"Light Tech" Communication part 2 - The Power of PODD: Autonomous Communication for Beginning Communicators

Based on the Work of Gayle Porter
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Currently we Often Offer a Limited Set of Choices

What Would You Really Rather be Doing Right Now?

Here are Your Choices:

Go Bowling
Play Ping Pong

AAC
What is our Long Term Destination?

Being able to say:
What I want to say,
whenever I want to say it,
to whomever I want to say it to

Will She Take it to a Party?
It’s about building **Language and Interaction**

Not just learning vocabulary or answering questions correctly

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**Adopt these Beliefs:**

Communication is About Something We Don’t Already Know - We Can Not Know what Another Person is Thinking

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**Communication is Messy**

- Dynamic and Raw - Not Edited and Polished
- Not Sterile Like Performing a Script
- Not a One Way Process - Dependent Upon the Communication Partner’s Responses - Not All Thought Out Ahead of Time
- When the Goal is Communication, We Need to Accept and Expand Upon Whatever the Child Does

Communication Happens “At Any Time” - Not Just an Activity

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**Communication is Constantly Occurring**

- In any activity, communication may be:
  - The primary goal
  - A necessary component to achieve another goal
  - An enhancing component

**Communication Autonomy**

(von Tetzchner & Grove, 2003)

- Must be the Child’s Message - Even if She Needs Help to Communicate it
- Not Just a Response to the Options Provided by Others
- Responsible for her own message
Imagine:

- You are a teenager with Rett Syndrome
- Mom is dressing you and talking about what you are going to do this weekend
- Go to little brother’s soccer game
- Go to the park and watch the kids playing
- You would like to go to the mall and buy new shoes - How do you say that?

What is a PODD?

PODD Communication Books are “Partner Powered” (partners turn the pages)

Operational Buttons on the Side

- Increases efficiency / speed
- Decreases visual distractions
- Reduces tactile sensory distractions
- Can be done by the child, once he can turn the page directly without interrupting his thought process
Organization of vocabulary within PODD

- According to the individual’s communication function and discourse requirements
- Categories, activity specific, topic and anecdote organizations can all be used
- Efficiency to meet communication requirements is the overriding factor

Within PODD

- Aided language development is supported - multiple page sets (communication books)
- The range of page sets reflects a developmental process as reported in the literature on both typical and aided language development
- Page sets are selected to enable the use of aided language stimulation

PODD is a Way of Organizing Vocabulary For All Day Long in Any Context

For a Range of Access Methods
High Tech and Light Tech

PODD is also the use of specific Methods and evidence-based Strategies for Teaching a Visual Language

How it is used matters!

Guiding Principles:

- Communicative:
  - Autonomy
  - Accessibility
  - Competence

- More than 20 years of development

- Gayle Porter and other colleagues with Team Input: PTs, OTs, teachers, assistants, conductors, families and children

- Discussions: questions, difficulties and concerns – what did and did not work for different children

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Based upon the work of Gayle Porter, Melbourne, Australia
• Comprehensive, multi-page communication books for communication at “any time”

PODD Communication Books are One Part of a Multi-Modal Communication Learning Environment

• Designed to be used receptively and expressively in natural daily contexts

Different Aids for Different Purposes

Problem: Another Year, Another AAC System

How Can anyone Learn a Language that Keeps Changing?

• We need:
  • Systems that build from early language through complex syntax - without changing patterns of vocabulary organization
  • Systems that maintain similarities across access methodologies
  • Systems that enable children to talk to each other

Need to Stop Looking for the Magic Device to Fix or Cure

Learning a Language Takes Time!!!!!!
PODD provides a language structure that can grow with the child and be built upon instead of replaced.

PODD is a Graded developmental progression across different page sets

- Increasing complexity of pragmatics, semantics, morphology and syntax.
  - Early functions (9, 12)
  - Expanded functions (9, 12, 16, 20)
  - Key word (36, 40)
  - Expanded key word (48, 70)
  - Complex syntax (90+, 100+)

How Do Children Learn Language?

Typical children learn language by being immersed in a native language learning environment, where they can freely interact with, and try out their developing skills.

Language Immersion

Gayle Porter, 2004

Input

Spoken language development

Output

Spoken Language

Gayle Porter, 2004
Receptive Input

* Aided language stimulation (Goossens', Crain & Elder, 1992)

* System for Augmenting Language (Romski & Sevcik, 1992)

* Natural Aided Language (Cafiero, 1998)

Critical for Learning Language Pragmatics!

Talking to the Child with his system:

* Validates the child’s means of communication

* Gives the partner a good perspective on what the child is facing

Model in Natural Everyday Situations

Children will learn to use their system in the way partners model it
Drill and practice is not very effective for learning language

- Language concepts need an emotional and meaningful connection to be stored in, and retrieved from memory
- Learning language in functional situations facilitates generalization
- Anything that has some intrinsic motivation for the child is more likely to be practiced in different settings and used by the child.

We Need to Create a Multi-Modal Language Learning Environment

The Challenge!

“A child who uses speech will independently select the words she wishes to use from the vast array of words she hears/sees used everyday.

A child who uses AAC will independently select the words she wishes to use from the vocabulary other people have chosen to model and, for aided symbols, made available for her to use.”

Porter & Kirkland, 1995, p.93-94

Aided Language learning opportunities don’t just happen

The Responsibility Lies with Us!

Providing Sufficient Aided Symbol Vocabulary

- To meet current communication requirements and
- To stimulate further development of communication and language

Varied communication functions

| great / disagree | manipulate | relate information | agree |
| instruct others | ask for things | joke |
| express an opinion | share information | |
| express feelings | protest | describe |
| discuss interest | “make social contact” | bargain |
| comment | request / attract attention | complain |
Vocabulary Growth as a function of age

<table>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>1:0</th>
<th>1:6</th>
<th>1:9</th>
<th>2:0</th>
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<th>3:6</th>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>174</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Smith (1926) as cited by Dale (1976) & Retherford (1996)

Common forms of organization of vocabulary across multiple levels or pages

- Categories with Master Index
- Activity Specific
- Core / Fringe
- Topic / Subject (curriculum)
- Anecdote - scripts and stories

PODD Communication Systems

- Comprehensive Personal Communication Systems - Always with the person
- Use a variety of organizational strategies based on efficiency
- Contain core and fringe, general and individual vocabulary
- Range of communication functions
- May contain Activity Specific pages
- Enables natural branching to move through pages

PODD Communication Systems:

High-tech + Light-tech

One child’s experience:

- age 2 - direct select 9 pictures
- age 3 - began partner-assisted scanning and some eye-pointing
- age 5-6 - began partner-assisted scan in combination with eye-pointing on a PODD with 70 items per page
- late elementary school - single switch scanning on a device as well as continued to use light tech PODD

One child’s experience:

- moved to coded access for light tech and continues to use single switch scanning on her high tech device

Section? Color? Number?
One child’s experience:

* I use my communication book with my friends... why?... because it gives them something to do

* I use my high tech communication device with my Mom at home... why?... because she is always saying “wait a minute”

PODD Resource
Direct Access templates

- Step by step instructions
  - Information files
  - Construction files
- Additional vocabulary ideas
- Template folders

PODD Template folders

CD1 One page opening & Group books
CD2 Two page opening
CD3 Two page opening plus side panel

Information Files and Construction Files

Construction
9 per page expanded functions
Modified for pick up and give/show access

Selecting pages to include with pick up and give/show access.

Pick up and give/show access requires two copies of each page. One copy becomes a page in the book. The second copy is a full-size individual card and attached to the basic page with velcro™. The individual cards and pages can be added and removed to fit needs. The construction files are for the communication books. This provides the user of pick up and give/show access for all pages in the 5 page expanded function PODD as such a book would be too thick and heavy for practical use. It is therefore necessary to remove and add pages page by page.

Acknowledge that Communication is a priority!

“Communication is the essence of human life” ASHA, 1991.

Communication allows us to:

- establish relationships
- express our personality
- demonstrate and share our knowledge
- ensure that our needs are met and our wishes are considered

PODD Trainings 2–3 Day Introductory Course

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How are pragmatic branch starters used in PODD for beginning communicators who may be at the early one or two word phrase stage of language development?

**Pragmatic branch starters**

Perform two different functions

- Provide faster predictive links to pages of vocabulary commonly required to express a particular communication function.

- Compensate for the reduced use of environmental supports, gesture and intonation generally used to establish the communication intent of 1-2 word utterances.

**What Function are You Expressing with “store”?**

What functions may be expressed with this vocabulary?

**Store**

- Request – “Let’s go to the store”
- Question – “Are we going to the store?”
- Relate information – “I went to the store.”
- Tell a story – “We went to the store ..”
- Pretend – “Let’s play going to the store”
- Etc.

What type of branching organization suits each function?
Pragmatic Organization - Begin with the Pragmatic Intent - Then get to the Word

“Let’s go shopping”

“Let’s pretend we are going shopping”
“Let’s pretend we are going shopping”

“Are we going shopping?”

“Are we going shopping?”

“Are we going shopping?”

Places - go to page 12

Shop

You need to tell me yes/no” - go to page 7

I’m asking a question - go to page 8

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“I went shopping”

I’m telling you something - go to page 3

It’s already happened - go to page 7

Tense markers

• Scaffold the child’s inclusion of sufficient information to enable partner understanding
• Compensate for AAC system limitations

Pragmatic or Communicative Intents:

• I want something
• Something’s wrong
• I’ll tell you what I think (or I like and I don’t like)
Communicative Intents

• Let's chat
• I'm asking a question
• Let's pretend
• I'm telling you a story
• I have an idea
"I have a sore back"

- I'm feeling that way.
- Let's pretend.
- Let's go...
- I want to do something.
- I want to know... 
- I like this
- I don't wish to do it.
- I don't like it.
- I want to make a story about.
- I'm talking to you something.

"I want (to do) playdough"

- I want... (to do) playdough
- I want to make something.
- I want to know... 
- I don't wish to do it.
- I don't wish it.
- I don't like it.
- I want to make a story (and X)
- I want to make you something.

Something’s wrong - go to page 5
Hurt, sore, pain - go to page 6
back - go back to page 1
I want ... - go to page 11
Make something - go to page 11d
(do) playdough - go to page 31
**Playdough activity display**
May be in PODD or a separate display

**Note:** Children who do not point, can use partner-assisted scanning with a PODD book. See handout: Light Tech Communication Part 1

**Scanning is giving the child an alternative means to point**

**NOT a Series of Questions**

**Scan vs. Series of Questions**

Is something wrong?
Do you want something?
Do you want to go somewhere?

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