Creating Communication Environments

An Overview

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Creating a communication environment

Requires changes in the...
- **Partner**
- **Environment**
- **Activities**

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Engineering the Partner for Modeling

- Creating or designing ways for us to be most effective
- Setting YOU up for success using AAC
- Problem-solving how the AAC will always be within arm’s length
Modeling

- Partner use of communication modes/materials to represent:
  - own words
  - communicator’s words
  - instructor’s words
  - others’ words
  - words related to the current situation….

Don’t just tell, show…

“We just can’t tell beginning communicators how to interact … using AAC … We need to show them how to use the modes of communication … and demonstrate that using AAC works and can work for them.”

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Benefits of Modeling

- Provides opportunities to observe the functional uses of the AAC system
- Helps identify strengths and limitations of the system
- Sensitizes facilitators to difficulties in using the AAC approach
- Requires facilitators to become competent users of AAC
- Makes communicative interactions naturally slower, allowing more time for processing the language
- Ensures language input will is relevant to the context and needs of communicator
Instructions vs communication

- Beware modeling the system solely to boss the student
- AAC is not a visual schedule
- AAC is not classroom management

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Engineering the Environment for Modeling

- Setting YOUR SPACE up for success using AAC
- AAC always within arm's length
- Predicting the words you need where you need them
Context-specific

- Preparing to have the words you need when and where you need them.
- Whenever possible, use the full system!
- Better to model symbols separate from the full system than to not model at all.
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Engineered Partner Interactions

- Purposefully created
- Motivating
- Familiar, often predictable
- Model, model, model
- Wait time: provide LOTS
- Non-directive language
- Open-ended comments

Engineering Interactions

- pause – place an item where it is visible but don’t give it immediately
- missing item – item needed for activity is missing
- interruption – remove an item that is part of a routine
- partial presentation – give only some of the parts of the activity
- wrong item – give an item that doesn’t match what they requested
- inaccessible item – place item in visible but inaccessible location

Engineering Activities

- Identify your conceptual focus
- Blend your conceptual focus with the language you need to explain your concepts

Compare/Contrast

- Same vs different
- LIKE this, NOT LIKE or DIFFERENT from that
- Describing words: this is LIKE this because… this is DIFFERENT because…
- Opposites
- Same concept across all subjects across the entire day

Time and Sequencing

- FIRST, THEN
- FIRST, NEXT, LAST
- FIRST, then CHANGE, now DIFFERENT
Possible Next Steps

* Ask: How is your environment supporting you to model? Which activities are easiest for you to use AAC? Which ones are hardest?

* Share: your strategies in the Facebook group

* Create an extra copy of the AAC

Thank You!
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