

*Augmentative and Alternative  
Communication  
Developing Participation  
Part 2: Building Fundamentals*



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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

# Building Fundamentals: The Scope



The child is learning to:

- Put a message together, e.g. verbal, non-verbal or, using an speech-generating device (SGD)
- Look at social engagement with others such as commenting, turn-taking
- Learn to regulate his/her communication behavior
- Recognize he/she is regulating other's behavior

# Janice Light



## 4 Purposes of Communication

- Social closeness for relationships
- Information transfer of ideas and meanings
- Social etiquette conventions
- Wants and needs to regulate other's behavior

## Link to Building Fundamentals

- “Give hug, hug me, hug doll” or “Go away.”
- “That cookie, big ball, blue car”
- “Hello, good-bye”
- Toys, food, shares, personal interest items.

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 1988

## 4 AAC Competencies

### 1. Linguistic

- Processing receptive and expressive language
- Comprehending symbolic language of AAC drawings, signs, and codes, and using all forms of language

### 2. Operational - technical skill

### 3. Social - pragmatics

### 4. Strategic - enlisting and utilizing support

Light, J. (1988). Interaction involving individuals using AAC systems: State of the art and future directions. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 4, 66-82.

# Operational Competence

- Technical skill
- Forming the correct hand shape for manual signs, pointing, or touching buttons on a SGD
- Scanning
- On/off
- Turn the pages of a communication book
- Gross/fine motor, attention, and memory skills



# Social Competence

## Sociolinguistics – discourse strategies

- Initiating, maintaining, terminating conversation
- Stating wants and needs
- Requesting and protesting

## Socio-relational

- Positive self-image
- Interest in others
- Interest in communication
- Putting communication partners at ease



# Strategic Competency

- Compensatory strategies (hold four fingers up instead of saying misarticulated “4”)
- Clarify message, optimize communicative efficiency of message and speed
- Repair messages
- Enlist and utilize the support of a peer or adult



# AAC Competencies: A Visual Representation



# What and How is the Child Communicating Now?

## Unaided

- Uses eyes, smiles, and/or verbalizations to direct people's attention, elicit interaction, and to make choices
- Hands, arms, legs, feet, head nods and/or positioning

## Aided

- Use of a variety of switches or speech generating devices (SGDs)
- Symbol selection



# Building Fundamentals: 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

# Building Fundamentals for 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!!!

# Ideas for Social Interaction

- Model and elicit questions, “What’s that?”
- Encouraging vocalizations providing meaning to others as needed
- Model and include the child in turn-taking
- Include words for success, mistakes, spontaneous interjections such as gasps, “Yeah, oops”
- Child begins to make choices for group activities

# Building Fundamental with Skills and Activities



# Skills and Activities

## Activities

- I Spy!

- Daily routines:  
dressing, feeding,  
bath time

- Mr. Potato Head

## Skills

Joint reference and joint attention, auditory and visual discrimination, label the item and comment, “I did it.” “I see it.” “No, that’s not it.” “Help me.”

Stating preferences, working with routine transitions that benefit self-regulation, predicting the action physically

Identifying and labeling body parts, prepositions, having fun with interaction

# Skills and Activities: Fun with Literacy

A great big thank you to Judy Montgomery for this literacy nugget.

1. Take a really fun book to class/therapy/home and share the story with the child/children
2. Create anticipation of finding the same book in a bag during the next session, read it, and have the child say the key characters or objects
3. Hide the same book in the room at the next session, read it, and have the child finish the sentences
4. Bring the same book wrapped in a box. Open the box with the child creating anticipation, read the book, and follow up with communicating about the key words, finishing sentences, or other literacy task

# Facilitator Strategies

Who's on 1<sup>st</sup>... What's on 2<sup>nd</sup>... I Don't Know's on 3<sup>rd</sup> ...



# Goal: Increase Opportunity, Initiation, and Response

- 15-20 minute activities two to three times a day
- Look and WAIT for initiation in interaction
- Look and WAIT for responses within an interaction
- Read books together
- Ask for the child's opinion: I like it. I don't like it.

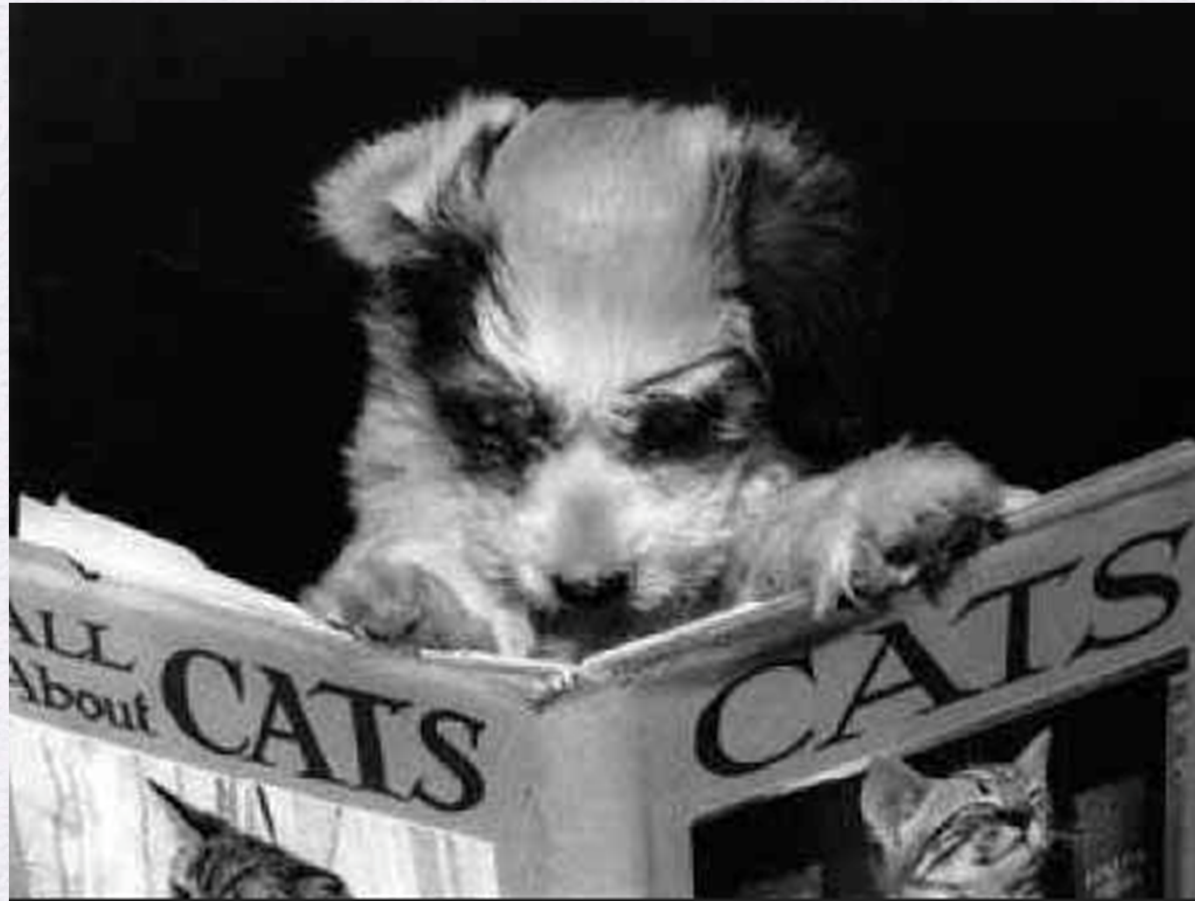


# Tips for Facilitators

- Expand the communication partners interacting with the child everyday
- Expand the quality of the interaction. If you started with social greetings, move towards information transfer
- Observe and report preferences, interests, learning styles,
- How many different ways can the child communicate a message



# Literacy Skills



# Creating Literacy Opportunities

- Notice the child's favorite ice cream, pizza, restaurants, activities at school, toys
- Address safety signs: green-go, red-stop
- Turn pages in a book, "read that page again, wait a minute, I am all done"
- Draw and write simple shapes, letters, using a dry erase board, Doodle Buddy app on a tablet, chalk or pens on paper

# Adult Role in Literacy



- In webinars 2-5 we will introduce you to the idea of narrative development based on the work by Sadao & Robinson 2010.
- Describing text, pictures, and context
- Playing with sound and letter correspondence using aided and unaided AAC

# Literacy Tips

- Learning about print and page orientation
- Considering physical access to the print such as slant boards for writing and Velcro to stabilize print
- Asking what questions of the child. Seeking opinion and confirmation of comprehension.



# Let's Revisit Communication

- Access method to literacy: direct selection, SGD switch, Bookworm, high tech,
- What's next: low tech page fluffers such as Velcro or raised edges, using a switch to state, "turn the page"
- Is the reading level of the books adequate? Consider alternating levels of books, one for interest level and one for the reading level
- A comment from our first webinar Getting Started: "My son learned to read before he learned to speak. It is probably more common than people realize."

# More on Revisiting Communication

- What behaviors is the child showing you that he or she is connected to the material?
- What are the signs to wait, read again, continue?
- Can you see a way to head towards an independent way to express these ideas as we move towards Bridging Skills?



# Vocabulary



# Options for Vocabulary

- Practice questions, “What’s that?”
- Use book reader or Tablet technology to share reading with friends
- Words for “I agree, I don’t agree
- Social interaction, “what’s up? Let’s watch the game”
- I, what’s that, hey there, good-bye, help, that, my, mine, you/your, look, like, on/off, in/out, over/under, concepts of color shape and size – combining stage



# Vocabulary: Adult Role

- Maintain a core vocabulary list
- Maintain a fringe vocabulary list
- Ask for vocabulary from teachers up front if possible
- Check out the text or copy chapter summaries
- Play word games
  - matching or go-together words just like you may have done with pictures
  - matching pictures
  - matching pictures with the labels
  - Match a picture to a word
  - Match a written word or icon to a definition



# Vocabulary Ideas



- Program question forms on a communication board.  
What, where, why
- The act of asking questions must be explicitly taught.
- Include negation. In Part I Getting Started we talked about saying “no.” In Building Fundamentals we want to expand the language to include words such as, “do not, I don’t.”
- Visit the PRC language lab break down of stages to follow visit:

<http://www.aaclanguagelab.com>



# Tools for Building Fundamentals



- Talking photo albums – talking about family, field trips, special events
- Jelly Bean - single switch for single, phrase, or sentence length messages

AbleNet Device Skins



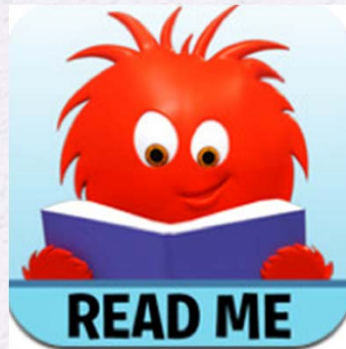
# A Few More Tool Ideas

- iTalk2 – dual switch for expressing choices
- Environmental control switch – run blenders, toys, lights
- Visual scenes – increase language complexity
- Tablets – access to communication, education, and fun



# More Tools and Use

- Dry erase boards – used to support generating messages
- Book readers on various technology



Morris

- Bookshare at <https://www.bookshare.org> helps people with print disabilities of all ages gain free access to books

# Troubleshooting

Nobody knows.....



# Troubleshooting: From the Trenches

- AAC is only used in one setting: Train, train, train potential facilitators. Everyone implements AAC is the message that must be sent.
- If one AAC tool is not successful in a setting, what could be? Think multimodal. Can a low-tech tool meet the need. Does the language need to be simplified? Work with paraprofessionals on what follow through activities will work for them.

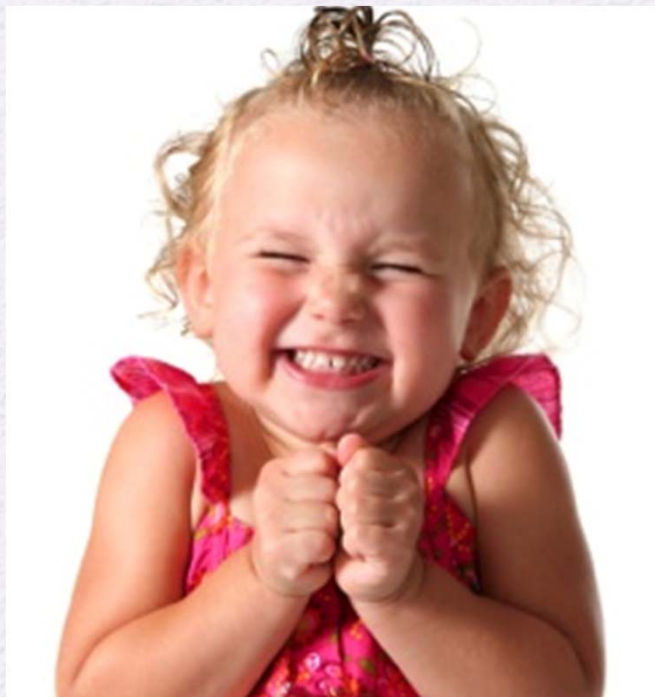


# Troubleshooting: Symbol System Consideration

- Be cautious of how the symbol system may change across devices.
- For example, are the symbols used on an app similar or the same to symbols that may be used for a low tech device.
- Consistency may be required.
- Change may be fine for one person who can represent language multiple ways. For others, the change represents new learning of language, or visual memory demands that may be too much.

# Parting Advice for Building Fundamentals

Communication exists in the intent of the message not in “hitting buttons.”



*Tell us how we're doing*

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