

# *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*

## *Developing Participation*

### *Part 1: Getting Started*



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# Meet Dr. Sharon Rogers



- Speech-Language Pathologist
- AAC Consultant, Retired Faculty from California State University Fullerton and Claremont Graduate University
- AAC presentations given in the United States, Ireland, Denmark and Spain
- Published in Journal of Learning Disabilities

# Meet Dr. Lesley Mayne



- Speech-Language Pathologist
- AAC professor at California State University, Fullerton
- Public school practitioner
- 2013 CSHA Outstanding Achievement award

# Developing Participation for Children Using AAC:

## A Five Part Webinar Series



- April 30, 2013 Getting Started
- May 9, 2013 Building Fundamentals
- May 21, 2013 Making Connections
- June 4, 2013 Bridging Skills
- June 25, 2013 Maximizing Participation

# Getting Started: The Scope



- Beginning stages of participation for the child and the communication partner
- Establishing purpose and meaning to gestures, vocalizations
- Discovering new ways to communicate by exploring listening, reading, writing, and speaking
- Using tools to develop and express language

# Getting Started: Agenda



## So What Was I Supposed to Do?

- Social Interaction
- Skills and activities
- Teachable suggestions for facilitators
- Beginning literacy skills
- Choosing vocabulary
- AAC tools and access methods
- Troubleshooting



# Getting Started with Social Interaction



# Why are We Developing Participation?

Purpose: Authentic communication ...

- Motivating
- Causes action
- Expresses the child's unique identity
- Transfers information
- Yields an emotional response for the child and communication partner
- Belonging
- Fun!!!

# What Janice Light Has to Say about Social Interaction

Communicative competence is a relative and dynamic, interpersonal construct based on functionality of communication, adequacy of communication, and sufficiency of knowledge, judgment, and skill in four interrelated areas:

- Social closeness
- Information transfer
- Social etiquette
- Wants and needs



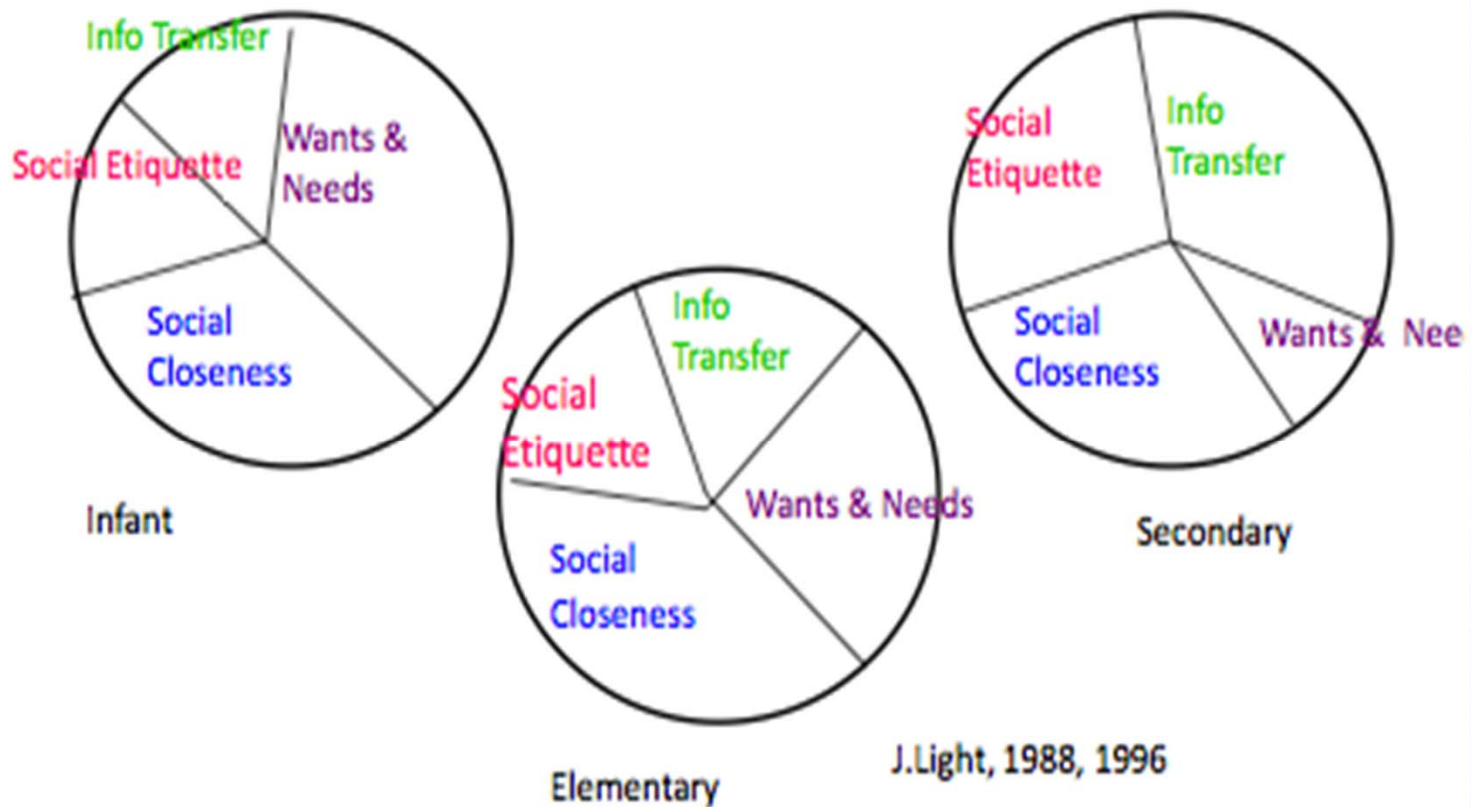
Janice Light: Our Hero

Light, J. (1989). Toward a Definition of Communicative Competence for Individuals Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 5, 137-134.

# Janice Light 4 Purposes of Communication (1988)

1. Social closeness
  - a. Establishing, maintaining, developing relationships
  - b. Sympathy, jokes, joy, love
2. Information transfer
  - a. Sharing information
  - b. Complex language to convey ideas and meaning
3. Social etiquette
  - a. Social conventions - politeness
4. Wants and needs
  - a. Regulate others' behavior
  - b. Tends to dominate communication books and boards

# Changing Purposes of Communication



# What and how is the child communicating now?

## Unaided

- Uses eyes to look at people and the environment
- Smiling at the communicator partner
- Hands, arms, legs, feet, head nods and/or positioning



## Aided

- Introduction or use of switches or speech generating devices (SGDs)

# Getting Started with Skills and Activities



# Skills and Activities

## Target Skills

- Using eyes to engage
- Smiling to communicate
- Vocalizing or use of a speech generating device (SGD) to extend a conversation

## Activities

- Talk to the child while playing peek-a-boo, blowing bubbles, or reading a book
- Sing to the child using facial expressions and movement of the arms and legs



# Let's Go On a Walk About!



- Take your session outdoors!
- Gather a single switch or a dual switch
  - Program “go” for a single switch
  - Program “go” and “stop” for a dual switch
- Explain to the child that you are going for a walk and they are in charge of when we “go” and “stop”
- Remember to bring a hat, sunglasses, or other protective wear as appropriate (e.g. sun lotion)

# Participation is the Context

- \* Friendships
- \* Skills
- \* Competencies
- \* Creativity
- \* Mental health
- \* Physical health
- \* Meaning and purpose

# Can Child Center for Disability Research

[canchild.ca/en/childrenfamilies/participation.asp](http://canchild.ca/en/childrenfamilies/participation.asp)



Participation in activities is the context in which children form friendships, develop skills and competencies, express creativity, achieve mental and physical health, and determine meaning and purpose in life.

# Teachable Skills and Suggestions for Facilitators



- Interpret and describe the child's modes of communication to others
- Acknowledge and expand the child's expressions, verbally or using SGDs
- Model use of sign language, gestures, and SGD communication
- Identify opportunities with families to determine times to communicate (e.g. car, meals, dressing, friends over)

# Natural Consequences



# Natural Consequences

- **The purpose is to make sure the child knows his/her communication matters; that the facilitator won't make the choice for the child**
- Offer a choice and expect a response. If you don't get a response, move on to the next option until you get a response
- Once the child makes a choice, give the choice even if you think the child wants a different option
- Give the child a chance to request his/her intended choice on the next trial

# Literacy Skills: Do We Do That?



# Beginning Literacy Skills

- Literacy skills are the ability to read and write in a given language
- View the literacy process through the lens of the child's role and the adult role
- 50-90% of all children who use AAC do not have functional literacy skills (Koppenhaver & Yoder, 1992)

## Ablenet Book Worm

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YLAP2wWb40>



# Literacy: Child's Role

- Look at photos and photos with print
- Make choices about books and other print
- Listen to stories, repeatedly
- Observe and interact with objects paired with word labels (e.g. labeled items in the home, family with names)
- Scribble with markers, pens, crayons with adapted grips as appropriate





# Literacy: Adult Role

- Accommodate processing demands providing phrases or short sentences
- Show the child print all around their world
- Point out concepts of color, shape, and size
- Simplify text



# Let's Look Back at Communication a Second

In regards to literacy:

- Determine access methods: direct selection with fingers, stylus, head pointer, eye gaze, or switch
- What's working? What can I try next? What did the child teach or show me?
- Circle back to social interaction: What behaviors do you observe the child expressing their connection to the story, activity, and communication partner?



# Choosing Vocabulary

- Social closeness
  - Close people (e. g. mom, dad, siblings, caretakers)
  - Action words “hug” and “go away”
- Information transfer
  - Words that cause action (e.g. Knock the blocks down! Build the blocks again!)
  - More, stop, go
- Social etiquette
  - Say hello/goodbye appropriate to the age (e.g. “What’s up? Hey!”)
- Wants and needs
  - Favorite toys, books, food,



# Vocabulary



- Core Words
  - Words that account for most of our language that are not specific to an individual such as “dog, cat, store, you, me, school”
- Fringe words
  - Words that appeal to a person’s unique individual experience such as people’s names and nicknames, restaurant names, names of pets such as “Kim, Taco Deli, and Toto”

# Vocabulary Source

<http://www.vantatenhove.com/files/NLDAAC.pdf>

Gail Van Tatenhove has a gold mine of resources free for download. Included are vocabulary lists of top words used by toddlers (Banajee, DiCarlo, & Buras-Stricklin, 2003).

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Clinical Application: A Place to Start

*all done, different, help, mine, more, not/don't,  
stop, that, want, what*

# Getting Started with Ablenet Technology Options



# AAC Tools & Access Methods



Think multimodal!

- Body: How many ways does the child communicate using their body? Practice all of them.
- Communication boards
- Symbol system: Pictures, Drawings, Mayer Johnson Boardmaker and Symbolstix



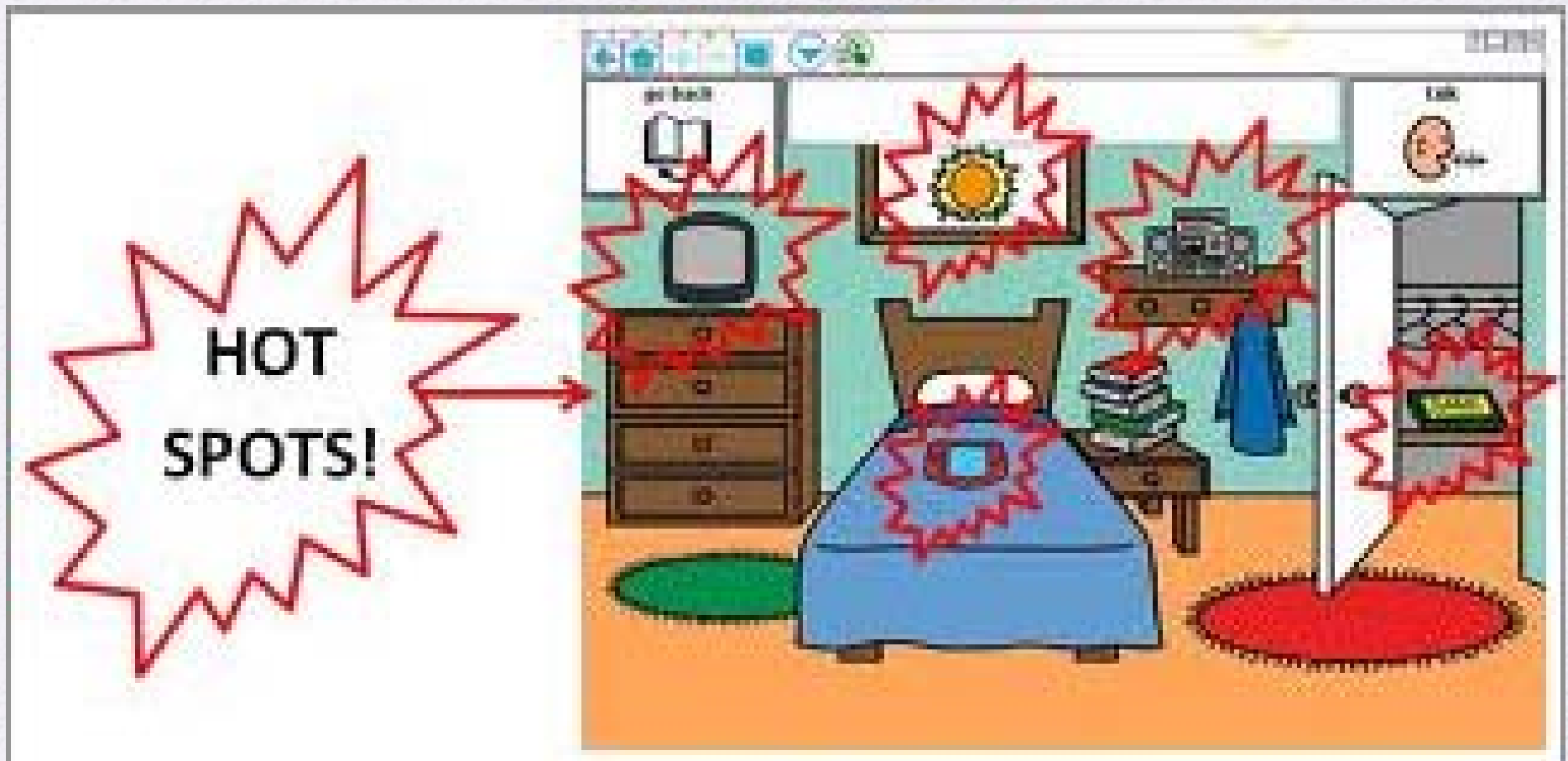
# AAC Symbol Options

- Real object that represents an object
- Partial object that represents an object
- Miniature object
- Photograph
- Line drawing
- Logo
- Orthography (e.g. letters, writing, keyboard)
- Symbol system: Mayer Johnson Boardmaker and Symbolstix



# Visual Scene

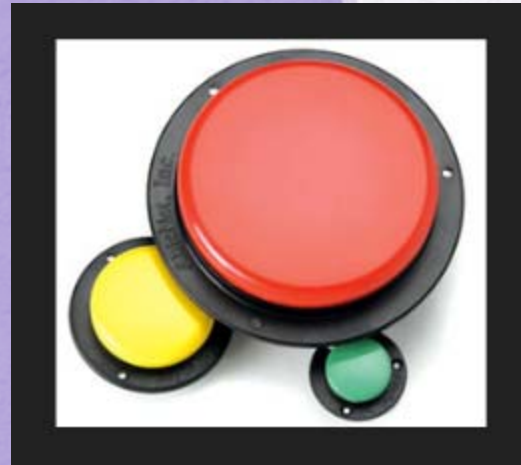
Young children acquire language faster in context.



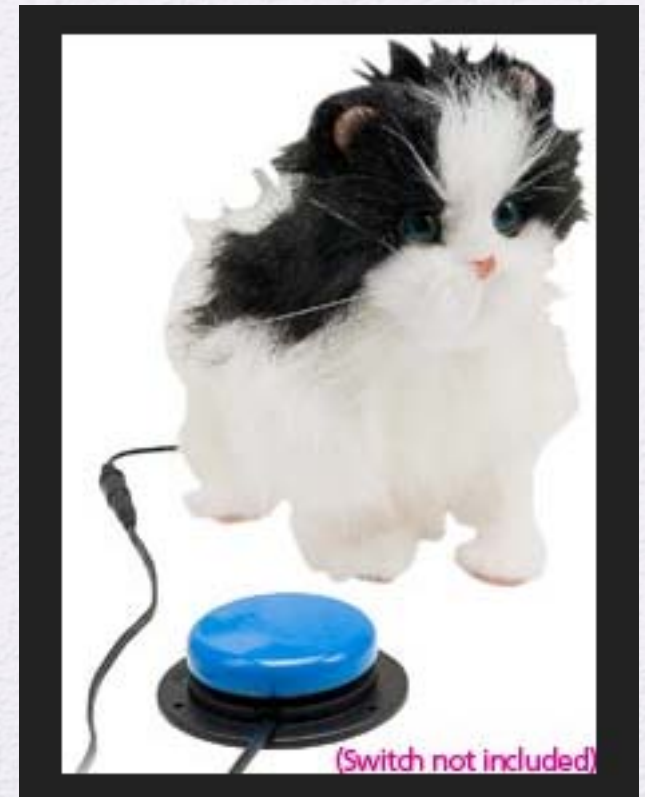
# Visual Scene Displays (VSDs)

- Interactional and environmental context (Dietz, McKelvey, & Beukelman, 2006)
- Easier for young children 2.5 years to learn and use (Drager, Light, Carlson, D'Silva, Larsson, Pitkin, et al, 2004)
- Children with developmental disabilities take more social turns using VSD (Drager, Light, Finke, 2009)

# A Sampling of Ablenet Switches



Single switch: Big Mac  
and Jelly Bean  
Dual switch: iTalk2  
Environmental  
control: Jelly Beamer  
and a switch with a  
battery device adapter





## Getting Started: Three iPad Apps

- ◆ Sounding Board by Ablenet – Free
- ◆ Answers HD – binary option Free or \$3.99
- ◆ Tap Speak Button – single switch \$14.99, 29.99, 49.99 Major Johnson Symbols

# Ablenet TalkTrac



- 4 messages and 2 levels = 8 individual messages
- Quick social messages
- TalkTrac is a perfect companion for children and adults on the autism spectrum, helping them feel more comfortable in social situations.



# Troubleshooting

*"Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." - John Wooden*



# Troubleshooting: Linguistic Variations

- Reduce language input to the child
- Pause more-create the expectation for communication
- Pause for motor planning needs
- Give more and/or different life experiences
- Change the voice options on the SGD if possible to improve motivation



# Troubleshooting: Operational Ideas

Technical skill or a physical skills such as forming the correct hand shape for manual signs, pointing, or touching buttons on a SGD

- Check the batteries
- Keep a small stock of batteries
- View YouTube tutorials available on the use of a SGD or accessory
- Keep the manual for reference
- Teach others how to program SGDs
- Provide a model with verbal encouragement, “I helped you say ‘more,’ now it’s your turn to say ‘more.’”

# Parting Advice for Getting Started

Make communication fun.

If I am having fun, the child is having fun.



*Tell us how we're doing*

After this session is over, a short survey will appear on your screen after the meeting ends. Please tell us how we're doing!

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FREE SoundingBoard app  
download from iTunes!





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