Introduction

Beyond Requesting:
I Have More to Say

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

- What is requesting?
  - A way to express a desire or
  - Ask for something (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/requesting)

Benefits of requesting (con’t)
- Give some degree of control over the environment
  (simple to complex): (Bondy & Frost, 2001; Reichle & Sigafoos, 1991; Sigafoos & Reichle, 1992; Schlosser et. al 2007)
- Requesting is important for self-determination, empowerment, and self-advocacy
  - Everyday opportunities to impact daily care via increased choice making and requesting of preferred items/activities (Calculato, 1999)
  - Requesting may also impact decisions related to directing personal services including employment, transportation, and living situations (Collier, 2006)

Benefits of requesting
- Allows individuals to gain access to preferred objects and activities
- An early communicative function seen in typically developing children
- Can be taught using established protocols (Sigafoos & Mirenda, 2002)

Brainstorm

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

- Requesting is commonly used to teach AAC (Snell et al, 2006)
- Used in 87.5% of reviewed studies with individuals with severe disabilities
- Compared to social interaction (37.5% of studies) or joint attention (30% of studies)

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

- Benefits of requesting
  - Allows individuals to gain access to preferred objects and activities
  - An early communicative function seen in typically developing children
  - Can be taught using established protocols (Sigafoos & Mirenda, 2002)
Let’s Talk about Requesting…

“Most of our research and clinical attention to date … have served to support the communication of needs and wants … We have assumed these needs to be of the greatest importance … It is time to question these assumptions…” (Light, 1988)

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

- Limitations of requesting

WE GET “STUCK”!

- With beginning communicators
- With more advanced communicators
- With children
- With adults

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

• Limitations of requesting (con’t)

NOT WHAT VERBAL INDIVIDUALS DO

• Not the only function used by verbal individuals
• Verbal children express a wide range of communicative functions — children with language impairments express a limited number (Fey, Leonard, Fey, & O’Connor, 1978; Leonard, Camarata, Rowan, & Chapman, 1982; Rom & Bliss, 1981)

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

• Limitations of requesting (con’t)

- Puts too much emphasis on regulating the behavior of others
  - Children with autism (Wetherby, 1986; Wetherby & Prutting, 1994)
  - Children with physical disabilities who use AAC (Cress et al., 1999)
  - Adolescents with cognitive impairments (Cirrin & Roland, 1985)
  - Adults with cognitive disabilities (Ogletree et al., 1992; Brady et al., 1995)

…at the expense of learning how to use social communication like verbal individuals use…

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

• Limitations of requesting (con’t)

- Requesting does not generalize
  - Children who were taught to request did not use the same symbols to communicate for other reasons like requesting information, commenting, stating, and requesting actions (Glennen & Calculator, 1985)

Let’s Talk about Requesting…

• Limitations of requesting (con’t)

- Does not allow AAC users to become competent communicators (Light, 1989)
  - Linguistic competence
  - Operational competence
  - Social competence
  - Strategic competence
Let’s Talk about Requesting...

- Limitations of requesting (con’t)

“One of the things that really sucks is that the disabled community is never taught pragmatics. We are not taught how to make small talk, the levels of trust, how to slowly make friends, or even different ways to greet people. Making friends tends to be difficult, because I was never taught basic social skills. I do the best I can, but it’s really hard, and I am lonely a lot” (Botten, 2006)

I Have More to Say

“We could see that her communication was indeed far more than choice making. Anna liked finding keys for asking questions and making comments….She liked hitting the key that had been freshly programmed to tell me something about her day” (Mintun, 2005)

I Have More to Say

- According to Light (1988, 1989), there are five main agendas or purposes to communication:
  - Communication of needs/wants
  - Information transfer
  - Social closeness
  - Social etiquette
  - Specific communicative functions
    - Information gathering
    - Protest
    - Self-expression
  - Requesting
  - Beyond Requesting

I Have More to Say

- Let’s narrow these down to a list we can handle!

- Requesting
  - Requesting more
  - Requesting object, action, attention
  - Choice Making
- Beyond Requesting
  - Rejecting/protesting
  - Asking questions
  - Commenting
  - Gaining attention
  - Social etiquette
  - Answering questions
  - Sharing information
  - Telling stories
Vocabulary Selection

- Goal: provide paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words, word endings, and letters that can be used for
  - Rejecting/protesting
  - Asking questions
  - Commenting
  - Gaining attention
  - Social etiquette
  - Answering questions
  - Sharing information
  - Telling stories

Vocabulary Selection

- Vocabulary might be in one or more of these groups
  - Common Constructions
  - My Phrases
  - Quickfires
  - Word Lists
  - Core Words
  - Letters (Keyboards)

This vocabulary will help you go beyond requesting AND it also reflects the speech of verbal individuals!

Vocabulary Selection

- Common Constructions (Phrases in EZ Sets, Talk Topics)
  - Messages that are typically or frequently said by individuals in a certain context
  - Not necessarily appropriate in other contexts
  - Can be both phrases and sentences
  - Can have variable elements

Vocabulary Selection

- My Phrases (Pop Talk)
  - Complete thoughts that have a specific purpose and may be used in multiple different conversations

Vocabulary Selection

- Quickfires (Pop Talk)
  - Short, quick messages that allow for timely interaction
  - A part of many different conversations

Vocabulary Selection

- Word Lists (My Words, Vocab Lists, Lists)
  - Single words that fit into a category (food, drink, action)
  - Can be used alone, but typically used with other messages for description or clarification
  - Can be used in conjunction with core words
Vocabulary Selection

- Keyboards
  - Promote participation in literacy activities
  - Allow spelling of any words (within abilities)
  - Utilize word and phrase prediction

- Core Word Strategy
  - Single words to combine to create phrase and sentences
  - Tools learn/use grammatical skills
  - Does not require literacy skills to use

“Like in typical development, it is important to integrate preprogrammed messages for both efficiency and gestalt language forms with more flexible single symbols that can be expressed alone or combined with a small set of other symbols” (Paul, 1997)

Multiple types of vocabulary support flexibility in going beyond requesting!
- Common Constructions “Good dog”
- My Phrases “I like it”
- Quickfires “What’s the score?”
- Word Lists “Thank you”
- Keyboards “These are study”
- Core Words “Really?”

“Not so much” “Yucky” “Horse”
“Excited” “Striped” “Why is the horse brown?”
“Susan is excited to go to the zoo!”
“Yes, I like the striped one best.”

Vocabulary must be organized efficiently (Smith, 2005)
- Efficient (consistent) access
- Logical for teachability

Vocabulary should be appropriate for age
Vocabulary should be appropriate for Communication Ability Level
Vocabulary Selection

- How would this impact communication for an AAC user?

Two topic changes per minute

- Reasons to change topics:
  - Tell stories
  - Empathy
  - Tease
  - Negotiate

Slang and humor is important

Vocabulary Selection

- Multiple vocabulary types are needed
  - Flexibility
  - Successful day-to-day communication
  - Higher-level language and literacy development/use
  - Vocabulary must be organized efficiently
  - Consistency
  - Logical (teachable)

Vocabulary should be appropriate for age

Vocabulary should be appropriate for Communication Ability Level

Vocabulary Selection

- Age-appropriate vocabulary includes a variety of age-appropriate topics
  - Places (e.g., the library, school, home)
  - Events (e.g., birthday party, church, doctor’s visit)
  - Standing obligations (e.g., work, coffee with friends, playdates)

Vocabulary Selection

- Vocabulary should be appropriate for Communication Ability Level (influenced by Dowden, 2002)

- Identify the age group you think would be most likely to use the phrases read by your presenter
  - Young Child (2-6)
  - Child (7-12)
  - Teen (13-21)
  - Young Adult (22-50)
  - Adult (50+)

- Helps us to provide vocabulary in a way that makes sense based on someone’s understanding of:
  - Spoken words and symbols
  - Experience with communication
  - Literacy skills
  - Other important needs/skills (e.g. support from communication partners)
**Vocabulary Selection**

- Vocabulary should be appropriate for Communication Ability Level (influenced by Dowden, 2002)

**Emergent**
- Communicate using facial expression, body language, gestures, behavior.
- Beginning to use simple, concrete symbols.
- May be inconsistent—but does best in routines.

**Contingent-Dependent**
- Uses simple symbols independently especially in familiar situations
- Beginning to combine symbols to create new messages
- Developing literacy skills

**Independent**
- Have language, literacy, and social skills equivalent to their same-age peers.

**Communication Ability Level**
- Influences how (and what) vocabulary is presented

- Concrete symbols
- Limited messages offered at one time
- Simple, basic vocabulary
- Supports available for communication partners
- Variety of vocabulary types for communicative functions
- Access to more/complex/flexible messages
- Easy to move between vocabulary types

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**Vocabulary Selection**

- Case study scored on:
  - Variety of vocabulary types
    - Quickfires
    - My Phrases
    - Common Constructions
    - Word Lists
    - Keyboards
    - Core Words
  - Efficiently organized vocabulary (consistent and logical—teachable)
  - Vocabulary appropriate for age
  - Vocabulary appropriate for Communication Ability Level

**Case Study 1: Katie**

- Introduction of more/more complex/more flexible messages
- Supports available for communication partners
- Additional vocabulary types for communicative functions
- Access to more/complex/flexible vocabulary
- Easy to move between vocabulary types

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**Vocabulary Selection**

- How do all of these vocabulary considerations work together?
**Vocabulary Selection**

- Case Study 1: Katie

**Wrap Up – Tools**

- AAC Needs Assessment

**Wrap Up – Tools**

- Observing the Classroom Environment

**One More Tool for Beyond Requesting!**

**Dynamic AAC Goal Grid (Schneider & Clarke, 2007)**

- A tool to help visualize where do we start, where do we go and how do we get there
- Outlines a proposed hierarchy of linguistic, operational, strategic and social competencies for the AAC user across communication ability levels
- Measures progress over time

**Components include:**

- Communication Ability Levels (Dowden, 2002; InterAAC)
  - Emergent, Context-Dependent, Independent
- Communicative Competence (Light, 1989)
  - Linguistic, Operational, Social, Strategic
- Chain of Cues (Diener & Elder, 2008)
  - Least to Most hierarchy
- Goals (multiple SLPs, AAC users, family members)
Questions and Discussion

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