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# AAC in Special Schools

Carolyn MacNab, Teacher

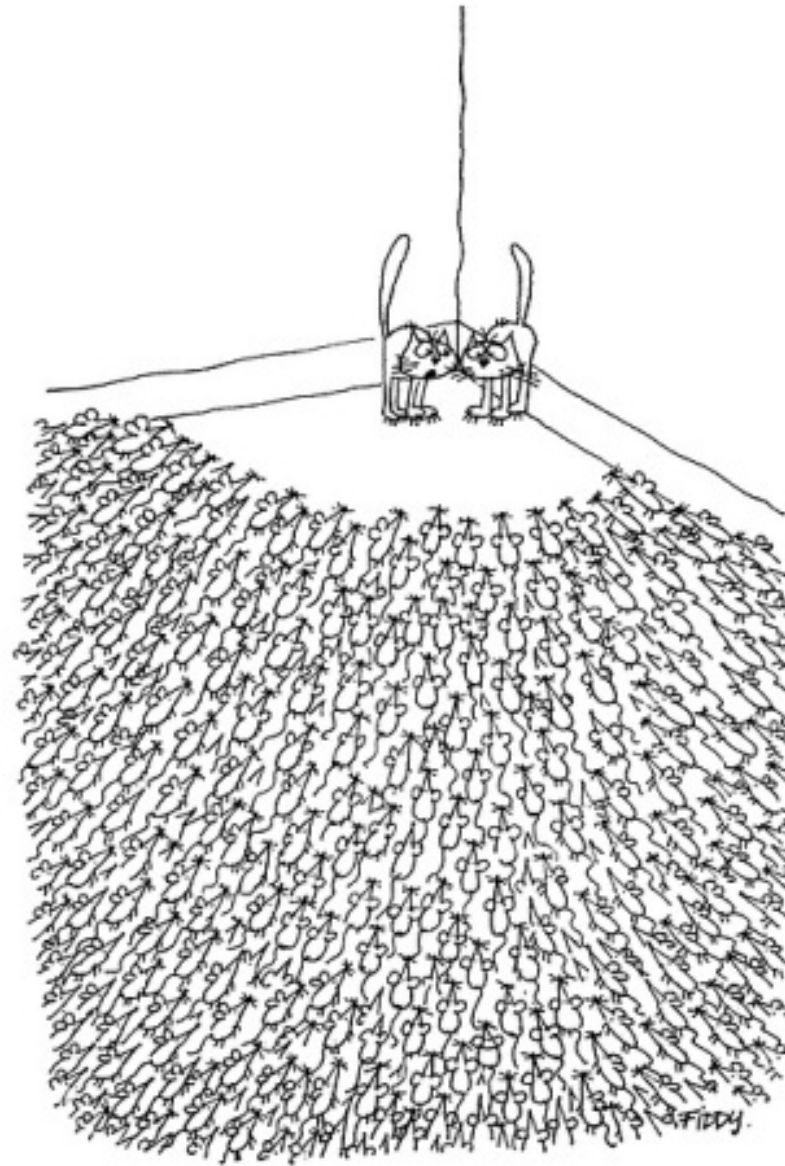
Helen Sutherland, Speech and Language Therapist



Buckinghamshire Healthcare  
NHS Trust

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every time



*"Well don't just stand there - negotiate!"*



# Key Points

- Where do you begin?
- Getting going with class teams
- Working with School Senior Leaders
- Moving into classrooms
- Who does what?
- Involving parents
- Challenges and options

# Where do you begin...?

*“Oh good – the speech therapist is here. We’ve got these 12 iPads – what should we do with them...?”*



# ... in the same place as the school



- What do they already have?
- What are they using?
- How are they using it?
  - What have they already tried?
  - How did that go?
  - You might be saying the same words, but do you mean the same thing...?





# Getting going in the classroom: Training baselines

	PECS				Communicate in Print 2				Go Talk Now				Intensive Interaction				Etc...
	Tg	Date	Exp.	Conf.	Tg	Date	Exp.	Conf.	Tg	Date	Exp.	Conf.	Tg	Date	Exp.	Conf.	
<b>Mrs Jones</b>																	
<b>Mr Peters</b>																	
<b>Mrs Allen</b>																	
<b>Di (Physiotherapist)</b>																	
<b>Harriet (Music Therapist)</b>																	



# Assessing staff knowledge and skills: IPAACKS

- Informing and Profiling Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Knowledge and Skills
- <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/2507407/nesd0214aacframework-re.pdf>
- AAC Competency Framework
- Non-hierarchical: seeking to build a skill-mix
- For anyone who supports AAC users

# Building confidence

- The mantra of AAC:

***Model, model, MODEL!!***



- Make use of other SLT activities e.g. Lis'n Tell; social communication / chat groups; Talkabout groups etc.
- NB always be mindful of good principle in therapy practice: **teach one thing** (and know what it is!)
- Repetition, repetition, repetition



# Moving into classrooms: What do classes need and value?

- Class Teachers need:
  - To understand the concept (what is your aim?)
  - Know how the equipment (even low tech) works
- LSAs need:
  - The skill modelled by a therapist
  - Time to practice with support
  - Confidence to deliver!



# Collaborating with School Senior Leaders



- In order to be effective, all SLT initiatives will need support and enabling from senior level.
- A collaborative, co-written AAC Policy can be a useful starting point – shared vision; agreement / clarification of roles and responsibilities...
- Likewise, key points of School Development Plan can be written in collaboration

# What do School Senior Leaders need from us?

- Information about:

- Cost

- Training expectations (internal vs. external)

- Cost: consider internal vs. external

- Time – what is needed and logistics

- What will the impact be and how will it be measured?

- How will you show progress with the data being collected?

- How does it fit within the curriculum and school targets?





# Who does what...?

- Making resources!!
- Programming equipment (e.g. updating vocabulary; syncing updates)
  - Both of these things are time-intensive, and with non-contact time
- Looking after equipment
  - Day-to-day e.g. charging devices
  - One-offs e.g. when something goes wrong



# Who does what – minimising stress!

- What is needed in classrooms to support classroom staff taking on aspects of AAC e.g. updating vocabulary; making resources; day-to-day looking after equipment (ensuring it's charged etc.)?
  - Knowledge
  - Taking responsibility of any device (LSA's)
  - SLT to be present



# Involving Parents

- Logistical challenges: when can you meet communicate?  
How?
  - Expect variety between schools / areas of school
  - Letters; phonecalls; meetings; parents' evenings; coffee mornings; workshops....
- Who to include?
  - Open invitation vs. targeted audience
  - Taster workshops: rotating or linear models, with parents feedback
- Using a (Multi-Disciplinary) Clinic model
  - Logistically can work better for a team of (part-time!) staff
  - Have a plan for carryover – reports

# Challenges and Options...



Time

Money



“Shared” language:

***Dr X: ‘Please will [the Speech and Language Therapist] see this child for “a block of pecks” following his diagnosis of Autism’***

# Collaborative work (Sutherland and Georgaki)

- Work exploring SLT-Music Therapy collaboration
- Themes of successful collaboration:
  1. Shared goals: the student as the “centre of gravity”
  2. Actively create shared understanding, especially of language and terms – joint observations; writing
  3. Professional curiosity and openness (including to the idea that you might be wrong!)
  4. Participation and co-facilitation across professional boundaries
  5. Awareness of roles and limitations: “assertive and flexible” with roles





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A message for all of us:

GUIDE  
EUAN'S

***“If I could finish with one request it’s please  
keep fighting for your patients and please don’t  
take no for an answer.”***

Euan MacDonald, Co-Founder, Euan’s Guide

Keynote Address, RCSLT Conference 2017, Glasgow

# Any questions?



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