC system *Pause*	
ANSWER + MODEL 2 SYMBOLS using AAC system *Pause*	<i>When the student uses 2 or more symbols:</i> RESPOND by using 2 or more symbols
PROMPT (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

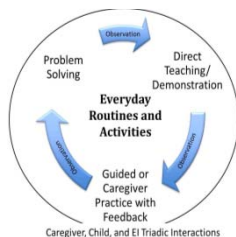
- 69-year-old man
- stroke 15 years prior with multiple ruptured aneurysms in left MCA
- now with chronic fluent aphasia, most consistent with conduction type
- uses multimodal strategies to communicate including:
 - natural speech
 - gesture
 - drawing
 - writing
 - stored information tools (notebook 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"> • he uses spoken language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "he called" "I like him" "he's dead" • combines writing and talking • gestures "brother" to himself to cue writing • uses writing to clarify point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I liked him but I didn't like him" • keeps partner's attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "but listen" • gestures "beautiful girl" • gestures shoveling dirt at funeral | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • augmented writing support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • she writes "cousin?" • explicit about communication process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We'll talk about that at lunch." • she repeats what AA writes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "78" "82" • she offers multiple choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he died "last week? last year?" • references his writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "who's 74?" • summarizes message so far <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "so he has two brothers?" "he's dead too?" • asks for clarification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "so you're switching, was it a man or a woman?" (with finger emphasis) |

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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