Don't Ask, Do Tell!
Non-Directive Language

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Today's Topic Location
in the 5 STEPS

Targets	
Teaching/Tasks	☆
Tools	
Testing	
Team	

Creating a Rich Language
Learning Environment

1. **Know** – difference between directive and non-directive
2. Find – questions, directives in language environment
3. Replace – questions and directives with non-directives
4. Add – modeling, scaffolding and engineering interactions

Directive Language
Including Questions

Know the difference between directive and non-directive

We aren't great partners…

"Research shows that the partners of people with complex communication needs tend to ask predominantly yes/no questions, interrupt, take the majority of conversational turns, provide few opportunities for communication, and focus on the technology rather than the individual"

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Directives

- Directive is a term used to describes the type of language, typically used by the partner
- Directives 'direct' or tell the student what to do, say
- Response is often right/wrong
- Puts the student into the responder role

Directive Language

- "Show me…"
- "Find the…"
- "Point to …"
- "Tell me …"
- "Say …"

Directive Language

- "Show me…"
- "Find the…"
- "Point to …"
- "Tell me …"
- "Say …"

Questions

- Valid question – question where you don't already know the answer
- Test question – question where you already know the answer
- Questions also 'direct', by expecting a specific response
- Puts the student into the responder role

Test Questions

- "What do you want?" (when the answer is known)
- "What is it time for?" (eg schedule)
- "Where are we going?" (when you already know)
- "Where is (target word/icon on device)?"
- "Can you find _____?"
- "Can you tell me with your talker/book?"

Test Questions

- "What do you want?" (when the answer is known)
- "What is it time for?" (eg schedule)
- "Where are we going?"
- "Where is (target word/icon on device)?"
- "Can you find _____?"
- "Can you tell me with your talker?"

Reasons We Use Directives and Ask Questions

- to engage students in interactions
- to get the student to talk more, or use their AAC system more
- so that both people take turns to contribute to a conversation
- to remind the student of what they should do without actually telling them
- to get information from the student, to find out about an experience or event
- to know what they know, see what they have learned, and what they may not yet understand

Actual Outcomes of Directives and Questions

- limit initiation
- reduce genuine participation
- encourage dependence
- increase frustration
- encourage apathy
- create conversational imbalance
- decrease motivation
- create poor/inaccurate language models
- generate inaccurate data
- occupy the space intended for teaching and learning

Non-Directive Language

Know – difference between directive and non-directive

Non-Directive Language

- Provides language input that does not direct student to say or do something
- Models use of the student's communication system, without the expectation of student performance
- Can include genuine questions (ones you don't know the answer to)

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Non-Directive Language Input and Model Examples

- observations, comments, statements
- "thinks aloud"
- descriptions
  - "right now" events and experiences
  - past events/experiences
  - words that seem to match the student's experience in that moment
- social conversations

Non-Directive Language

- "I wonder_____"
- "I think_____"
- "I am going to _____"
- "I see you are_____"
- "That makes me think of _____"
- "I see you are doing/looking/acting _____"
- That would make me feel _____"

Appropriate Questions

- Valid question – question where you don't already know the answer
- Make sure the student has a way to answer that they are able to use consistently, reliably
- If it is meant to assess knowledge, determine how you will record and use the data before you collect it
- Keep testing/valid questions to a minimum, teaching/models maximized

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Genuine Questions

- Academic test questions
  "What is the setting of the story?"
- Choices – when you truly do not already know
  "Who do you want to sit with?"
- Social interaction and information-seeking questions
  "What are you going to be for Halloween?"
- Open, thought provoking questions
  "Ooooh! What do you think will happen next?"
- Feeling or state of being questions
  "How do you feel?"

Monitoring the Language Environment

Find the questions, directives in language environment

Language Environment

- Changing behavior first requires awareness
- We are not accurate judges of our own language – perception is not reality
- Important to have an accurate picture of student's experience

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Observation Chart

Adult			Student	
Question	Directive	Statement	Response	Initiation

Observation Chart Categories

Adult	Description
"Question"	asking for information, expecting an answer
"Directive"	telling student what to do/not to do
"Statement"	comment, give information; no student reply expected
Student	**Description**
"Response"	action or message in reply to adult question or directive
"Initiation"	spontaneous communication

Example I

Adult: *"What is next?"*

Student: *responds by pointing to "lunch" on their schedule*

Adult			Student	
Question	Directive	Statement	Response	Initiation
/			/	

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Example 2

Adult:	"What is next?".	question
Student:	no reply	
Adult:	"Do you know what's next?".	question
Student:	looking around room	
Adult:	"Check your schedule and see what's next."	directive
Student:	looks towards schedule	
Adult:	"Is it time for lunch?"	question
Student:	points to lunch picture	response

Example 2

Adult:	"What is next?".	question
Student:	no reply	
Adult:	"Do you know what's next?".	question
Student:	looking around room	
Adult:	"Check your schedule and see what's next."	directive
Student:	looks towards schedule	
Adult:	"Is it time for lunch?"	question
Student:	points to lunch picture	response

Adult			Student	
Question	Directive	Statement	Response	Initiation

Common Distribution

Adult			Student	
Question	Directive	Statement	Response	Initiation

Common Distribution

- 50 utterances across adult and student
- 40 Adult utterances (80%)
- 37 / 40 were directives or questions
- 10 Student utterances (20%)
- Most of the adult questions/directives went with no response

Adult			Student	
Question	Directive	Statement	Response	Initiation

Simple Chart

| Adult Questions | Student Communication |
| | |

Changing the Language Environment

Replace questions and directives with non-directives

Add – modeling, scaffolding and engineering interactions

Change is purposeful···

"Being an effective communication partner or AAC facilitator is not intuitive. It often requires one to change long-established, unconscious ways of communicating"

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Monitoring Our Language

- Observation with immediate feedback
- Video
- Peer support
- Cheat sheet of options

Modeling is key intervention ···

"Despite their diversity, the research reports summarized in this article all have a common thread···all studies investigate the use of aided AAC modeling as a key component of AAC instruction"

Drager, 2010

Modeling

- Partner use of communication modes/ materials to represent:
  - own words
  - communicator's words
  - instructor's words
  - others' words
  - words related to the current situation···

Don't just tell, show···

"We just can't tell beginning communicators how to interact using AAC ··· We need to show them how to use the modes of communication ··· and demonstrate that using AAC works and can work for them"

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Scaffolded Response Strategies

- imitate
  - Partner repeats message that was expressed by the communicator
- repeat
  - Partner repeats message that was expressed in another form (eg person standing at the door, partner says "go" and "out" with Core)
- expand
  - Partner adds to message (eg person says "want", partner expands to "want this")

Engineered Interactions

Help encourage the individual to communicate by using activities that
- Are purposefully created/identified
- Are highly motivating
- Include models as needed
- Incorporate wait time/opportunity to communicate
- Ensure that communication supports are available and effective

Engineering Interactions Strategies

- <u>pause</u> – wait instead of immediately moving to the next step
- <u>missing item</u> – item needed for activity is missing
- <u>interruption</u> – remove an item that is part of a routine
- <u>partial presentation</u> – give only some of the parts of the activity
- <u>wrong item</u> – give an item that doesn't match what they requested
- <u>inaccessible item</u> – place item in visible but inaccessible location

Monitor and Change

Monitor yourself, student, interaction and environment and
Change program to promote progress

- Go back to data collection process
- Compare to pre-intervention data
- Adjust training, support, intervention choices for specific team members as needed

Possible Next Steps

- Record directive/non-directives for one 10" period
- Count how many opportunities student has to initiate (NO questions, prompts, or directives provided) in a 10" period
- Wear 3 hair bands on one wrist – each time you stop yourself from using a directive/question and make it a non-directive, move a band to the other wrist
- Videotape yourself for 5" and watch to see your language
- Try being non-directive for a week, or a month, and see what changes you observe

Thank You!

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