



AC 101 Steps to Learning, Step Three:

Take In by watching other people using the word or message

Step 3: Take In



Step 3 is all about the partner- modeling how the word/message is used in the real world. The point of this step is for the student to begin to understand when to use these words and messages and what it looks like when someone communicates using the method that they will ultimately be using themselves.

This is exactly how infants and toddlers begin to learn to speak, by watching and experiencing their parents and the other adults around them communicating by talking to each other for real purposes.

What is modeling?



AAC Modeling Strategies How Much Language Do I Model? - STAR Issue 2.5,
YouTube Channel [CTEC Communication Technology Education Center](#)



What does modeling look like?

Take 6 minutes and check out this wonderful explanation from the Communication Technology Education Center

This is a lot of work. Are we sure this works? Yes!!



- [Binger, C., & Light, J. \(2007\). The effect of aided AAC modeling on the expression of multi-symbol messages by preschoolers who use AAC. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 23, 30–43.](#)
- [Binger, C., Maguire-Marshall, M., & Kent-Walsh, J. \(2011\). Using aided AAC models, recasts and contrastive targets to teach grammatical morphemes to children who use AAC. Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research, 54, 160–176.](#)
- [Dada, S., & Alant, E. \(2009\). The effect of aided language stimulation on vocabulary acquisition in children with little or no functional speech. American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 18, 50–64.](#)
- [Harris, M.D., & Reichle, J. \(2004\). The impact of aided language stimulation on symbol comprehension and production in children with moderate cognitive disabilities. American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 13, 155–67.](#)
- [Sennott, S.C., Light, J., & McNaughton, D. \(2016\). AAC modeling intervention research review. Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 41, 101–15.](#)
- [Solomon-Rice, P., & Soto, G. \(2014\). Facilitating vocabulary in toddlers using AAC: A preliminary study comparing focused stimulation and augmented input. Communication Disorders Quarterly, 35, 204–15.](#)

Curated by Carole Zangari



Modeling is one of the MOST researched techniques proven to positively impact a student's development of communication competence through AAC. But when we talk about modeling, we mean a LOT of modeling, as much as 200x a day. But for now, don't panic, start small and get the hang of it first.

When you have those moments when you are wondering WHY you are working so hard on this, here's your motivation! You can click directly on these links to take you to the research articles which were curated by Carole Zangari on the PrAACtical AAC website go take a look!

Keep these articles around because it never hurts to have a ready explanation of your process to your administrators, families and other team members!

Binger, C., & Light, J. (2007). The effect of aided AAC modeling on the expression of multi-symbol messages by preschoolers who use AAC. Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 23, 30–43.

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Tricks to Keep You Modeling!

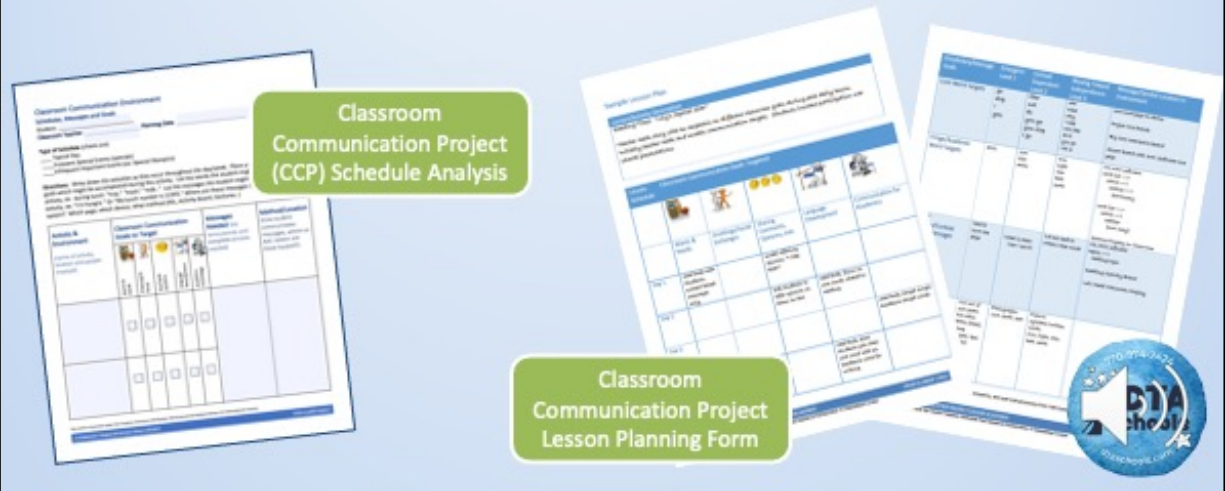
Plan	Plan the words you will model BEFORE the activity begins.
Make	Make the materials easily accessible
Take	Take Data
Reward	Reward Yourself



Modeling seems easy, just use the AAC system to say the words while you are saying them. BUT when you first begin to model communicating this way, it seems AWKWARD. This is because you are generally a competent communicator. When you add the component of a new way of communicating, for example using picture symbols, you will at first become less of a competent communicator. We educators typically are quite averse to this feeling of incompetence. Often we hate it so much that it is very difficult for us to start this process. The trick here, I believe, is to understand that it's going to be messy! And that's OK! If you acknowledge to yourself and the other adults around you that is not going to be perfect at first, you will allow yourself the grace needed to make mistakes and learn from them. This is a critical concept in order to move forward in your own journey to becoming a competent AAC communicator. Here are some ideas to get you started and keep you moving towards modeling effectively and consistently for your students.

Planning for embedded instruction:

or... "when do I model the new word or message??"



At DTA Schools we have two tools you can use to plan for your embedded communication instruction. The Classroom Communication Project Schedule Analysis forms, and the Classroom Communication Project Lesson Planning Form.

We talked about the Schedule Analysis Forms during Step One. This tool can also be used to help you plan which words you will use during each of your typical activities. The third column of this form is a place where you list all the words and messages that are necessary during a particular activity. If you already completed this form during the targeting step, you're all set! These are the words you will model each day! Easy Peezy!

The Lesson Planning Form is for those people who want to dig in a little bit deeper into each individual activity. Communication lesson planning can be a very helpful process to help you identify the words and messages you will target during activities/ lessons you use for other purposes. For example, you may be working on a English language arts activity. During this, you want to be sure you are embedding communication learning at the same time. You can use the communication lesson plan to help you remember the words and messages you want to be sure to model for the student, and later, expect them to produce themselves.



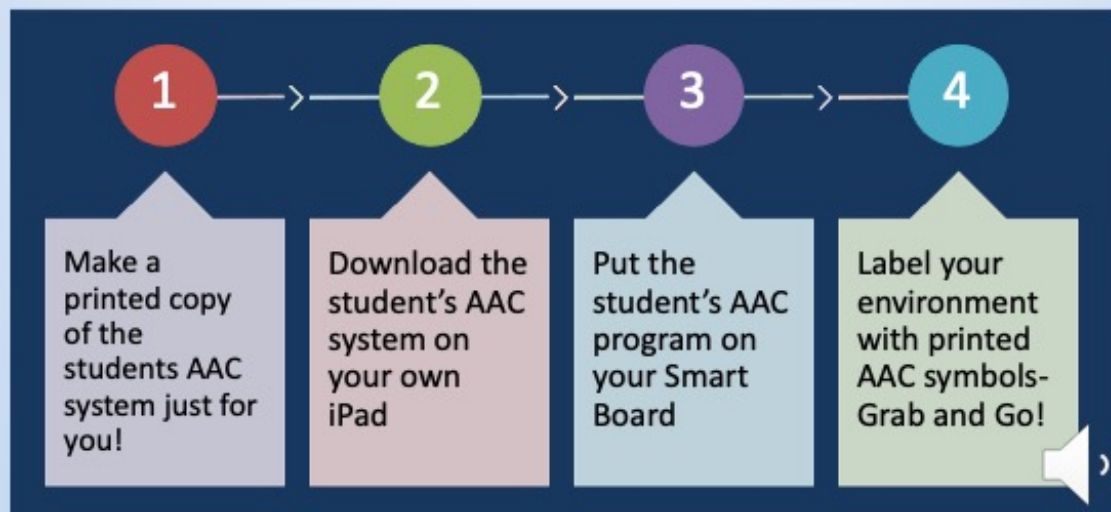
Planning for Modeling: Observe What Everyone Else is Saying!

- Watch the activity and take notes on the words you think the STUDENT will say. (not YOU!)
- Watch other students and see what words THEY are using.



One of the simplest ways of identifying words and messages to target during activities is to simply watch what everyone else is doing! One of the ways that we know a person is communicatively competent is their ability to participate fully in the activities of their day. These are a perfect place to start your modeling journey!

Readily Accessible AAC Materials





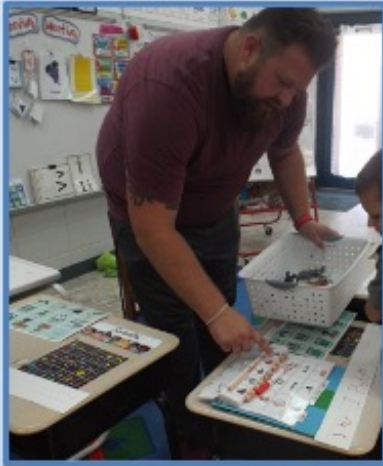
Student watches partners use the word or message in typical situations.

Modeling: “I do!”

When do I use these
words & messages?



Moving to spontaneous, real-time communication!



Structured Activities-Language Arts



Unstructured Activities- Lunchtime

Because our end goal is spontaneous novel communication across environments, we want to make sure that we are modeling not only in structured activities but also in unstructured daily activities.

In this first picture the teacher is modeling on an AAC flipbook during a structured English Language Arts activity. On the second picture the teacher is modeling during lunchtime where you can see the DTA AAC Flipbook sitting right beside our juice and empty pudding bowl!



"Stop, Said the Cop:" Modeling in Structured Activities

