



A guide to modelling

What is modelling?

Modelling is essentially showing someone how something is done. It's demonstrating how to use AAC by participating and using an AAC device yourself.

Modelling and showing is also sometimes called aided language simulation.

When children learn to communicate using natural speech we all model without even realising it!

We show them how to communicate by talking around and to them using our own speech all the time.

People learning to use AAC don't have the advantage other learners have of seeing speech being demonstrated every hour of every day. This is why modelling can be so important, to show a child how to communicate using their AAC.

Tips for modelling

- 1 Remember AAC is a communication method and not an activity. So there needs to be a real reason to communicate.
- 2 Make sure what is being talked about is worthwhile (from the AAC learners perspective).
- 3 Follow their lead.
- 4 Model without expectation of a response.
- 5 Talk about things that are important to the learner.
- 6 Notice what is immediately around them - model language that reflects this.

Think about:

What other strategies do they use? (gesture, eye pointing, body language, facial expressions). Don't make assumptions about what they want to say.

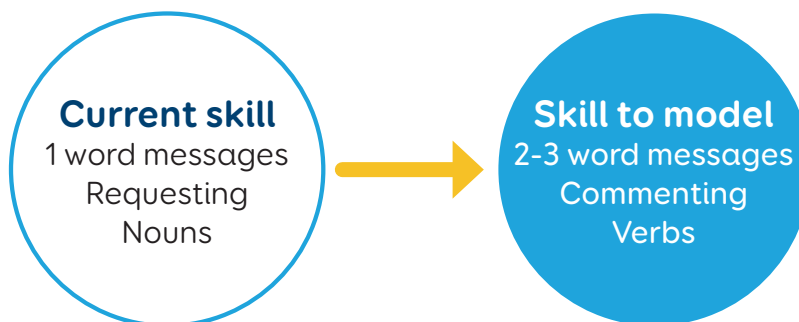


Extend skills

Extend skills by using different words to say the same thing. This allows the learner to connect with the word they prefer.

For example: I wonder / maybe you're thinking / perhaps.

This also helps the learner understand that you may not know the right word to use, and that's okay - it builds interaction. Another way to extend skills is to model 1-2 words above the current skill level. This also supports attention development.



Processes

Processes are a key skill in developing communication and refer to the ability to problem solve, make mistakes, take back what you have said, repair and say something in a different way.

Ways to support processes:

- 1 Talk about processes so that in time the learner will do it for themselves.
- 2 Don't be afraid to make mistakes.
- 3 Show the learner how you problem solve.

Situation

Strategy to develop process knowledge

You've written the wrong thing. →	"Whoops I've made a mistake! Better delete that" (as you model how to delete what you've written)
You can't think of a word, or can't remember where to find it. →	"I'm looking for a word. I think it's in descriptions?" (if it's not in descriptions, model and comment where you go next)
Old words keep being used, or are cluttering the message window. →	"I'm going to clear the message to get rid of old words" (select clear to model this function)
The learner isn't looking. →	"Shall we look at your talker to see what you want to say?" (model how the device can be used)
When really cool stuff is going on around the learner. →	"Wow!, that's ace!, love that!" (model where to find these social phrases as you say them)

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