Supporting Inclusive Practice

A collaborative approach for professionals teaching children with special educational needs.
Developing Inclusive Practices
The Government’s Green Paper: Excellence For All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs (DfEE 1997) put creating an inclusive society for all children as well as raising educational standards at the heart of the Government’s education policies.

The SEN Programme of Action (DfEE 1998) outlined several key actions, one of which was ‘developing knowledge and skill in special educational needs’.

This training package aims to do just that.

EQUALS recognises the many challenges that mainstream practitioners face in striving to develop an effective inclusive environment: resourcing, training, curriculum balance to name but a few, therefore we have developed a unique training system which aims to increase SEN expertise within the field of mainstream education in a supportive and flexible way.

This module has been written for mainstream teachers, teaching assistants or other practitioners who wish to increase their skills and knowledge in educating pupils with Special Educational Needs in Primary and Early Years settings.

This training approach aims to address the key issue of ‘promoting a collaborative approach to training’ outlined in The Government’s Strategy for SEN: Removing Barriers to Achievement(DfES 2004) which advocates sharing expertise between special and mainstream schools.

As the outreach role of the special school develops, there has been a growing need for a structured yet flexible framework, which provides in-house training for all with the guidance and support of outreach teachers from specialist units or special schools. Local Authorities also have a vital role to play in supporting more partnership work between special and mainstream provision. As the proportion of children with special educational needs educated in mainstream schools increases there is a greater need to develop knowledge, understanding and specialist skills to meet the needs of all pupils.
2. So, How May This Training Package Be Used?

This module is designed to allow for a self-study approach with a mentor or study partner overseeing the contents and providing support and advice to the trainee as necessary.

This training module may be used by one school, a cluster of schools or two schools that have either already established or are developing outreach work. The combination of schools maybe special or mainstream, however the study partner or outreach worker must have relevant knowledge and expertise to offer effective guidance and support.

The trainee has total control over the pace and time-scale of his or her learning, however further guidance on organising the work is provided in section 5 of the introduction.

The sections and activities within this module are short to allow for teachers to integrate the training into their usual working week if they choose. This allows for a more practical, context-bound approach which should prove easily manageable for classroom practitioners.

As the practitioner works through this module he or she will be closely supervised by a study partner who is from a local special school or has relevant expertise in the field of special educational needs. This arrangement may be organised and set up by the teachers themselves, by the school managers or even the Local Education Authority. It is envisaged that many Local Authorities may wish to endorse this training package for clusters of mainstream and special schools, therefore adopting it as a training approach throughout the authority and possibly involving head teachers, advanced skills practitioners or advisory teachers.

3. Sample pages from Training Module 5

Here you can view a few pages from this module.
Supporting Inclusive Practice

Module 5

An Introduction to Alternative and Augmentative Communication for pupils with Special Educational Needs

Introduction Section

Please select either module 5 or the Introduction Section by clicking on the images above.
Training Module 5
An Introduction to Alternative and Augmentative Communication for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

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Some aspects of this document are based on work produced by a working group of teachers and officers from Swindon Borough Council and therapists from Wiltshire and Swindon Health Trust, in supporting parents and carers.
1. Introduction

Why have we written this module and for whom?

This unit is for practitioners working with, or supporting, pupils who have been identified as having one of the following:

- Severe Learning Difficulties
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
- Physical Disabilities in addition to difficulty with communication.

It is a very wide range of pupils who may benefit from AAC. The main defining features will be the inability to communicate through speech and/or writing and/or with use of the computer mouse with some of these pupils having difficulty reading text and/or understanding language.

After Completing this unit you will:

- Begin to understand a range of options available to support pupils with communication difficulties and be able to begin the process of identifying appropriate strategies for different needs.
- Be able to begin to plan your classroom as a Total Communication Environment.
- Have an idea of when you need to call in outside agencies to enable you to assess need and who you can go to for this kind of support.

So What is AAC?

*Alternative* means instead of.

*Augmentative* means as well as.

Communication is the act of expressing or receiving a message with a meaning. In our culture it is usual to convey messages through speech with the supplement of body language, facial expression, intonation, pitch and pace to give emphasis to the point we may be trying to make.

AAC looks to enable those who have difficulty with speech by enabling them to use alternative or augmentative means to get their message across. A person should be considered for AAC support when their speech is not clear enough for them to get across everything they want to say.
AAC strategies include:

**Gesture/Body Language including:**
- Choice making
- YES/NO

**Manual Sign including:**
- British Sign Language
- Sign Supported English
- SignAlong
- Makaton

**Visual and/or auditory and/or tactile Displays including:**
- Objects
- Photos
- Pictures
- Symbols
- Words/Phrases
- Letters

**Writing or Typing.**
- Word prediction systems may be incorporated into typing based activities.

For AAC to be most effective the same approach should be used in all environments including home, school, visiting friends, out shopping, at clubs etc. Close liaison between home, school and those providing advice in both settings is essential for this to work well.

Whilst this unit is not a comprehensive instruction manual. The aim is to provide information and ideas that may be used when planning differentiation and supporting inclusion as well as giving some advice on how you might be able to get help for pupils you feel would benefit from AAC.
2. Information Communication Technology (ICT)

What does it mean?
The following definition is taken from the guidance in the QCA Schemes of Work for ICT: "Information and communications technologies (ICT) are the computing and communications facilities and features that variously support teaching, learning and a range of activities in education." Activities in ICT with particular relevance for AAC users includes:

- CD ROMs to support learning.
- Computers with appropriate keyboards, mouse alternatives, switch access and other devices to make access to the computer as easy as possible.
- Devices to facilitate communication for pupils with special needs;
- Electronic toys to develop spatial awareness and psycho-motor control;
- Internet access and e-mail for research and communication purposes;
5. Methods Supporting Communication

a. Using a Multi-sensory Approach to the Curriculum

**Objects of reference and a tactile supported curriculum:**

Objects of reference was originally designed for the deaf and blind community who were unable to receive information about their environment without using touch or smell to feel or sense an object associated with the next activity. More able members of this community might be able to go on to learn to finger spell using a special method that involves signing the letters into the hand of the recipient. More recently the concept of using objects for pupils who are thought to have a great deal of difficulty understanding language has emerged.

Objects are chosen to represent places, activities, people, times etc.

For example, An armband might be used to let someone know they are going swimming. A place mat or a fork might indicate lunch time. A wooden spoon might be used to signal that it is time for food technology.

Special features might involve textures, tastes and/or smells that are familiar to the communicator. There might also be very personal objects that are specific to a communicator. For example, a favourite teddy that is always used at bedtime to signal that it is time to go to bed.

**Key principles in using objects**

- Think carefully about how the object will make sense to the child you are using it with. A toy car may not easily relate to a real car but car keys might be more familiar. A plastic tree may not relate to the park but a real leaf might. A bangle might be associated with a particular assistant. A piece of material could be related to cushions in a particular room.

- A key element therefore is to ensure that you teach the children the meaning of the objects they are being asked to feel or taste or smell. There's no point deciding that a smell of Lavender is meant to signal that the child will be receiving a massage and then taking them to the toilet instead. It is important that the relevant activity immediately follows exposure to the object. Once this learning has taken place pupils will begin to anticipate the activity on being exposed to the object. The idea is that the pupil will eventually seek out the object in order to request the activity.

- Objects can be arranged in order to signify the timetable for the day which children can see, feel, hear or touch if necessary to give them guidance and enable them to predict what is coming next.

*Objects to represent items to be used in HAND/MUSIC class.*
• Consistency is important. Stick to the object chosen and make sure it is used in all environments. Try to ensure that the family is on board with the system.

• A progression from objects to symbols can be encouraged by the use of tactile symbols. This involves arranging a set of tactile triggers in the same way that you might a symbol board with a view to moving towards more representational expressions as time goes on.

Example of tactile board for choosing a drink

Symbol equivalent of the above

• A step in between the two above could include the use of Moon raised symbols. It is also possible to make your own raised symbols with heat-pens. They are simple pen like devices which have a metal drawing nib which heats up. This allows you to draw directly onto swell paper and produce instant raised results. There are useful contacts in the appendix for these resources.

• This multi-sensory approach can be carried over into specific lessons with the production of such resources as tactile reading books where a popular classroom text is adapted so that the pupil who needs this kind of support for their understanding can access it. Initially it is recommended that books are made which relate to the pupils direct experience such as a walk that they are familiar with or a routine that they experience on a daily basis. This can then progress to simple stories.
ACTIVITY 2

PURPOSE:

To practice making resources for pupils who need a multi-sensory curriculum approach including a high tactile element.

To experience breaking routine activities down into small steps to aid understanding.

To investigate curriculum differentiation at an objects of reference level.

To understand progression from objects of reference to pictorial representation.

WHAT TO DO:

- Think of an activity you participate in every day.
- Make a list of every step involved in the activity leaving no detail out.
- Make a list of the objects related to the activity that signify various steps.
- If possible gather relevant objects and glue them onto sheets of card in the correct sequence.
- You now have your own tactile book.
- Think about how you could turn the “story” of this activity into a book which used another graphic mode rather than objects. For example, photographs, drawings, symbols.
- Make that book too.
- Think of a familiar story book that you particularly like and write a plan of how you might turn this into a tactile story book.
- Make the book.
- Think about the timetable you have in any given day and make a few notes on how you might turn this into a tactile timetable for an individual student with severe learning difficulties who is being included in a mainstream curriculum in your school.