

**AAC Language**  
**Why do we want it?**  
**Planning for long-term outcomes**

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**Gayle Porter- Disclosure**

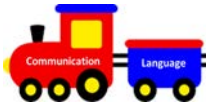
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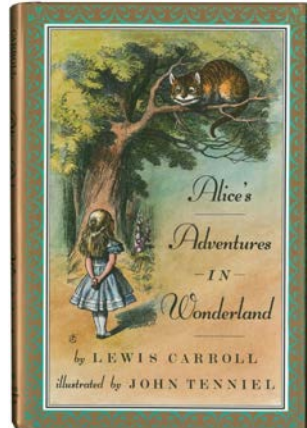
**Language**

- Language is made up of socially shared rules that include the following:
  - What words mean (e.g., "star" can refer to a bright object in the night sky or a celebrity) - Semantics
  - How to put words together (e.g., "Peg walked to the new store" rather than "Peg walk store new") – Syntax
  - How to make new words (e.g., friend, friendly, unfriendly) Word morphology
- Language may be in a variety of forms
  - Spoken language (speech)
  - Written language
  - Sign language
  - Graphic symbol / pictograph language

**“Communication is the engine that drives language”**  
**Martine Smith (2003)**




- The purpose of language is to enable us to understand others and be understood
- The ability to use language is important in terms of how it enables us to meet our varied communication requirements



Alice:  
*“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”*

Cheshire Cat:  
*“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.”*

**Long term outcomes – aim of AAC**



(Porter, 2007)

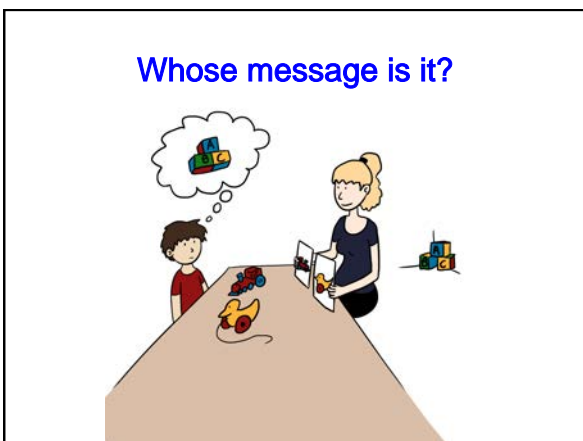
### Autonomous communication

Being able to say  
 whatever I want to say,  
 to whoever I want to say it to,  
 whenever and wherever  
 I want to say it  
 However I choose to say it

### What is Autonomous communication?

- Autonomous communication is different from
  - Choice-making
    - select preference – other person's options
  - Answering Yes/No
    - agree / disagree other person's idea
- Autonomous communication originates in the thought of the speaker (said)

### Whose message is it?



### Whose message is it?



### Whose message is it?



### Communication Autonomy

Autonomous communication is **not necessarily** sophisticated or complex language

*Need to be able to communicate in the words you're thinking*

## Autonomous communication is not the necessarily independent

Another person may have a role in operating the system to enable an individual to “say what they want to say”.

## Autonomous Communication - need to generate own messages in own words

- Spelling to generate own words
- Whole word / symbol AAC systems
  - Degree of autonomy will be influenced by the size and diversity of the vocabulary pool
  - Larger the pool the more likely it is that the word I'm thinking will be there
  - Efficient organization supports more frequent autonomous communication

## Communication Accessibility



There are people in the social environment who

- understand the alternative communication form
- can scaffold it in the acquisition period
- are able and willing to communicate in a manner that gives the individual maximal communicative autonomy.

(von Tetzchner & Grove 2003)

## Purpose of AAC



To enable the person to meet all of his/her varied **communication requirements** as

- intelligibly
- specifically
- efficiently
- independently
- in as socially valued a manner as possible

To understand others and to be understood.

Porter, 1997

## Varied communication functions

greet      manipulate      relate information  
 agree / disagree      answer      ask questions  
 instruct others      ask for things      joke  
 express an opinion      share information  
 express feelings      protest      describe  
 discuss interest      "make social contact"      bargain  
 comment      request / attract attention      complain

Problem-solve how each individual can meet their varied communication requirements

- To understand others & express self
- Full range of
  - Purposes (e.g. ask questions, complain, comment)
  - Messages, topics
  - Social roles (e.g. student, sister, friend, employee)
  - Partners
  - Environments and physical positions
- Express individual personality

### Multi modal communication

- We all use multiple modes to communicate.
- Choose the most effective method to “get our message across”
- Different modes of communication may be more or less effective to communicate
  - different types of messages
  - in different situations
  - with different partners

### Multi-modal communication

*“an individual does not abandon simpler strategies in the march towards independence. Instead the individual acquires more and more sophisticated communication methods to add to an existing repertoire.”*

Blackstone & Hunt Berg, 2003. p. 15

*“the function of communicative abilities is to solve communicative challenges.”*

von Tetzchner & Grove, 2003 p.14

### Everyone uses AAC !

We all use AAC when external or internal **constraints** limit the effectiveness of our spoken language.



Over distance



Noisy bar

International travel

Laryngitis

### Internal constraint Complex Communication Needs

- Effectiveness of spoken language (gesture) more frequently limited
- Worth investing in a more sophisticated AAC system!



### Communication competence for people who use AAC (Light, 2003; Light & McNaughton, 2014)

Sufficient knowledge, judgment and skill

- linguistic competence (language)
- operational competence
- social competence
- strategic competence

#### Psychosocial factors

- Motivation
- Attitude
- Confidence
- Resilience



### Habits to support autonomous communication

- Routinely ensuring the AAC system is readily available for use **ALL THE TIME**
  - Prepared for communication **AT ANY TIME**
- Providing enough time for the person to communicate their own message in the manner / words they prefer



## AAC interventions long term destination

*“Communication is not an end goal in and of itself, rather it is a tool to allow individuals to participate effectively and attain their goals at home, at school, at work or in the community”*

Light & McNaughton, 2015. p. 4

*“Ultimately, the goals of AAC intervention must be that the children and adults with complex communication needs have the opportunity to live happy and fulfilled lives where they are able to participate fully in education, employment, family, and community life; where they are safe and secure, and have access to needed services; where they are respected and valued for who they are; where they have a chance to develop friendships and intimate relationships; and where they have the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to society”.*

*(Light & McNaughton, 2015. .p 3 )*

- Light, J & McNaughton, D. (2014) Communicative Competence for Individuals who require Augmentative and Alternative Communication: A New Definition for a New Era of Communication? *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* 30 (1), 1-18.
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