



Teaching Active Listening Skills to Pre-Service SLPs

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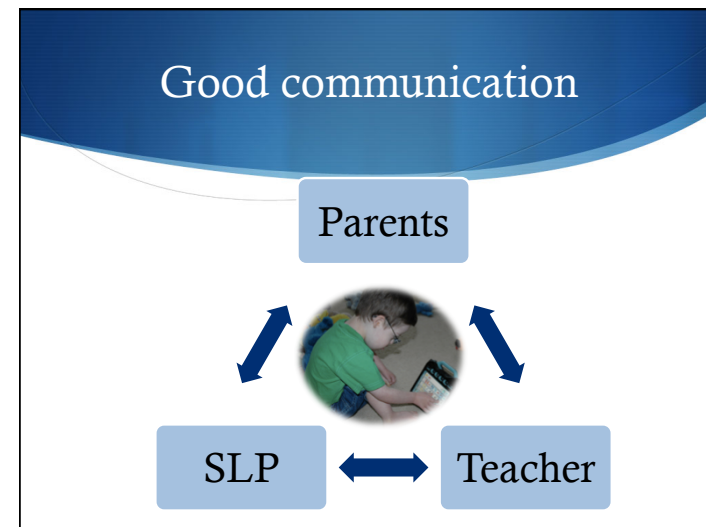
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Challenge

- ◆ Goal of Family-Centered Practice
 - ◆ Parents and professionals need to work together to produce positive outcomes for child
- ◆ However
 - ◆ Early career professionals have limited experience in working with families
 - ◆ Difficult to establish rapport
 - ◆ Parents may view professionals as disinterested

Parent Experiences

- ◆ “One of my concerns in starting out was that they would listen to my ideas...so I could tell them the kinds of things I felt Jennifer liked and didn't like and the kinds of things that I felt would work at home and that we could manage at home.” (Parette et al., 2000)
- ◆ “You have to be very pro-active and very on the ball, otherwise you won't get where you need to go.” (Goldbart & Marshall, 2004)
- ◆ “Team members need to have communication skills and team building skills. The ability to work with colleagues without letting your ego or your old histories get in the way.” (Soto et al., 2001)



Listening as a communication skill for SLPs

- ◆ Benefits of listening
 - ◆ Learn more about the views of parent
 - ◆ Demonstrate an interest in their beliefs
 - ◆ Build rapport
 - ◆ Ensure that proposed solutions address parent concerns
 - ◆ Being part of the team is more enjoyable

What is “good listening”?

- ◆ What went well?
- ◆ What could be done differently next time?
- ◆ How do you think the “parent” feels?
- ◆ How do you think the “SLP” feels?
- ◆ Have they made any progress in solving the problem?
- ◆ Will the “parent” come back?

LAFF active listening strategy

L	A	F	F
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen, empathize, and communicate respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions (and permission to take notes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a first step

Listen, empathize, and communicate respect

- ◆ Greeting, chit-chat
 - ◆ *“Hi, thanks for coming in today ...”*
- ◆ Give the parent the floor
 - ◆ *“What would you like to talk about today?”*
- ◆ Empathy: understanding of others’ thoughts and feelings
- ◆ Respect: communicate our belief that others’ feelings are important to us
 - ◆ *“I am sorry this has been a challenge, I appreciate that you came to talk with me”*

Ask questions (and permission to take notes)

- ◆ Find out more about the problem
 1. 4 W's plus How (not Why)
 2. Something positive
 - ◆ *Has there ever been a time this was not a problem?*
 3. Who else is involved
 - ◆ *Have you spoken with anyone else?*
- ◆ Communicate empathy and respect
- ◆ Buys you time to think

Focus on the issue

- ◆ Reflect back your understanding of the problem
 - ◆ Summarize issues (and emotions)
- ◆ Review notes
 - ◆ Notes are concrete evidence you were listening
 - ◆ Notes are useful for later reference
- ◆ Ask if there is anything to add

Find a first step

- ◆ Need for an interpreter?
- ◆ Zone of control
 - ◆ Inside: You can have an impact
 - ◆ Gather more information and think
 - ◆ Unless individual is in danger of harm
 - ◆ Outside: You cannot have an impact
 - ◆ Refer to someone who can help
- ◆ Communicate first step and plan for follow up with the parent

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Training Protocol

- ◆ Pre-test
- ◆ Training
 - ◆ Class lecture and discussion (60 minutes)
 - ◆ LAFF steps, rationale, examples
 - ◆ Guided practice (30 minutes)
- ◆ Post-test
- ◆ Reflection paper (10 minutes)

Guided practice sessions in groups of three

- ◆ Person 1: SLP
- ◆ Person 2: Parent
- ◆ Person 3: Recorder
- ◆ After each scenario, the class re-groups and each person shares their experience



Role Play Scenarios: Background Information

- ◆ Both “SLP” & “Parent” have this info
 - ◆ Zack is a 7 year old with developmental delays. He uses gestures, vocalizations, and a dynamic display device mounted on his wheelchair. His device contains about 100 vocabulary items, organized on pages.

Role Play Scenarios: SLP

- ◆ You are Zack’s SLP. Zack does a good job of answering questions about recent events or preferred activities using his device.
- ◆ You received a message from the school secretary saying that Zack Zattan’s parent would like to talk to you at 3:30, right after your last therapy session of the day

Role Play Scenario: Parent

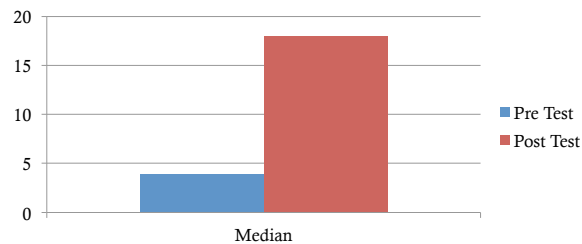
- ◆ You are the parent of a 7 year old boy, Zack. Zack enjoys being with people and you often notice his eyes avidly following the activity around a room. Zack will use his device to answer questions but you think he often waits for others to start the conversation.
- ◆ *Opening statement: "I'm afraid Zack misses out on chances to talk to people because they don't know what to make of his device."*
- ◆ *Example: "He really likes talking to people and just lights up and engages when someone talks to him, but doesn't seem to know how to start talking to them."*

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Results

(Comparison of Pre and Post Video)



Difference between median pre test and post test scores is significant, $p < .0001$

Results

	Pre-Training	Post-Training
Minimum	2	11
Mean	4.2	17.4
Maximum	8	20

Does Active Listening (LAFF) matter to SLPs?

The pre-service SLPs

♦ Learned the skill

- ♦ Mean score improved from 4.2 to 17.4 (max = 20)
- ♦ range of 11 to 20

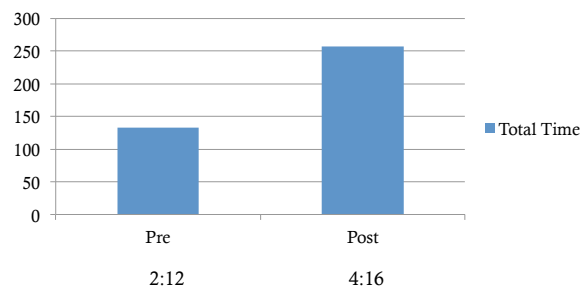
♦ Valued the skill

- ♦ 95% would recommend that others learn it

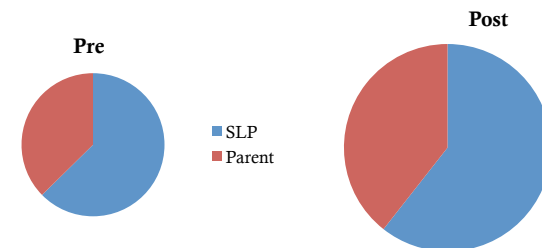
Does Active Listening (LAFF) matter to parents?

- 7 mothers of children who use AAC watched 2 “paired sets” of videos
- *In which video did the SLP demonstrate stronger communication skills?*
- **11 of 14** chose the Post-Training video

What changed?: Total Time



What changed?: Who was talking (as a % of time)



What changed?: SLP behaviors

In the video you indicated as being more positive, what were the positive communication behaviors?

Positive Behavior	Percentage
Took notes	57%
Made plan/follow up	57%
Reviewed notes	50%
"Seemed interested/sympathetic"	50%
Asked questions	36%

What did we learn?

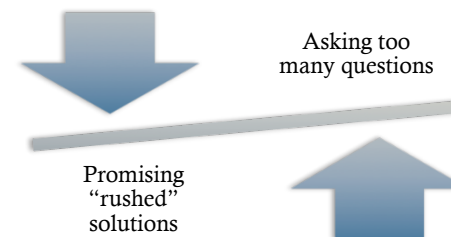
- Active Listening skills can be taught in an efficient manner
 - Training time = 100 minutes
 - All students show improvement
 - Average = 17.4 (max = 20)
 - 78% were over 80%
- Active listening valued by SLPs
- Active listening valued by parents



What did we learn?

- For 3 of the 14 trials, the parent chose the "pre" training video
 - Expectation of a solution during the first meeting?
 - 3-5 minutes in length
 - We discourage "hasty solutions"
- Parents want to be heard, but we also want to know we are dealing with someone who is thinking about it as we talk (Parent #3)

Better understanding the problem, AND Moving towards a solution



What would we change ?

- ◆ Listen, communicate empathy and respect
 - ◆ **Use parent's and child's name**
- ◆ Find a first step
 - ◆ **Frame problem as issue of**
 - ◆ Access
 - ◆ Opportunity
 - ◆ **Suggest both sides start to generate possible solutions**

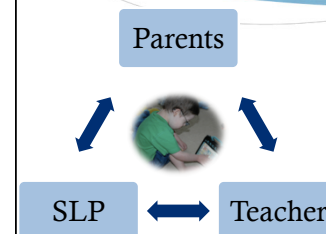
Comments from a graduate

- ◆ A specific time when the LAFF strategy was useful is when I was talking to a mother who has two children with ASD. Her concern was the use of the IPAD for the intervention and her two children fighting over the technology. I was really able to listen to her concerns and then I was able to get back to her with my ideas on the solution.
- ◆ Without the technique of the LAFF strategy I might have made a rash decision to the problem. It turned out that the technology was not the problem, but the management of her children's behaviors with it. This came out later after she had the time to talk and then I reiterated to her what I heard the problem was. This helped myself and the parent to really get to the problem.

Training in Active Listening

- ◆ Vostal, B.R., & McNaughton, D. (2012). Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Collaboration: Evaluation of Instruction in an Active Listening Strategy (submitted for publication)
- ◆ McNaughton, D., & Vostal, B. R. (2010). Using Active Listening to Improve Collaboration With Parents. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 45(4), 251.
- ◆ McNaughton, D., Hamlin, D., McCarthy, J., Head-Reeves, D., & Schreiner, M. (2008). Learning to Listen: Teaching an Active Listening Strategy to Preservice Education Professionals. *Topics for Early Childhood Special Education*, 27, 223–231.

Good communication



"[The SLP] acknowledged what I was saying and I felt like they were honest with me but they weren't afraid to say that they hadn't seen that, or they weren't aware of that. But then they came up with some great strategies to try."

Acknowledgements

- ◆ Thank you volunteers: Shawn Datchuk, Douglas Dexter, Sarah Douglas, Katie Hoffman, Theresa Hoover, Brooke Lylo, Trace Poll, Yuon Park, Natasha Wilson, and Elizabeth Benedek Wood.
- ◆ The Hintz Family Endowment in Children's Communicative Competence
- ◆ US Department of Education Training Grant #H325D11008
- ◆ Next project: Online survey for SLPs on the topic of Designing AAC Displays. <http://aac.psu.edu/?p=1085>