Best Practice in AAC
Kelly Moore
1. Communicative Competence

The central goal of AAC intervention

- Linguistic Competence
- Operational Competence
- Social Competence
- Strategic Competence

Light (1989)
Linguistic Competence

- Learning the linguistic code of the AAC system
- Learning the language of the home and community
- Learning the symbols and vocabulary
- Learning to combine words into sentences

Light (1989)
Operational Competence

- Learning the required skills to operate the AAC system
- Motor skills – how they access their system
- Visual and auditory skills
- Use the features of the AAC system
- Learning to become more efficient operating the AAC system
- Navigating the pages, using message window, clear, go back, programming your own device

Light (1989)
Social Competence

- Initiating and maintaining a conversation
- Greetings, comments, requests, questions, making choices, rejecting
- Turn taking
- Active engagement and interest in communication and interactions

Light (1989)
Strategic Competence

- Skills that make the best of what the AAC user does know and can do
- Developing compensatory strategies for effective communication given limitations of the user or their system
- “Please guess” “Ask me yes/ no questions”
- Find another way to say it
- Use pre-programmed messages

Light (1989)
Figure 1.

Language Development
Symbolic Understanding
System Introduction

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE

STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

'functional knowledge and judgement in interaction'

'knowledge and skill in use of tools of communication'

Power of communication
Eye-contact
Turn-taking
Greeting
Yes/no signalling
Responding
Requesting object / action

Alison MacDonald (1991) developed from the original work of Janice Light (1989)
Resources


A summary....
http://www.acipscotland.org.uk/MacDonald-Rendle.pdf

http://www.keycommaac.ik.org/p_Communication_Competencies.ikml
2. Core Vocabulary

- a small number of words (around 250)
- used for the majority of communication (around 85%)
- frequently occurring, “generic” words
- used by all people everywhere, anytime, over and over
- generally NOT easily represented by a picture (non-iconic)

  e.g. pronouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives
“Children used a core vocabulary comprising 263 words, which accounted for 79.8% of their total communication sample.”

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<th>I/ I’m</th>
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<td>okay</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>yeah/ yep</td>
<td>want</td>
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<td>c’mon</td>
<td>um</td>
<td>ah</td>
<td>wanna</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>over</td>
<td>play</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>come</td>
<td>mine</td>
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<tr>
<td>need</td>
<td>Spiderman</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>mum</td>
<td>where’s</td>
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<td>dwanna</td>
<td>hello</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>found</td>
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<td>baby</td>
<td>sit</td>
<td>doing</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>so</td>
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<td>remember</td>
<td>making</td>
<td>yummy</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>why</td>
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<tr>
<td>hat</td>
<td>please</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>dad</td>
<td>gone</td>
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<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>quick</td>
<td>name</td>
<td>lunch</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Trembath, Balandin & Togher (2007)
Resources


http://www.aacinstitute.org/Resources/ProductsandServices/PeRT/CoreVocabularyAndTheAACPerformanceReport.html

Word Lists
http://www.minspeak.com/CoreVocabulary.php
http://aac.unl.edu/vocabulary.html

Core Vocabulary Classroom
http://www.vantatenhove.com/showgroup.php?id=43
3. Robust Vocabulary
Take it everywhere!

* To provide vocabulary to interact for a variety of communication functions, ALL the time, EVERYWHERE you go.

“A child who uses speech will independently select the words she wishes to use from the vast array of words she hears/see everyday. A child who uses AAC will independently select the words she wishes to use from the vocabulary other people have chosen to model, and for aided symbols, made available for her to use” (Porter & Kirkland, 1995, p. 93-94)

As cited in Porter, (2007), PODD manual
Vocabulary should be...

- Meaningful & functional
- Flexible
- Interesting & motivating
- Effective to establish social closeness
- Used frequently
- Reflective of personality
- Age, gender, culturally appropriate
- Revised frequently

Trembath, Balandin & Togher (2007)
“New concepts/words should be taught by using them, not by expecting a child to first demonstrate understanding of them and promoting passive interaction. Recognising and pointing to symbols in response to questions is a very different skill from initiating new ideas with those symbols in conversation” (p. 271)

Resources


Engineering the Environment

4. Create Communication Opportunities

“If the teacher (or assistant) did not provide a specific opportunity for a student to use a specific communication behavior … then most often the student did not communicate” (p. 263)

“In many cases, these students will only communicate in response to deliberate attempts by an adult to elicit a specific communication behavior” (p. 270)

“The lack of peer communication for the student with DSI was striking” (p. 269)

Rowland (1990)
“Most of the communication opportunities created by the disabled participants went unnoticed, much of the communication that staff initiated was to give instructions and there were few activities or events in which people participated that created occasions for communication.”
(p. 304)

McDonald (1997)
“Teachers and other professionals can support the expression of intentional communication acts by maximizing the number of opportunities they create for children to communicate and by ensuring immediate adult responsiveness”

“School professionals can attend to how various activities during the school day influence the rate of communication expressed by each child”

(p.310)

Bruce & Vargas (2007)
“The success of any student's augmentative/alternative communication program is greatly increased when all staff involved embed it's use within everyday programming. Augmentative/Alternative communication implementation should not be viewed as separate from the learning program. Rather, as the educational plan is developed for each student, opportunities for AAC use should be infused into the curriculum. This gives the student real reasons to practice and apply their AAC skills.”

http://atto.buffalo.edu/registered/ATBasics/Populations/aac/begin.php
Resources


Where to Begin? Assistive Technology Training Project, University of Buffalo
http://atto.buffalo.edu/registered/ATBasics/Populations/aac/begin.php
5. Assistive Technology Assessment

Cook and Hussey, (2008)
Participation Model

* Assessment is not a one time process. It is ongoing! Assess to meet today’s needs, then tomorrow’s, and tomorrow’s…..

* Providing an AAC system is not enough! Identifying current and future barriers is essential in the assessment process.

* Technology alone cannot make someone a competent communicator.

Beukelman & Mirenda, (1998)
Resources


Participation Model – quick web link

Integrating the concept of Assistive Technology for Function into program curricula
http://www.teachingat.info/constructs/human.html

Mobile Devices and Communication Apps – AAC RERC White Paper
http://aac-rerc.psu.edu/index.php/pages/show/id/46
A teaching strategy where the facilitator (e.g. parent, teacher, therapist) highlights symbols on a communication display while interacting and communicating verbally with the user.

Based on the idea that individuals learn to communicate in the way they experience their system of communication being used.

Goosens', Crain & Elder (1992)
Porter, (2007)
Resources

Goossens’, C., Crain, S. and Elder, P. (1992) *Engineering the pre-school environment for interactive symbolic communication*

http://www.lburkhart.com/ATIA_ALgS_handout_1_10.pdf

For auditory scanners
http://www.lburkhart.com/hand_ALS_Aud_Scan.htm
7. Low Tech Backup

One concession ticket to

_________________
at_________ please

One small popcorn
and a small coke please
_remnant_book

_personal_communication_passport
http://www.communicationpassports.org.uk/Home/

_community_request_cards

_photos
Resources


ILC Tech has a range of communication boards and books that we are willing to share

Consult with your visiting Speech Pathologist


8. Train Communication Partners- School

“Without sufficient training and support, important student outcomes such as increased participation and communication initiations for device users are unlikely to be achieved”

Research emphasizes the importance of training to be linked with observation, modeling, repeated practice and feedback within the classroom setting for educators to effectively integrate technology into daily instruction

McMillan, 2008, p. 199

DON’T FORGET TO ENGAGE PEERS

Beck & Dennis, 1996
Resources


AAC in the Classroom

Peer Research

Communication Circles – Caroline Musselwhite
Train Communication Partners - Family

- Family members need to be active members of the AAC team
- A child needs to be given the chance to succeed
  McNaughton et al., 2008
- First step is to decide on the desired outcome to be targeted as goals for the intervention
- We need to work with families to translate what we know about evidence based practice into everyday practice
  Granlund et al., 2008
“The success of the interaction depends not only on the skills of this individual, but also on those of the communication partner”

(Kent-Walsh & McNaughton, 2005, p. 195)
Resources


Great website for families
http://aac.unl.edu/yaack/

Rocky Bay Project- AAC Kit for the whole team
http://www.rockybay.org.au/go/services/clinical-services-directorate/resources
9. AAC Myths

* To help you address the myths!

* AAC Connecting Young Kids

http://aac.unl.edu/yaack/

10. The essentials…

Someone learning to use AAC needs to;

1. See their system of communication used interactively by other people to communicate real messages in real situations

2. Have multiple opportunities to practice communicating real messages in real situations- with appropriate scaffolds as required

3. Receive natural feedback as to the effectiveness of their communication

4. Have their messages expanded by other people to demonstrate effective communication

Porter, (2007), PODD manual
Principles for the Next 25 Years of AAC

- The time for AAC is now: the right to communicate is a basic human freedom.
- One is never enough: Individuals with CCN require more than one device, one communication partner, one communication strategy, one communication environment.
- My AAC must fit my life - highly individualised and appropriate to the individuals needs
- AAC must support full participation in all aspects of the 21st century.
- Nothing about me without me!

Williams, Krezman & McNaughton (2008)
“Everyone has the need to communicate. The challenge is to figure out a way of providing all individuals with appropriate ways to meet this need, regardless of their age, diagnoses, or level of disability”

Sigafoos & O’Reilly, 2004
Resources


Questions?

For further advice or an appointment phone 9381 0600
email technology@ilc.com.au

For resources www.ilc.com.au
ILC Tech page