

Project Information

Project Title:	Supporting Students Who Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Throughout the School Day
Problem:	• Elementary school students with complex communication needs often use AAC (augmentative alternative communication) devices/systems to help them express their needs and wants. • AAC systems support more than just communication of basic wants and needs. Consistent use of AAC devices is important for academic learning (early literacy) and social participation. • AAC users rely heavily on support of communication partners (family members, teachers, peers and so on) for consistent use of their devices • Teachers and educational assistants often report they lack the training and confidence for supporting AAC users (students) within classrooms and during daily routines at school. This leads to underutilized AAC devices restricted to limited communication functions, instead of supporting robust participation in classroom learning and social interaction. Problem: Students who use AAC systems often experience reduced opportunities to participate in learning activities, classroom communication, and social interactions, due to lack of adequate training for teachers and educational assistants on how to support AAC users in schools.
Project Description:	• A short asynchronous eLearning module designed for elementary school teachers and classroom staff who support students using AAC systems. • The module will be designed as a self-paced professional development experience intended to be completed in approximately 10–20 minutes. • The module will focus on 3 components: 1. Practical cueing strategies (Infographic, demonstration video, and knowledge check quiz). 2. How to incorporate AAC device use in classroom learning to promote vocabulary building. (activities: scenario-based learning through examples). 3. Identify opportunities to promote use of AAC devices throughout school day (application-based learning activities).

Roles and Responsibilities for the Project–

Learning Designer:	Vinaya Kulkarni. Responsibilities: The learning designer will be responsible for conducting Gap analysis, learner analysis, designing instructional plan, developing multimedia elements and creating assessments, all embedded within the final eLearning module ensuring alignment between instructional decisions, learning theories, and project goals.
Critical Project Stakeholders:	• Elementary school teachers • Classroom assistants/paraprofessionals • Speech-language pathologists • Students who use AAC systems • Families/caregivers • School administrators Stakeholders will provide input about barriers which contribute to the gap between in desired outcome and reality. This knowledge will help the learning designer to curate a learner centric training experience.
Subject Matter Experts:	Ashley Larsen M.S., CCC-SLP A speech therapist within the Madison County School district and an AAC expert with experience of collaborating with teachers for AAC use with students. Also: • Research literature focused on AAC participation, communication partner strategies, and classroom AAC implementation • Professional AAC implementation resources such as PrAACtical AAC • Professional experience and prior AAC training experience of the designer
Other Contributors:	N/A

Preliminary Project Details

Target Audience:	Elementary school teachers and educational assistants who work with students who use AAC as primary method of communication within inclusive classroom settings.
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Project Goal:	The goal of this project is to increase educator awareness, confidence, and practical skills for supporting AAC users throughout the school day, thereby facilitating academic learning and social participation for AAC users.
Authoring Tool or Other Tool to be Used:	• Rise 360 • Canva • CapCut • Rise AI • ChatGPT image generation
Description of Deliverables / Course Assets:	A self-paced asynchronous eLearning module developed in Articulate Rise 360 including the following assets: • Instructional content focused on practical AAC communication partner strategies, AAC use during classroom learning, and opportunities for AAC participation throughout the school day. • AAC Do's and Don'ts infographic highlighting effective communication partner strategies. • Self-produced demonstration video modeling AAC communication partner supports such as aided language input, wait time, validation of communication attempts, and open-ended prompts. • Sorting activity knowledge check focused on distinguishing effective and ineffective AAC support strategies. • Classroom examples demonstrating AAC use across academic subject areas including reading, mathematics, science, and writing. • Matching activity knowledge check focused on identifying opportunities for AAC participation during classroom learning. • Interactive hotspot activity allowing learners to explore AAC participation opportunities across various school environments and daily routines. • Final summative quiz aligned with all learning objectives. • AAC Cueing Strategies Infographic (downloadable resource). • AAC Support Action Plan Worksheet for Educators (downloadable resource). • Instructional visuals including original photographs, AI-generated images, and AAC device examples. • Learner accessibility supports including video captions, alt text, clear navigation, and self-paced learning features. • Final Project Plan, Design Document, Storyboard, Reflection, and Copyright/Media Attribution documentation.