AUDIT of COMMUNICATIVE OPPORTUNITIES 2007

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Overview

- Reasons for audit
- Audit process
- Results
- Conclusions

- AAC audit in a local school - outreach work

- Useful to audit at IMS

- Different focus

- Provision of communicative opportunities = central focus

- This audit is a work in progress
- However, even before it has been completed, useful information has been obtained;
- it is clear that it has been a very good use of time;
- and something worth repeating at regular intervals

Focus of Outreach Audit

- To review use and availability of AAC and assistive technologies within each class.
- To highlight and share successes.
- To highlight issues that need addressing e.g. equipment, whole school training, time constraints etc.
- To review staff competencies and individual training needs.
- To provide a mechanism for investigating communicative styles within environments.

IMS Audit

- Audit = powerful persuasion tool, but different focus from outreach
- Access to resources not a major issue
- Strategic staffing structure already in place for AAC (Assistive Communication Group)
- AAC teaching structures in place – a good resource base, curricula + focused timetabled slots

Reasons for Audit /cont

- BUT variable integration of AAC across the school day

- Daily chunks of timetable = Task Series (Conductive Education) – directive communication.

- No communication specialist on Senior Leadership Group. Evidence-based persuasion tools expedient

Reasons /*cont*

- Particularly wanted to focus on ways of facilitating interactions,

- and to compare directive v non-directive input for speaking and non-speaking children

Process

- Organic process at first
- Audit started in preschool group
- Data collection forms constantly being adapted, so this became a start-up phase. Data has not contributed to final results.
- New S&LT has started in Preschool. Renewing audit data is proving to be a useful tool for her to get an overview of AAC practice there

Process /cont

- **STAGE 1**: Talk to all classroom staff to outline purpose & process
- **STAGE 2**: Document general information about children in collaboration with teachers + assign communication categories (see later)
- **STAGE 3**: Observations & data collection in a variety of sessions (over a period of 2 weeks per class). These to include a balance of National Curriculum and Task Series sessions

Process   */cont*

- **STAGE 4**: Collation of data

- **STAGE 5**: Feedback to classroom staff

- **STAGE 6**: Feedback to Senior Leadership Group

- **STAGE 7**: Use audit data as part of AAC inset training day

- **Ongoing**: using forms to track progress of audit

Documentation

1. Communication Categories

- **Sp**: Speech
- **Phon**: Difficult to understand
- **Dis**: Language disorder
- **Del**: Language delay

- **Soc**: Social communication issues
- **Si**: Signing
- **AAC**: Aided AAC
- **Pre**: Pre-Intentional

Documentation /*contd*

2. Facilitations of Interaction *(one credit per interactive event e.g. reading a book aloud would be one event, but comments, questions etc would be additional)*

- **DS:** directive / statement that child responds to etc
- **Y/N:** Yes/No question

- **MC:** Multiple choice
- **OP:** Open question
- **NI:** Novel initiation

3. Children's Interaction Modes:

- **Non-Verbal:** (including facial expression, undifferentiated vocalisation, body language etc.)

- **Differentiated** (recognisable) **vocalisation/speech**

- **Gesture/Signing**

- **Objects/Photos**

- **Paper-based symbols**

- **Speech output device**

Facilitation of Interactions: Observation sheet

Group: Session: Date:

Child's interaction → Teacher's interaction →	Non-Verbal Expression, Undiff. Vocalisation, Body Must be interactive		Different Speech Must be inte		Gesture/ Sign Must be interact		Objects/ Photos Must be interactive			Paper-Based Sym Must be interactive			Speech Output Device/ Software Must be interactive				
	DIR	Y/N	DIR	Y/N	DIR	Y/N	DIR	Y/N	MC	DIR	Y/N	MC	DIR	Y/N	MC	OP	NI
Child: Com Code:	Cappy		Cappy		Cappy		Cappy			Cappy			Cappy				

	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted

Child:

Com Code:

AAC Needed (Circle + specify)	Used ? Y/N
Own Paper Based	
Own voca (inc simple)	
Topic-Specific	

AAC details:
Cappy

Cappy

	Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted	(Secondary) Prompted

1. Lower Juniors (KS1)

- 13 sessions (of approximately 1 hour) were observed
- 7 National Curriculum lessons
- 4 Task Series (Conductive Education programme, with key focus on physical tasks)
- 2 focused communication sessions

Facilitations

per child/per session	AAC	Speakers
Average no of interactions	**22.7**	**34.5**
Av. no of directives etc (with communicative response)	5.6	4.2
Av. no of Yes/No Questions	7.5	5.8
Av. no of Multiple Choice Questions	5.5	3.6
Av. no of Open Questions	3.1	9.5
Av. no of Novel Initiations	2.7	14.2

Primary Communication Modes

per child/per session	AAC	Speakers
NonVerbal	21.3	0.4
Recognisable vocalisation/ speech	5.7	34.5
Gesture/ Signing	3.0	0.3
Objects/Photos	0.1	-
Paper-based symbols	8.3	1.4(worksheets)
Voca/Communication software	2.0	-

Comparison of communicative opportunities for AAC users in different settings

Averages per session	Task Series	Curriculum	Communication
Directives	13.2	20.0	12.3
Yes/No	17.2	32.4	15.3
Multiple Choice	5.4	12.6	18.0
Open Questions	1.2	15.8	13.5
Novel Initiations	5.2	11.6	12.5

Comparison of communicative opportunities for AAC users in different settings

Averages per session	Task Series	Curriculum	Communication
Non-Verbal	19.0	29.4	17.7
Speech	14.2	23.0	11.0
Signing	6.2	14.2	14.6
Symbols	7.0	23.6	21.7
Voca	-	6.0	13.0

2. Upper Juniors (KS2)

- 13 sessions (of approximately 1 hour) were observed
- 5 National Curriculum lessons
- 5 Task Series (Conductive Education programme, with key focus on physical tasks)
- 3 focused communication sessions

Facilitations

per child/per session	AAC	Speakers
Average no of interactions	15.0	29.1
Av. no of directives etc (with communicative response)	4.3	3.3
Av. no of Yes/No Questions	6.3	4.6
Av. no of Multiple Choice Questions	2.4	2.1
Av. no of Open Questions	0.8	9.2
Av. no of Novel Initiations	1.2	9.9

Primary Communication Modes

per child/per session	AAC	Speakers
NonVerbal	8.5	-
Recognisable vocalisation/ speech	2.3	28.2
Gesture/ Signing	0.7	-
Objects/Photos	0.6	-
Paper-based symbols	2.9	0.9 (worksheets)
Voca/Communication software	0.9	0.2 (writing software)

Comparison of communicative opportunities for AAC users in different settings			
Averages per session	Task Series	Curriculum	Communication
Directives	17.8	12.7	9.5
Yes/No	15.5	23.4	19.0
Multiple Choice	4.5	11.0	15.0
Open Questions	1.3	3.1	7.5
Novel Initiations	3.0	5.7	8.5

Comparison of communicative opportunities for AAC users in different settings

Averages per session	Task Series	Curriculum	Communication
Non-Verbal	27.8	32.0	27.0
Speech	6.8	8.4	7.5
Signing	5.3	7.5	7.0
Symbols	3.8	10.9	10.0
Voca	-	1.9	13.0

General Comments:

- Number of AAC interactions variable
- Disparity at KS1 in AAC resource availability & interactions reflected this.
- Task Series sessions are primarily directive, but some staff included symbol choice making very effectively.
- Others did not make symbols available at all
- Task Series accounts for first 1 ½ hour every day, and needs to embrace some non-directive practice.
- This audit will provide evidence to take to senior

- Two exceptional KS 2 sessions, with 2 AAC users having equal interactive opportunities to speaking peers.
- Conversely, two very disappointing KS1 curriculum sessions. All but 2 children in group non-speakers. No AAC resources available. All non-directive communication aimed at speakers.

- Observed voca use in curriculum sessions was restricted to most able users
- Remaining AAC users used devices mainly in targeted sessions.
- On the whole, low tech AAC used extensively & effectively in curriculum sessions
- Restricted use of vocas to be highlighted, discussed & addressed.
- It has been highlighted before, but this is the first evidence base
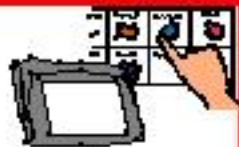
Reflections on using this tool:

- This is potentially a very useful tool for providing an evidence base
- However, it has presented a number of challenges
- e.g. difficulty with being definitive about interactions:
- Does imitation count as interaction?
- Does putting a hand up count as a gesture – I wasn't including this initially, then felt I should

Reflections on using this tool /cont

- My phobia of numbers has been a problem!
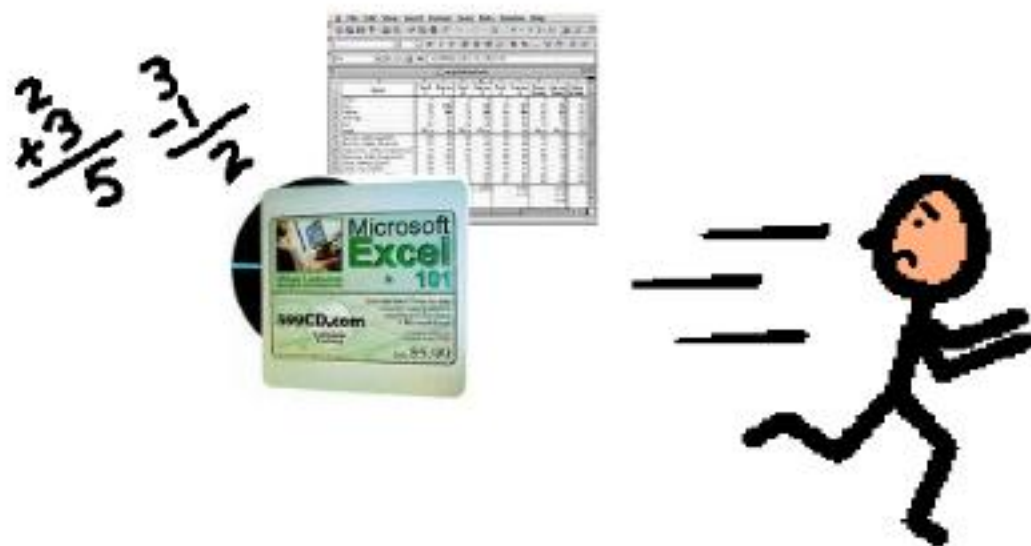
Reflections on using this tool /cont

- I set a wholly unrealistic time frame initially

- I recorded data on all children in sessions,

- This proved very difficult

- It would have been better to focus on less children at a time and/or to use video

Reflections on using this tool /cont

- Some further information would have been useful, but did not show up in the way I administered this

- For example, differentiating further information about direct access v switch users

- Also credit not given if AAC user spends time creating sentences, which reduces number of credited interactions

Reflections on using this tool /cont

- However, even with design faults, this has provided very useful information

- and I am looking forward to presenting the findings to team staff and senior managers when preschool data is added.

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