

63RD CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Believing In Achieving

SHERATON FOUR SEASONS | KOURY CONVENTION CENTER | GREENSBORO, NC



Integrating A Modified Pragmatic Communication System Into The Classroom

Going beyond circle time.

Session #68





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**Based on the work of
Linda Burkhart & Gayle Porter**



Disclosure

- Kristine Drum, MA, SLP-CCC
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- Presenter



Disclosure

- Lynda Horney, OTR/L
- Presenter



Barriers for Children who face Severe Multiple Challenges

- Due to significant challenges they can not take an active role in learning and daily routines
- Only communication strategies they use are “fussing”
- Have repeated failure when efforts to participate or communicate are not successful
- Due to lack of experiences, sensory limitations, motor control, or medical complications they may lack a broad base of knowledge
- Processing may be adversely
- Difficult to motivate or have a limited repertoire of interests
- Limited expectations from family, teachers, therapists



The Problem of Learned Helplessness and Passivity

- Become passive due to lack of control or success in their life
- Begin to view self as passive participant
- Focus efforts on pleasing others and become prompt dependent
- Once they develop learned helplessness it is very difficult for student to change his/her self-image
- Multiple and ongoing successes with active participation are needed to rebuild the feeling of “I can do it!”



How Children Learn

- Children are born with billions of neurons and trillions of neurological connections
 - Learn by creating, building, expanding sets of neurological connections to create cognitive schema which is the basis for understanding new experiences
 - Learning is the process of strengthening, adding, discarding connections based upon experience
 - As the child experiences, associations are made based upon comparisons and looking for patterns in relationship to what is known.
- The brain is prewired to look for comparisons, contrasts and patterns to what is already known
- Normal processing builds a complex network through many parts of the brain such as visual, auditory, tactile, and kinetic, etc
 - However, those with abnormal processing may only build limited connections with fewer associations



How Can You Help

- Provide **multi-sensory experiences** in natural contexts instead of teaching isolated tasks that are unrelated to what the child already understands
- Provide opportunities for **active participation** within these experiences
- Provide activities that have **repetition** with small changes to expand their skills



Active Participation

- Active participation is more effective than passive participation
- Learning is more likely to take place when the student is in the active role
- Staff need to think creatively to create participation opportunities
- Multiple and ongoing successes with active participation are needed to rebuild the feeling of “I can do it!”



The PODD

A Method to Increase Active Participation

- Pragmatically Organized Dynamic Display (PODD) was developed by Gayle Porter to help children communicate through a system of systematic questions and vocabulary.
- The PODD is set up with a beginning or home page from which all the other vocabulary is linked.
- The vocabulary is presented in series of lists which the child can respond to with yes/no.
- Provides the user with quick access to predictable messages with a wide range of vocabulary to take an active role in communication.

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/product/27918>
<http://div12perspectives.asha.org/content/18/4/121.full>



How Can Our Students Use It

- Direct selection
- Switches for yes/no responses
- Yes/no pointing response



Going Beyond Circle Time

- Student Driven
- Success Rate
- Effective form of communication
- Classroom benefits
 - **Teacher**-for the first time students were understood
 - **OT**-communication structure for activities
 - **ST**-allowed generalization of vocabulary



Modified Pragmatic Communication System VARIETIES

- 6-SYMBOL Velcro removable
- 4-symbol direct select
- 6-symbol direct select
- Portable 4-symbol
- Single symbol
- High Contrast Single symbol
- Dynamic Display (iPad & Mini-Mo)
- 4-symbol horizontal
- 5-symbol horizontal



SETTING UP THE CLASSROOM

- Centers
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Classroom Door
- Art
- Computer
- Centralized 'Help'



INTEGRATING IN THE CLASSROOM

- Integrating in Art
- Integrating in Playtime
- Integrating in Computer
- Integrating in Horticulture
- Integrating in Literacy
- Integrating in Mealtime



Planning

- Staffing with teacher, OT, PT, & SLP
- Consultation with other service providers:
Horticulture Therapist, VI, HI
- Classroom themes



Added Benefits

- Generalization of vocabulary
- More active participation in all activities
- More initiation of communication
- Learn that the system is a powerful communication tool
- Seek out the system for communication



Pointers

- Staff need to model using the system during class activities
 - Verbalize your thoughts for system selections
- Connect meaning to all responses of students
- Wait with anticipation, most of our students process slowly (30 seconds or more)



Questions?



Resources:

<http://www.lburkhart.com/>

<http://www.mayer-johnson.com/nsearch/?keywords=PODD>

<http://www.novita.org.au/Content.aspx?p=683>

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/product/27918>

<http://div12perspectives.asha.org/content/18/4/121.full>

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