AAC and Literacy
Network Day 24th June 2014

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What is Literacy?

- Reading, writing, speaking and listening
- The ability to read and write using text
Why are we talking about AAC and Literacy?

“most individuals who require AAC experience difficulties in literacy development. Their skills lag behind those of typically developing peers, and these problems persist into adulthood.’


*Why do so many people who use AAC have difficulties with literacy?*
Why are we doing this?

DfE National Prospectus Grant Programme for SEN and Disability

- Develop and reform services that support children with SEN, disabilities and other health needs

**Objective:** Tackle under-developed areas of the AAC market

**Outputs:**
- Comprehensive on-line information resource of AAC hardware and software
- Minimum 10 new information leaflets
- Robust evidence of impact

**Evaluation and monitoring:**
- Feedback from staff piloting resources
• Survey created in order to begin to explore how literacy is taught to individuals who use AAC

• Questions created in response to a survey project in USA that examines reading strategies and adaptations for students who use AAC:

• 16 participants completed the survey
Teaching Literacy Survey Responses

Do you explicitly teach literacy to the child/children who use AAC?
  – 94% Yes, 0% No, 6% other

How often does the child/children participate in guided reading activities?
  – 88% rarely, 12% regularly

Comments
  • “The pupil participates in narrative and AAC stories”
  • “Reading is not appropriate for the pupil at this stage – Nursery”
How often does a child/children participate in teacher and/or student led discussion about books before or after reading?
- 6% rarely, 0% occasionally, 94% regularly

How often does the child/children engage in story retelling?
- 63% rarely, 6% occasionally, 31% regularly

How often does the child/children choose what they will read?
- 63% rarely, 6% occasionally, 31% regularly

How often does the child/children read independently?
- 74% rarely, 13% occasionally, 13% regularly

Comments
- Following reading there is encouragement for the student to talk about the story, request more of a liked sound/noise/story part through pictures/symbols.
- Not appropriate for developmental level although enjoys looking at books.
Teaching Literacy Survey Responses (cont.)

How often does the child/children identify pictures that rhyme?
  – 94% rarely, 0% occasionally, 6% regularly

How often does a child/children identify sounds (phonemes) in words?
  – 81% rarely, 6% occasionally, 13% regularly

How often does the child/children identify pictures that begin with the same sound?
  – 81% rarely, 13% occasionally, 6% regularly

How often does the child/children recognise high frequency written words?
  – 81% rarely, 0% occasionally, 19% regularly

Comments
What are the challenges?

• Attitudinal barriers
• Limited opportunity
  – Time
  – Resources need to be adapted
  – Knowledge
• Difficulties to access
  – Can’t manipulate books independently
  – Difficulties with process of writing
  – No verbal output
• Standardised assessments are not suitable
  – No alternatives
  – Difficult to set literacy targets
The challenges (cont.)

Hear it and say it
e.g. /p/ /æ/ /t/

See it and say it
e.g. pat

Say it and write it
e.g. pat
There once was a fisher named Fisher,
Who went fishing for fish in a fissure,
A fish with a grin,
Pulled the fisherman in,
Now they're fishing the fissure for Fisher.
There was a fisherman named Fisher, who went fishing for fish in a fissure.

A fish with a grin,
pulled the fisherman in.

Now they're fishing the fissure for Fisher!

• What happens to the meaning?

• What happens to the humour?
Symbolisation towards Literacy

What is the focus for vocabulary on AAC system?

• Language of the story… to retell

• Language for interaction… to discuss and comment

• The print… to talk about language and literacy

Do we identify and teach vocabulary on an AAC system that supports Literacy learning?

Dr Janice Murray (Manchester Metropolitan University) and Dr Martine M Smith (Trinity College Dublin)

- Deconstructing Symbol Communication and its Impact on Language Development
- Pre-literacy Communication Strategies & Activities
- Formal Literacy Training and Writing
- Word Deconstruction

Communication Matters are hoping to repeat this event in Manchester in 2015 [http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/study-days](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/study-days)
DfE National Prospectus Grant

Project Resources

• Low Tech AAC
• Switch access to AAC
• Literacy and AAC

• Written guidance
  – iBooks
  – PDF handouts

• Downloadable resources
  – Clicker Grids
  – Activity packs
Resources

Resource sharing

What else do you think is needed?
Useful websites

- [http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds](http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds)
  Karen Erickson - Center for Literacy and Disability Studies

  Jane Farrall

- [http://aacliteracy.psu.edu/Home.html](http://aacliteracy.psu.edu/Home.html)
  Janice Light and David McNaughton

- [http://aacintervention.com/](http://aacintervention.com/)
  Caroline Musselwhite

- [http://praacticalaaac.org/](http://praacticalaaac.org/)
  Robin Parker and Carole Zangari


Conclusion

- Presentation will be available on our website www.acecentre.org.uk

- Contact us…

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