


Shifting Focus: The Importance of Participation in AAC and Autism

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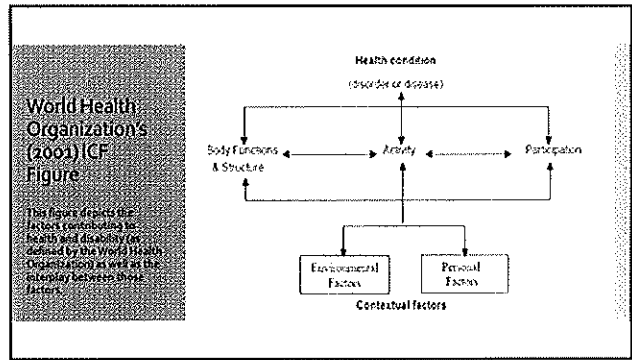


The World Health Organization's (2001) International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF)

- Disability and healthy functioning encompass different ends of a fluid and complex continuum.
- Factors contributing to healthy functioning and disability include:
 - Body structures & functions
 - Activity
 - Participation
 - Environmental factors
 - Personal factors (World Health Organization, 2001)

World Health Organization's (2001) Factors Defined

- Body structures and functions:** physiological functions of body systems or anatomical parts of the body
- Activity:** execution of a task or action by an individual
- Participation:** involvement in a life situation
- Environmental Factors:** the physical, social, and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives
- Personal Factors:** the particular background or features of an individual (World Health Organization, 2001)



Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for Adolescents and Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is one environmental factor that can benefit individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and communication disability (Mirenda & Iacono, 2008).
- Despite the benefits of AAC, adolescents and adults with ASD rarely participate in school, social, or community settings as fully and frequently as their typically-developing counterparts (Roux et al., 2015).

The Current Study

- The goal of the current study was to explore AAC interventions that have been completed for adolescents and adults to date to determine which factor(s) have been the focus of intervention.
- If participation is not a focus of intervention, shifting focus toward it in intervention may help support better outcomes relative to school, social, and community participation for adolescents and adults with ASD.

Method: Article Identification

- Systematic review, with a descriptive look at the ICF factors and communication functions and competences addressed in AAC intervention research for individuals with ASD aged 11 and older
- Followed PRIMSA (2009) guidelines
- Searched four databases:
 - PubMed
 - PsycINFO
 - PsycArticles
 - ERIC

Method: Article Inclusion

- Inclusion criteria:
 - Peer-reviewed
 - Published in or after 1995
 - An original intervention study
 - Involved AAC
 - Affected population were only individuals with ASD at or above the age of 11
 - Addressed communication disability
 - Contained analyzable results
- Inter-rater reliability was 95.6% for all variables coded

Results: Flow of Articles

- 243 publications were identified through electronic database searches; 4 publications were identified through additional sources
- 57 publications were subjected to full-text analysis for eligibility
- 18 intervention studies from 14 publications met inclusion criteria for the final data analysis
- Of included studies:
 - A total of 18 unique participants were included
 - All studies utilized single-subject methodology

Flowchart for Determining Final Set of Articles Included

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Results: Focus of AAC Interventions for Adolescents and Adult with ASD

- Of the interventions utilized within the included studies:
 - 13 directly addressed the activity factor
 - 4 directly addressed participation
 - 3 directly addressed environmental factors

Heat Map of AAC Intervention Foci for Adolescents and Adults with ASD

Red indicates High (i.e., large number of interventions)
Green indicates Low (i.e., little to no interventions)

Implications for School-Based SLPs and Other Service Providers

- The current study suggests that participation may be an under-addressed influencing the functioning of adolescents and adults with ASD.
- Additionally, a recent review of IEPs found that few IEP goals addressed participation in school or other activities (Klang et al., 2016).
- Focusing on participation in intervention and progress-measurement may improve important life outcomes relative to participation for adolescents and adults with ASD who use AAC.

Example IEP Goals Addressing Participation

- The student will independently use her communication device for the function of information transfer 10 times in a 50-minute small group classroom activity.
- With modeling from the clinician as needed, the student will initiate and/or maintain a conversation by using his device to make at least three partner-directed comments during a peer interaction.
- The student will demonstrate her linguistic (i.e., orthographic) and strategic competence by using her keyboard to repair a communication breakdown with minimal prompting from the clinician (e.g., gesturing to the keyboard) in 80% of opportunities in which it is required during a 20-minute observation in her work setting.

References

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