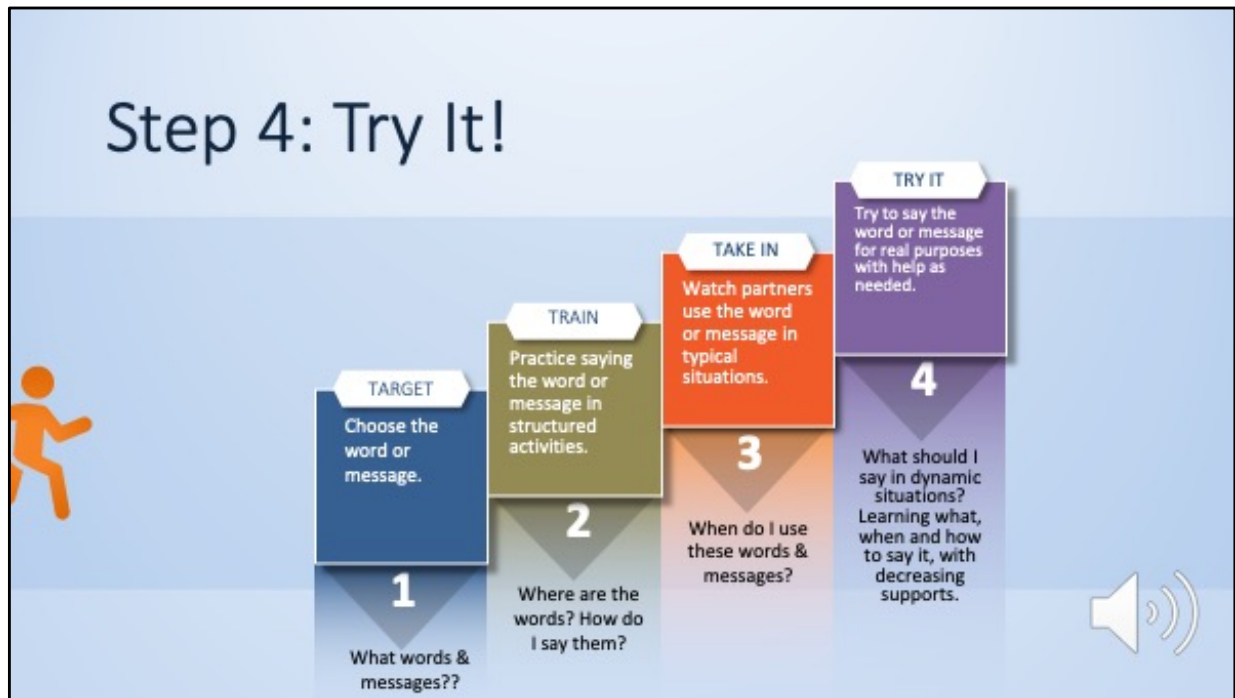




AAC 101 Steps to Learning: Step Four

Try It!



It's finally time to begin to offer our students the opportunity to use their AAC system for communication purposes, with lots of support as they get started!! Your targets are going to be the same ones you chose initially, and the ones that you have been modeling through Step Three. Now students will begin to use the words and messages in their AAC system for functional purposes in their natural daily environments.

Because you've been modeling these exact words in these exact situation during Step Three, this is going to be an easy process! You already know how to use the words and model them during these typical activities so you can begin to concentrate on providing the supports that benefit your student the most in becoming independent.



You're going to be prompting the student as they start this process, and gradually reducing the amount of prompts that you provide them until they can become independent communicators. We have an entire resource page devoted to Partner Strategy Training in our Communication Training Website.

Communication is a dynamic process, between at least 2 people. It requires us to not only teach our students new skills, but also to **learn new skills ourselves!** There are years of research on the need for partners, for people who use augmentative communication (AAC), to have knowledge around best practices in encouraging interaction with students who use AAC. To this end, we are creating materials and webinars, as well as conducting trainings to help partners of AAC users hone their skills. We have also curated a variety of materials from all the wonderful specialists out in the world who are also developing and sharing their resources!

These are two of the tools available to you on the partner strategy training page. You can click to access the Partner Strategy Kits. Each kit has a video explainer and example. You'll also find a flyer you can share with your team and families OR hang

on your wall as a reminder!

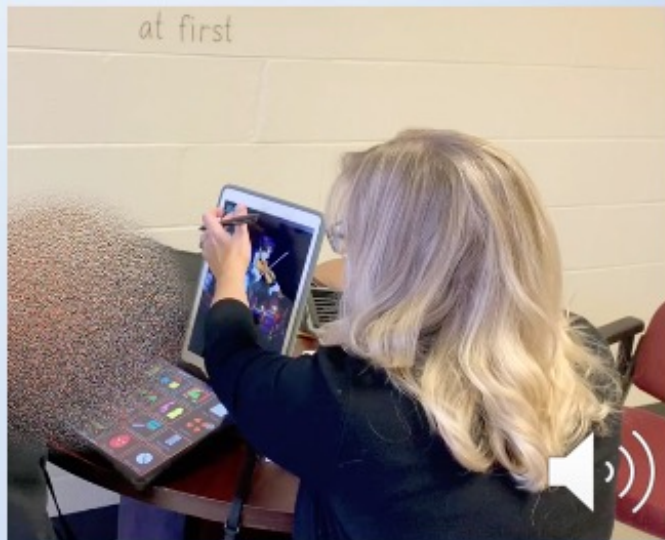
The **Partner Strategy Webinars** are recorded trainings that I've been presented at multiple national and state conferences! You can even get a continuing education certificate when you finish them!

Try It: In Structured Settings

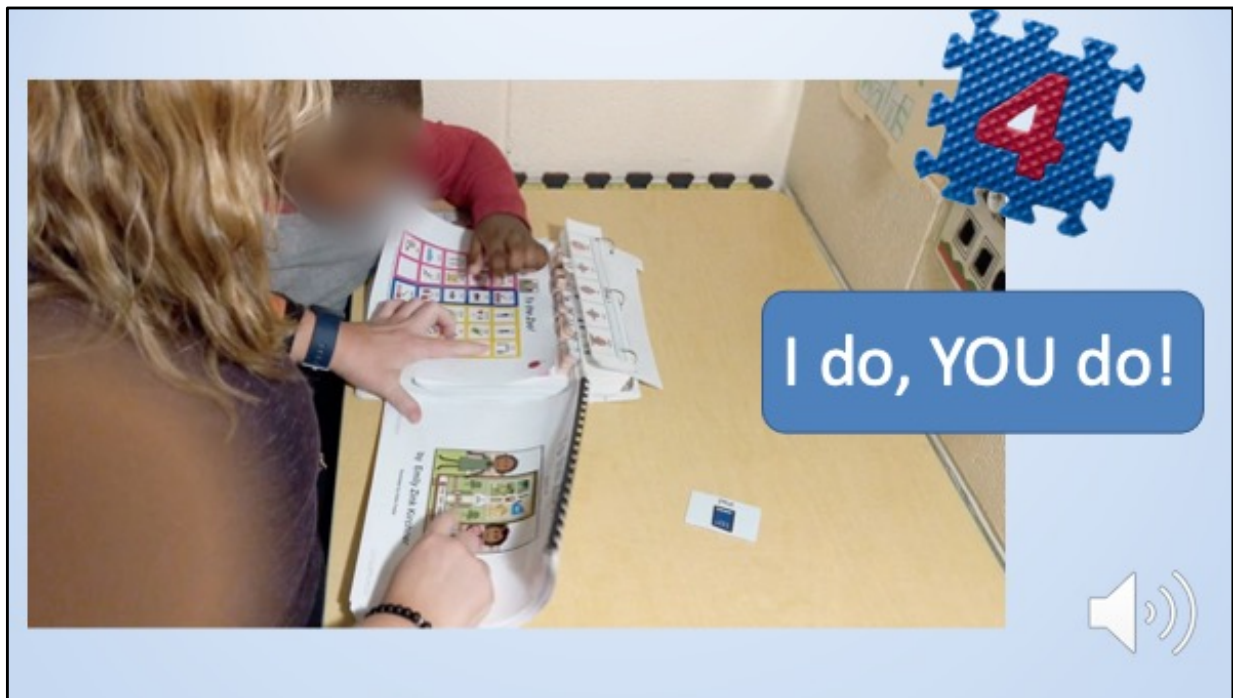
With speech or AAC, say the word or message independently for your own real purposes.

Typically occurs in a therapy or classroom setting in activities planned and directed by a partner.

Autonomous messages are produced within the activity. Student is selecting messages they want to say with support as they learn.



Let's take a look at what it looks like as we begin to instruct our students communicating using AAC in structured settings. Typically this occurs in a therapy or classroom setting during activities that are planned and directed by a partner, often the speech therapist, teacher or paraprofessional. Autonomous messages are produced within the activity. This means that the student is selecting messages that they want to say, with supports as needed. The student is engaging in true communication at this point using their AAC system.



Here's another example of a structured activity encouraging the students to begin to use their AAC system for communication. In this example the teacher modeled appropriate communication targets first and then, within the same session, began to give the student the opportunity to try it himself. You'll see where Step Three and Step Four sometimes occur very quickly. In other cases we have to model for a long time before we can expect the student to try themselves. In this case this young man was moving very quickly!

He will be ready for Step Five before you know it!