



Empowering Student Communication: Practical Strategies for Supporting Secondary Students with Assistive Communication Tools

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| Facilitator(s): | Carissa Anderson |
| Date: | February 12, 2025 |
| Time: | 9:00 am – 12:00 pm |
| Cost: | |
| Location: | Red Deer (Balmoral Bible Chapel) 2700 55 St. |
| Session Code: | 25-IE-010-CARC |

Target Audience

Jr High and Senior High teachers

About this Learning Opportunity

Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) is a way for students who have difficulty speaking or communicating to express themselves. It includes tools and strategies like using pictures, symbols, gestures, or technology (like tablets or speech devices) to help them communicate more easily.

This presentation will focus on the implementation of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) strategies in middle and high school settings. It aims to provide school staff with comprehensive knowledge of why AAC is important, how to incorporate AAC in curriculum activities and socially with peers/classmates. School staff will obtain valuable foundational knowledge and leave with practical materials and ideas they can use the next school day!

Presentation Outline:

1. What is AAC

- ? Definition and significance of AAC
- ? Overview of AAC types (symbol boards, speech-generating devices, etc.)

2. Teaching AAC Effectively

- ? Importance of motor planning and modelling on AAC devices
- ? What to model – importance of core and functional language

3. Incorporating AAC into your classroom and school

About the Facilitator(s)

Carissa Anderson



- ? Incorporating AAC into everyday activities and social activities
- ? Planning small group/pullout activities with classmates for direct AAC

Implementation

- ? Implementing a core word of the week strategy
- ? Incorporating AAC throughout the school – available to all students and staff
- ? Incorporating AAC with technology all students in the classroom are using – Siri, Google Lens, Google Read and Write

4. Incorporating AAC into Literacy and Curriculum Activities

- ? Define shared reading and incorporating peers in shared reading
- ? Predictable chart writing as a universal strategy for the middle/high school classroom
- ? Analyze real-life case studies to discuss successful AAC implementation and ideas to improve execution

5. Group Discussion and Q & A

- ? Staff get to collaborate, discuss common challenges and troubleshooting tips.

This learning opportunity is being subsidized through funding from Alberta Education.