

Chalk Talk

Augmentative Communication
in the Classroom

by

Delva M. Culp and John Effinger

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Copies of ChalkTalk are available from:

Missouri Assistive Technology: www.at.mo.gov

<http://at.mo.gov/information-resources-publications/communication.html>

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Chalk Talk

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO CHALKTALK

ChalkTalk outlines a process that gives school teams a “place to start” when developing communication programs for Individual Education Plans (IEP) for Augmentative Communication (AAC) Students. The process identifies and develops classroom characteristics and communication skills that will enhance the AAC Student's ability to participate at school. ChalkTalk is for use with preschool to secondary age students who have at least emerging skills in listening, turn taking, and using symbols (e.g., signs, pictures, or words). The focus of ChalkTalk is on conversational skills needed for classroom participation. ChalkTalk proposes that prior to the development of a program, team members systematically observe an AAC Student's Communication Behaviors in the Classroom Environments. The information collected will assist teams in determining an AAC Student's current level of participation. Using this information, teams can target areas to facilitate future communication. Simply stated: *The ChalkTalk Framework provides a systematic procedure for observing an AAC Student's communication in order to develop a program that facilitates that student's classroom participation.* The level of intuitive sophistication of the team using ChalkTalk will to some extent determine how ChalkTalk is used. The authors developed ChalkTalk to be useful to teams with different levels of AAC experience.

RATIONALE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHALKTALK

In working with AAC Students in a variety of school settings, the authors had noted teams repeatedly experiencing the same problems including:

- receiving students in schools where staff members have limited experience with AAC,
- establishing common terminology and ways of thinking about and discussing AAC,
- organizing and prioritizing the many factors that affect AAC Student communication,
- finding ways to manage AAC in the classroom relative to time constraints,
- documenting AAC Student's participation at baseline and after intervention,
- developing accommodations/communication goals to enhance AAC Student participation, and
- maintaining continuity of communication programming from year to year as students change schools or staff turns over.

The authors thus developed ChalkTalk to assist teams in dealing with these problems. The ChalkTalk Framework was developed based on the AAC interaction literature of the 1980's, the educational literature about classroom communication, and the authors' clinical experiences.

Much of the work in AAC in the 1980's focused on establishing functional conversational skills (Light, 1988) and understanding communicative competence (Light, 1989). For example, *Partners in Augmentative Communication Training-PACT* (Culp and Carlisle, 1988) provided a structured framework for considering child-partner behaviors. *PACT* focused on the assessment and facilitation of conversational communication. However, many clinicians found *PACT* too comprehensive to use given the time and opportunity constraints of the

school setting. Furthermore, addressing conversational communication goals did not consistently facilitate classroom communication and participation.

Until recently, only a few authors had attended to implementation of AAC in the schools (Blackstone, Cassatt-James, and Bruskin, 1988) and AAC Student classroom participation

(Beukelman and Mirenda, 1992). Contemporary literature is beginning to consider the types of communication behaviors Typical Students and AAC students need to be successful in the classroom (Beukelman, 1995). Considerations in education have evolved as school teams adopt a collaborative model and more special needs students spend increasing amounts of time in regular education classrooms (Blackstone, 1996; Calculator and Jorgensen, 1994; Stainbeck and Stainbeck, 1992).

Finally, the authors drew on their own clinical experiences. These included consultative experiences with many different school districts/teams/AAC Students and longitudinal experience with several different schools/ teams/AAC Students.

The ChalkTalk Framework thus identifies Classroom Environment Characteristics and AAC Student Communication Behaviors which the authors believe to be important for functional communication in the classroom. ChalkTalk observation tools and guidelines for intervention thus focus on the Classroom Environment Characteristics and AAC Student Communication Behaviors addressed by the Framework.

CHALKTALK OVERVIEW

ChalkTalk includes four primary components: the Strategies, the Framework, the Observation Tools, and the Guidelines for Developing a Communication Program.

THE STRATEGIES

The Strategies provide a step by step plan for teams to consider in implementing ChalkTalk procedures.

THE FRAMEWORK

The Framework outlines and describes key Classroom Environment Characteristics and AAC Student Communication Behaviors.

THE OBSERVATION TOOLS

The ChalkTalk Observation Procedure is a tool to help teams systematically observe characteristics and behaviors of the Framework as the AAC Student participates in the classroom.

The ChalkTalk Profile summarizes the AAC Student's Communication Behavior data from the ChalkTalk Observation Procedures.

THE GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

The Guidelines assist teams in using an Action Plan to identify Accommodations for the IEP. The Guidelines also provide assistance in using a Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet and sample goal format to develop AAC Student Communication goals for the IEP.

The following chapters specifically discuss the four components of ChalkTalk

CHAPTER 2 STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CHALKTALK

Communication programming for the AAC Student is complicated by the many Classroom Environment Characteristics and AAC Student Communication Behaviors to be considered, as well as the need to interact with all of the people on the team. Time and scheduling conflicts often provide additional complications. ChalkTalk strives to organize characteristics and behaviors and to offer the team a set of tools providing common ground on which to efficiently discuss communication programming. Every team will have to make a decision about how ChalkTalk might be useful in a particular setting. However, the authors suggest a general set of Strategies for implementing ChalkTalk. These Strategies are outlined in Table 1. The following sections describe each step within the Strategies.

TABLE 1
ChalkTalk Strategies for Implementation

We suggest that the ChalkTalk process be implemented as follows:

1. The AAC team meets to:
 - A. Designate an AAC Case Manager.
 - B. Identify priority Learning Contexts (Classroom Activities) for the AAC Student.
 - C. Establish a timetable for completing ChalkTalk observations.
 2. The Case Manager completes the ChalkTalk Observation Procedure for each of the priority Learning Contexts identified by the team in Step 1.
 3. The Case Manager compiles data from each ChalkTalk Observation Procedure on to a ChalkTalk Profile.
 4. The team develops a communication program, reviewing ChalkTalk Profiles and using the ChalkTalk Guidelines to:
 - A. Identify appropriate accommodations for the Classroom Environment and develop an Action Plan.
 - B. Summarize AAC Student Communication Behaviors and develop communication goals for the classroom.
 5. The team establishes a procedure for team members to communicate.
 6. The team plans for re-evaluation.
-

IMPLEMENTATION OF CHALKTALK

AAC TEAM MEETS

The makeup of the AAC team may vary from school to school. At a minimum, the team would include the parent/s, the AAC student (when possible), the teacher/s, the speech-language pathologist, other special services staff, and an administrator. It is not always possible to have all team members play an active role in the ChalkTalk process, but it is critical that those charged with implementing the AAC Student's daily educational program are very involved. The first step in implementing ChalkTalk is to designate an AAC Case Manager. This person will be responsible for:

- familiarizing the team with ChalkTalk materials,
- completing the ChalkTalk observation tools,
- reporting observations back to the team, and
- coordinating the communication program recommended by the team.

Second, the team identifies Learning Contexts or Classroom Activities that team members feel are priorities relative to the AAC Student's communication. As teams are getting familiar with ChalkTalk, it may be helpful to begin with just two or three Learning Contexts. Other contexts can be added gradually. Depending on the situation, teams may choose a combination of “easy” Learning Contexts in which they feel the student is most likely to be successful or “hard” Learning Contexts in which the student's poor communication interferes with education. The Learning Contexts identified will be targeted for use of the ChalkTalk Observation Procedure (See Chapter 4).

At the end of the team meeting, the team agrees upon:

- who will complete the ChalkTalk Observation Procedures and Profiles (usually the Case Manager),
- when the observations will be completed and ready for presentation to the team, and
- when the team will meet to review the results of the observations and develop a communication program.

CASE MANAGER COMPLETES CHALKTALK OBSERVATION PROCEDURES

During the period designated by the team, the Case Manager completes Parts I. and II. of the Classroom Observation Procedures in the Learning Contexts previously specified by the team. The goal is to get a typical or representative sample of the AAC Student's communication in each Learning Context. After each observation, the Case Manager needs to get feedback from the teacher about how representative the student's communication was during the observation period. If the teacher describes communication as atypical, another observation of the same Learning Context is appropriate.

CASE MANAGER COMPILES CHALKTALK PROFILES

Prior to the scheduled team meeting, the Case Manager compiles the data from the Observation Procedures on the ChalkTalk Profiles (See Chapter 4). The Profiles, as summaries, will be presented to the team at the meeting. The Observation Procedure forms should also be available at the meeting in case the team needs more detail.

TEAM DEVELOPS COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

The AAC team meets at the specified time to review the Observations. After reviewing Part I. of the Observation Profiles, the team uses the ChalkTalk Guidelines (Chapter 5) to consider the status of the Classroom Environment: Learning Contexts, Teacher Communication Behaviors, Typical Student Communication Behaviors, and AAC Student's Communication System. If team members identify characteristics of the Classroom Environment that need to be changed, they decide on an appropriate accommodation/s and specify on the Action Plan how it will be made. This will insure that the team will be clear about *who is doing what, where*.

Next, the team uses the ChalkTalk Profiles and Guidelines to consider the AAC Student Communication Behaviors: Communication Modes, Communication Functions, Successfulness, and Message Frequency. Team members identify student communication behaviors that need to be developed. The Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet may help the team consider the various communication behaviors. The team can then write specific communication goals. The ChalkTalk Sample Goal Format may be helpful.

The Action Plan and the Communication Goals are included in the student's Individual Education Plan.

TEAM ESTABLISHES PROCEDURE FOR TEAM MEMBERS TO COMMUNICATE

It is important that team members jointly discuss and decide upon the best way for them to communicate and stay in touch about the AAC Student's communication program. In making this decision, it may be helpful to consider *how* to communicate (face to face meeting, notebook carried by student, e-mail, phone conference, etc.) and *how often* (daily, weekly, etc.). Regular communication among team members is critical to the student's communication program. Given the busy schedules of team members, the authors strongly recommend a structured method of team communication that is convenient for everyone and "built in" to the schedule. List the method of team communication on the Action Plan.

TEAM PLANS FOR RE-EVALUATION

Before the team meeting adjourns, the team decides how to monitor the AAC Student's communication program. In addition to meeting the deadlines of the Action Plan and monitoring the student's progress toward goals, it may be helpful to decide upon a time to repeat the ChalkTalk Observation Procedures and begin this process, again.

SUMMARY

Developing an AAC Student's classroom communication is a challenge for school teams. The ChalkTalk Strategies provide a plan for teams to begin to use the ChalkTalk Framework, Tools, and Guidelines. Each team will then make modifications in that plan in order to meet the needs of particular students in specific school settings. The important thing is that ChalkTalk provides a team with a system for working together as they think about, observe, and develop an AAC Student's classroom communication program. Chapter 3 will familiarize the reader with the ChalkTalk Framework which is the basis for the ChalkTalk observation tools and intervention guidelines.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHALKTALK FRAMEWORK

The ChalkTalk Framework (Table 2) identifies characteristics and behaviors that the authors believe to be important for functional communication in the classroom. The authors chose these characteristics and behaviors after reviewing the available literature and considering their own clinical experiences. This framework is posed not as a theoretical model, but rather as a functional outline for systematically viewing AAC in the classroom. The ChalkTalk Framework is organized relative to The Classroom Environment and AAC Student Communication Behaviors.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The Classroom Environment section of the Framework considers four major areas:

- Learning Contexts,
- Teacher (Partner) Communication Behaviors,
- Typical Student Communication Behaviors, and
- AAC Student's Communication System.

The authors have grouped these areas together, because they all involve potential accommodations made to an AAC Student's school environment. A team may need to make environmental accommodations in order to facilitate a student's communicative development and educational program. Each of the four areas of the Classroom Environment section of the Framework warrant careful consideration.

LEARNING CONTEXTS

The first area for consideration is Learning Contexts. The Framework considers six primary Learning Contexts that may impact classroom communication. Clinicians have recently attempted to develop a better understanding of communication activities in the classroom. Obtaining a better understanding of these activities should provide insight into the kinds of communication skills AAC Students need. Sturm and Nelson (In press) have identified Learning Contexts that occur frequently in the classroom environment. More than one Learning Context may occur during a given class Activity. For example, a teacher may begin Math with a lecture/question answer period (Learning Context = Teacher Directed) and move to posing a problem for the class to solve using manipulatives and discussion (Learning Context = Cooperative Learning Group). The following section describes each of the Learning Contexts considered in ChalkTalk.

Descriptions of Learning Contexts

Teacher Directed Class

Teacher primarily lectures, controls topics, and elicits student participation by asking questions.

Small Group Instruction

Teacher interacts with a small group (e.g., <7) students, as in a traditional reading group.

**TABLE 2 -ChalkTalk Framework for Classroom Communication
THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**

Learning Contexts

- Teacher Directed Class
- Small Group Instruction
- 1/1 Instruction
- Cooperative Learning Group
- Seatwork
- Transition.

Teacher (Partner) Communication Behaviors

- Provides Pause Time
- Offers Choices
- Asks Open-Ended Questions
- Asks Questions Requiring Short Responses
- Reinforces Student's Communication
- Simplifies Vocabulary and Sentence Structure
- Other.

Typical Student Communication Behaviors

- General observations about Vocabulary and Communication Functions.

AAC Student's Communication System

- General observations about Adequacy of Modes, Available Vocabulary, Availability of aid, Aid Input/Output features.

AAC STUDENT COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

Communication Modes

- Eye gaze
- Point
- Select Symbol
- Facial Expression
- Speech
- Vocalization
- Gesture
- Sign Language
- Other.

Communication Functions

- Socializes with Teacher
- Socializes with Peer
- Makes requests
- Answers Yes-No questions
- Answers Questions
- Answers Open Ended Questions
- Offers Information
- Asks Questions
- Reads/spells aloud
- Recites
- Other.

Successfulness

- Successful
- Partially Successful
- Unsuccessful

-Uncertain.

Message Frequency-Number of messages per time period/activity.

1/1 Instruction

Teacher directly instructs one student.

Cooperative Learning Group

Students work on an activity in a group with minimal teacher participation/direction.

Seatwork

Students work on an activity independently at their desk.

Transition

Students move from one activity to the next.

TEACHER (PARTNER) COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

The Teacher Communication Behaviors in the Framework represent a cursory list of behaviors believed to be facilitating to the AAC Student's communication and classroom participation. A teacher will often be the partner for the AAC Student in the classroom. However, these behaviors may also be applied to other partners in the classroom, such as teaching assistants and student helpers. The importance of the role of the partner of an AAC user has been previously stressed. Turn-taking is important in all communication interactions. However, in augmented interactions, the partner may also be a facilitator who helps the AAC Student construct messages. The facilitator may also interpret the meaning of the messages. There is general agreement in the literature that a communication partner's skills can have a substantial impact upon the AAC user's communication behavior. While partner communication styles may vary, there are some specific partner communication behaviors that seem to facilitate augmented interactions. Specific studies of these facilitation techniques in the classroom are in the preliminary stages. Thus, the Teacher Communication Behaviors included in the Framework are drawn from the earlier partner research and the authors' clinical experience. The following section provides examples of each of the ChalkTalk Teacher Communication Behaviors.

Examples of Teacher (Partner) Communication Behaviors

Provides Pause Time

- Teacher asks a question and pauses to give the AAC Student adequate time to answer.
- Teacher finishes reading a page of a story and pauses to give AAC Student time to ask a question or comment.

Offers Choices

- Teacher holds up two books and asks the AAC Student to look at the one to be read aloud.
 - Teacher asks the AAC Student to answer a content question by E.g., "Look at this hand if the answer is George Washington or look at that hand if the answer is Thomas Jefferson."

Asks Open-Ended Questions

- Teacher asks open-ended questions that require more complex answers such as: "Why do you think George Washington was elected?" "How do you feel about recycling?" or "What do you think will happen next?"

Asks Questions Requiring Short Responses

-Teacher asks, "What day is it?" "Where do you go next?" or "Who do you want to work With?"

Reinforces Student's Communication Attempts

-Teacher asks for an answer to a math problem. AAC Student points to a number on the communication board. Teacher notes the student's attempt, walks over to the student, looks at his response, and says, "Bob says the answer is 24. Very Good!" or "Bob says the answer is 23. That is a good try, and you are very close."

Simplifies Vocabulary and Sentence Structure

-Teacher gives an instruction to the class, "Before we get started, get out your pencils and write your identifying information in the upper right-hand corner of your paper." The teacher repeats the request for the AAC Student, adapting to that student's language skills "Write your name in pencil (pointing to the upper right-hand corner of the paper) here."

TYPICAL STUDENT COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

The third area addressed in the ChalkTalk Framework is Typical Student Communication Behaviors. Observation of the communication behaviors of typical or speaking students in a Learning Context provides a better understanding of the AAC Student's communication needs in that particular context. Specifically, observation of the vocabulary and communication functions that the Typical Students use may provide insights to facilitate the AAC Student's communication in the classroom.

Vocabulary

Sampling the vocabulary used by Typical Students in a particular Learning Context or Activity may provide ideas for selecting vocabulary for the AAC Student. This is particularly critical for students who are unable to spell what they need to say. Having access to a functional vocabulary set is critical to successful classroom participation.

Communication Functions

Sampling the Communication Functions used by Typical Students in a particular Learning Context or Activity may provide insights that facilitate the AAC Student's communication in that context. It is important to understand what student communication behaviors the Typical Student uses to successfully participate in a Learning Context or Activity. If a particular Learning Context requires students to be able to Answer Questions, Recite, Offer Information, etc., the AAC Student needs to be prepared to use these Communication Functions.

AAC STUDENT'S COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Finally, the Classroom Environment section of the Framework addresses the AAC Student's Communication System. Through observation of the AAC Student in different Learning Contexts and Activities, it may become apparent that features of the student's communication system need to be adapted to maximize the student's potential to participate in a context. A student's communication system includes not just a device or a communication board, but all of that student's available communication modes. For example, an AAC Student's communication system might include a few intelligible spoken words, 20 basic signs, eye gaze, and a voice output device. Given the wide range of communication systems used by students, it is difficult to pose a comprehensive list of features to consider. Some common features are posed for consideration.

Adequacy Communication Modes

Generally, the adequacy of the student's Mode of communication for a particular Learning Context should be considered. For example, severely impaired speech may not be a functional Mode of communication in a noisy Cooperative Learning Context; sign language may not be a functional Mode of communication with a teacher and students who do not know sign; and a voice output device may not be a functional Mode of communication for providing quick answers to math problems in a Teacher Directed Context.

Vocabulary Access

Vocabulary access is another critical feature of the communication system for consideration. During observation, it is important to determine if a student's Communication Modes have the necessary vocabulary available for successful participation in a Learning Context.

Availability of Communication Aids

Communication aids, manual boards or electronic devices, need to be consistently available to the AAC Student. It is thus critical to know how available a student's communication aids are and what, if any, issues are interfering with availability.

Communication Aid Features (Input/Output)

The Input and Output features of an AAC Student's Communication Aid can dramatically affect the student's ability to participate. Input features such as communication aid position, power source, adequacy of displays, control for key repetition, switch placement, scanning type/rate, etc. warrant careful consideration. Observations about Output features are also important. Such features might include intelligibility (of picture/word or voice output), appropriateness of output type (pointing to symbol/word, voice output, printed output, etc.), volume control, etc.

THE AAC STUDENT COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

The AAC Student Communication Behaviors section of the Framework considers four major areas:

- Communication Modes,
- Communication Functions,
- Successfulness, and
- Message Frequency.

The authors have identified these communication skill areas as critical to the AAC Student's participation in the classroom. Through systematic observation of these skills, a team can identify AAC Student Communication Behaviors that need to be developed. These behaviors can be targeted in goals included in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The four areas of the AAC Student Communication Behavior section of the Framework warrant careful consideration.

COMMUNICATION MODES

Both a natural speaker and an AAC Student may have numerous Communication Modes or methods within their communication system. It is important to have a good understanding of what Communication Modes an AAC Student has available and uses. In any given communication interaction, an AAC Student needs to choose the most appropriate Communication Mode to use relative to the Learning Context and the partner. For example, the AAC Student's impaired speech may be the most appropriate mode for a Teacher Directed Class where the topic is known, and the teacher is a careful listener, but a voice output device may be

ChalkTalk: Culp & Effinger, 1996

needed in a Cooperative Learning Group where topic/context is variable and group members listen less carefully. The following section provides examples of the Communication Modes included in the ChalkTalk Framework. AAC Students may use other Communication Modes, also. In addition, it may be helpful to be more specific, as in labeling a particular communication device.

Examples of Communication Modes

Eye Gaze

- AAC Student asks for his lunch box by looking at it on the shelf.
- AAC Student answers math question by looking at the number on the number line on the chalkboard.

Point

- AAC Student describes weather by pointing to picture of “rain” on the bulletin board.
- AAC Student points to the door to request a restroom break.

Selects Symbol

- AAC Student points to symbol for “recess” on communication board.
- AAC Student hits switch to make a voice output device say “subtract.”

Facial Expressions

- AAC Student responds to “How do lemons taste?” by making a “sour” face.
- AAC Student smacks lips to indicate snack tastes good.

Speech

- AAC Student uses oral speech to express a message. It may be a single word or short phrase. It may be correctly articulated or a word approximation.
- AAC Student say “hi” to greet peer.

Vocalizations

- AAC Student sighs to indicate “yes.”
- AAC Student makes a sound that has implied meaning to team, “eee” for “yes” and “ooo” for “no.”

Gestures

- AAC Student shrugs shoulders to indicate “I don t know.”
- AAC Student pats his head to answer “Davy Crocket.”
- AAC Student nods head yes or no.

Sign Language

- AAC Student uses sign for “drink.”

COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS

The second area for consideration in the AAC Student Communication Behavior section of the Framework is Communication Functions. Communication Function refers to the particular use or intent of a Message within a given interaction or, for ChalkTalk purposes, Learning Context. In the Framework, the authors have attempted to identify eight Communication Functions that appear to be basic to classroom participation. Other Communication Functions may also be used

by the AAC Student or needed in a particular Learning Context. The following section provides examples of each of the ChalkTalk Communication Functions.

Examples of Communication Functions

Socializes with Teacher/Peer

- AAC Student says “hi” or “thank you.”
- AAC Student selects “See ya later” on voice output device.

Makes Requests

- AAC Student signs “bathroom” to request restroom break.
- AAC Student selects computer symbol on communication board to ask to work on the computer.
- AAC Student selects “Please get my homework out of my backpack.” on his voice output device.

Answers Yes-No Questions

- Teacher asks if “4” is an odd number. AAC Student nods “no.”
- Teacher asks if student needs help. AAC Student selects “yes” on voice output device.

Answers Questions

- Teacher asks, “What is the capital of Alaska?” AAC Student types Juneau.
- Teacher asks, “What is the boy in the picture doing?” AAC Student points to “sleeping.”

Answers Open Ended Questions

- Teacher asks, “What will happen next?” AAC Student signs, “Boy eat.”
- Teacher asks, “How would you describe this picture?” AAC Student selects “Happy.”

Offers Information

- AAC Student enters class and selects “snow” on voice output device to tell teacher it is starting to snow.
- AAC Student types out “I went to Washington. D.C. last summer.”

Asks Questions

- AAC Student selects “What is my homework?” on voice output device.
- AAC Student signs, “Where is Michael?”

Reads/Spells Aloud

- AAC Student activates a communication device to read a word or phrase from a book.
- AAC Student spells C-A-T by pointing to letters on a communication board.

Recites

- AAC Student selects appropriate key, or sequence of keys on a voice output device to say a poem or recite the pledge.
- AAC Student gestures or signs to retell a story to his class.

SUCCESSFULNESS

The third area for consideration in the AAC Student Communication Behavior section of the Framework is Successfulness. Successfulness refers to how effectively the observer feels the AAC Student has conveyed a message in a particular Learning Context. It is of course important for the student to be as successful as possible during classroom participation. Successfulness must also be considered relative to what Communication Mode and Function the student uses,

what Learning Context and Partner are involved and so on. Four ratings are used to consider Successfulness.

Successfulness Ratings

Successful

The message is Successful when the observer judges that the teacher understood the student's intended message (even if for example the child's intended message is not the correct answer to the teacher's question).

Partially Successful

The message is Partially Successful when the observer judges that the teacher understood only part of the student's intended message. For example, a teacher understands that the student's answer involved "Indians," but is unable to understand what the student said about the Indians.

Unsuccessful

The message is Unsuccessful when the observer judges that the teacher did not understand or acknowledge the students intended message.

Uncertain

The message is Uncertain if the observer is unsure what the student's intended message was or whether the teacher understood the message.

MESSAGE FREQUENCY

The final area of the AAC Student Communication Behavior section of the Framework is Message Frequency. Message Frequency can be considered relative to time (so many messages per minute) or Learning Context/Activity (so many messages during Math class). Message Frequency provides a good way to consider how actively the AAC Student is participating in a Learning Context.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the authors have described the ChalkTalk Framework which includes two major sections: The Classroom Environment and AAC Student Communication Behaviors. The Framework is posed as a functional outline for systematically considering AAC in the classroom. The next task is to consider how the Framework can be used as an observational tool.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHALKTALK TOOLS

ChalkTalk includes two primary tools based on the Framework: The ChalkTalk Observation Procedure and The ChalkTalk Profile. The ChalkTalk Observation Procedure provides the team with a systematic approach to observing the Classroom Environment and AAC Student Communication Behaviors in a specific Learning Context or Activity. The ChalkTalk Profile offers a procedure for summarizing the AAC Student Communication Behaviors in a particular Learning Context/Activity and across Learning Contexts/Activities. The purpose of these tools is to assist teams in understanding and facilitating the AAC Student's communication and participation in the classroom.

THE CHALKTALK OBSERVATION PROCEDURE

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

A ChalkTalk Observation Procedure (Table 3 and Appendix A) is to be completed while the clinician/Case Manager observes the AAC Student in each Learning Context/Activity. *Before the observation, the clinician should be familiar with the descriptions and examples of the Classroom Environment Characteristics and AAC Student Communication Behaviors in Chapter 3.* A sample of a completed ChalkTalk Observation Procedure has also been provided (Table 4).

During the observation/s, the Case Manager:

Part I: The Classroom Environment

1. Comments on the effect of the **Learning Context/s** on the AAC Student's communication.
2. Makes general observations about **Teacher Communication Behaviors** rating behaviors as O/Often, S/Sometimes, or R/Rarely.
3. Notes **Typical Student Communication Behaviors** which appear critical to success in the Learning Context/Activity. These communication behaviors typically include vocabulary and communication functions.
4. Describes any concerns about the adequacy of the **AAC Student's Communication System**. Concerns may involve factors such as: adequacy of modes, accessibility of vocabulary, availability/position of communication board or device, input/output device issues, and so on.

Part II: AAC Student Communication Behaviors

(See Codes at the top of Part II.)

4. Identifies the **Learning Context/s** throughout the observed Activity.
5. Identifies the **Partner** (Teacher, Aid, Peer, Other) during each message.
6. Records **AAC Student Messages**: *A message is a spontaneously formulated unit that has at least one symbolic/word referent and contributes meaning to the conversation.* The observer writes down exact student messages when possible. If the student uses a communication mode that the observer has to interpret (e.g., vocalize, gesture), the observer writes down the meaning as he or she understands it.

Many partners use a “yes” or “no” response to confirm a student's Message. It is not necessary to note each “yes” or “no” response when it is used to confirm a student Message. *In some cases, there may not be opportunity for the student to communicate. If there is no opportunity, or the student did not take advantage of the opportunity, note that on the form.*

**Table 3: ChalkTalk: Observation Procedure Part I
Culp and Effinger (1996)**

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Examiner:** _____

Class/Activity: _____ **Total Time (min):** _____

General Observations of Learning Contexts

Teacher Communication Behaviors

Rate The Communication Observed as **O=often S=sometimes R=rarely**

_____ Provides Pause Time _____ Asks Questions Requiring
Short Responses

_____ Offers Choices _____ Reinforces Student's
Communication Attempts

_____ Asks Open-Ended Questions _____ Simplifies Vocabulary and
Sentence Structure

_____ Other:

General Observations of Typical Student Communication Behaviors:

General Observations of AAC Student's Communication System:

7. Notes with a () in the **Assist** column if the AAC Student requires assistance (e.g., verbal/physical prompt or a model) to produce the Message. Leave this box blank if the AAC Student produces the Message independently.

8. Indicates the primary **Communication Mode** in which the message was communicated. If the Mode is not listed on the form, the observer may make up a code and document under "Other."

9. Indicates the **Communication Function** of the Message. Study the types of Functions in Chapter 3 and try to apply one to each Message. If the Function is not listed on the form, the observer may make up a code and document under “Other.”

10. Indicates the **Successfulness** (Successful, Partially Successful, Unsuccessful, or Uncertain) of the student's Message.

DISCUSSION

Developing observation skills to understand the dynamics of the Classroom Environment and AAC Student Communication Behaviors takes time and repeated practice. ChalkTalk was designed to facilitate development of observation skills needed to plan AAC Students' communication programs. While not an assessment tool, the ChalkTalk Observation Procedure establishes a baseline of Classroom Environment Characteristics and AAC Student Communication Behaviors. This baseline can be used for comparison to future observations.

Less Experienced Teams

Team members with limited experience with AAC Students may find it helpful to begin by focusing on Part II of the Observation Procedure. They can start by using the Observation Procedure to identify one or two AAC Student Communication Behaviors, such as Communication Modes (e.g., Eye Gaze, Facial Expression). Watching the student while learning to recognize Communication Modes is an essential component of the ChalkTalk Observation Procedure. As the team members learn to identify Communication Modes, they can begin to associate Messages communicated via a Mode (e.g., “Hi” indicated by “ah”). Some Messages are obvious, such as when a student points to a symbol, spells a word, or signs. Other Messages produced with Gestures, Eye Gaze, or Facial Expression may be more difficult to interpret. Using the ChalkTalk Observation Procedure, team members can begin to compile data based on the student's Message. For example, the team notes that a student consistently uses a smile to indicate “yes.” A smile would be recorded under Communication Mode as a Facial Expression. Repeated identification of the same behavior/Mode documented on the Observation Procedure could assist teams in matching behavior to Message.

In this way, teams with beginning observation skills may attempt to answer the following questions: What does the student do to communicate (Mode)?

What are the Messages the student is trying to communicate?

As team members develop observation skills, they can begin to record other Communication Behaviors, such as Communication Functions and Successfulness, until they are comfortable with Part II. To complete the ChalkTalk Profile, Message, Communication Mode, Communication Function, and Successfulness must be filled out. When team members become comfortable with Part II, they can begin to also look at the characteristics of the Classroom Environment by using Part I.

Experienced Teams

Teams with more experience in observing AAC will be able to complete the entire ChalkTalk Observation Procedure, Part I and Part II. Part I gives teams a means to document the characteristics of the Classroom Environment. Team members make notes about the Learning Contexts, Teacher Communication Behaviors, Typical Student Communication Behaviors, and AAC Student's Communication System.

Part II of the Observation Procedure gives teams a means to document the following about an AAC Student's Communication:

- Learning Context in which the student was observed,
- Time the observation began and ended (total time),
- Communication Partner/s who interacted with the student,
- Message the AAC Student communicated,
- Communication Mode in which the Message occurred,
- Communication Function of the Message, and
- Successfulness of the Message.

While this looks like a great deal of information from one page of documentation, it is not complex to transcribe. Furthermore, all of the information is useful in understanding classroom communication and developing a communication program.

Sample Observation Procedure

The sample Observation Procedure in Table 3 involves Rob, a seven-year-old boy with Down Syndrome. Observation was conducted during a Halloween Activity involving a Teacher Directed and a 1/1 Learning Context. Notations on Part I suggest that Rob participates successfully in the Teacher Directed portion of the activity. However, while Typical Students socialize in a Cooperative Learning Group, Rob is pulled aside to interact in a 1/1 context with the aide. In addition, the Teacher may need to provide more pause time, offer choices, reinforce communication attempts and simplify vocabulary and sentence structure. Typical Students use social vocabulary suggesting that Rob needs access to more social vocabulary. It is also noted that the teacher does not consistently understand Rob's gestures.

In Part II, it is apparent that Rob's communication Partners are consistently the adults in the classroom. He generates short Messages using a variety of Communication Modes. It is noted that he frequently has to be Assisted to use his Symbol Select/Communication Board Mode. He uses a variety of Communication Functions and is generally Successful.

**Table 3: ChalkTalk: Observation Procedure Part I
Culp and Effinger (1996)**

Student: Rob E.

Date: Oct, 1996

Teacher: Goodenuff

Examiner: Effinger

Class/Activity: Pumpkins

Total Time (min): 25 min

General Observations of Learning Contexts

The student's in the classroom work in Cooperative Learning Groups.

Rob Works in a one on one setting with the aide.

Teacher Communication Behaviors

Rare The Communication Observed as **O=often S=sometimes R=rarely**

 S Provides Pause Time

 O Asks Questions Requiring Short Responses

 R Offers Choices

 S Reinforces Student's Communication Attempts

 S Asks Open-Ended Questions
Structure

 S Simplifies Vocabulary and Sentence

 Other:

General Observations of Typical Student Communication Behaviors:

The students in the classroom socialize all the time while working.

The vocabulary used during the activity ranges from specific to task to general during social opportunities.

General Observations of AAC Student's Communication System:

Rob often requires prompts to use his communication boards.

Rob interacts with the classroom aide and never with his peers. Rob ignores his peers.

The classroom teacher does not consistently understand Rob's gestures.

Rob does not have age appropriate vocabulary (gestures) to socialize with his peers.

THE CHALKTALK PROFILE

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS

The ChalkTalk Profile (Appendix B) was designed to summarize the AAC Student's Communication Behaviors in a specific Learning Context. After completing ChalkTalk Observation Procedures, fill out a ChalkTalk Profile for each Learning Context (e.g., Teacher Directed) or Activity (e.g., Math Class). One ChalkTalk Observation Procedure and one ChalkTalk Profile will be completed for each Learning Context/Activity designated by the team. The ChalkTalk Profile can also be used to summarize the AAC Student's Communication Behaviors across all Learning Contexts/Activities.

Looking at Part II of the ChalkTalk Observation Procedure, fill out the ChalkTalk Profile as follows:

1. Make sure a **Communication Function** is assigned to each AAC Student Message.
2. Write each **Communication Mode** demonstrated by the AAC Student across the top of the ChalkTalk Profile, one Mode per column. In order to make comparisons between Profiles, it is important to list **all** of the student's Modes (even if not used in a particular Learning Context) in the same order, across the top of each of the student's Profiles.
3. For each message on the Observation Procedure:
 - A. Identify the **Communication Mode** used and find the appropriate column on the Profile.
 - B. Identify the **Communication Function** and go down the Mode column (identified in A.) to the appropriate Function row on the Profile.
 - C. Identify the **Successfulness** of the Message. If it was Successful, mark an (S) in the box designated by steps A. and B. If it was Partially Successful, mark a (PS) in the designated box. If the Message was Unsuccessful, mark a (U) in the box designated by steps A. and B. If the observer is Uncertain whether the Message was Successful, mark a (UC) in the box designated by steps A. and B.
 - D. Look in the **Assist** box. If there is a () in that box indicating that the Message was assisted, **Circle** (0) the "S", "PS", "U" or "UC" representing that Message.
4. Follow the above procedure for each ChalkTalk Profile page.
5. It may also be helpful to transfer information from all Profiles on to one Profile which can be used as a summary of the AAC Student's communication in all Learning Contexts/Activities.

DISCUSSION

Team members may choose to use the Profile:

- to summarize the AAC Student's Communication in each Learning Context on different Profiles.
- to summarize the AAC Student's Communication in all Learning Contexts on one Profile, or
- to accomplish both of the above summaries.

As team members review an AAC Student's Profiles for individual Learning Contexts, they can begin to note how actively and successfully the student participates in these different contexts. During this review, it will be important to have Part I available so that the team has knowledge of the Classroom Environment. If participation is below expectations and differences are noted between contexts, team members will need to look for contributing factors. All of the Classroom Environment Characteristics and AAC Student Communication Behaviors should be considered. For example, one teacher may facilitate communication better than others, or the AAC Student's Communication System may exclude appropriate vocabulary for a context. Sometimes to be successful in a particular context, the AAC Student may need to select a different Communication Mode or to develop use of a specific Communication Function. Use of the Profile, to summarize the student's communication across contexts often provides a good overview of the student's variety of Modes and Functions, as well as his or her level of communicative independence and success.

SUMMARY

As team members have completed the Observation Procedures and Profile/s they have developed a considerable database and understanding of the AAC Student's Classroom Communication. As they review the Profile/s, the ChalkTalk Guidelines provide suggestions for developing a communication program for the classroom.

CHAPTER 5

THE CHALKTALK GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

When the Case Manager/Observer has completed the ChalkTalk Observation Procedures and the ChalkTalk Profiles, the team can use them to develop a plan for facilitating classroom communication. The plan may involve accommodations/modifications and goals to be included in the AAC Student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Teams may find it helpful to consider the following guidelines as they relate to the Learning Contexts/Activities that have been observed.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The team reviews observations of the Classroom Environment in Part I of each of the ChalkTalk Observation Procedures and the Profiles from each Learning Context. Through this review, the team identifies environmental characteristics that need to be changed. Changes made to the environment are considered "IEP accommodations" to meet the AAC Student's educational program (rather than goals to be met by the student). Specifically, accommodations need to be made to facilitate the student's communicative development and educational program. As such characteristics and accommodations are identified, it may be helpful to use an Action Plan (Appendix C) to map out accommodations. Many teams already use an action plan process, and ChalkTalk accommodations can be integrated into that process. For teams less familiar with the use of an action plan, instructions are provided in Appendix C. If the team has completed an Action Plan together, members have a clear understanding of what is to be done and who is responsible. The AAC Case Manager monitors the Action Plan. Accommodations to the classroom environment should be documented in the IEP.

LEARNING CONTEXT

Identify Learning Contexts in which the AAC Student participates less or communicates less successfully.

In comparing Profiles from different Learning Contexts, the team may note differences in the AAC Student's Communication Behaviors. The team considers factors contributing to these differences such as: Teacher Communication Behaviors, available vocabulary, complexity of material, and so on. However, in some cases the structure of the particular Learning Context may be impacting the student's communication. If accommodations are needed in a Learning Context, the team uses an Action Plan to specify such accommodations. For example, it may not be possible to anticipate the vocabulary an AAC Student will need to participate in a Cooperative Learning Group. An appropriate action may be to train a peer in the group to offer the AAC Student choices to facilitate participation.

The Action Plan might include:

Action: Provide training in offering choices to Jennifer Smith, peer volunteer.

Who: Speech-language pathologist.

When: By November 1, 1996.

How: Use discussion, handout, and roleplay/practice.

TEACHER (PARTNER) COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

Identify any Teacher Communication Behaviors that were not consistently observed that would facilitate greater communication from the AAC Student.

The Teacher Communication Behaviors listed in Part I of the ChalkTalk Observation Procedure are generally thought to facilitate AAC Student Communication Behaviors. Therefore, if a teacher is not using one or more of these behaviors consistently and successfully, an appropriate action may be to provide training in communication facilitation techniques. The team can write this up in an Action Plan.

TYPICAL STUDENT COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

List observations about Typical Student Communication Behaviors that may need to be developed for the AAC Student.

Vocabulary selection for the AAC Student should occur frequently. Careful observation of the classroom environment along with noted observation of Typical Student vocabulary should occur when classroom activities change or AAC Student messages fall off or are infrequent. The team determines if any Typical Student vocabulary can be incorporated into the AAC Student's communication system. The team then lists the vocabulary that will be added and uses an Action Plan to write up an accommodation for the IEP.

Functions of Typical Students' communication may also provide insights that facilitate the AAC Student's communication. Observation of the functions used spontaneously by Typical Students in a particular Learning Context/Activity may suggest functions the AAC Student needs to be able to use. For example, it may be observed that Typical Students primarily need to Answer Questions in Mrs. Smith's math class and Offer Information during Miss Brown's Show and Tell. The team determines what Typical Student functions the AAC Student will need to participate in a particular Learning Context/Activity.

At times Typical Students may need to use some of the designated Teacher Communication Behaviors, such as providing pause time, to facilitate the AAC Student's classroom participation and communication. The Action Plan may be used to outline facilitation training for the Typical Students.

AAC STUDENT'S COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

List features of any mode of the AAC Student's Communication System that need to be modified.

Any mode of a student's communication system may need to be modified for a particular Learning Context/Activity. For example, signs may need to be taught to a teacher. A student using a picture communication board may need to be positioned near the teacher or a spokesperson. Devices may require special mounting, volume control, printer access, power sources, etc. Vocabulary identified as important for classroom participation in a particular Learning Context/Activity may need to be programmed into a device. If access to vocabulary appears to be a problem in several Modes or Learning Contexts, the team may recommend a comprehensive vocabulary selection study. The team lists any features of the AAC Student's Communication System that need to be modified and uses an Action Plan to write up an accommodation for the IEP.

DISCUSSION

Understanding the characteristics of the Classroom Environment and their impact on the AAC Student's communication is critical to communication success. After reviewing Part I of the

Observation Procedures for each Learning Context/Activity, the team has developed this understanding and begun to identify accommodations for improved classroom communication. The team documents the accommodations on the Action Plan and includes the Action Plan in the student's IEP.

AAC STUDENT COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

In reviewing the ChalkTalk Profiles, the team can begin to identify behaviors to be targeted for IEP goals. As such target behaviors are identified, it may be helpful to use an AAC Student Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet (Table 4) for each Learning Context/Activity.

Table 4
ChalkTalk
AAC Student Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet
Culp and Effinger (1996)

Student: _____ Examiner: _____

Learning Context/Class Activity: _____ Date: _____

Using the ChalkTalk Guidelines, list possible Target Communication Behaviors which the AAC Student has the ability to use to improve classroom participation.

Communication Modes:

Communication Functions:

Successfulness:

Message Frequency:

Other:

When there is variability in the AAC Student Communication Behaviors across Learning Contexts/Activities, it may be necessary to fill out an AAC Student Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet for each Learning Context. However, in cases where communication behaviors are more consistent across contexts, it may be appropriate to fill out one form to summarize performance. When the team completes the summary sheet/s, it refers to that sheet to write goals. It is typically helpful to write goals that integrate the student's communication relative to the natural environment. A Sample Goal Format (Table 5) is provided as a reference for teams.

Table 5
ChalkTalk
Sample Goal Format
Culp and Effinger (1996)

In (Learning Context/Activity) the student will demonstrate ability to use (Communication Mode/s) to

(Communication Function/s) on ____/10 opportunities (or ____ times per/ ____ minutes)

Target Date for Completion: ____ with prompt or model

____ spontaneously.

COMMUNICATION MODES

Identify those infrequently used or less effective Communication Modes that the AAC Student can use to improve his or her classroom participation in the Learning Context/Activity. This may also include a new mode that needs to be developed.

A student may have an available Communication Mode that he or she is not using, despite the fact that it may be effective in a particular Learning Context/Activity. For example, eye gazing at a number on the class number line may be faster and more functional in math than using a voice output device **or** using a voice output device may allow the student to use a wider range of vocabulary in language arts than using facial expressions and gestures. The AAC Student may also need a new Mode of communication to participate in a specific activity. The team lists target Communication Modes on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet. These target modes are considered when the team writes goals.

COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS

Identify those infrequently used or less effective Communication Functions that the AAC Student can use to improve classroom participation in the Learning Context/Activity.

A student may need to develop skills with a Communication Function to be an active participant in a particular Learning Context/Activity. It is important to understand what Communication Functions are most important for success in the specific class activity. Again, it is often helpful to look at the Communication Functions of the Typical Students to understand what works in a particular activity. Many classroom activities require students to Answer Questions. Primary grade classes often ask students to Recite and Read/Spell Aloud. Cooperative learning groups often encourage students to Ask Questions and Offer Information. However, each specific Learning Context requires the team's careful consideration. The team then lists target Communication Functions on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet (Appendix D). These target functions are considered when the team writes goals.

SUCCESSFULNESS

Identify any concerns about the AAC Student's level or percentage of Successful Messages.

The level of expected communication success will vary depending on the environment and the AAC Student's abilities. The team carefully reviews the student's current level of success in an activity and determines if that level needs to be improved. Level of success may be stated in terms of Number of Successful Messages/Learning Context, Ratio of Successful Messages /Unsuccessful Messages, or Number of Successful Messages/Specified Time Period (e.g., 15 minutes). The team lists an appropriate target level of success on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet. This level of success is considered when the team writes goals for that Learning Context/Activity.

MESSAGE FREQUENCY

Identify any concerns about the number of messages the AAC Student generated in the Learning Context/Activity.

The number of Messages a student generates during an activity/specific time period can vary depending on characteristics of the classroom environment and student's communication abilities. In general, the goal is for the AAC Student to be as active of a participant as possible given these two factors. The team reviews the student's current Message Frequency in the Learning Context and determines if it needs to be increased. The team lists an appropriate target Message Frequency (e.g., 10 messages/15 minute activity or 5% of the messages generated by students in the class) on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet. This target Message Frequency is considered when the team writes goals for that Learning Context/Activity.

OTHER

Consider other features of AAC Student Communication Behaviors that may need to be developed.

There are a number of additional features of the AAC Student's communication skills that may need to be considered. These may include, but are certainly not limited to rate of communication, use of vocabulary, formulation of original messages, and maintenance of a topic.

Rate of communication is important to classroom success. If the AAC Student's rate is excessively slow during an activity, other students may lose interest and begin to disrupt the class. The teacher may also find it difficult to cover an appropriate amount of material. It may thus be necessary to address factors such as improving the AAC Student's physical access to communication or establishing rate enhancement strategies (e.g., programming in whole phrases for quick access, using word prediction, using abbreviations, etc.). The team reviews the student's rate of communication and determines if it needs to be increased. The team then lists appropriate rate enhancement strategies on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet for consideration when goals are written for the Learning Context.

Vocabulary development is critical to AAC Students, as it is to Typical Students. The team looks at the student's available vocabulary and determines if the student uses it appropriately. The team may also look at the variety and complexity of vocabulary used relative to the AAC

Student's receptive vocabulary skills. If vocabulary comprehension is considerably higher than expression, the team may wish to list a need for development of specific vocabulary on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet.

Message formulation is important for the student to be able to express original thoughts. This includes being able to put together two part messages (e.g., Subject + Verb and Adjective + Noun) and eventually being able to create full sentences. The team reviews the AAC Student's receptive language skills and determines if expressive semantic relation and grammatic development are consistent with receptive performance. The team's speech-language pathologist has expertise that will be helpful during this review and in deciding if the team needs to list specific skills of this type on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet.

Topic maintenance is essential for more sophisticated AAC Students. They will need to not only Offer Information about a topic, but also be able to elaborate or say several things about a topic to successfully participate in many classroom activities. If the team finds that a student has potential to participate at this level in an activity, but does not, it may list sustaining a topic as a specific skill on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet.

DISCUSSION

Understanding the current status of AAC Student Communication Behaviors is critical to developing appropriate communication goals for the IEP. By reviewing the student's ChalkTalk Profiles for each Learning Context/Activity and making notes on the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet, the team develops this understanding. At this point, the team is ready to write goals for the IEP.

Sample Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet and Goals

The sample Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet in Table 6 notes possible team issues based on the previously presented example of Rob (Tables 3). Again, this basic sample is for demonstration purposes and would not be adequate to plan an actual communication program.

Looking at the Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet, the team seems to be primarily concerned with Communication Modes and Communication Functions. Team members appear to be satisfied with Successfulness and Message Frequency. They express a need for Rob to use two-part messages.

Table 6

ChalkTalk
AAC Student Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet
Culp and Effinger (1996)

Student: Rob E.

AAC Case Manager: Effinger

Learning Contexts/Class Activity: Teacher Directed/One on One/Art Activity

Date: Oct. 1996

Using the ChalkTalk Guidelines, list possible target communication behaviors which appear to be within the student's abilities and to have potential to improve classroom participation.

Communication Modes:

Improve oral communication skills.

Increase independent use of communication boards and/or voice output device.

Communication Functions:

Maintain and expand use of Making Requests (MR), Offering Information (OI) and Answering Questions (AQ).

Develop the use of symbols associated with Socializing with Peers (SP), Reciting (R) and Reading/Spelling Aloud (RA).

Successfulness:

Message Frequency:

Other:

Increase the use of two part messages.

In reviewing this Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet and the Sample Goal Format, possible goals to consider (in addition to an appropriate oral communication goal) might include:

1. In Teacher Directed and 1/1 contexts, Rob will demonstrate ability to spontaneously use Communication Boards and Voice Output Devices to Make Requests, Offer Information, Answer Questions, Read/Spell Aloud, and Recite in 5/10 messages with > 70% success.

In addition, 30% of Rob's messages in the above contexts will involve combining two or more symbols with > 70% success.

2. In Cooperative Learning Groups, Rob will demonstrate ability to spontaneously use 8 symbols (on Communication Board or Voice Output Device) to Socialize with peers at least twice per 30 minute period with > 70% success.

CONCLUSIONS

The authors pose the ChalkTalk process in hopes of assisting teams in meeting the challenges of facilitating classroom communication and participation for a wide range of AAC Students in a variety of school settings. The ChalkTalk Tools have been piloted in the Anchorage School District (Anchorage, Alaska) and the Lewisville Independent School District (Lewisville, Texas). Formal and informal feedback from the teachers and clinicians in these districts suggested that these tools were needed, useful, and manageable for school professionals with varied experience with AAC.

There is much to learn about AAC in the classroom. The authors applaud efforts to research Classroom Environment Characteristics, AAC Student Communication Behaviors, and AAC Student Academic Development. In the interim, ChalkTalk has the potential to help a variety of teams collect and organize specific data in order to implement an annual Individual Education Plan. Furthermore, when a school/team adopts ChalkTalk, the ChalkTalk Framework provides a long term plan for an AAC Student's classroom communication development. Most importantly, it is the authors' hope that ChalkTalk will provide AAC Students with participation opportunities.

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ChalkTalk

APPENDICES

Appendix A: ChalkTalk Observation Procedure

Appendix B: ChalkTalk Profile

Appendix C: Action Plan

Appendix D: Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet

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ChalkTalk: Observation Procedure Part I

Culp and Effinger (1996)

Student: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Examiner: _____

Class/Activity: _____

Total Time (min): _____

General Observations of Learning Contexts

Teacher Communication Behaviors

Rate The Communication Observed as **O=often S=sometimes R=rarely**

_____ Provides Pause Time

_____ Asks Questions Requiring Short Responses

_____ Offers Choices

_____ Reinforces Student's Communication Attempts

_____ Asks Open-Ended Questions

_____ Simplifies Vocabulary and Sentence Structure

_____ Other:

General Observations of Typical Student Communication Behaviors:

ChalkTalk Profile

Student: _____ **Date:** _____ **ACT/LN Context:** _____ **AAC Case Manager:** _____

Indicate the successfulness of communication as (S) Successful (PS) Partially Successful (U) Unsuccessful (UC) Uncertain. Circle if assistance was provided.

MODES:

(ST) Socializes with Teacher						
(SP) Socializes with Peers						
(MR) Makes Requests						
(AYN) Answers Y-N Questions						
(AQ) Answers Questions						
(AOEQ) Answers Open-Ended Questions						
(OI) Offers Information						
(Q) Asks Questions						
(RA) Reads/Spells Aloud						
(R) Recites						

ChalkTalk Action Plan

Student: _____ **Date:** _____ **School:** _____ **AAC Case Manager:** _____

Action	Who	When	How

ChalkTalk
AAC Student Target Communication Behavior Summary Sheet
Culp and Effinger (1996)

Student: _____ **AAC Case Manager:** _____

Learning Contexts/Class Activity: _____

Date: _____

Using the ChalkTalk Guidelines, list possible target communication behaviors which appear to be within the student's abilities and to have potential to improve classroom participation.

Communication Modes:

Communication Functions:

Successfulness:

Message Frequency:

Other:

