

Bridging the Gap in Communication, Literacy and Language Development for Children with Complex Communication Needs



31 March – 2 April 2008

Nedbank Sandton Auditorium, 135 Rivonia Road, Sandton

Who Should Attend the Conference:

This workshop welcomes all who are involved with children with severe communication difficulties.

Including:

- Teachers
- Therapists — Speech & Occupational
- Parents
- Administrators
- Psychologists
- Paediatric Neurologists

CPD points are being applied for from the HPCSA.

Organised by:



Sponsor:



Conference Secretariat:

Classic Events

P.O. Box 291765 Melville

2109 Johannesburg

Tel: (011) 673-7366 / 673-7387 / 673-7095

Fax: 086-514-5412

E-mail: schoolconference@lantic.net

Enquiries on workshop content:

SAALED

Tel: 011 648-5779

e-mail: membership@saaled.org.za

Inclusive Solutions

Tel: 011 798-5562

e-mail: info@inclusivesolutions.co.za

About the Bridge School

San Francisco - www.bridgeschool.org



About the Bridge School

The Bridge School is an educational program dedicated to ensuring that children with severe speech and physical impairments achieve full participation in their communities through the use of augmentative & alternative means of communication (AAC) and assistive technology (AT) applications. The Bridge School has established an outreach program to share what is developed at the school with parents, professionals and users of AAC/AT across the world. South Africa is at present the recipient of their innovative Outreach program generously funded by The Bridge School.

Dr. Vicki R Casella is the Executive Director of The Bridge School

Aim of Conference

The primary aim of the conference is to develop capacity for professionals to take the information provided and to share with other professionals and families. Train the trainer's model has been proven to be effective in the other countries where The Bridge School has been active.

This conference provides practical and invaluable training with emphasis on no-tech and low-tech options but giving valuable insight to the advantages and use of high tech as a tool to enhance communication. The strategies and interventions presented can address a wide range of students. There are some very specific workshops targeting students with severe physical and complex communication needs, but many of the strategies will be effective with a broad range of students.

In addition, the conference has been adapted for parents and caregivers. We strongly recommend attendees attend the full 2.5 days.

Presenters

We wish to thank all the following presenters for their wonderful contribution. Unfortunately we could not document all experience, workshops and publications presented.

(Full CVs of the presenters are available at www.inclusivesolutions.co.za and www.saaled.org.za.)

Dr. Vicki R Casella -Executive Director Ed.D. M.A. B.S. **Current Position:**

Executive Director: The Bridge School, Hillsborough, CA, 2003 - Present

Director: Provide leadership to four interrelated programs (Education, Transition, Outreach and Research) supporting the education of children with severe physical and speech impairments.

Director: Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, San Francisco State University, 1993 f 2003

Personal Narrative: Dr. Vicki Casella has been involved in the education of children and adults with special needs for 46 years. Her professional experience includes classroom and clinical teaching, public and private school administration and university teaching and administration. Personally, Dr. Casella took her work home in that she has a 38 year old daughter, Denise, with a severe to profound hearing loss and an 18 year old son, Rolando, with a metabolic bone disorder. Her experiences with her daughter gave her tremendous insight into the parents' role in special education.

Kristen Gray M.A. BA.

Current Position:

The Bridge School — Outreach Program Manager
AT for ALL, Inc. — Consultation and Therapy Services, private practice
President of the US Society for AAC (2008-2010)

Stephanie Taymuree B.S. M.S.-SLP

Current Position:

K-5 teacher at Redwood Heights School and director of TACLE program (Technology and Augmentative Communication for Learning enhancement)

Kelly Fonner B.S. M.S.

Kelly has been working with individuals with disabilities since the mid 70s and with assistive technologies since 1983.

Kelly's focus areas in Assistive Technology include technology for people with Learning Disabilities and significant cognitive disabilities, computer access etc.

Jennifer Yeh B.A. M.A.

Current Position:

Presently: Online Instruction and Web Administrator — The Bridge School

She manages and co-ordinates the re-design of the Bridge School website.

Conference Sessions



The full conference schedule will be displayed on www.inclusivesolutions.co.za and www.saaled.org.za

Dr. Vicki Cassella

A Collage of Effective Strategies for Developing Communication and Literacy Skills with Children who rely on Augmentative and Alternative Communication

One teaching or intervention strategy does not fit every child or every situation. This session will present a variety of strategies, materials and techniques that have proved effective with children who have severe physical impairments and complex communication needs. Rationale for intervention and video examples of strategies will be included.

Language Acquisition: One Approach to Assessment and Intervention Planning

When a child has complex communication needs, is difficult to find one single tool that works to assess his or her acquisition of language and most programs find it necessary to use a battery of tests and checklists to guide them in the support of language development. This presentation will illustrate one tool used at The Bridge School for assessment, intervention planning, communication partner training and measuring student progress in the area of expressive communication.

Multi-Modal Communication: Process, Products and Success

Everyone uses a variety of strategies, tools, and systems to communicate effectively. Most of us talk, gesture, write, use body language and incorporate various other tools to enhance our ability to communicate with others. Supporting the development of a communication system for someone with complex communication needs poses a challenge for everyone involved in this process. This presentation will illustrate an effective multi-modal system in use, suggest strategies and demonstrate tools that can be an important part of a communication system.

Stephanie Taymuree

"I Have a Story to Tell": Developing Personal Narrative Skills of Children Who Use AAC

Personal narrative language is an essential component to the development of overall language competency and the ability to acquire literacy. Students who use AAC often display impaired personal narrative ability. This presentation will present a strategy to support the development of personal narrative skills of children who use AAC systems.

Teaching Literacy: "Literacy is for Everyone and It Begins in the Cradle"

The key to literacy development is opportunity, consistency, and access. Children with severe disabilities are often denied access to pre-literacy and literacy activities. This presentation will present light-tech strategies that provide a bridge to literacy.

Low-Tech Communication Strategies for Communication: "A Smorgasbord of Ideas"

You don't have a high-tech voice output device? Never fear. A lot can be done with pictures, objects, laminating film and Velcro! This presentation will highlight materials and strategies to engage students in learning and communication the cheap way!

Kristen Gray

Adapted Play – Building Social Interaction and Communication Skills

Children play to develop problem-solving abilities, motor skills, and cognitive understanding. Play also develops language concepts and builds interpersonal skills. This presentation will illustrate ways to make adaptations for children with disabilities in these areas: interpersonal play, pretend play, toys, games, music and art.

Adaptation All Around

Active, self-directed exploration and use of the environment helps build independence. Managing to hold pencils, turn pages of books, push buttons and other activities of daily living can present obstacles to people with disabilities. This session will teach participants to use readily available materials in order to make objects more accessible. Examples of simple adaptations as well as materials for adaptations will be available.

Visualizing Language f Strategies to Support Success

Many people have difficulty understanding spoken language, maintaining a schedule in their heads and keeping track of information resulting in frustration. Representing language in picture and written form can help individuals gain independence and control over their environment. Deciding when and how to use pictures is key to successful implementation. This presentation will provide examples and strategies for using visual materials to support student achievement.

Kelly Fonner

Assistive Technology Supports for Students with Learning Difficulties, Autism and Cognitive Disabilities

Students with cognitive disabilities, Autism or Learning Difficulties can benefit from the introduction of assistive technology and adapted materials in their educational curriculum. These learners need access to modified instruction, systematic language intervention strategies, structured choices, and support for concept development. This presentation will offer examples of tools and strategies that address these needs.

Assistive Technology Supports for Students with Learning Disabilities

High and low tech strategies provide students with learning disabilities with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, increase their academic performance and enhance their independence in the learning process. This session will illustrate portable low tech tools as well as computer software to support written language and acquisition of mathematical concepts.

Environmental Communication Teaching (ECT): Supporting Interaction and Communication in the Classroom

This session, a highly abbreviated version of an intensive training program, will cover the basic elements of ECT. This process helps teachers critically evaluate their teaching environment, structure activities and schedules to optimize communication opportunities within their classroom, document student performance and modify instruction based on collected data.

Conference Programme



Monday, 31 March 2008

08:00 Registration

08:30 **For Everyone**

Welcome, Introductions, Overview

09:45 **For Everyone**

The Bridge School - Philosophy, Organization and Dissemination

10:15 Tea Break

10:45 **For Teachers/Therapists and Administrators**

Teaching Literacy: "Literacy is For Everyone and It Begins in the Cradle" (**Taymuree**)

For Parents

Supporting Language Development for Children with Physical and Speech Challenges (**Casella**)

12:15 Lunch Break

13:15 **For Teachers/Therapists**

Environmental Communication Teaching (ECT): Supporting Interaction and Communication in the Classroom (**Fonner**)

For Administrators

Establishing and Maintaining Support for Teachers and Therapists in a Special Education Setting (**Casella**)

For Parents

"Literacy is for Everyone and It Begins in the Cradle" (**Taymuree**)
Making and Adapting Communication Tools (**Gray**)

30 Minute Tea Break

17:00 End of Day

Tuesday, 1 April 2008

08:00 Registration

08:30 **For Everyone**

A Collage of Effective Strategies for Developing Communication and Literacy Skills with Children who rely on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (**Casella**)

10:30 Morning Break

11:00 **Concurrent Session**

"I Have a Story to Tell": Developing Personal Narrative Skills of Children who use AAC (**Taymuree**)

Concurrent Session

Assistive Technology Supports for Students with Cognitive Disabilities (**Fonner**)

12:30 Lunch

13:30 **Concurrent Session**

Adapted Play - Building Social Interaction and Communication Skills (**Gray**)

Concurrent Session

Assistive Technology Supports for Students with Learning Disabilities (**Fonner**)

15:00 Open Forum - Discussion and Questions

15:30 End of Day

Wednesday, 2 April 2008

08:00 No Registration - Day starts 8:00 sharp

08:00 **Concurrent Session**

Low-tech Communication Strategies: A Smorgasbord of Ideas" (**Taymuree**)

Concurrent Session

Language Acquisition: One Approach to Assessment and Intervention Planning (**Casella**)

09:30 **Concurrent Session**

Adaptation All Around (**Gray**)

Concurrent Session

Multi-Modal Communication: Process, Products and Success (**Casella**)

11:00 Morning Break

11:30 **For Everyone**

Teaching writing to children with complex communication difficulties (**Taymuree**)

12:30 Closing Remarks, Discussion and Questions