A Communication Page Set for People with Severe Aphasia

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ISAAC
July 22, 2014

What is Aphasia?

- Aphasia is an acquired communication disorder that impairs a person’s ability to process language, but does not necessarily affect intelligence (National Aphasia Association, www.aphasia.org)
What works best?

- Many different models for identifying and teaching supportive strategies
- Many different types of support available
- Electronic and non-electronic options

Tablets

- Dominate the North American Consumer market
- They are part of everyday life for many people
Electronic Options

- Some were too expensive
- Some were too complicated for our population

Available Page Sets

- Were not successful
- Too much modification
- Didn’t incorporate commonly used communication supports
  - Pain scale
  - Maps
  - Calendar
British Columbia

- Provincial program for AAC uses TouchChat for symbol based communication systems
- We created a page set that would work for our clients, using a TouchChat vocabulary set and making generic modifications

Creating the Pages

- Gathered vocabulary and architectural ideas from SLPs who work exclusively with people with severe aphasia
- Followed the core values from the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia
- Expected the pages to be part of a multi-modal communication system
Life Participation Approach to Aphasia

- **Core Values**
  - Enhancement of life participation
  - Service for everyone affected by aphasia
  - Service at all stages and for all degrees
  - Documented outcome measures
  - Consider personal and environmental factors

Page Set Features

- Can be used by people with different
  - Types of aphasia
  - Degrees of severity
  - Range of cognitive issues
- Can be used to enhance understanding of spoken language
Page set Features

- Options to personalize
  - Messages
  - Topic setters
  - Scripts for
    - Narratives
    - Social interactions
    - Self-Advocacy
    - Directing Care
    - Repairing breakdowns

Page Set Options

- Symbols
- Pictures
- Words
- Visual scenes
- Life stories
- Maps
- Schedules
- Scales
Results

- Being used with 12 SLPs
  - Urban environment
  - Inpatient and outpatients
  - Stroke groups

Survey Results

- Acceptance
  - was high for both speech pathologists and clients
  - In a hospital setting
  - Support for clients and for speech pathologists
  - Easier to customize than a low tech system
Survey Results

- Limitations
  - Difficult to insert videos
  - Unsatisfactory voice when rate was slowed
  - Never enough time for collecting information and programming it!

Get a Copy

- It is called: “Aphasia – GF Strong & CAYA”
- available to download from DropBox
- Email sgauthier@cayabc.org for the link

- If you already have TouchChat, you can download it from the Public Folders in iShare
  - iShare -> Public Folders -> Adult -> General Communication
References

- National Aphasia Association, www.aphasia.org
- TouchChat http://touchchatapp.com/

- www.assistive-technology.ca
- www.cayabc.org

Thank You!

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