

Typing to Communicate

8 Ways to Support Participation in the General Education

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| <p>Membership and Belonging</p> | <p>Teachers should refer to the AAC user in a way that includes them in the conversation. For example, When Ms. Mayfield began to read the book, Splish Splash to the class she said, “Maya you are going to love this book, it is all about swimming.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maya is a student with autism who points to communicate. For many students with autism pointing to communicate takes time. This strategy is a quick and easy way to make sure the student is recognized as an important member of the classroom. When Ms. Mayfield shared in front of the class that Maya will enjoy this book she teaches that Maya has interests and ideas that are similar to her peers. In doing this, Maya did not have to respond or say anything, but her active participation and competence were acknowledged and shared by her teacher’s public acknowledgement. |
| <p>Use Communication Methods Efficiently and Often</p> | <p>If students use AAC and are working on a yes / no communication strategy be sure to use this during a lesson. You can do this during a whole group lesson by saying, “Do you all think that 5x5=25?” Or do this in an individual way, “Was Harry a hero in the story?” This will allow the student to use their yes or no strategy and include them in the lesson. If they answer incorrectly then you can say, “Oh I don’t think that is quite right. Does anyone have other ideas? Or Want to try again?” Make sure the AAC device is always ready to go with content related to the lesson so that the student can participate.</p> |
| <p>Ask permission to Share Information with Others</p> | <p>Too often students who point to communicate do not have any privacy, be sure to ask before you share information that the student has typed or shared using their SGD.</p> |
| <p>Reduce the Speech Demands</p> | <p>Teachers can use strategies such as hold ups (Himmele & Himmele, 2011) where students hold up a premade response card to share their ideas. These cards can have ABCD responses, true/false, or can be content specific and have words such as executive, legislative, judicial on them so students can hold up responses to questions about the branches of government.</p> |
| <p>Teach Peers</p> | <p>Teachers and communication support aides should make sure that peers understand how the AAC user communicates. Peers should also be encouraged to talk directly to the AAC user.</p> <p>Teachers can make sure that peers learn about each other by providing opportunities to talk about current events, age appropriate interests, things they like to do, places to go, events around school. The AAC user should be provided opportunities to use their communication strategies to make many choices throughout the day: choose food to eat, materials to use, where to sit, what to read, what to play, and share their opinion on topics.</p> |
| <p>Give the AAC User Information in Advance</p> | <p>Teachers need to create openings for participation and prepare the AAC user so that they are ready to share and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say, “I am going to call on you for number 4” • Sometimes give the AAC user the last question first • Provide an opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Say, “Jay what do you think about that?” ○ “I think Leah has something to say” |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Be Ready to Adapt</p> | <p>Teachers and communication support aides should be ready to change the format of assignments to make it accessible for the AAC user</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert responses to multiple choice • Have pre made responses that the AAC user can point to show order • Use a dry erase board and write responses for the AAC user to point to <p>Format and structure – Understand that sometimes the AAC user will answer using open ended conversation and sometimes the response will be through short answers, multiple choice, or true false. Make sure that you are designing communication supports that connect to the learning goal and that are both efficient and meaningful.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Materials</p> | <p>Teachers and communication support aides should use the students SGD as the primary tool to support communication. However, there are many other tools that can be used to provide quick communication in social and academic situations. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry erase boards can be used to provide choices for quick responses to teacher questions. For example, if the teacher asks the student to turn and tell to their neighbor the name of planet closest to the sun the communication support aide can quickly write 2-4 possible responses on a dry erase board and ask the AAC user to point to their response. • Other materials that might be useful are paper or post-it notes to write communication options, pre made picture communication boards with possible responses to curricular and social opportunities, and paper boards for recess and for times when the SGD is not working properly. |

Ashby, C. & Kasa, C. (2013). Pointing Forward: Typing for academic access
 Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 22(3), 143-156.