

Au~entative Communication News

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INSIDE

THIS ISSUE . . .

For Consumers

AAC users
and the arts

Clinical News

The arts
in intervention

Equipment

Exemplary Programs

Very Special Arts

Governmental

National Standards
for Arts Education



For Consumers

AAC users and the arts
with John McCarthy

"Art is communication." People everywhere express and receive messages through the arts. Creative works hang on the walls of our houses, play on the radio, line our bookshelves and show at local movie theaters. It is important to acknowledge the potential impact of the arts on the lives of AAC users. Music, painting, sculpture, writing, drama and dance convey a range of ideas, thoughts and feelings. Often the arts can express emotional messages with more depth than traditional modes of communication. The arts are important to all of us because they provide:

- a source of enjoyment
- a vehicle for self-expression
- a means of escape from daily routines
- a way to relax
- meaningful leisure activities
- opportunities for socialization
- an avenue to learn the experiences and feelings of others
- a forum to foster independent thought and divergent thinking
- access to new experiences.

The Arts and AAC

There are at least two very important reasons to discuss the role of the arts in the lives of AAC users. From the perspective of a clinician or teacher, the arts can (continued on page 2)

UPFRONT

Remarkably little written information is available about the role of the arts-music, the visual arts, the performing arts, literature and the like-in the lives of individuals who have severe speech and/or writing difficulties. The lack of literature does not reflect what is going on. This double issue of ACN begins to report on some of the activity.

Six months ago, Dr. Janice Light, Associate Professor at Penn State University, and I discussed the possible value for her graduate students to

collaborate with me on an issue of ACN for independent study credit. This issue is the result of our first such collaboration. It is my great pleasure to introduce my co-author, John McCarthy, whose research, enthusiasm for the arts and eagerness to learn underlies this issue. John has a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance from Penn State University. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology at Penn State University. John doesn't see the fields of music (or other areas of the arts) and speech- (continued on page 2)



UPFRONT (continued from page 1)

language pathology as being so separate. "I see communication as a sphere that encompasses different things. For me singing was a means of communication and introduced me to other languages and cultures. I learned about expressing emotions and myself through art, and I learned about how other people express themselves." John is also interested in teaching.

He said, "Dr. Janice Light introduced me to the field of augmentative and alternative communication. She is an outstanding mentor and was a tremendous help in encouraging me to pursue this issue." Janice said, "I think John's involvement in helping to produce an issue of ACN has proved to be a remarkably valuable and practical part of his graduate preparation."

This issue is divided into five sections. For **Consumers** explores the benefits and barriers, as well as the ways AAC users can participate in the arts. **Clinical News** focuses on the arts as a therapeutic tool to develop social skills, teach language skills, foster self-motivation and educate the public about individuals who use AAC. The **Equipment** section describes ways technology can facilitate the appreciation, re-creation and creation of art, and provides several examples. **Exemplary Programs** highlights the Very Special Arts, an international program to enhance participation in the arts for individuals with disabilities. Finally, **Governmental** discusses new standards for arts education in the United States and raises concerns about the implications for individuals who use AAC.

For ten years, *Augmentative Communication News* has been black and white and red (read) all over. The next issue will look very different. I have had ACN redesigned. Beginning with volume 11, number 1, the color and layout will change. Again, please accept my apologies for the lateness of this issue. I am continuing to work hard to catch up.

Sarah Blackstone, Ph.D., Co-author

For Consumers (cont. from page 1)

provide a therapeutic scaffold for the achievement of other goals. For example, participating in a play can facilitate the growth of language skills, increase operational competence using an AAC device and

encourage social integration. [See Clinical News for a discussion of the use of the arts in therapy.] However, concentrating only on the therapeutic value of the arts minimizes its true importance. A second, and more important, reason for focusing on the arts is that

Table I. Benefits of the arts for people who use AAC

Expanding leisure activities	Music, painting, writing and drama offer options that can be done alone or with others.
Increasing language skills	Poetry, creative writing, journals, and drama allow individuals to use language in meaningful ways.
Expanding self-expression	Music, painting, drawing, theater, dance and sculpture allow individuals to make powerful statements without the constraints of language.
Increasing social opportunities	Community events can increase social contacts and allow AAC users to meet others with similar interests.
Supporting inclusion	The arts are often a vehicle for inclusion in school or the community.

individuals who use AAC, just like everyone else, should have access to the arts for their own sake. If they choose to participate, there are many ways to do so.

The benefits. For augmented communicators, the arts may have special importance because they provide avenues for expression and involvement. Table I depicts some of these benefits. For example, some individuals with disabilities have limited opportunities to engage in leisure activities.² The arts offer options for recreation that are meaningful and pleasurable. For those who enjoy using language, the arts can provide ways to enhance and expand linguistic expression, free from the typical confines of conversation. For individuals with limited language skills, the arts offer a range of media (i.e., music, painting, sculpture, drama, dance and so on) through

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which individuals can make powerful statements and express deep feelings and thoughts without language. Finally, the arts can extend access to a broad range of social situations and can be a vehicle for inclusion. Participating in performances, as well as viewing and listening to art in its many forms, can increase an individual's opportunities for meaningful socialization and integration.

The barriers. Many individuals who use AAC have limited exposure to and involvement in the arts. Obstacles abound, and include: (1) architectural constraints, (2) transportation problems, (3) attitudinal barriers and (4) financial constraints. Getting to a performance or practice session can be a real challenge for people with

physical, cognitive and/or communication disabilities. In addition, others may view individuals with disabilities as not able to participate in the arts, or they may not know how to facilitate the involvement of people who use AAC. Another barrier is that some families and social groups push aside the arts as "fluff." Furthermore, busy individuals, including people who use AAC and their caregivers, may feel they do not have time for the arts in the contexts of their daily lives and efforts to accomplish other goals. While the arts are perceived as a luxury by some, others consider it a crucial part of their daily life. Unfortunately, many individuals with disabilities who pay for assistive technology, services, programs

and training, as well as "food and shelter, find that pursuing an interest in the arts can be too expensive.

levels of participation

According to the National Standards for Arts Education, people can experience and participate in the arts at three levels. These are described below and summarized in Table II.³ To a particular individual, one level may be more important than another, e.g., fewer people create art than appreciate it. Nonetheless, each level is important for its own sake.

1. Appreciation of the arts. Appreciation means experiencing music, drama, books, poetry, paintings and other art forms, through one or more sensory (continued on page 4)

Table II. Examples of levels of participation in drama, music, literature and the visual arts

Art Form	APPRECIATION	RE-CREATION	CREATION
Drama	Attending performances alone or with a group; Listening to plays on radio or audiotape; Watching performances on video or TV; Reading plays (in print or with a screen reader); Discussing plays with others-face to face, via e-mail or chat rooms; Reading biographies of actors/directors.	Performing previously written plays, monologues, dialogues and skits using mime, a VOCA, signs with text, shadow actors, and/or interpreters; Acting out stories using puppets.	Acting/performing; Improvisation; Writing original plays or screen-plays; Adapting plays, film, video from existing stories; Standup/sitdown comedy.
Music	Attending concerts alone or with a group; Listening to CD's, audiotape, radio; Watching concerts on video or TV; Visiting music stores; Discussing music/performance with others-face to face, via e-mail or chat rooms; Downloading music from the Internet.	Participating in preschool and school music classes/activities; Performing previously written music either solo or with a group; Producing music via a VOCA; Producing music via adapted musical instruments.	Improvisation; Composing new musical pieces for solo or group performances via voice, VOCAs, electronic and adapted musical instruments.
Literature	Reading books/poetry; Being read to by a person or screen reader software; Attending public readings (e.g., at a coffee house or library); Listening to literature on audiotapes, CDs, Internet; Reading biographies of writers; Discussing creative writing with others-face to face, via e-mail or chat rooms; Attending book club meetings.	Writing stories and poems using templates or graphic symbols; Presenting dramatic readings or group readings via a VOCA or sign language; Reciting a poem; Writing a synopsis of a story; Reading to a friend or group; Telling stories written by others.	Writing original plays, stories, poems; Keeping a journal; Adapting stories/poems/plays for video/film; Generating poetry from a word bank; Writing an autobiography.
Visual Arts	Going to art galleries alone or with a group; Reading books on art; Taking a class in art appreciation; Discussing art with others-face to face, via e-mail or chat room; Looking at art over the Internet.	Trying to copy famous art; Using clip art to make a picture; Doing dot-to-dot pictures or painting by number; Coloring; Taking classes in how to paint (water colors, oils, etc.); Taking a class in computer art, ceramics, sculpture, photography.	Drawing; Sculpture; Paper mache; Puppetry; Painting using oils, water colors and other media; Using a computer to create designs, pictures; Graffiti; Collages; Photography.



For Consumers. (Continued from page 3)

channels. It involves "taking in" the artistic work of others and may entail attending live performances, listening to or watching recorded performances and going to galleries. In addition, appreciation of literature can occur independently, with the help of screen reading software or by listening to someone else read. Additionally, appreciation of the arts can involve studying the artistic works of accomplished visual artists, musicians, authors, and choreographers.

"Appreciation means experiencing music, drama, books, poetry, paintings and other art forms, through one or more sensory channels."

Appreciating art means not only having access to art, but also experiencing it emotionally. Appreciation begins early in childhood and continues throughout life. For many, art is an integral part of each day and informs us about our thoughts and feelings. For example, a song can remind one of a friend, a poem may inspire feelings of joy or sympathy, and a play or movie can make one reconsider a previously held opinion. Appreciation of art often is not only a private experience. Many enjoy talking with others about a performance or artistic experience. For those who like to share ideas and reactions, discussions about art can lead to meaningful conversations, as well as personal growth.

Appreciation also can mean "understanding the interactions

among the various professions and roles involved in creating, performing, studying, teaching, presenting and supporting the arts and in appreciating their interdependent nature." To facilitate this understanding, appreciation of art may include discussions about specific books, poems, songs, paintings, music, films and plays, as well as conversations about the arts (and artists) in general. For individuals who use AAC, discussions might entail describing one's feelings about a particular book using an alphabet board, expressing one's reactions to a movie using a set of words or symbols, and talking about a favorite character or critiquing a musician's performance using a voice output communication aid. True appreciation of the arts is never a passive activity, whether it is an entirely internal experience or a social one.

2. Re-creation of the arts. Re-creation of art involves the reproduction of previously written, drawn, choreographed or composed works. Individuals using AAC often have limited experience in re-creating artistic works due to problems with access. Physical obstacles, transportation difficulties, financial constraints and attitudinal barriers can and do result in fewer opportunities to play musical compositions, act, sketch, dance, sing and write. For example, it takes effort to program songs for use in a voice output communication aid (VOCA). In addition, scripts calling for characters who use AAC are few and far between

and so are directors who will cast an augmented communicator in a role. Also, it is not easy to find teachers who know how to support individuals who use AAC in creative writing, drawing, dance and/or music classes.

"Re-creation of art involves the reproduction of previously written, drawn, choreographed or composed works."

Rick Hohn taught art classes to adults with disabilities. Rick himself is a painter and an AAC user with cerebral palsy. He described how his personal experience as an artist has influenced his teaching. As a teacher, part of Rick's message to his art students (some of whom used AAC strategies) was "Never give up and throw a painting in the trash." Also, "Don't be too hard on yourself." Rick paints in oils and watercolors with a brush attached to my head stylus. "After years of being frustrated by an inability to do detail work, I discovered that I was a natural at impressionistic art. Although landscapes sell more, I enjoy painting people with disabilities and making statements that we can do anything we want.,,6

In order to increase the participation of AAC users in the re-creation of the arts, the field needs to adopt a "can-do" attitude. Providing access to the kind of art individuals are interested in doing is important. AAC users may want to program popular songs in their devices so they can join in at parties or community events.

Most speech output devices can "sing," and many devices are keyboard emulators that can be used to access music, drawing and publishing programs on a computer or over the Internet.. An example of a new product that enables AAC users to sing songs is *Music From the Heart* written by Jeff Moyer. It is a computer disk with 13 songs in both male and female voice pitch ranges. The songs are about living effectively with disability and seeing disability in the healthy context of human diversity.⁷ This can be a meaningful part of a disability pride project at home or in school. The disk was developed for AAC devices that are: (1) capable of loading text files from a computer disk and (2) use DECTalk speech synthesizers.

Another way to re-create the arts is to perform in public. It is important to acknowledge that when individuals who use AAC devices perform-whether in school or at a community recital, conference or ball game-they are sending a powerful message to the audience about the capabilities of individuals with severe expressive communication impairments. The kind of message being sent, however, is a relevant concern. Disability rights activists would caution AAC users not to get caught in a "poster child" situation which could be used to invoke pity.

An example of a powerful performance occurred in 1995 when Michael B. Williams, author of *Alternatively, Speaking*, read his original mime poem using an AAC device, while it was enacted by Rick

Wamer, a talented mime. The combination of these artists performing their art and the poignancy of the message they conveyed made a lasting impression on the 100 plus participants at *Alliance <95: Outcomes in AAC*. In the poem, Michael told of a recurrent dream (or perhaps nightmare).⁸

It starts, in this blackness of nothing...

Then there is the light,
Dim at first.. Slowly growing
brighter.

I try to move and cannot..
I'm tied to a chair.

I try to call out. No answer.
My every move controlled by others.
Forever in a state-run institution.
No escape.

My every move controlled by others.
Leisure time?
Plenty of that, But with nothing to do.
Forever the same. Year after year.
Nothing to do ... Forever.

I awake. Surrounded by the familiar
things of life,
Saved by high-octane literacy.
I am here with you,
Empowered by the written word.
(Michael B. Williams, 1995)

"Creation involves the
development and
production of new works
and is a lifelong process."

3. Creation of the arts.

"The arts are a way of knowing.
[Individuals] grow in their ability to
apprehend their world when they
learn the arts. As they create ...
they learn how to express them-
selves and how to communicate with

Creation involves the
development and production of
new works, and is a lifelong
process. Rick Hohn took up
painting at 15 years of age. After
learning how to use a typewriter
for communication purposes, he

tried a paint brush on his head
stylus. He reports:⁶

I can still remember the first painting I did in my high school art class. It was an impressionistic sky, a brown mountain and a stream. I thought it looked terrible, and I hoped that nobody would see it! But my teacher took the water color painting and taped it on the black board in the front! Dh, my, gosh!

To my amazement, my classmates seemed to like it, from their oohs and aahs. I did not understand. I was used to my mom's and my uncle's realistic paintings. Mine was nothing like theirs.

Through the encouragement of my mom, I continued to paint after high school using water colors. I still did not like my art and gave my work as presents to my friends and relatives in hope that they would not get too mad! Again, to my amazement, they said that they loved what I did.

Several years later, I met an art teacher who explained the difference between my art, which I thought looked ugly, and my mom's art that almost looked real to life. The teacher said that I painted impressionistic, and that I should not compare it with other styles. He invited me to come to his art class where he encouraged me to develop my own style.

Developing a piece of art is not the only form of creation. Adapting existing compositions is another way to create art. Also, creation does not have to be a long process, although it certainly can be. Quick improvisations of music, drama, and poetry are fun and provide opportunities for participation without extensive preparation and rehearsals.

Family members, friends, teachers and service providers can encourage individuals who use AAC to create music, plays, dances, pictures, stories and poems. These (continued on page 6-

For Consumers (cont. from page 5)
compositions can be re-created by other individuals who use AAC, or shared with colleagues and friends, displayed or performed in the community and saved as part of an individual artist's portfolio of work. They can also be compiled with other artists in an anthology or exhibition.

Staring Back: The disability experience from the inside out is an anthology edited by Kenny Fries, a well-known American poet. In the introduction, Fries recounts how the book began.

In 1994, I was invited to and participated in the historic "A Contemporary Chautauqua: Disability and Performance," organized by Victoria Ann-Lewis, director of Other Voices, at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. That April weekend, prominent artists with disabilities gathered from all across the United States to perform, read, teach, learn, talk, and get to know one another. That we had something valuable to offer was evidenced not only by an audience hungry to share our work, not only by the overcrowded classes, the sold-out performances, the TV camera crews from CNN and WNET, but also by the lasting nurturing relationships forged by many of the participant artists.

When leaving Los Angeles, I did not know the writing I was exposed to that weekend would eventually form the core of this anthology. But returning home, I knew I was not alone in my struggle to give voice to the disability experience, an experience which throughout history has been marginalized or cooped, if not ignored.

Reflecting on the book, Fries says, "... The work in *Staring Back* not only shows that pain is but a small part of living life as a person with a disability. It also challenges us to look anew at the

"I knew I was not alone in my struggle to give voice to the disability experience, an experience which throughout history has been marginalized or cooped, if not ignored."
(Kenny Fries, 1997)

disabilities of FDR and Matisse, the lives of Helen Keller and Frida Kahlo, and the work of Stephen Hawking. 12

AAC user contributions to the arts

Several augmented communicators have written books that tell their personal stories. However, we know very little about the artistic talents of people who use AAC strategies and techniques across the spectrum of the arts. An anthology of the creative expressions of individuals who use AAC is now under development. The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) is planning to publish the artistic works of AAC users from around the world. Edited by an AAC user, the book will feature individuals whose ability to express themselves through speech may be limited, but whose communication through the arts. Musical scores, as well as pictures of paintings, pottery, sculpture and other visual arts will be considered for inclusion in the book. This publication will be a documentary of the experience of living, communicating and creating as someone who uses AAC.

Note: To recommend artists as contributors to the anthology, and for more information, contact the ISAAC Secretariat, 49 The Donway West, Suite

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Summary

People who use AAC, like everyone else, are surrounded by the arts. At the very least, AAC users should have access. As children, individuals who use AAC need to be exposed to various forms of the arts and have opportunities to explore and learn about them. Without the support of AAC professionals, these experiences are unlikely to occur.

For those who choose to get more involved, opportunities and resources to appreciate, create and re-create art need to be more available. For too long, individuals with limited movements and access to language have also had limited access to other forms of expression. While the level of involvement of a particular individual ultimately will depend upon that person's interests, talents and resources, the creations and re-creations of AAC users around the world ought to be shared within the AAC community and beyond.

Professionals working with individuals who use AAC can help facilitate each client's awareness of and access to the arts. In addition, teachers and therapists can use the arts to enhance the outcomes of AAC intervention. Art can make learning more enjoyable, as well as provide opportunities to participate in activities that typically are not available through more traditional intervention programs. It is important to realize that when activities involve the arts, the clinician may have a set of goals and the client may have a set of goals. However, outside of the clinician/client context, the AAC user is likely to have another set of goals. As discussed in For Consumers, AAC users may engage in the arts for recreational purposes and/or as a hobby or vocation. Using the arts in therapy is different from being involved in the arts in daily life.

Therapeutic goals

As a clinical tool in AAC, the arts can achieve four major therapeutic goals: (1) develop and foster social skills and relationships; (2) teach language; (3) teach self management skills; and (4) increase public awareness about the capabilities of individuals who use AAC.

Developing social skills.

"Involvement in the arts can lead to social interactions and school and community integration." 13 AAC service providers and family members can use the arts

Table III. Using the arts to develop social skills	
Goals and Benefits	Examples of techniques
Enhance integration with peers.	Develop theater activities involving teams where the AAC user has a meaningful role and a chance to interact with peers. Provide opportunities for the individual who uses AAC to take a role to play with peers, use a VOCA to participate. In a Singing activity, or be responsible for one line of a poem in a group performance.
Build teaming skills.	Perform plays, skits, musical compositions or poems in groups of individuals. With and without disabilities.
Develop an appreciation of the motivations and perspectives of others.	Recreate a character in a play. Engage in pretend play. Write songs or poems about others' feelings and experiences.
Foster friendships.	Attend performances with others. Discuss the arts with others.

to enhance integration and social interaction, build teaming skills, develop an appreciation and understanding of the motivations and perspectives of others and foster friendships. Examples of techniques that utilize the arts to achieve social goals for both children and adults are listed in Table III. Predominant among these goals is providing meaningful activities to foster

"Involvement in the arts can lead to social interactions and school and community integration."

community integration. However, the success of these activities depends upon the careful planning and expertise of professionals who provide the necessary adaptations that enable AAC users to participate. Chadwick and Clark caution that many children with severe disabilities do not have an opportunity to develop social skills, even when they work with groups of typical children.¹⁴ This is of great concern because research also suggests that the amount of interaction children with disabilities have with nondisabled peers is a predictor of their progress.¹ Therefore,

activities that foster social skills in AAC users can lead to important outcomes.

Many school districts today include individuals who use AAC in regular classrooms. However, methods for facilitating inclusion are not clearly established.¹⁶ Teachers and instructional assistants often have no training in inclusion or familiarity with the needs of AAC users. Not surprisingly, many find it difficult to support the active participation of children with severe communication impairments, particularly at the middle and high school levels.

Classes and after-school activities in the visual arts, music, creative writing, dance, photography and drama offer opportunities for meaningful inclusion that can foster social skills. In addition, these activities may develop recreational and vocational interests, as well as nurture a life-long involvement in the arts. Thus, it is unfortunate when (a) parents and staff perceive art only as a recreational activity or a "frill" class, and (continued on page 8)



Clinical News (Continued from page 7)

(b) children with disabilities are not adequately supported by teachers so they can participate in classes or activities concerned with the arts. Using the arts to increase social skills is a legitimate, therapeutic activity. But, like all others, it requires careful planning.

Teaching Language Skills.

"The arts are an invaluable learning tool that can be universally used to assist learning for all people with disabilities."¹⁷ Specifically with regard to language, clinicians can use the arts to: (1) develop ways of depicting reality and fantasy for children, youth and adults, (2) expand vocabulary, (3) increase turn-taking, (4) practice sequencing and timing, (5) support literacy skills (including phonemic awareness) and (6) encourage the use of multiple modes of communication. For ideas about the use of art to teach language, see Table IV. One example is the use of theater to teach sequencing, timing and turn-taking skills to children. In 1988, Sheela Stuart described a program for children

"The arts are an invaluable learning tool that can be universally used to assist learning for all people with disabilities."

at varying skill levels who used AAC devices.¹⁸ The children wrote a script and then performed in the play they wrote. Staff had specific language and communication goals for each child. As part of the process, they made a videotape of the performance so it could be shared with others.

Speech-language pathologists and teachers use a range of artistic media to teach language. For example, Caroline Musselwhite and Pati King-DeBaun describe the use of music, literature, the performing arts and the visual arts in their book *Emergent Literacy Success: Merging technology and whole language for students with disabilities*.¹⁹ This practical, 414 page book is a wealth of information and ideas. It details ways to help individual AAC users learn to read and write, and much, much more! Many of the suggested activities use music, drawing, poetry, puppetry,

songs and good books to foster an interest in reading and writing. The authors devote almost 100 pages to helping teachers think about utilizing music and song to support reading and poetry and using the visual arts to support writing. They also describe ways to use technology to encourage the development of language skills in children and youth. The appendix includes information about AAC devices, computer software, strategies and "magic tricks" for using devices and computers to support AAC through a range of art activities that serve as a bridge to literacy. Examples of products that support literacy through art activities are *Kid Pix* (Broderbund), *ClickIt* and *IntelliKeys* (Intelli-Tools), *Switch Interface* (AbleNet, Don Johnston), *Ke:nx*, *Discover Switch* (Don Johnston) and *Speaking Dynamically* (Mayer-Johnson, Inc.). For example, *Kid Pix* can be set up as a drawing template that allows children to scan through items located near the drawing to create a fun graphic related to a story.²⁰ *Learning the Brew* and *Yuck Soup* software (Creative Communicator, \$25) make it easy to create poems. *Yuck Soup* also has ready-to-print communication displays for story participation and retelling.²¹

Using the arts in teaching language has advantages over more traditional drill methods. In the arts, for example, there are no right or wrong answers. As a result, everyone involved in learning and using language can focus on expressing ideas and

Table IV. Using the arts to teach language skills

Goals and Benefits	Techniques
Develop ways of depicting reality and fantasy	Improvise scenes, music, or poems; Roleplay; Engage in pretend play with peers.
Expand vocabulary	Adapt scripts to target specific vocabulary; Teach vocabulary through songs or poems.
Increase turn-taking	Perform dialogues in scripted plays; Roleplay.
Practice sequencing and timing	Activate messages at appropriate times during a play, song or poetry performance.
Develop literacy skills	Act out storybooks; Increase the complexity of poems to scaffold language.
Use multiple modalities to communicate	Supplement scripted lines with gestures; Use gestures or facial expressions in reaction to music or creative writing; Use gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze and vocalizations to describe a scene or event

feelings rather than getting the "right" answer. The arts also can provide opportunities for individuals to explore unknown aspects of the world in an enjoyable way and display talents and strengths rather than limitations. Theater, songs, and poetry offer alternative ways to use language and enable professionals to teach language skills in an enjoyable manner.

Sheela Stuart thinks storytelling and play-acting are important elements of communication. "We try to identify a genre that best fits the age group, i.e., older age adults need World War II stories to entertain their listeners, while preschoolers like to participate in storybook reading."²² She describes how to use *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (and similar classics) with young children. A child who uses an AAC device might say the first line—"Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?" Speaking kids say the varying lines—"I see a __, looking at me." Stuart also uses puppetry. For example, the AAC user can play the big bad wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* using a gruff voice on an AAC device. She observes that individuals with severe cognitive disabilities often become engaged and "the payoff is powerful."

"Rewards inherent to the artistic process can inspire individuals to work on specific skills."

Fostering Self-Motivation.

Teachers and clinicians can use the arts to foster motivation and teach self-management skills. The arts require a

dedication and a process of practicing, rehearsing and revising works in progress. Rewards inherent in the artistic process can inspire individuals to work on specific skills and may even help people develop personal schedules.

Unfortunately, individuals with disabilities often have schedules imposed upon them and may not have opportunities to learn how to accomplish projects and manage their time. Also, teachers and clinicians sometimes have difficulty finding things that are "motivating." It can help to consider a client's interests in music, drawing, video, film and/or books. For example, David (not his real name) had a diagnosis of language impairment, apraxia and is labeled mentally retarded. In addition, David's first language is American Sign Language (because his mother is deaf). His drawing was once perceived as compulsive and a barrier to accomplishing other goals. However, staff have used his passion for sketching to get him interested in other aspects of the school program. Most importantly, he has learned to read, making more than a year's progress in less than 10 months. Recognizing his interest in the arts led to increases in self-confidence, increases in literacy skills and decreases in behavioral outbursts.

Another example is the use of photography. Stuart says AAC users can take photos of events or outings (with assistance if necessary), make slide shows

and then use a single switch to show them. With a digital camera, the user can put the pictures in a slide show using *Claris Works*, *Kid Pix*, *Power Point*. During the show, the augmented communicator can tell the story and make

"Public performances and displays of work by individuals using AAC can help demonstrate their capabilities."

Educating the public. Raising awareness about people who use AAC is an important job and should be done mindfully, not incidentally. Public performances and exhibitions of the work of individuals who use AAC can help demonstrate their capabilities. Stephen Hawking, the author of *A Brief History of Time*, is a physicist and professor at Oxford College in England.²⁴ He has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. When he lectures or gives an interview, Hawking educates the public, not only about the expanding universe, but also about individuals who use AAC. While Hawking rarely mentions his disability, commentators inevitably want to know about his AAC device and how he uses it. As a result, the public gets a unique insight into the personal experience of an individual who uses AAC. Other examples of ways to inform the public include:

- The Rolling Thunder Theater Company is based in Brantford Ontario. This theater group has actors with and without disabilities. In a play entitled, *Given Half a Chance*, the cast depicts the difficulties a (COni. on page 10)



Clinical News (Cont. from page 9)

man with cerebral palsy experiences trying to gain employment from a skeptical manager. To further educate the public, the group explains various disabilities and takes questions from the audience after each performance.

- In 1991, James Renuk, an AAC user with academic degrees in human nutrition, food science

and exercise physiology, sang the National Anthem at a Michigan State University basketball game using his AAC device and received a standing ovation. He said, "Before I sang, I was nervous When it was all over, I felt really great." Renuk also said he liked the local TV coverage because it gave him a chance to let people know he was highly educated. 6

Summary

The arts have a place in the spectrum of AAC intervention strategies. As a form of communication, they offer unique opportunities for individuals with limited speech. Professionals can expand the range of expression available to AAC users by using the arts in therapy. 7C

Equipment

Arts & technology in AAC
 with John McCarthy

The process of creating and performing art often involves the use of technology. Word processors, electronic instruments, graphics programs, animation programs, light boards and sound boards all create the magic that is art. Writers use word processors; musicians make music via the computer; artists now use computers and other high-tech media; and the theater is full of lights, sounds and sets that help create a magical environment. Technology is a facilitator of the arts, just as it facilitates conversation and writing for individuals who use AAC. Obviously, technology can not make anyone a competent communicator, musician, painter, singer, poet or actor. That requires practice. Having access to assistive technology enables AAC users to appreciate, re-create and/or create art. Unfortunately, consumers, family members and professionals often have little guidance in selecting and using technology to access the arts. Table V suggests some ways technology can provide access.

- To access CD players, TV's and videos, individuals can use environmental control units.
- To access information about the arts and participate in discussions, keyboard emulators, adapted mouse technology, etc. can enable Internet access and the use of e-mail.
- To act, sing songs, participate in poetry readings, do improvisations and discuss art, AAC users use speech output technology.
- To play musical instruments, special adaptations (such as mallets for a drum) can be obtained.
- To paint and create designs, a brush on a head stylus or an adapted mouse with software can provide access.
- To dance, wheelchairs especially designed for dancing are available.

- To write poetry and stories, as well as compose songs, draw and design, AAC users can use a wide range of commercial software. The Drake Music Project in York, England facilitates disabled people in making music via technology. They have an excellent article describing ways people with disabilities can make music. 27

Ideas and resources

Below are some examples of what people are doing today.

1. MIDI Keyboard, drum pads, pitch converters. A MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) allows individuals to connect synthesizers, keyboards, etc. to a computer so it can become both a composition and a performance tool. The MIDI allows music to be conceived, organized, written down and played. Soundbeam,

Table V.-Use of technology to access the arts

Technology	Access to what?	Purpose
Environmental control units	CD-ROM, CD player, tape player, TV, VCR, radio.	Appreciation
E-mail and the Internet	Information about the arts, discussions on the arts, download music, poetry, visual arts.	Appreciation Re-creation
Software programs	Producing text with cognitive and linguistic supports; activate lines of a story, song or poem; use computer graphics, publishing programs, etc.	Creation Re-creation
Digitized devices	A way to say lines and sing songs or recite a poem.	Re-creation
Voice output communication aids	A way to participate in plays, poetry readings, improvisations and so on.	Re-creation Creation
Adapted instruments/tools	Adapted mallets or beaters; Soundbeam; adapted paint brushes and so on.	Creation Re-creation
MIDI	Allows for communication between a computer and an electronic musical instrument.	Creation Re-creation

Equipment (continued from page 10)

for example, is a dedicated device developed by Edward Williams. It translates dance movements into musical sounds using a MIDI. The process involves using an ultrasonic beam, varying in lengths from a few centimeters to a few meters, and moving into the beam to make sounds on electronic instruments. Wheelchair movements can create sounds, just as any other movement. Therapists in many settings including hospitals, dance studios, schools and adult centers in England and Australia have worked with Soundbeam.

2. *Pooling Ideas on Art and Imaging.* This booklet, by David Nicholls, a teacher of children with physical disabilities in England, has important information about creating art.

3. Tips from Caroline Musselwhite. Author and AAC consultant, she feels passionately about the use of the arts and reading, shared the following strategies.

Poetry: The software *Phonics Phun and Poetry* (\$15 US) allows teachers to set up a template that enables students with limited literacy skills to write poems. It has set ups for Macintosh and PC and includes phonics, word building and poetry construction activities using *OverlayMaker*, *IntelliTalk*, *IntelliPics* (IntelliTools). The first step is to identify a list of words (generally a group activity). Then, students create a poem (individually or in groups). For example, a poem about "Trash" might include the words: icky, messy, dirty, smelly, yucky, sticky, gooey, gummy, stinky, trash, I love, I hate. Nineteen-year-old Alex who had never written before, wrote this poem:

Icky trash, drippy trash
Yucky ucky mucky trash
love love love love trash!

Another student, who had not previously written or composed any poetry, was introduced to the template "About Me." She went to the computer, created a poem and printed it out. She then passed out a copy to each of her teachers and classmates. The poem said:

sad, lonely
I'm a lonely girl
I'm a sad sad lonely girl..

Concerned, her teacher called home and discovered that her parents were divorcing. Everyone assumed that she "wouldn't understand" so they hadn't told her. Access to language, whatever the form, makes a difference. Available from Creative Communicating, P.O. Box 3358, Park City, UT 84060. 435-645-7737 (phone & fax). www.creative-comm.com

Puppetry. *I Can Go-The Puppet Stand* (\$89) works with most favorite puppets. Like a battery-operated toy, the stand moves in a circle or from side to side/back and forth when someone hits a switch. To make puppets talk, you can use (1) a tape recorder with the *Puppetinterface* (\$39), (2) loop tapes, (3) talking switches, (4) AAC devices or (5) interpreters. Available from AssisTech, Inc., PO Box 137, Stow, NY 14785. www.assistech.com

Clay. *Collection I: Early Play* (\$30) by Linda Burkhart enables children with severe motor impairments to play with clay. It requires *IntelliPics* and *IntelliKeys*. Children can select from four colors of clay and four actions (pound, stretch it, make a snake, drop it). Available from Linda J Burkhart, 6201 Candle Ct., Eldersburg, MD 21784.

Nursery Rhymes. *Nursery Series* (\$75) is software for the Macintosh. It includes nursery rhymes, colorful graphics, animation, text and narration for the *Mouse*, *Touch Window* and *IntelliKeys*. Available from Creative Communicating.

Music. *The Rodeo* (\$95) and *Teen Tunes* (\$59) CD-ROMs (MAC and Windows) have age appropriate graphics, animation and music. Also for older students, *Singing to Read* (\$7) and *Older Students Sing Out* (\$6.00) encourage the use of music to teach language skills. Available from Creative Communicating.

Stories. *The Storytime Songbook. Part I and Part II* (\$99 each) is based on King-DeBaun's book *Story Time* with songs based on stories and sung to familiar tunes. For use with *IntelliKeys*, single switches, *Touch Window*. Available from Creative Communicating.

4. John Duggane is a graduating senior at the California Institute of the Arts. He is an artist who is severely speech and writing impaired and uses a *HeadMouse* (Origin Instruments) wearing the silver light reflective dot on his nose to operate a mouse and a bite switch to click.


Greeting cards. John uses *Adobe PhotoShop*. He uses the paint brush and airbrush tools and then picks different colors. "I paint just as if I had a paint brush in my hand," he said. Using perspective, color, negative space and shadows, he draws realistic pictures. Then he imports the pictures into *QuarkExpress* so he can add words and complete his cards.

Movies. For his senior project, John used *Adobe Premiere*. He scanned photographs into *PhotoShop* and then imported them into *Premiere*. He then edited them, added music and used the motion graphics tool to make the pictures move.

Storing and retrieving art

Using AAC devices to facilitate participation in the arts raises some unique questions. Methods for storing and retrieving art are just as important as they are during other communication situations. For example, should the actor have all his or her lines preprogrammed in the device? Should a singer activate a device line by line or perform the entire song with One hit? Obviously, answers to these questions will depend upon the person and the performance.

Comment

Whether an individual who uses AAC utilizes technology to appreciate the arts or to realize his or her own creative ideas and feelings, it is the user that is the creative force. Technology is only a tool. 



Exemplary Programs

**Very Special Arts
with John McCarthy**

Very Special Arts (VSA) is an international non-profit organization whose purpose is to create learning through the arts for people with disabilities. The organization's mission reflects the belief that the arts "are an avenue to learning and a universal language that all of us can understand." VSA materials cite the following rationale for helping young people become engaged with the arts:

- Students who participate in the arts score nearly 100 points higher on the SAT than students who don't. In addition, the more years students participate in the arts, the higher their SAT scores.³³
- Students who participate in school music programs score higher in reading, mathematics, language and overall achievement test scores.
- A complete arts education, including dance, music and drama contributes to improved academic performance for students with disabilities.³⁵

By employing the multiple learning potentials of the arts, VSA programs claim to cultivate lifelong educational skills and help people with disabilities contribute to the cultural and economic life of their communities. The programs are implemented by affiliates in 90 countries around the world and 47 states including New York City and the District of Columbia. Activities are funded by governments, charities and corporations on the national and

state levels. VSA has recognition programs designed to encourage young artists to develop their work, as well as projects and programs that focus on one or more of the arts for people with disabilities in local and regional areas. Each year millions of people participate in VSA programs worldwide.

VSA recognition programs

These programs award young artists for their work:

- **VSA Playwright Discovery Program.** This program is designed to recognize two playwrights and encourage students to embark on stage writing. It is for U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Participants submit a play that documents the experience of living with a disability. VSA gives awards to someone age 18 and younger and someone over the age of 18 years. Every year their plays are performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Award recipients receive a monetary prize and a trip to Washington, D.C. to view the Fall production. VSA has a teacher's guide for creative writing and drama exercises to incorporate in the classroom.

Contact VSA, 1300 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036; 1-800-933-8721; TTY 202-737-0645; fax 202-737-0725; playwri_eth1@VSArts.org.

- **VSA Young Soloists Program.** This program recognizes outstanding musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under. Each year two Rosemary Kennedy International Young Soloists Awards are sponsored by the Kennedy Center Education Department; and two Panasonic Young Soloists Awards for children and youth in the U.S. are sponsored by Panasonic Con-

sumer Electronics Company. These four vocalists or instrumentalists also receive a scholarship. Award recipients are announced in December and perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. in March of the following year.

Contact Vanesa Goldberg (International) or Azura Hassan (U.S.), VSA, 1300 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036; 1-800-933-8721; TTY 202-737-0645; fax 202-737-0725.

VSA programs

- **VSA Festivals.** These community-based celebrations showcase participants in local and regional programs. Local festivals are organized in collaboration with schools, hospitals, recreation facilities and other community organizations. They feature performances, art exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops where children, youth and adults with disabilities share their artistic accomplishments.
- **VSA International Festival.** This important event takes place every five years to spotlight programs and initiatives implemented by VSA affiliates worldwide and to showcase the artistic talents and abilities of people with disabilities. The first International VSA Festival was held in Washington, D.C. in 1989. The second was hosted by Brussels, Belgium in 1994. Los Angeles, California will host the 1999 *Festival Art and Soul: An international celebration of arts, disability and culture*. This five-day festival (May 28-June 2, 1999) will take place at the Los Angeles Convention Center in California, and bring together more than 3000 artists with disabilities from around the world. Delegates also represent organizations that provide artistic opportunities. (continued on page 13~)

Exemplary Programs

(continued from page 12)

for people with disabilities. For more information, contact Heidi Kurtz at VSA, 800-933-8721.

- **Very Special Arts Galleries** (in Washington, DC and Beverly Hills, CA). These galleries display the work of emerging and professional artists with disabilities. Exhibits include a wide variety of genres, from abstract art to realism, to folk art. Proceeds from the sale of art displayed in the galleries help to fund VSA programs and artists, as well as to connect artists with art patrons, collectors and exhibition opportunities. The galleries also sponsors festivals that include performances, exhibitions, demonstrations and educational workshops where participants share their work with the public.

To receive information or join the Artist's Registry in Washington, DC, contact 202-628-0800 (voice); 800-933-8721 (voice); 202-737-0645 (TOO); 202-737-0725 (fax)

vsagallery@vsaatl.org. In Beverly Hills, CA, contact 310-385-0499 (voice); 310-385-9430 (TOO); 310-385-0867 (fax);

vsawest@earthlink.net

- **Start with the Arts**. This instructional program for four-, five- and six-year-olds uses the arts to assist young children to explore early childhood themes. It focuses on developing basic literacy skills and offers engaging art activities for children and parents. The program offers institutes for artists, educators and parents to help them incorporate *Start with the Arts* into existing early childhood curricula. Strategies promote inclusion of children with disabilities in grade level classrooms. An arts teacher's guide, *Start with the Arts*, has 64 learning experiences and student learning logs, including a "Learn Along at Home" letters to parents to accompany each art experience.

VSA (Same phone numbers and address.) swta@vsarts.org

- **Project PARTnership**.¹³ This three-year program was carried out in Ohio in the Wayne County Schools. It aimed to foster self-determination and self-advocacy skills in adolescents with disabilities through participation in the arts. The project established a new arts-focused course within each participating school and provided adapted curricula to accommodate all students involved. Each participating student's IEP included an Individual Arts Education Plan (IAEP). In addition to curricular modifications, the project established avenues for training school faculty, community arts leaders and parents about the value of arts for children with disabilities. Each school involved artists with disabilities as trainers, performers, role models and mentors. To encourage a more lasting commitment in the arts and to help with other aspects of arts development, a support network was established. The ultimate hope of the project was to develop a nationwide model. Although the evaluation of the project was positive, results suggested a need to investigate specific ways to make the arts work better in integrated school settings.

- **Very Special Arts Virginia**. This state affiliate sponsors an integrated theater group where able-bodied volunteers dress in black like stage hands and "shadow" actors who need assistance.³⁵ Shadow actors serve as interpreters, or they assist individuals with disabilities to move. For more information on state affiliates and their local programs, please contact Claudine Drakshani at VSA.

- **National Theater for the Deaf** (NTD). Very Special Arts sup-

port of the Theater for the Deaf. Their sign language performances are excellent examples of adaptive re-creation.

NTD can be reached at 800-526-4971 (voice) or 800-526-4974 (TTY).

Exemplary AAC programs

A description of two programs especially relevant to individuals who use AAC (but not connected with Very Special Arts) follow:

- **Reaching for the Stars**. This theater workshop for disabled students who were high school graduates and/or young adults on a college track involved a three-day program with a performance on the last day. The procedures used for the program, i.e., learning about different facets of arts production and having guest artists, are adaptable to programs for children and/or adults who use AAC.³⁷
- **AAC camp at the Matheney School** in Peapack, NJ. A music therapist coordinates all of the musical activities. The children participate in singing and acting out songs like B-I-N-G-O (each child has one letter that has to be done at the proper time), Old MacDonald, and Row-Row-Row your Boat.³⁷

Summary

Some very exciting model programs exist in a few scattered locations. However, in most areas too little is being done to enable AAC users to participate in the arts. We encourage our readers to explore opportunities for action in their communities, and to share ideas about using the arts to benefit individuals with severe communication impairments through conference presentations and in the AAC literature. **TC**



Governmental National standards for arts education with John McCarthy

In an attempt to make the United States more "competitive" on an international level, President Bill Clinton signed the Goals 2000 Educate America Act of 1994.³ Whether one agrees or disagrees with the value of national standards and the potential of a national curriculum, Goals 2000 has started people thinking about what is important in various disciplines. It identifies the arts as a core subject and states:³⁸

All students deserve access to the rich education and understanding that the arts provide, regardless of their background, talents, or disabilities In particular, students with disabilities, who are often excluded from arts programs, can derive great benefit from them and for the same reasons that studying the arts benefits students who are not disabled. As many teachers can testify, the arts can be a powerful vehicle-sometimes the best vehicle-for reaching, and teaching a particular student. At the same time, there is a continuing need to make sure that all students have access to the learning resources and opportunities they need to succeed. Thus, as in any area of the curriculum, providing a sound education in the arts will depend in great measure on creating access to opportunities and resources.

The Act created a National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) to approve content, performance and opportunity standards at the state and national level on a voluntary compliance basis. This includes a review of what students should know in each subject area, how well students should perform in that area and

whether schools are giving students an opportunity to learn in each area. The federal government encourages states to adopt national standards by offering money (grants) for reforms. States that adopt the national standards do not need to seek approval of their state education plan. However, states that outline their own plans must get NESIC approval based on three principles. Plans must:³

- be internationally competitive.
- reflect the best knowledge about teaching and learning.
- be developed through a broad-based, open adoption process.

Guidelines for the arts

From 1992 to 1994 the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations worked to develop guidelines for what they determined every child should know and be able to do in the arts. One outcome was a set of voluntary standards, which provide a comprehensive view of important skills across the disciplines of dance, music, theater and visual arts. They include a set of competencies that are arranged in terms of content standards for kindergarten through 12th grade and constitute: (1) general guidelines, e.g., identifying and demonstrating movement elements in dance and (2) achievement standards, e.g., demonstrating movement elements in straight and curved pathways. As a result, a teacher can define measurable goals in a progressive order and provide a way to measure those goals. According to these standards, when students leave second-school, they should be able to:

- communicate at a basic level in dance, music, theater and the visual arts; have knowledge and skill in the use of the basic vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques and intellectual methods of each art discipline.
- communicate proficiently in at least one art form, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason and technical proficiency.
- understand and evaluate work in the various arts from structural, historical and cultural perspectives, including the ability to develop and present basic analyses of works of art.
- have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works from a variety of cultures and historical periods and a basic understanding of historical development in the arts, across the arts.
- relate arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines of art-making-art history and culture, as well as analyze art-related projects.

Comment

When setting new (and often higher) "standards" for various subjects in our schools, it is vital that governments take concrete steps to insure that, in practice, standards don't foster the exclusion of students with disabilities (or economic disadvantages). Responsible consortia and councils have devoted too little time and attention to ways of including students with disabilities in these commendable new practices. AAC professionals, consumers, family members and others should recognize the necessity of monitoring the ways in which standards are implemented and in advocating for greater inclusion of children with disabilities.

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- 28 Website <http://lnz.com/webnz/ability/csn/2000papers/soyndbeam.htm>. Also, contact aphne Rickson LTCL ANZSMT, Music Therapist Hammersley Park School, Physical disabilities Resource Centre, Quinns Road, Christchurch, New Zealand.
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YOUR RESOURCES

Many thanks to John McCarthy, who can be reached c/o Penn State University, The Pennsylvania State University, Dept. of Communication Disorders, 110 Moore Building, University Park, PA 16802. jwml21@psu.edu 814-863-6015 (phone). Thanks also to Janice Light for her vision and support.

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