



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

April 2021 | Volume 08

COMMUNICATION



[DOCUMENT RESOURCES](#)

[SESA LIBRARY RESOURCES](#)

[MAKE A REFERRAL](#)

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

As we patiently await the spring break up and the awakening of nature and all its creatures, it would be easy to focus on the negative aspects this pandemic has brought. However, I encourage you to instead focus on the positives. Perhaps, reflecting on the things you learned this year, the acts of kindness you experienced, or the things you took for granted that you now have a sense of renewed gratitude for.

The theme for this newsletter is communication. We communicate for a variety of purposes including to comment, connect with others, request or decline something, or to share our ideas. Our students benefit from support, direct instruction, and modeling to become better communicators as well. Whether we are zooming, Google meeting, talking on the phone, or talking in person 6 ft apart, there are learning opportunities to be had. We hope this newsletter generates ideas on ways to increase those opportunities with students.

Wherever you are on this journey, SESA is here to support you.

Gunalchéesh tlein (Tlingit)
Thank you very much,

Amy Topmiller

Multiple Disabilities Specialist and Editor

Talking not Testing – Communicating Across Settings

by Jennifer Schroeder, Multiple Disabilities Specialist

People communicate for all sorts of reasons and it is important that we help our students to communicate for the same wide variety of reasons that we do. Communication is not about giving the right answer, rather it is about exchanging thoughts and ideas with another person. It can be easy to fall into asking questions (or testing) students during the day but by changing how we approach an activity we can change a direct question into a more open-ended opportunity for a student to share what they think instead of just what they know.

[Read More](#)

Practice Doesn't Make Perfect, it Makes Permanent

by John Barrowman, Autism Specialist

Even when we have chaotic schedules, we still have several routines. Within those routines are opportunities to practice new communication skills. In most cases, we provide help and access to things our students or children want every day without requiring them to communicate for them. So again, what we practice every day will make our habits permanent, so let's look at some ways we can make that practice perfect for building communication skills!

[Read More](#)



Building Non-Verbal Communication Skills in Students with Visual Impairments

by Angel Black, Vision Impairment Specialist

The ability to communicate effectively is arguably the most important of all life skills. It gives us the ability to give other people information and to respond to information being given to us. The need for communication begins at birth and continues throughout our lives.

In its most basic form, communication is the act of transferring information from one place to another, in one form or another; by voice, written, visual or non-verbal, typically a combination of several of these at one time. [Read More](#)

Aiming for Present Moment Awareness

by Lyon Johnson, Emotional Disabilities Specialist



As mentioned in my previous article on [mindfulness](#), there are specific ways to help students develop present moment awareness. Daily mindfulness activities are great skill-building opportunities to help learners be in the moment. The more learning opportunities students have, the more these learners will truly understand how present moment awareness can help them stay more focused on what matters and self-regulate. Another important part of the process is communicating to students when they appear to be staying in the present moment. Oftentimes,

students are disengaged in avoidant behavior because they are lost in the past or future instead of being present for learning. Communicating such observations can help students

Taking a Picture Walk: Pre-reading Strategies for Increased Reading

Comprehension *by Tyler Arsen, AKCAM Specialist*

Have you ever begun a physical activity without warming up? If you have, you know that it can cause that activity to become a lot less enjoyable. You may feel stiff, fatigued, and self-conscious because you know that you aren't doing as well as you could do. You may want to tell others, "I wasn't ready to start yet!". Basketball players take shots before the game to get in the zone. Piano players run through notes before a recital to make sure their fingers are limber. Many learners need this type of warm up prior to reading--they see a long article or passage and think, "I'm not ready to start yet."



Reading becomes much easier when the reader has a sense of the characters, scenes, theme, and overall direction of the text. This background knowledge allows them more comfortable access to the reading material. One effective method for providing this background knowledge is called a "picture walk." [Read More](#)

Unlock Learning Through Language

by Kelsey Koenigs, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist

The largest barrier facing students identified with hearing loss is their access to communication, regardless of communication mode (Listening and Spoken Language, Total Communication, ASL/English Bilingual-Bicultural); not only direct instruction in the classroom but also incidental and social language that takes place around them, among peers, school staff and even their own family members.

Since spontaneous acquisition of language is not equitably available, it is important to be intentional with communication exposure and language modeling. This is why I often recommend making an explicit communication plan. This means something different for each child, their families, the other individuals in their daily communication network, the resources readily available or needed, the various communication environments and is specific to the communication mode/s chosen. [Read More](#)

Connect with Us!

