



Empowering Excellence Through a Collaborative AAC Coaching Cohort

Karley Sykora, MS, CCC/SLP

Brainerd Public Schools

Kirsten Morton-Aldous, P/HD, TBI, OHD Specialist, AT Specialist

Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative

Welcome & Introduction

- Karley Sykora, MS, CCC/SLP
 - Speech-Language Pathologist
 - Brainerd Public Schools
- Kirsten Morton-Aldous, P/HD, TBI, OHD Specialist, AT Specialist
 - Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative (PBEC)

Learner Objectives

- Participants will describe why a coaching model may be an effective way to build capacity of Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams.
- Participants will identify key principles and strategies involved with a coaching model.
- Participants will demonstrate knowledge of effective collaborative practices used within our coaching model.

Background and Purpose

Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative

- 6 Districts & 3 Charter Schools
 - Aitkin Public Schools, Brainerd Public Schools, Crosby Ironton Public Schools, Pequot Lakes Public Schools, Pillager Public Schools, Pine River Backus Public Schools, Crosslake Community School, Discovery Woods Charter School, and Pillager Area Charter School

Founding Professionals

- 3 Cooperative Staff Members
- 11 Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP)

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Coaching Model Goals

- Empower and build capacity in IEP teams to provide AAC support to learners who present complex communication needs.
- Serve as a resource for AAC strategies
- Provide support to speech/language pathologists as they lead IEP teams through the AAC Process.

Three Foundation Years

Year One (2018-2019)

Monthly meetings/trainings, vendor visits, creating a shared knowledge

Year Two – Taking a Step Back (2019-2020)

Continued monthly meetings/trainings, developed AAC Process Framework, developed a shared Google drive that matched AAC Process Levels

Year Three - Bringing in Our Colleagues (2020-2021)

Introduced our process, presented at cooperative meetings, moved to monthly virtual roundtable meetings

Our AAC Process

Teams flow from level to level,
not necessarily in order listed



Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Cohort

Information for SLPs, SPED Teachers, Admin

AAC Cohort Coaching Model Goals

Empower and build capacity in IEP teams to provide AAC support to learners who present complex communication needs.

Serve as a resource for AAC strategies.

Provide support to speech/language pathologists as they lead IEP teams through the AAC Process.

Assistive Technology PBEC Staff

For more information about the AAC Cohort, contact one of the AT staff members:

Kirsten Morton-Aldous "Morty", Teacher of the Physically Impaired/AT Specialist

kirsten.morton-aldous@isd181.org

Karley Sykora, AAC Cohort Facilitator, SLP

karley.sykora@isd181.org

AAC Cohort Members

Aitkin: Shawna Hill, SLP

Brainerd ECSE: Erica Braun SLP, Sarah

Munsterteiger, SLP, Debbie Ray, SLP

Brainerd Elementary: Suzanne Lokken, SLP &

Karley Sykora, SLP

Brainerd Secondary: Alyssa Daniels, SLP

Crosby-Ironton: Renae Stueber, SLP

Pequot Lakes: Amanda Sigler, SLP

Pillager: Lindsay Solheim, SLP

Pine River-Backus: Mackenzie Determan, SLP

AAC PROCESS

CONSIDERATION

SETT Framework (Student- Environment-Tasks-Tools) is an organizational tool to help collaborative teams consider what tools and strategies work in the student's real world to foster educational success

CONSULTATION REQUEST

If needed, an AT Consultation is initiated to access an AAC Cohort member. This is an information gathering, coaching process.

FEATURE MATCHING

Systematic process of matching student's current strengths, abilities & needs to available tools & strategies.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS TRIALS & DATA COLLECTION

Low-tech to high-tech
AAC Lending Library availability

TEAM DECISION & ACQUISITION

Two Pathways - Educational or Medical
Report writing, IEP writing, Funding

IMPLEMENTATION

AAC training & integration for student and communication partners, Intentional follow up, Transition: ESCE to Kdgn, Elementary to Secondary, Secondary to Transition programming, ESY services

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

An ongoing process identifying supports and barriers, making adjustments as identified.

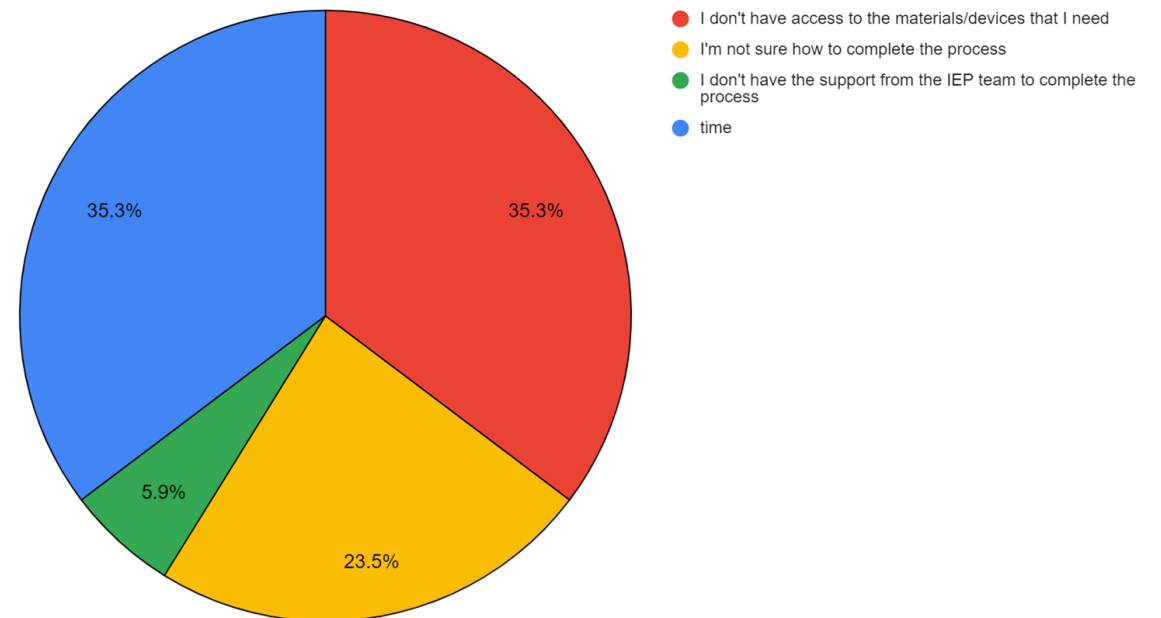


Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative
-October 2023

Letting Feedback Be Our Guide...

Surveys sent out quarterly to speech-language pathologists within the Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative helped us know where to focus.

AAC Challenges
January 2020



Examples of How We Addressed Each Challenge

“I don’t have access to the materials that I need”

- AAC Lending Library
- Assistive Technology Lending Library barcode system
- Shared Google Drive of resources

“I’m not sure how to complete the process”

- Grant supported workshop by Rachel Madel + Chris Bugaj
- AAC Tidbits
- SETT Framework resources
- Access to AAC Cohort Coaches

Learning to Use Coaching Questions

Cohort Coaches worked together to develop a “Quick Reference” document. Some examples of questions we developed are:

- “What change do you and the IEP team want to see?”
- “What does the team need in order to support this student and make this change happen?”
- “What features of a communication system are important for this student?”
- “If “yes” to (a specific communication system), what did you say “no” to?”

(More) Examples of How We Addressed Each Challenge

“I don’t have the support I need from the IEP Team”

- Relationship building
- Empowering teams with strength-based coaching strategies

“Time”

- The great mystery!
- Administrative support

Coaching Strategy: Reflective Listening

Reflecting on the speaker's message *in your own words*

“What I hear you saying is...”

“It seems as though...”

Coaching Strategy: Let's Practice! Reflective Listening

Timmy's teacher reports, "He never uses his device."

Coaching Strategy: Let's Practice! Reflective Listening

Timmy's educational assistant reports, "His device is never charged when it comes back to school."

Coaching Strategy: Strength-Based Coaching

Capitalizing on the positives! Proactive check-ins to build confidence and leverage areas of strength and growth.

“What went well today?”

“Why do you think it went well?”

“I noticed how you...”

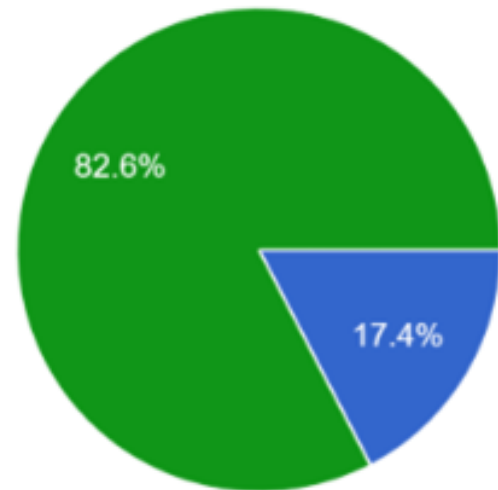
Coaching Strategy: Let's Practice! Strength-Based Coaching

Ivan's educational assistant (EA) has been working on using more wait time. She has an abrasive tone and is often observed speaking for Ivan (e.g., "Well, he thinks..."). She is known to ask repeated questions without giving Ivan enough time to process and respond. She is admittedly uncomfortable with AAC and often comments that she's just a "dumb EA."

Fast Forward to January 2024

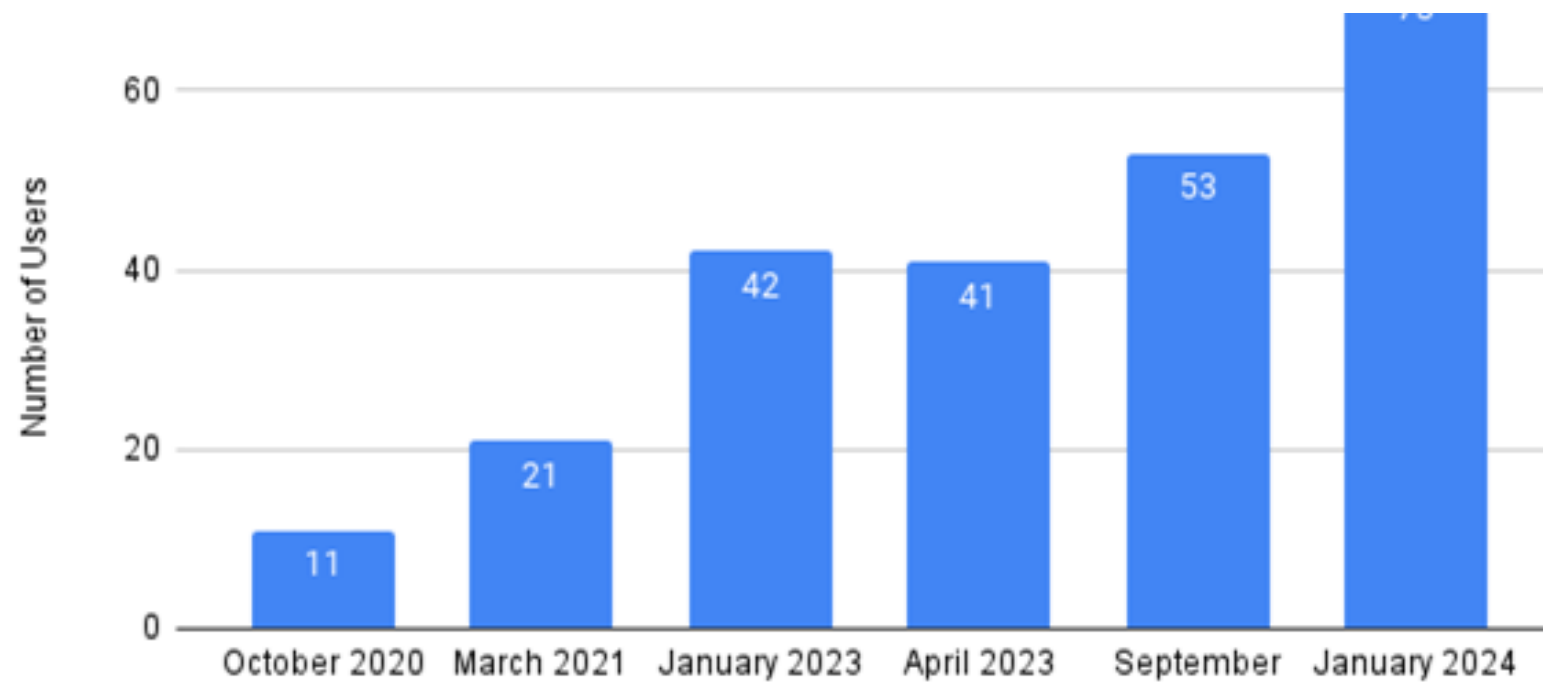
What is your biggest challenge in the area of AAC assessment/acquisition?

3 responses



- I'm not sure how to complete the process
- I don't have access to the materials/devices that I need
- I don't have the support from the IEF team to complete the process
- Time

The Result of Increased Assessment Capacity



Our Next Steps

- Virtual Roundtable meetings for all IEP Team members held every 6 weeks: networking + problem solving
- Cohort coaches meet in-person twice yearly
- Working toward implementation plans and fidelity using the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) matrices



Questions?



Thank you!

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