

My Journey: Finding my voice has set me free

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The first time I met Alice...

I walked into Alice's classroom.

Alice pointed to me, made lip sounds and looked at her School Support Officer (SSO) inquisitively.

SSO said "This is Rachael your new speech pathologist".

Alice pointed to her old speech pathologist then me, and looked curiously at her SSO.

SSO said "Yes, her name is Rachael too".

Alice made lip sounds and nodded.

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My first conversation with Alice...

I asked Alice "What did you do on the weekend?"

Alice used her device to say "horses".

I waited.

I asked for more information.

Alice pointed to her School Support Officer (SSO).

SSO said "Alice walks to see the horses with her nanny on Saturdays".

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What did Alice learn from these interactions?

1. Quicker and easier for someone else to say it.
2. I don't want to try because people may not understand me and it frustrates me.

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Communicative Competence

Requires the integration of:

- Linguistic Competence (language skills)
- Operational Competence (access skills)
- Social Competence
- Strategic Competence (compensatory skills)

(Light, 1989)

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Linguistic Competence (language skills)

Goal to develop expressive language:

- Expected more than single words:
 - "horses"
 - "horses nanny Saturday"
 - "I saw horses with nanny Saturday"
- Added core vocabulary (= frequently used words):

I	it	me	mum	George	don't	like	come	to	something	here
you	we	my	dad	Charlie	want	go		the	home	there
he	they	Nanny	Emma	have	help			and	hospital	
she	because	Di	Bob	need	break				reminds	
- Literacy program.

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Operational Competence (access skills)

Goal to increase Alice's speed & efficiency of device use:

- Consistent layout to support motor learning
- Reduced visual complexity of pages.

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Social Competence


Goal to develop discourse skills:

- Take turns in interactions
- Maintain interactions
- Provide appropriate information.

Lots of scripting activities.





Encouraged use of a range of pragmatic functions (eg make comments, ask questions, state opinions).

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Social Competence

- Added pre-stored phrases:

 Hi	 How are you?	 How was your day?	 See ya
Good morning	Good thanks	What have you been up to?	Good bye
Good afternoon	I'm tired	What are we doing?	
	I'm sick	What are you doing on the weekend?	

- Increased use of word prediction.
- Encouraged use of activity specific pages.

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Strategic Competence (compensatory skills)

Goal to compensate for spelling difficulties by using the following strategies:

- Starts with (letter) 
- Sounds like... 
- Its about... 

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Empower Alice, Raise Expectations & Change Behaviours of Partners

Goal to change behaviours of key partners:

- Don't talk for Alice
- Model and teach language
- Wait.

Empowered Alice:

- To use her own voice
- To give it go before asking others
- To be responsible for device.

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Now we can get to know who she really is




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References

Light, J. (1989). Forum – Toward a Definition of Communicative Competence for Individuals Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*. Vol 5 p 137-144.



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