

Planning to Maximize AAC Success

for Complex Students

Introduction

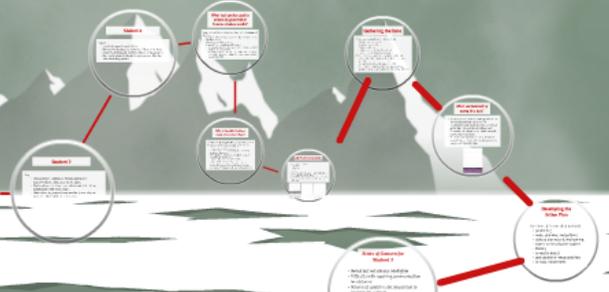
- Luanne Holland-SLP, Tanja Recktenwald-SLP, Nancy Hoopinger-PT, Susan Buck-OT: members of the Durham Public Schools Assistive Technology Team
- Part of an interdisciplinary team for a special program to look at in depth assessment of students with complex needs

Description of Students

- Developed a criteria to select students for assessment which included:
 - significant motor impairment
 - significant communication impairment
- Range of students in the selected group varied
 - from nonverbal and little physical movement
 - to somewhat verbal but with very poor intelligibility and some independent movement (able to self-propel wheel chair)

Student 1

Nonverbal and little physical movement



Looking Ahead

- begin interventions with the student
- training of school team members
- review action plan on an ongoing basis
- at 6 months document progress using the AAC Profile to update level of functioning
- establish new goals

Difficulty assessing computer

- Use of touch screen
- Review of alternative methods including eye-gaze, head track, etc.

Difficulty probing when assessment done

- Realized student using software
- Practice
- Offer feedback during sessions

Scattered academic ability

lots of repetition with revision feedback

Difficulty with writing

- Use of a dot block at the end of the writing line
- Use of a dot block at the end of the writing line
- Use of a dot block at the end of the writing line

Want to learn to write early and throughout

- Use of a dot block at the end of the writing line
- Use of a dot block at the end of the writing line
- Use of a dot block at the end of the writing line



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Student 1

- Non-verbal with severe motor and cognitive impairments
- Minimal functional communication
- Significant physical impairments
- Minimal self-care skills

Student 2

- Minimal functional communication
- Significant physical impairments
- Minimal self-care skills

Student 3

- Minimal functional communication
- Significant physical impairments
- Minimal self-care skills

Student 4

- Minimal functional communication
- Significant physical impairments
- Minimal self-care skills

Student 5

- Minimal functional communication
- Significant physical impairments
- Minimal self-care skills

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- begin interventions with the student
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Difficulty accessing computer

- Use of touchscreens
- Investigate alternative input devices including Big Keys, Track ball, etc.

Difficulty producing written communication

- Review of software writing software
- ProBuilder
- Editor Software
- Editing Software

Scattered academic ability

- Work on direct instruction with a specialist teacher

Verbal but not always intelligible

- List of the 100 highest frequency words
- Review of software writing software
- ProBuilder
- Editor Software
- Editing Software

Activities with high cognitive demands

- Work on learning computer functions to allow for in screen synthesis regarding the appropriate keyboard and mouse alternatives for the student's message

Review of specific assessment data to plan further support

- Review of AAC Profile



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Looking Ahead

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Student 1

- Jack:
 - nonverbal with some random vocalizations
 - very limited use of hands for manipulating materials
 - requires supported seating
 - limited vision
 - difficulty staying alert

Roy:

- Nonv
- appr
- Can l
- isol
- Min
- man

Student 2

Roy:

- Nonverbal but vocalizes with occasional word approximations. Uses gestures and signs.
- Can hold and sometimes manipulate materials. Has an isolated point with index finger.
- Minimal seating support; uses seat belt for safety; can maneuver wheelchair in the classroom

Student 3

Nyema:

- Verbal but frequently unintelligible
- Ability to manipulate some materials. Difficulty with more precise movements such as hand writing and mouse control
- Able to drive a power wheelchair using a joystick. Requires moderate seating support.

What tool can be used to assess Augmentative Communication needs?

Augmentative & Alternative Communication Profile-A Continuum of Learning

- Author: Tracy M. Kovach: Associate clinical professor University of Colorado-Denver
- Use with age 2-0 through 21-11
- Intended for children who use AAC systems
 - It can be used with those who do not have a specific system but use a variety of devices
 - Can be used with those who don't use devices to determine current level of communication (i.e. nonverbal or verbal but poor intelligibility).

Why is the AAC Profile a Good Assessment Tool?

"The AAC Profile gives multidisciplinary service providers and family members a more systematic and comprehensive approach to:

- Apply evidence-based practice and research
- Determine functional, long-range outcomes
- Determine steps needed and ongoing progress monitoring toward achieving outcomes
- Make objective comparisons of individual performance over time toward desired outcomes
- Support consistency among service providers
- Provide optimal learning environments
- See the 'big picture' and processes needed to develop communicative competence using AAC" (Augmentative & Alternative Communication Profile; Kovach, Tracy; 2009; p. 5)

Gathering the Data

The process we used to gather data included:

- Using other assessments
- Classroom observations
- Analysis of video
- Interview of communication partners
- Elicited tasks during pull-out sessions

An alternative method of gathering data could include:

- Observation with video recording during classroom activity
- Complete as much of the form as possible
- Then interview service providers/communication partners and/or work directly with student to elicit tasks

What we learned by using this tool?

- To Consider the 4 areas of learning that make an individual a good AAC communicator
- To establish a baseline of students' current level of functioning in order to plan future goals
- To consider the strengths and limitations of the communication partners
- To consider if the person has an individualized system in place or just a method of response to specific activities/situations

Augmentative & Alternative Communication Profile
A Continuum of Learning
Tracy K. Heath, Ph.D.

Name: Myra
Age: 2:07 Sex: Female
Date: 1/27

PERFORMANCE PROFILE SUMMARY

Communicative Competence Levels for Areas of Learning

Area	Receptive	Expressive	Functional	Metalinguistic	Pragmatic	Strategic	Other
Language	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Goal Checklist for SLP Areas

Area	Goal	Met	Not Met
Language	1. Understands the meaning of words and phrases	X	
	2. Understands the meaning of sentences	X	
	3. Understands the meaning of paragraphs	X	
	4. Understands the meaning of stories	X	
Expressive	1. Produces single words	X	
	2. Produces phrases	X	
	3. Produces sentences	X	
	4. Produces paragraphs	X	
Functional	1. Uses communication to meet needs	X	
	2. Uses communication to share information	X	
	3. Uses communication to express feelings	X	
	4. Uses communication to influence others	X	
Metalinguistic	1. Understands the sound structure of words	X	
	2. Understands the sound structure of sentences	X	
	3. Understands the sound structure of paragraphs	X	
	4. Understands the sound structure of stories	X	
Pragmatic	1. Understands the context of communication	X	
	2. Understands the context of language	X	
	3. Understands the context of paragraphs	X	
	4. Understands the context of stories	X	
Strategic	1. Uses communication to meet needs	X	
	2. Uses communication to share information	X	
	3. Uses communication to express feelings	X	
	4. Uses communication to influence others	X	

LinguSystems

Developing the Action Plan

List Areas of Concern (think about)

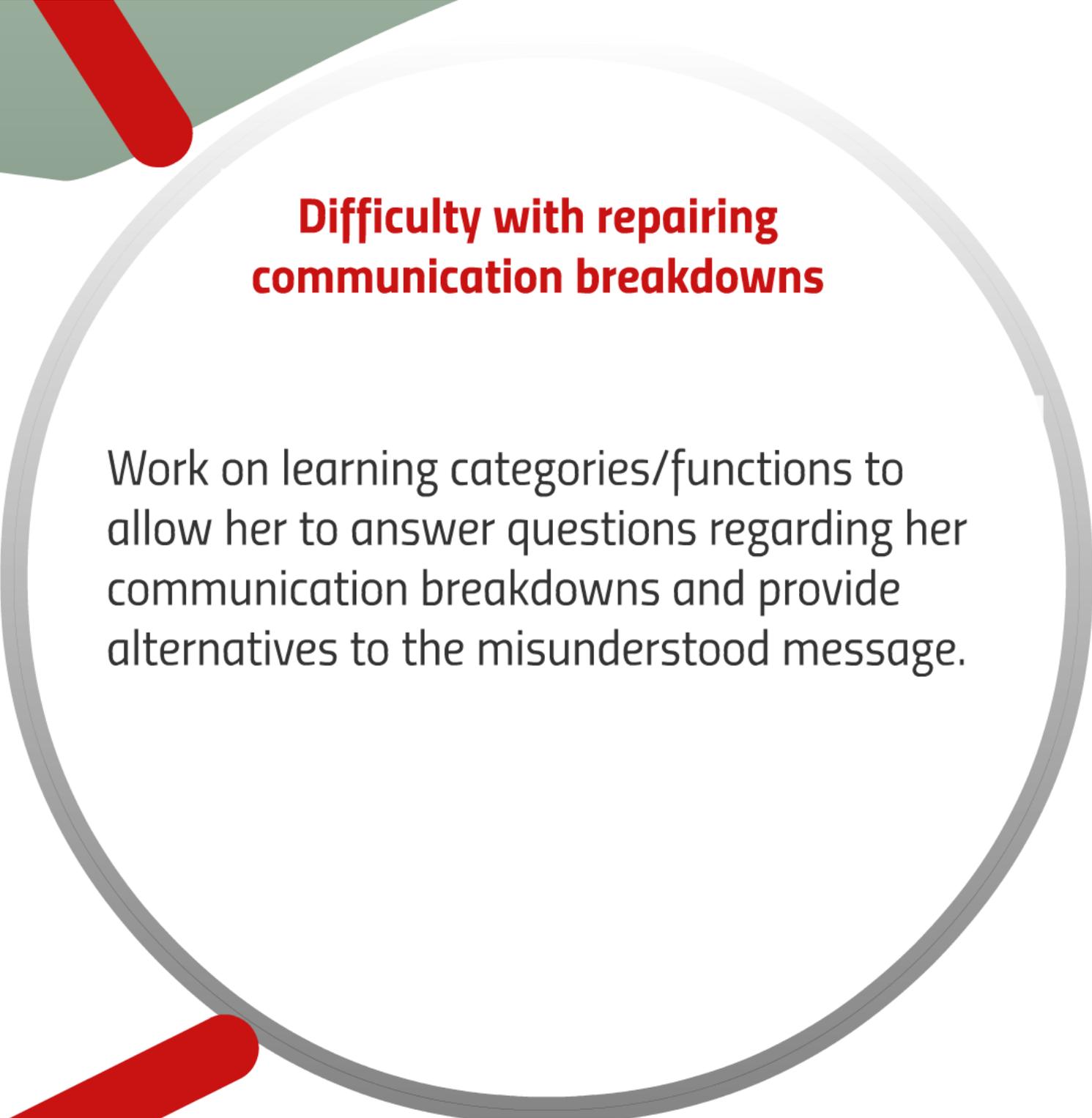
- positioning
- motor planning and patterns
- state of alertness during learning
- type of communication system
- literacy
- computer access
- participation in group activities
- sensory impairments

Areas of Concern for Student 3

- Verbal but not always intelligible
- Difficulty with repairing communication breakdowns
- Volume of speech is decreased due to poor breath support
- Scattered academic ability
- Difficulty producing written communication
- Difficulty accessing computer

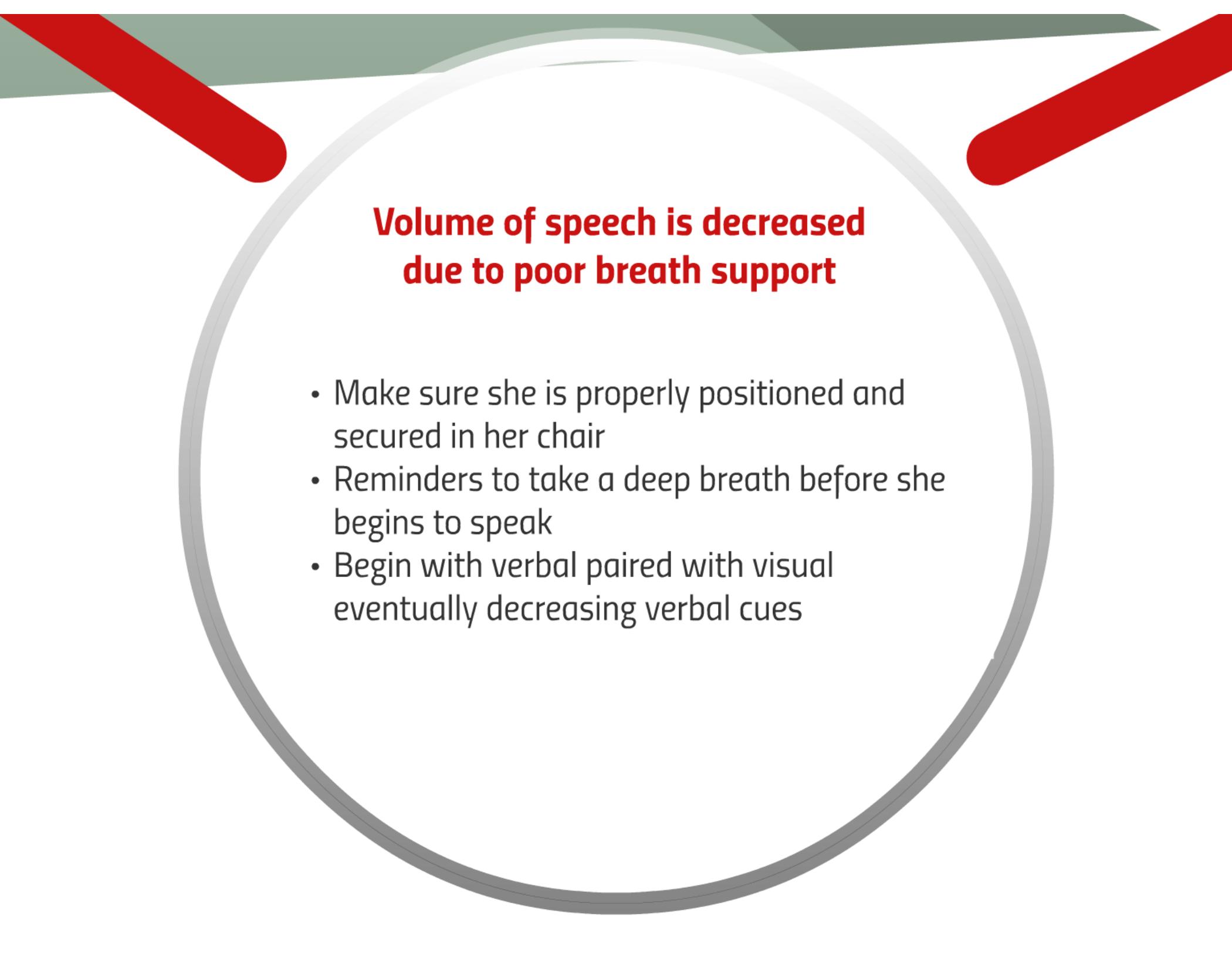
Verbal but not always intelligible

- Use of the Tech Speak 32 (12 levels) to assist in clarification of her speech
- Continue to work on articulation
- Provide visual supports if vocabulary is not on her device to assist her in expressing what she knows academically



Difficulty with repairing communication breakdowns

Work on learning categories/functions to allow her to answer questions regarding her communication breakdowns and provide alternatives to the misunderstood message.



Volume of speech is decreased due to poor breath support

- Make sure she is properly positioned and secured in her chair
- Reminders to take a deep breath before she begins to speak
- Begin with verbal paired with visual eventually decreasing verbal cues

Scattered academic ability

Lots of repetition with immediate feedback

Difficulty producing written communication

Trial use of adapted writing software

- PixWriter
- Write OutLoud
- Writing Templates

Difficulty accessing computer

- Use of touchscreen
- Investigate alternative input methods including Big Keys, Track ball, etc.

Looking Ahead

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Contact Information

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Kovach, T.M. (2009). Augmentative & Alternative
Communication Profile A Continuum of Learning. East Moline,
IL: LinguiSystems, Inc.