

Communication Levels & Augmentative-Alternative Communication

4 CE HOURS / .4 CEUs

PDH Academy Course #OT-1502

Course Abstract

This course discusses communication levels and corresponding Augmentative-Alternative Communication (AAC) interventions and implementation strategies, with particular attention paid to the role of Aided Language Stimulation (ALgS).

Target audience: Occupational Therapists, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Speech-Language Pathologists, Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (no prerequisites).

NOTE: Links provided within the course material are for informational purposes only. No endorsement of processes or products is intended or implied.



This course is offered for 0.4 CEUs (Intermediate level; Category 1 - Domain of OT: Instrumental Activities of Daily Living; Category 1 - Domain of OT: Activity Demands; Category 1 - Domain of OT: Performance Skills).

The assignment of AOTA CEUs does not imply endorsement of specific course content, products, or clinical procedures by AOTA.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Differentiate between the four competency goals shared by all Augmentative-Alternative Communication (AAC) users, with attention to factors that influence communication competence
- Recognize two methods of categorizing communication levels/communicators and AAC possibilities for each
- Recall two interactions used to foster language growth
- Recognize the importance of partner training and its role in AAC implementation strategies
- Identify Aided Language Stimulation (ALgS), with attention to creating/providing opportunities to use it
- Recognize prompting and how it should be used
- Recall why and how participation-based activities support contextual teaching
- Differentiate between functional and therapeutic communication interactions
- Recall several ways intervention sessions can provide opportunities to practice social communication

- Identify ways that the course material impacts the practice of Occupational Therapy

Timed Topic Outline

- I. Communication Competence (15 minutes)
- II. Developmental Levels of Communication (40 minutes)
- III. Emerging, Beginning and Intermediate Symbolic Communicators (20 minutes)
- IV. How and Where to Begin? (20 minutes)
- V. Partner Training (Including Handout) (20 minutes)
- VI. Augmentative-Alternative Communication (AAC) Implementation Strategies (5 minutes)
- VII. Aided Language Stimulation (ALgS): AAC Immersion (20 minutes)
- VIII. Creating and Providing Opportunities to Use ALgS (15 minutes)
- IX. Prompting Strategies (5 minutes)
- X. Contextual Teaching and Active Participation (5 minutes)
- XI. Functional vs Therapeutic Communication Intervention (5 minutes)
- XII. Pull out or Push-in? (5 minutes)
- XIII. Intervention Sessions (20 minutes)
- XIV. Furthering Communication Skills (5 minutes)
- XV. A Word about Setting and Writing Goals (5 minutes)
- XVI. References, Additional Resources, and Exam (35 minutes)

Delivery & Instructional Method

Distance Learning – Independent. Correspondence/internet text-based self-study, including a provider-graded multiple choice final exam.

To earn continuing education credit for this course, you must achieve a passing score of 80% on the final exam.

Registration & Cancellation

Visit www.pdhtherapy.com to register for online courses and/or request correspondence courses.

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Course Author Bio & Disclosure

Susan Berkowitz received a B.A. in Psychology from Clark University, an M.S. in Speech-Pathology and Audiology from Tulane, and an M.Ed. in Education Administration from California State University at Fullerton. She also has extensive graduate background in Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis, and has worked with children with autism for more than 40 years. Susan has worked in a variety of settings as a SLP, a Director of Education, and a Chairperson of the Speech Pathology Department. Her career has taken her to public and private schools, developmental centers, group homes, and adult day programs. She currently runs her own private practice in San Diego, providing Independent Educational Evaluations in speech-language, AAC, and Assistive Technology, as well as consultation and staff training. She presents at a variety of national conferences and provides workshops in AAC, autism, and literacy.

DISCLOSURES: Financial – Susan Berkowitz received a stipend as the author of this course. Nonfinancial – No relevant nonfinancial relationship exists.