Welcome back - let's take a leap!
Today-

• Quick snap shot of complex communication and students with Visual Impairment.

• A very quick look-so much to say-so little time!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What am I already doing?</th>
<th>What do I want to know more about?</th>
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<th>What will I try?</th>
<th>What do I need to change?</th>
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Lee Withall, AVT-PI EQ
What is our end point for our students?
• Do we want our students to say more?
Outcomes Will Focus

- An understanding - “What communication can mean?”

- A belief that all students can communicate and an understanding that there are no prerequisites for communication.

- Some key strategies to support a students’ communication

- Confidence as a ‘communication partner’
Communication

• The importance of communication cannot be underestimated in today’s world.

• Communicate everyday for a variety of reasons-up 70% of our waking lives communicating something, somehow to someone!

• We take it for granted that everyone, including a new born baby wants to communicate-it is the way in which we can most effectively influence others and ultimately our environment.
Communication allows people to:

- Make contact with others
- Establish relationships
- Express personality
- Demonstrate & share knowledge
- Ensure needs are met & wishes considered
- Form social bonds
“Everyone has the need to communicate. The challenge is to figure out a way of providing all individuals with appropriate ways to meet this need, regardless of their age, diagnoses, or level of disability.”

(Sigafoos & O’Reilly, 2004)
Long term destination

“Being able to say **whatever I want to say**,

**whenever** I want to say it

and **to whom** I want to say it.”

Porter, PODD Introductory Workshop 2011
Communication

Students may use different ways (modes) to get their messages across and/or process what is being said.

- Vocalisations, speech
- Gesture, pointing, facial expression
- Sign
- Symbols – aided language displays, communication books
- Devices – SGDs, iDevices

Lee Withall AVT-PI EQ

Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC) may be used to support the student’s communication.
It’s important to be aware of, and acknowledge that:

Speech limitations or difficulties processing or understanding language, are *not* indicative of intellectual impairment.

Communication requires movement…
Different movement can lead us astray – we cannot make assumptions about a student's understanding or cognition from speech and/or movement difficulties.

Just because a student is unable to speak, this doesn’t mean he/she has nothing to say!
The student has the same messages as their peers – just needs to ‘say’ it differently.

• Lee Withall AVT-PI EQ
Active Effective Communication

Partner

• Expect communication-pre-intentional ?????
• Allow time for students to take their turn
• Use language to encourage initiation - modelling
• Observation for possible messages – verbal reference
• Respond to possible messages – scaffolding
• Think about the questions we use - try to use “real” questions (not questions we already know the answers to)
• Model use of more formal specific strategies to develop functional communication - expanding
• Re-think how we look our students with severe and multiple impairment and who have complex communication needs.

Kerrie McLean SWD, 2013
Don’t “Badger” the Student

Crouch - Model - Count

• **Crouch**-bend down to the student’s level

• **Model** –use the ‘system’ to interact with the student

• **Count**-silently in your head to give the student time to talk.

Kerrie Mclean SWD, 2013
In the Classroom

• WAITING-WAITING-WAITING

• Not answering for the student! Expect communication.

• Not repeating the question/instruction constantly especially as soon as the teacher has said it. Remember that students have slower processing time and by repeating you are interrupting the processing!

Kerrie Mclean SWD, 2013
• Allowing time in a interaction is the most powerful strategy we have.

• Students take longer to process the information.

• They also take longer to organise their bodies to respond.

Kerrie McLean
What is AAC?

• AAC refers to any system, device or method that improves the ability of a person with a communication impairment to communicate effectively

• AAC is used as an alternative to or to supplement existing communication skills

• AAC systems can include voice / sounds, facial expressions, body movements, natural gestures, signing systems, object symbols, photos, pictures, text and electronic devices / computer based systems
Who can benefit from AAC?

A person:

• who is not able to use speech to communicate effectively in one or more situations
• who is developing speech and language but has developmental delay
• who is, to some degree, able to communicate with speech but is not understood by most listeners or speech is not functional
• who has sufficient speech but requires an augmentative system to write or carry on long conversations
• with comprehension difficulties requiring support to understand and function better within their range of environments
Prerequisites for AAC

• in recent years there has been a strong move away from the idea of “candidacy for AAC”
• research does not support the idea of someone being “too something” for AAC or “not ready” for AAC
• people excluded from AAC were often also excluded from experiences, instruction & practice necessary to improve capabilities
• now AAC teams determine AAC interventions based on matching the individual’s needs for today while building future capabilities for tomorrow
• In 1993 Pat Mirenda described breathing as the only pre-requisite relevant to communication.

• ‘it has nothing to do with mental or chronological age, prerequisite skills, mathematical formula or any of the other models that have been developed to decide who is an AAC candidate and who is not.
Communication V’s VI

• Goals for communication may be different from a vision specialist
• Primary goal is creating and expanding communication opportunities
• My goal is NOT increased use of vision but may help students use residual visual functional
• However, there are times when the team may decide the expansion of the language is more important than use of vision and this determines the type of system to be used.

Linda Burkhart John M Costello
Conflict between Communication and Vision

• Results in inappropriate communication goals eg.
• Identify object/photo/symbol from a choice of 2 or match picture symbol to object

Linda Burkhart John M Costello
Activity-
based on an activity by Gayle Porter-2 Day Introductory PODD Workshop.
These Goals Require Student-

• Visually attend/regard the field
• Visually track
• Visually hold gaze
• Visually confirm with joint attention to a partner

Linda Burkhart John M Costello
From A Communication Point

• Choice making is not communication especially when we know the answer.
• Communication means we don’t already know what the person wants to say
• Some children are interested in the social process not the message.

Linda Burkhart John M Costello
When There Is No Success-

• Based only on visual skills the student is assessed as “not ready just yet” for communication.
• “We need to wait until student has developed the prerequisite skills.”
• Students who have complex visual skills and complex motor movement disabilities will always have complex communication needs BUT does that mean we never offer opportunities for communication?

Linda Burkhart John M Costello
Different Strategies for Vision

• Each student is individual and as such individual decisions will made regarding the development of a communication system.

• Vision can be taken into account and strategies built around communication but sometimes it just makes sense to use the auditory strengths for communication and focus on vision at other times.

Kerrie McLean SLP-EQ
How Do We Provide Systems To Students With VI?

- We need to create communication opportunities and strategies that allow the student to use auditory strengths.
- This ensures the student’s language development is not held back by delayed visual skills and lack of movement opportunities because of motor disorders.

Kerrie McLean SLP-EQ
Basic Understanding

• The brain builds understanding based on patterns (Linda Burkhart)
• We need to be presenting vocabulary that doesn’t disappear.
• We need to present vocabulary that can be built upon instead of being inconsistent or consistently being replaced.
• A strategy of “20” questions where the student only has access to yes/no responses is inefficient, tiring, confusing and the student has no way of anticipating what will come next.
• “Yes/No” responses cannot be considered a communication system but do form vital role in allowing a student to participate in communication.

Linda Burkhart and John M. Costello.
So How Do We Move Forward For Students With VI?

• We need to present the vocabulary in a systematic way so “20 Questions” provide the student with a pathway to how a pattern in the vocabulary is presented.

• There is a need for students to initiate and carry on a conversation.

Linda Burkhart and John M. Costello
Strategy-Partner Assisted Scanning

- Auditory scanning-totally blind students
- Auditory-Visual Scanning-for students with some residual vision
- Removes the need to visually shift gaze and to only be limited by vision for communication
- Eliminates the need for communication success to be based on symbol recognition

Linda Burkhart and John M. Costello
Movies
Every AAC system requires

• Sufficient vocabulary to interact
  – for a full range of communication functions
  – to combine symbols into sentences
  – in a range of activities

• Vocabulary and features for the future

• Selection techniques which are not too physically taxing or limiting to promote meaningful communication

• Melissa Bakes SLP EQ
Goal of Communication/ AAC

“For the person to meet his / her varied communication requirements as: intelligibly specifically efficiently independently and socially valued manner as possible, in order to understand others and to be understood.”

(Source: Gayle Porter at the AGOSCI National Tour, Adelaide, 2004)
**Aided language acquisition**

- The language learning environment

**Input**

- Aided Language
- Spoken Language (Sign language)

**Output**

- Aided Language
- (Spoken Language) (Sign language)

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Gayle Porter, 2009
Interaction which encourages the development of communication skills

- **Initial focus on receptive input** - model communication throughout the day

- Don’t ask the child to point to or show you a symbol.

- See the child – see the communication system! Don’t pack away the book or displays.

- Team approach
  - partnerships with family and school community
  
  - Lee Withall “Chatting With PODDS”, 2012
Establish Habits

- Communication systems are always available – see the child, see PODD

- Expectations that the child will participate in solving their own communication challenges

- Focus everyone on learning with the child
The AAC system is your student’s voice

• Get in the habit of making sure their AAC system (voice) is always available—it travels everywhere the student goes!

Kerrie McLean SLP-EQ
• Communication partner education sessions on the purposes of communication and the function of AAC to support the child’s independent communication.

• Note that putting a communication system away:
  – implies to the child that you are not expecting them to have anything to say
  – may imply that communication only happens at certain times, as directed by someone else when they make the AAC system available
  – increases the effort and motivation required to communicate, as the child or their partners have to take time to retrieve the system as well as communicate the message.

Porter, PODD Introductory Workshop 2011
Children learn communication and language from other people in their daily environments

• Children learning a first language from parents hear it for a year before they use it

• All children learning to use AAC need real life examples to learn how to use AAC to communicate in their world.

Kerrie McLean SLP EQ
Important To Remember!

• No prerequisites for communication
• Takes babies 12-18 months to develop expressive communication but are immersed in receptive language continually from the day they are born—must immerse our students in their systems of communication for at least same period or more to lay receptive base.

Kerrie McLean SLP-EQ
If you feel the student is not progressing-
  • Please don’t assume it is the student and “He may not be ready”
  • Please don’t assume the system is not suitable /too hard/ etc
  • We must always examine our interactions first-
  • How are we implementing the system/how many opportunities/ is the language in the system appropriate/ how much modelling is actually happening/are the students attempts being recognised and valued?
  • Kerrie Mclean SLP EQ
• Do staff have a strong belief in this student’s communication?

• Over the years, it has been my experience that the key to success for students has been in answering these questions but too often it is easier to look at the student or the system rather than reflect on our own behaviour.

Kerrie McLean SLP EQ
The AAC Guru’s

• Gayle Porter (PODD)
• Linda Burkhart
• Pat Mirenda
• Janice Light
• David Beukelman
• Caroline Musselwhite
• Sarah Blackstone
• Carol Goossens

Melissa Bakes SLP EQ
Reference Musts

• Articles-

• “CVI and Complex Communication Needs: Characteristics and AAC Strategies.” Linda Burkhart and John M Costello

• “Partner-Assisted Communication Strategies for Children Who Face Multiple Challenges”—Linda Burkhart and Gayle Porter
“If all my possessions were taken from me, with one exception, I would choose to keep the power of communication for by it, I would soon gain all the rest.”
• Chat-Now-Information Handout-using Aided language Stimulation in Early Childhood Educational Settings.
• Scope
• Porter, G. (2004). AGOSCI National Tour