"I just had to go for it": How people with autism achieve independent communication



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Listening to the Experts: Amy Sequenzia

- Finding a voice through typing is no simple task. It does not mean just typing words. It takes courage to face skeptical eyes; it takes time to become independent-a long time in some cases. It does not mean that our voices can’t be powerful and a change in the world. Only we can relate how we think. We can be empowered through our thoughts, our fingers, our voices. We don’t need to yell to tell people how we think. Our voices come through typing but they are OUR VOICES and they tell the world who we are.

Show Your Tweets!!

- Take a moment and update your status, let your friends know what you have been up to!
- Write a **Tweet**, update your **Facebook** status, or send a **text** to a friend letting them know what you are up to.
  - Think about:
    - What you have learned
    - What you wish you were doing
    - What has moved you
    - Any AHHH HAAA moments

LET THE SOCIAL NETWORKING BEGIN!!!

Facilitated Communication is…

- A strategy which supports the physical, communicative, and emotional needs of a person with a communication disability to move more purposefully in order to express themselves through an alternate mode of communication

- A method of training a person to ACCESS an AAC device or low tech display in order to communicate

- A method of teaching someone to point and control their movements in order to communicate

Facilitated Communication is…

Total communication approach

- Not meant to replace current successful communication methods
- Meant to enhance and expand current communication opportunities
- Many people who type also use some speech, sign, prepared communication boards, dynamic picture displays

What do you know about Movement Differences?



Movement Difference Activity



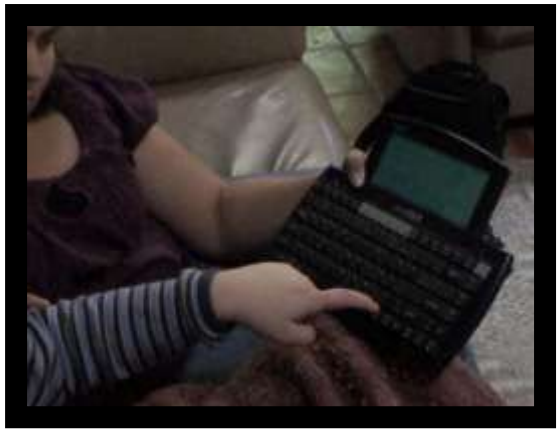
- Make a circle on the floor with your non-dominant foot
- Write your name with your dominant hand while keeping the circle going.
- Now write your name with your non-dominant hand while keeping the circle going.
- Write the dictated sentence while keeping the circle going.



What Are Movement Differences?

- A difference, interference or shift in the efficient, effective use of movement.
- A disruption in the organization and regulation of perception, action, posture, language, speech, thought, emotion and/or memory.

Leary, Hill & Donnellan, 1999





What are Movement Differences?

- “Movement disturbance can clearly have a profound effect on a person’s ability to regulate movement in order to effectively communicate, relate, and participate with others. It becomes necessary to suspend absolute trust in one’s intuitive interpretation of actions and intent.”
- “Behaviors may not be what they seem.”

Leary & Hill, 1996 p 44

New Research on Movement Differences

- "Praxis performance was a strong predictor of the defining features of autism, ... this correlation remained significant after accounting for basic motor skill. Praxis in children with autism is strongly correlated with the social, communicative, and behavioral impairments that define the disorder, **suggesting that dyspraxia may be a core feature of autism or a marker of the neurological abnormalities underlying the disorder."**

Dziuk, M., Gidley, J., Larson, J., Apostu, A., Mahone, E., Denckla, M., & Mostofsky, S. (2007). Dyspraxia in autism: Association with motor, social, and communicative deficits. *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, 49, 734–739.

Understanding Movement Differences

- It is known that sometimes people with autism have trouble moving their bodies. This is known as motor planning inability.
  Sometimes I have trouble making my body do what I want it to do.

Jamie Burke

- Sometimes I like to move in odd ways because it makes me feel more comfortable, yet I have control of some movements. I am also consciously aware of my odd movements at times. Sometimes my movements make me think more clearly.

Steven Hinkle

- I use dear Emily (his facilitator) to communicate with the world. Good communication for me is facilitated through someone giving me grounding by supporting my often spastic appendages.

Mark Utter

Understanding Movement Differences

- My body movements are jerky and unplanned.
- My mouth is moving completely independently from my mind.
- I am trying to get my body where I want it to go, but my body has a mind of its own.

Sue Rubin



Getting Started



Getting Started



Overview of Steps to Independent Typing

- Create a Plan
  - FC user and facilitator agree upon steps towards independence
  - Establishing at least 1 independent method
  - Building Confidence
- Practice
  - Three goals at one time (keep open communication with support, practice independence scheduled times, fade support during times of open communication)
  - Dynamic Support
  - Coaching
- Movement and Rhythm
  - Think, Look, Move
  - Rhythm
- Tools for independence
  - Practice exercises
  - Communication Stick
  - Yes/no and ABCD boards
  - Post its and Dry Erase boards

Jamie Burke's Thoughts on Typing

You must acknowledge this powerful emotion of fear and puzzlement in ourselves.

I fear silence and the life of submission without choices. We must know that your heart believes in us. Seek help If you struggle to move through our layers of resistance.

Our devices are our voices, but our needs change as our ability to type increases.

Say Something

- After reading Jamie's thoughts on independent typing. Turn to a neighbor and **say something** about what you read



Jamie Burke's Thoughts on Typing

You must have the ability to help with movement issues and be able to create the dance between feeling the encouragement and the need to move to less support. It is like the movement of pumping on the swing, once the movement of the legs has created the speed, the arc of movement carries through on its own

Once the flow of thoughts to the keyboard is both easy and developed understand you simply must use this as you would use your voice. It is never a voice to keep in the carrying bag kept in your closet. It is the voice that makes you human, and allows for choice and dreams of a life with beauty.

Say Something

- After reading Jamie's thoughts on independent typing. Turn to a neighbor and **say something** about what you read



Basic Principles for Facilitators

- Monitor eye contact
- Monitor body position
- Monitor device position
- Pull back
- Monitor output
- Provide feedback
- Provide scaffolded support
- Reduce support
- Don’t over-interpret




LA



ne:		
Phone:	Age:	Date:

e Acts	Level of Support						
	Hand 1	**Wrist** 2	**Mid Forearm** 3	**Top of Forearm** 4	**Elbow** 5	**Mid Upper Arm** 6	**Shoulder** 7
Drawings ice							
nk to two word ith only one al knowledge ly routine ble th no wrong							
Questions onversation							

Create a Plan

Remember to Celebrate ALL Success

- FC user and facilitator agree upon steps towards independence
  - When will we practice?
  - What activities will we use?
  - How often will we reevaluate our plan?
- Establishing at least 1 independent method
  - Yes/no
  - ABCD
  - Rate this…
- Building Confidence
  - Be supportive and encouraging to one another
  - Use what is working in daily communication routines



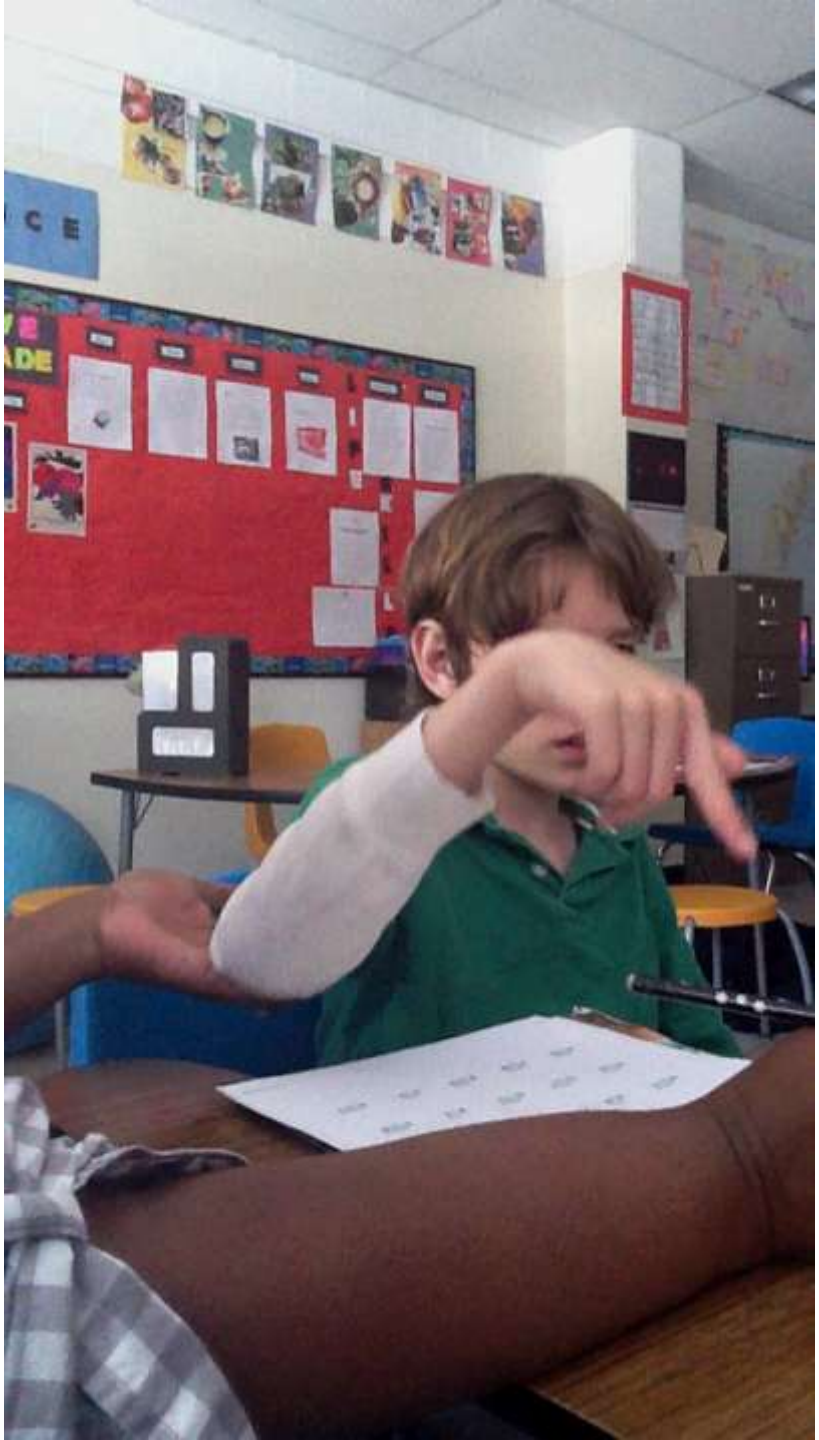
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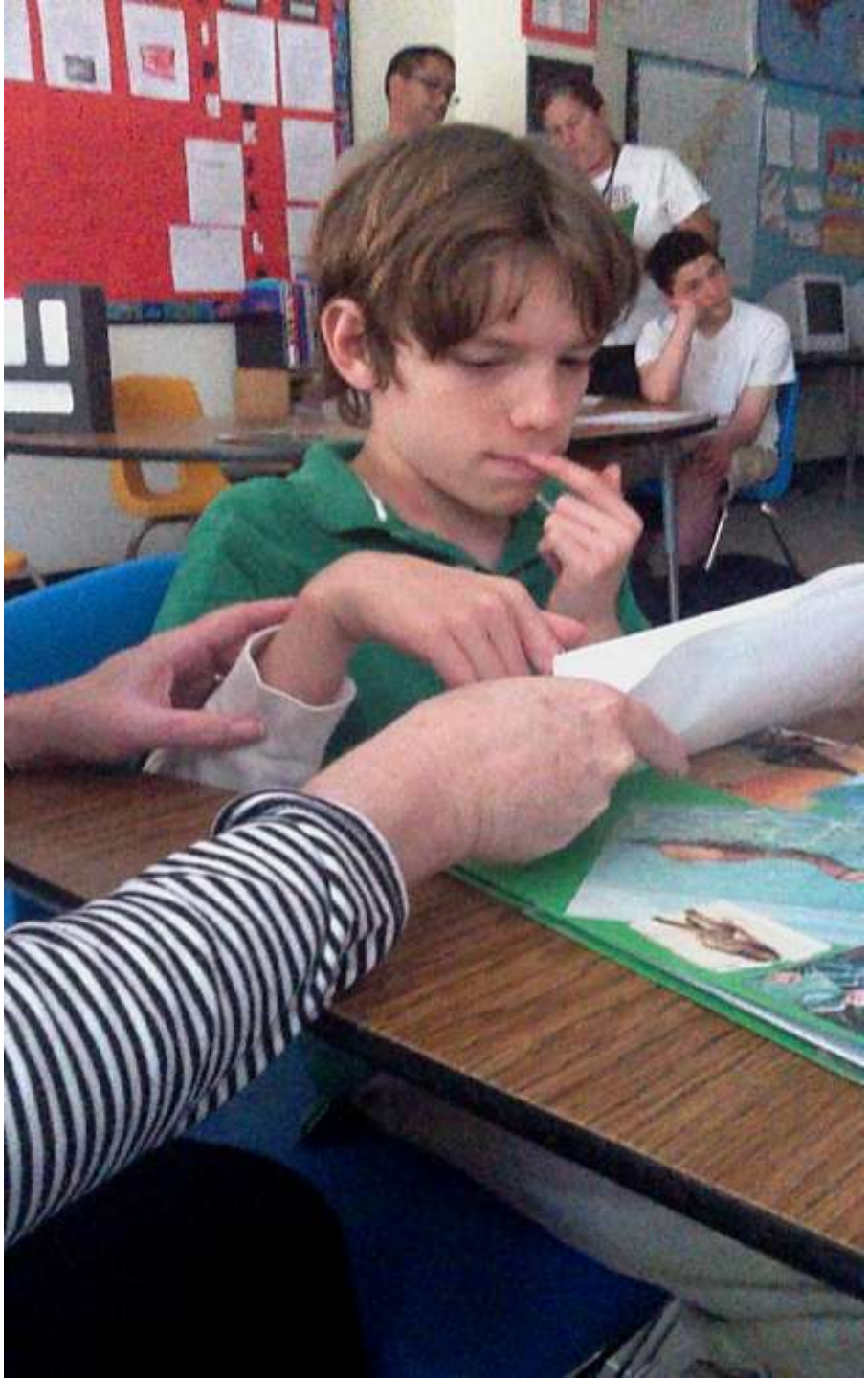
Exercises for Moving on the Language Ladder



Self Initiate Conversation:	- brings up a topic - brings facilitator a display - extends a hand or finger with no prompts - says "type" or some personal version
Participate in Conversation:	- takes turns a natural part of conversation - asks questions, makes comments
Paragraphing	- participates in a shared paragraph - completes a graphic organizer then creates a paragraph - provides a topic sentence, body, and conclusion to a paragraph
Answering Open-Ended questions:	- states opinion - responds to "tell me about…" - answers open ended questions about self, academics…
Less Predictable:	- name 3….. - give me a state that starts with the letter…. - responds to questions with no right answer
Familiar/ predictable:	- questions with only one answer - general knowledge questions with only one answer - questions that are asked on a daily basis
Spelling words:	- vocabulary - weekly spelling list - vocabulary presented as part of a communication display - ask student to answer comprehension questions on their spelling words
Word board:	- multiple choice board (a,b,c,d,) or (word board choices) - determine the size of the display
Line drawing	- line drawings used in communication book - line drawings used as part of activity a - ask student to identify b- ask student to respond to a comprehension question

Darlene Hanson, MA, CCC
10/04





Quin



Jenn



Movement, Rhythm and Focus

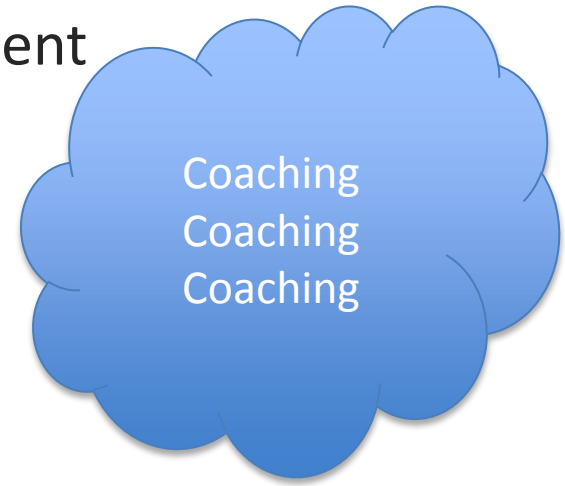
If someone is being supported at the wrist or forearm, you are often working on MOVEMENT and MOTOR PLANNING

If someone is being supported at the elbow, you are often working on DEVELOPING RHYTHM

If someone is being supported at the shoulder, you are often working on FOCUS and SELF REGULATION

Strategies for Supporting Movement and Rhythm

- Support Movement
  - Supportive seating and device placement
  - Finger isolation
  - Support sensory needs
  - Teach to THINK, LOOK, MOVE
  - Pull back
  - Start with something predictable
  - Pointing Activities



Strategies for Supporting Movement and Rhythm

- Support Rhythm
  - Metronomes
  - Voice
  - Background music
  - Drumming
  - Tap the table, the persons leg

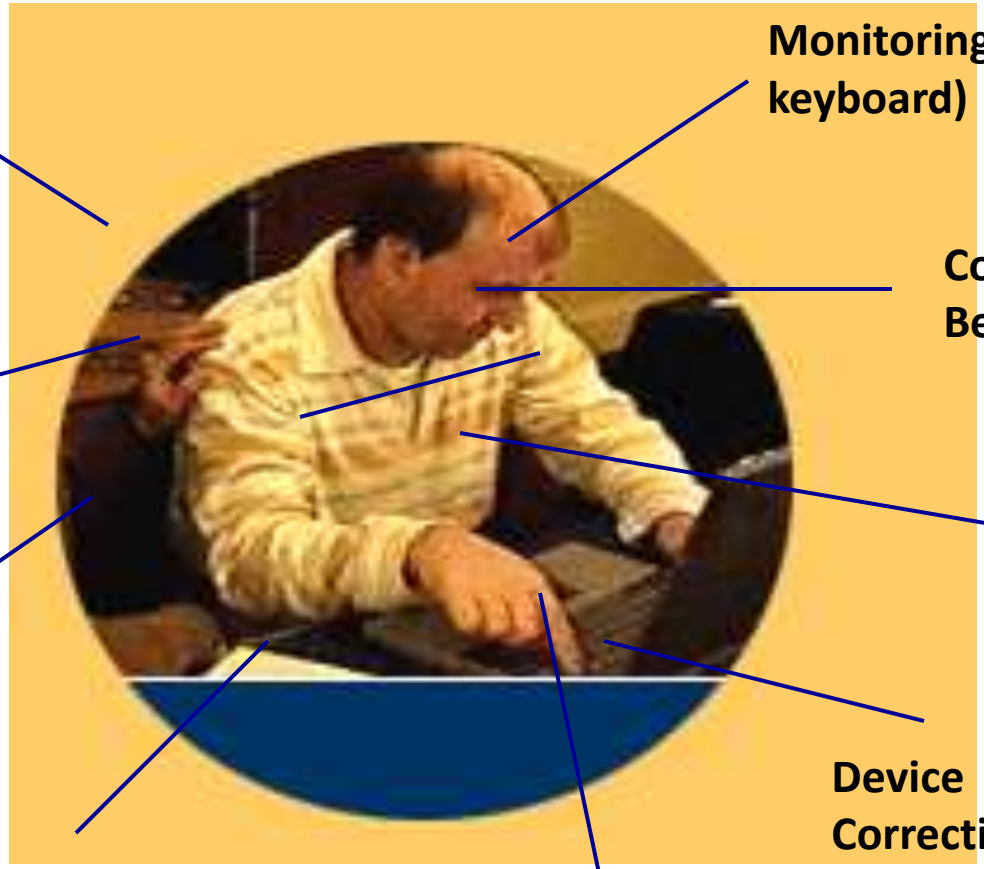


Practice

- Three goals at one time
  - keep open communication with support
  - practice independence at scheduled times
  - fade support during times of open communication
- Dynamic Support
  - Support is not linear—You may fade from the wrist in most situations, but you might go back during times of stress or fatigue
  - Verbal coaching may be needed more at the end of the day than in the morning
  - Movement and rhythm supports might fade while doing predictable work, but be needed when moving up the language ladder
- Coaching
  - "You can do it"
  - "Look at the M now get it"
  - "Lift your arm"
  - "Look at the letter you want"



Elements of Facilitated Communication Training



Practice - Practice - Practice

- This is a process of **Teaching / Not Assessing**
- Provide scaffolds: Multiple choice, word bank, yes/no, pictures
- Work on an independent yes/no and A,B,C,D response right away



Example of Communication Supports

Move Up the Language Ladder

Open ended Predictable

Tell me about your favorite character in Charlotte's Web…

Name your favorite character in Charlotte's Web…

Point to your favorite character in Charlotte's Web…

Templeton	Charlotte	Wilbur
		

An Example of Independence





Turn & Talk:

Take a couple of minutes to turn to the people sitting around you and discuss the questions listed below.

You might want to write down your ideas and some of your neighbors' as well

Consider the following questions:

- What strategies were supporting Mei Mei's movement and rhythm?
- What questions do you have about how Mei Mei learned to communicate and achieve independence?

Tools for Independence

Practice exercises and Activities

- Create a Comic Strip
  - http://www.stripcreator.com/make.php
  - http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/comic/index.html
- Write an Acrostic Poem
- Create a Wordle
- Play *Choose your top three…* Come up with fun categories like: Things you would do if you suddenly inherited 1 million dollars, responsibilities your parents have that you're glad you don't, Adventure trips you'd like to take, dog breeds, hair colors…

For Responses use:

- Communication Stick
- Yes/No and ABCD boards
- Post its and Dry Erase boards

Tools for Independence: iPad Apps

Practice exercises and Activities

- Pointing
  - ColorDots
  - CountingDots
  - Photo Zoo Touch
- Spelling
  - Spelling Zap
  - Word Wizard
  - Word Magic
- Predictable Activities
  - Sentence Maker
  - ABC Touch
  - Brain Pop
- Unpredictable (Open-ended)
  - Proloquo2go
  - Assistive Chat
  - Type-O

Imbed Communication Throughout the Day

- Use for choices throughout the day
  - Clothes to wear
  - Games to play
  - Food to eat
- Use to Access Academics
  - Yes/No
  - Multiple Choice
  - Fill in the blank
  - Comments and participation
- To Share Thoughts
  - Reactions and Feelings about experiences
  - Preferences
  - Ideas and comments

Independence

- Fade Support
  - Reduce/eliminate resistance
  - Reduce/eliminate rhythm
  - Reduce/eliminate touch
  - Reduce/eliminate coaching

  - DO NOT reduce or eliminate conversation structures that occur in all natural conversations

Independence Practice: Nick Brady





What next step can you take toward developing greater independence?