Integrating A Modified Pragmatic Communication System Into The Classroom

Going beyond circle time.

Session #68
• Presented by:

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Based on the work of
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Disclosure

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

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