Communication Access for ALL Students

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WANGEE PARK SCHOOL

RIGHT

In 1948 the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights recognised communication as a fundamental right and freedom for all of us.

ACCESS

Communication Access follows this declaration. By aiming for communication accessibility, we recognise that all of us has a right to communicate, and that every voice needs to be heard.

COMMUNICATION ACCESSABILITY IN EDUCATION

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Many Australian schools are now focusing on Communication Accessibility in their policy documents and statements.

COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY

Some schools are working towards attaining Communication Access status, while others are simply working on making the environment accessible to all the communicators who attend the school.

MAINSTREAM & SPECIAL EDUCATION

This is happening in both mainstream and in special education settings – but is particularly a focus in many special education settings.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS

Communication Access means that "everyone can get their message across, no matter how they communicate."

SCOPE Australia

AIMING FOR COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY

The steps towards achieving communication accessibility vary from school to school.

Common strategies are shown on the side.

Wangee Park School has implemented each of these strategies.

TRAINING

Providing all staff with training in being a good communication partner.

COMPREHENSIVE AAC SYSTEMS

Providing staff with a robust Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system of their own, so that staff can learn to deliver aided language stimulation in all environments.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Starting a Dynamic Assessment cycle with all students using individual assessment tool(s) e.g., Communication Matrix, Roadmap of Communicative Competence.

WANGEE PARK SCHOOL

WANGEE PARK SCHOOL

Small special education school in the inner west in Sydney

Multicultural student group

Most students in the school have Complex Communication Needs (CCN)

RESOURCE INVESTMENT

Speech Pathologist at the school regularly

Consultants in communication, literacy, sensory processing and access (Helen Tainsh, Jane Farrall and Fiona Beauchamp)

AAC SYSTEMS

Most students with CCN either have their own AAC system or are trialling one
The AAC systems in the school include LAMP, Proloquo2Go and PODD
Staff have access to appropriate systems for their class group, and training in using these for aided language stimulation

WANGEE PARK & COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY

WORKING FOR MORE

Communication Accessibility involves more than providing AAC systems and aided language stimulation

DIFFERENTIATION

Implement differentiation in support of each student's level of receptive and expressive language

INITIATION

All students need to have a method of initiating communication that is recognised by everyone

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PARTNER PROFILE

_____ Date of Profi

Focus & Scale	NA	

(l & conventional communicators)

al robust AAC system with them

Sometimes   Not observed

4   5   6   7

ccess get opportunities to participate in partner assisted scanning for choice m
d first and then repeated with time to indicate a selection

Sometimes   Not observed

4   5   6   7

mprehension of spoken language and build their understanding of how to use

Sometimes   Not observed

4   5   6   7

Page 3

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PROFILE

ASSESSING EACH CLASSROOM'S COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY

School executive identified that this was a priority

Began a process to look at pre-existing tools and evaluate them

Each exisiting tool had merit but didn't meet our needs

TAINSH ET AL, 2022

DEVELOPING THE CCP

STAGE 1 ■ REVIEWING EXISTING TOOLS

Including:
- Authentic Expression LLC (2022, October 4). Communication Environment Checklist.
- Senner J. E., Baud M. R. (2017). The use of an eight-step instructional model to train school staff in partner-augmented input. Communication Disorders Quarterly, 38(2), 8–95.

STAGE 2 ■ DISCUSS EXISTING TOOLS

Decision to develop our own tool

STAGE 3 ■ BEGIN DEVELOPMENT AND FEEDBACK CYCLE

Initial draft by Helen Tainsh; feedback and revision with small working party

DEVELOPING THE CCP

STAGE 4 ■ **TRIALLING WITH TEACHERS**

Three different teachers filmed a 30 minute video of a session
Assistant principal and speech pathologists watched video with teacher and completed CCP
Feedback from teachers very positive
Process showed us positives and limitations of the tool

STAGE 5 ■ **FURTHER CHANGES**

Further discussions and changes to the tool based on initial implementation

STAGE 6 ■ **VERSION ONE READY**

Version One of the tool now ready for use

Tool can be used by a teacher to look at their own practice

Or can be used as a tool for guiding observations with other(s)

Wangee
Park School

Classroom Communication Profile

A tool for examining communication accessibility of classrooms

Developed by Helen Tainsh in conjunction with staff at Wangee Park School, Tina Moisidis & Jane Farrall
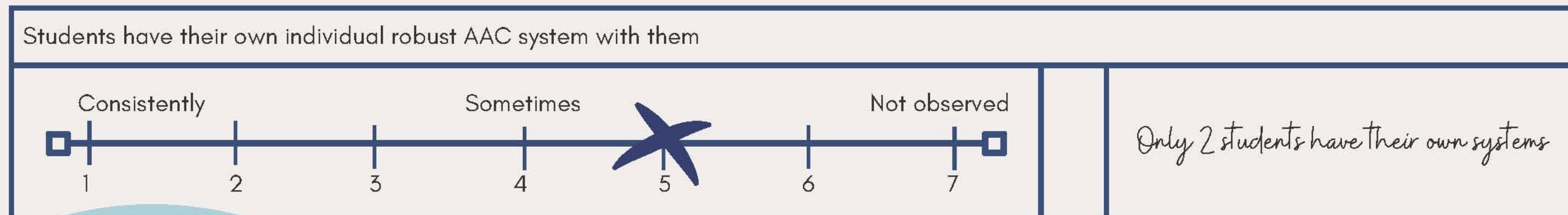
Classroom Communication Profile: Instructions

The Classroom Communication Profile (CCP) is designed to be used by a knowledgeable other and a classroom team e.g. speech pathologist and classroom team or school executive member and classroom team,.

The CCP should be completed by observing video footage of educators. Three videos should be used. These should be 5 to 10 minutes in length, and each video should be of a different activity e.g. group shared reading, predictable chart writing and a chat. One video should be a 1:1 interaction between an educator and a student. This could be simple a chat or an activity such as independent writing.

Each focus is scored on a 7 point scale, which goes from consistently to not observed. The scale can be marked at any point that is appropriate. For example:

Students have their own individual robust AAC system with them	
Consistently Sometimes Not observed ✗ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Only 2 students have their own systems

Educator name:_____Date of Profile:_____

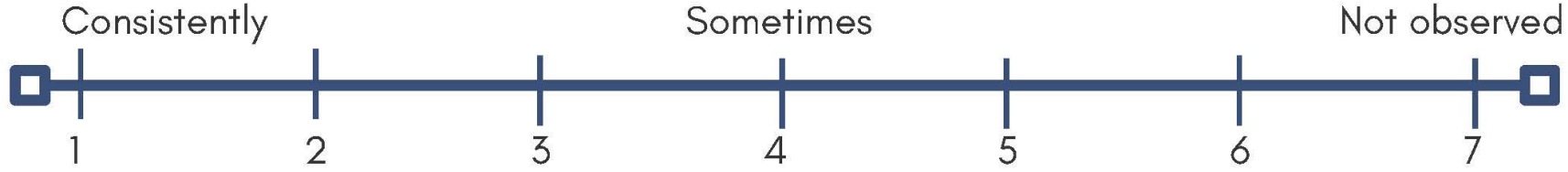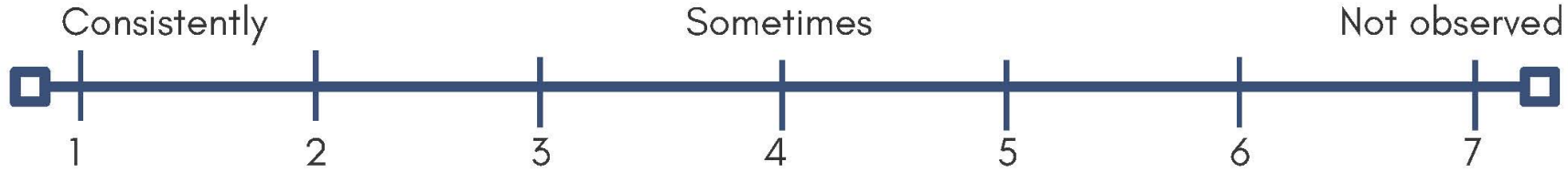| Focus & Scale	NA	Comments/Examples
Access to Language		
All students (emergent, transitional & conventional communicators)		
1. Students have their own individual robust AAC system with them		
Consistently Sometimes Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
2. Students who use alternative access get opportunities to participate in partner assisted scanning for choice making, outside of their AAC system, where the choices are listed first and then repeated with time to indicate a selection		
Consistently Sometimes Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
3. Students get input to support comprehension of spoken language and build their understanding of how to use symbols (i.e., adult uses AAC)		
Consistently Sometimes Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PARTNER PROFILE
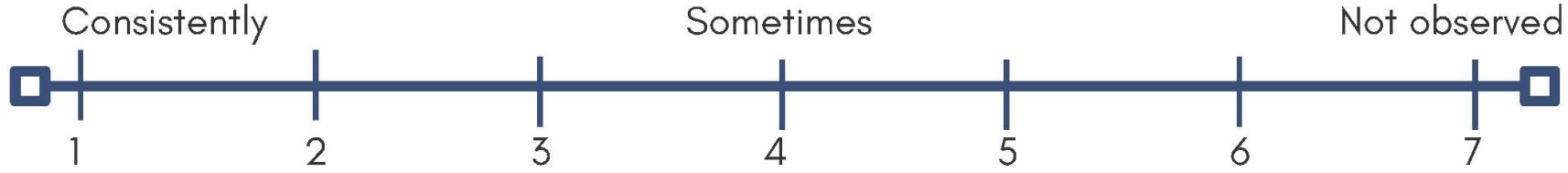
Educator name:_____Date of Profile:_____

Focus & Scale	NA	Comments/Examples
Access to Language		
Emergent students (emergent communicators)		
4. For student who does not yet have an individual system – student has access to classroom AAC system		
Consistently — Sometimes — Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
5. Identified strategies are in place to assist student to attend to modelling e.g., use of torch to point, AAC presented on slantboard		
Consistently — Sometimes — Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		

Focus	Yes	No	Comments/Examples
Initiation of Communication for all students			
6. Each student has an identified way to initiate or is learning to initiate			

Focus	NA	Comments/Examples
Initiation of Communication		
All students (emergent, transitional & conventional communicators)		
7. Each student has opportunities to initiate, not just respond		
Consistently Sometimes Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Emergent students (emergent communicators)		
8. Regular modelling of initiation of use of non-electronic AAC occurs. Each student is provided with an exact model of how they initiate.		
Consistently Sometimes Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
9. All initiations of communication are verbally referenced e.g. "I heard you call out; do you have something to say?" and responded to		
Consistently Sometimes Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PARTNER PROFILE

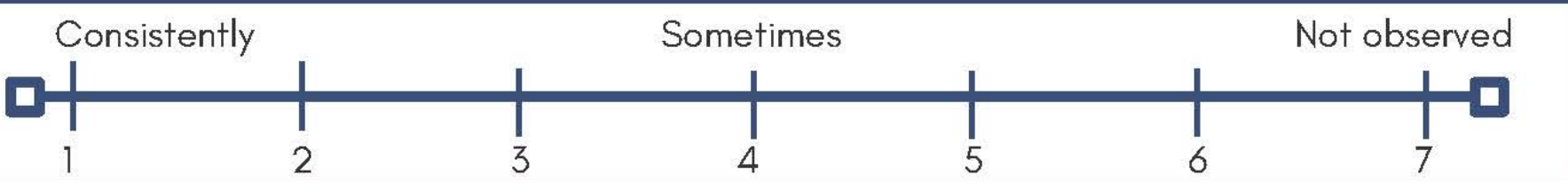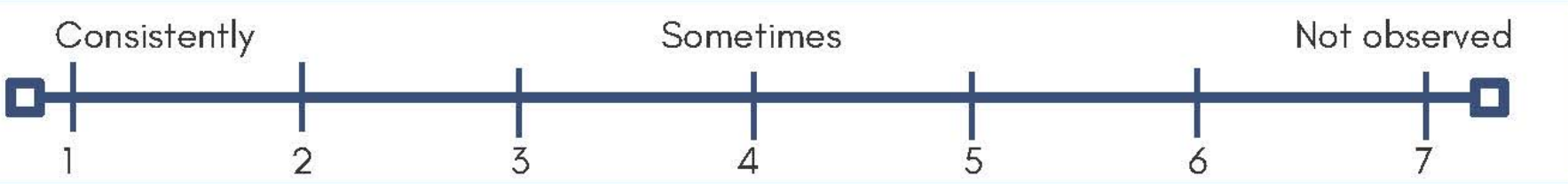| Focus	Consistently	Sometimes	Not observed	NA	Comments/Examples
Opportunities for Communication					
All students (emergent, transitional & conventional communicators)					
10. All students are recognised as communicators					
Consistently — 1 2 3 Sometimes — 4 5 6 Not observed — 7					
11. Every mode of communication is equally valued, for example speech, sign, gesture, symbols					
Consistently — 1 2 3 Sometimes — 4 5 6 Not observed — 7					
12. It is presumed that all students have something to say					
Consistently — 1 2 3 Sometimes — 4 5 6 Not observed — 7					
13. Opportunities are created that are likely to motivate students to communicate (e.g. using their interests)					
Consistently — 1 2 3 Sometimes — 4 5 6 Not observed — 7					

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PARTNER PROFILE

Focus	Consistently	Sometimes	Not observed	NA	Comments/Examples
Opportunities for Communication					
All students (emergent, transitional & conventional communicators)					
14. Students are provided with time to process and respond					
Consistently · · · Sometimes · · · Not observed 1　2　3　4　5　6　7					
15. Invitations to participate are phrased as open invitations rather than as closed or yes/no questions					
Consistently · · · Sometimes · · · Not observed 1　2　3　4　5　6　7					
16. Interactions support communication autonomy. Student responses are valued even if they appear off topic					
Consistently · · · Sometimes · · · Not observed 1　2　3　4　5　6　7					
Emergent Students (emergent communicators)					
17. Natural feedback is provided to students around the effectiveness of their communication					
Consistently · · · Sometimes · · · Not observed 1　2　3　4　5　6　7					

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PARTNER PROFILE

Focus	Consistently	Sometimes	Not observed	NA	Comments/Examples
Opportunities for Communication					
Transitional and Conventional students (transitional and conventional communicators)					
18. Students are provided with prompts or cues to support them to take a turn or initiate communication					
Consistently —— Sometimes —— Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
19. Students are given prompts and cues to support them to express their own message					
Consistently —— Sometimes —— Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PARTNER PROFILE

Focus	Consistently	Sometimes	Not Observed	NA	Comments/Examples
Modelling (Aided Language Stimulation)					
All students (emergent, transitional & conventional communicators)					
20. AAC is used by adults to communicate their own messages (e.g., "I am hungry" "I love this" "It's my favourite" etc)					
Consistently — Sometimes — Not observed — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
21. 'Kid talk' is used for genuine purposes so students can develop an understanding of things they may want to say (e.g. that's cool!)					
Consistently — Sometimes — Not observed — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
22. A range of communication functions are modelled (See table under Communication Functions)					
Consistently — Sometimes — Not observed — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
23. Instructions are accompanied with symbols to support comprehension (e.g. get your book)					
Consistently — Sometimes — Not observed — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					

Focus	Consistently	Sometimes	Not Observed	NA	Comments/Examples
Modelling (Aided Language Stimulation)					
Emergent students (emergent communicators)					
24. If student uses alternative access to AAC, model this access some of the time (at least once per week)					
Consistently ── Sometimes ── Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
Transitional and Conventional students (transitional and conventional communicators)					
25. Student has opportunities to see and hear their language expanded using their AAC system – i.e., student indicates 1 symbol; communication partner indicates 2 to 3					
Consistently ── Sometimes ── Not observed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7					

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PARTNER PROFILE

Summary

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Acknowledgements

- Farrall, J. & Niemeijer, D. (2015). Do's and Dont's of Implementing Real Communication Through AAC. AGOSCI Conference 2015, Brisbane, Australia. https://www.janefarrall.com/dos-and-donts-of-implementing-real-communication-through-aac/

- Centre for Literacy and Disability Studies. (2022, October 4). Project Core: A Stepping-Up Technology Implementation Grant. UNC-Chapel Hill. http://www.project-core.com/

- Authentic Expression LLC (2022, October 4). Communication Environment Checklist. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c3ShLnkjuam7jV5BLb9a-3ifral_KCEqh9xZhiqgbVY/edit?fbclid=IwAR2ZQre7joiowkrSdoQP-oKPJ5IwZMNg7W7oT_wXb1f5mBWJmSrkFp_IQ3Q

- Senner J. E., Baud M. R. (2017). The use of an eight-step instructional model to train school staff in partner-augmented input. Communication Disorders Quarterly, 38(2), 8-95. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525740116651251

TEACHER FEEDBACK

"Helped me to see areas where I need to focus"

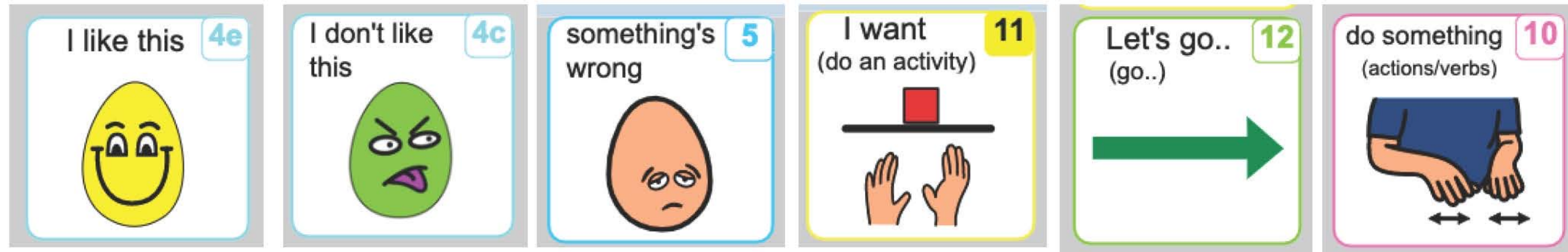*"Gave me some clear goals to improve communication in my classroom"*

USING THE CCP

DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

Also to be used in a Dynamic Assessment cycle.

Use the CCP to rate communication accessibility in the classroom.

Implement changes to practice based on the profile.

Combine data from CCP with individual student assessments to guide differentiation for individual students.

Repeat CCP in agreed time frame and re-examine classroom communication accessibility.

Communication Functions

These are the early communication functions (ie. pathways) to support your team to model. Start by modelling these:

I like this **4e**	I don't like this **4c**	something's wrong **5**	I want (do an activity) **11**	Let's go.. (go..) **12**	do something (actions/verbs) **10**

The below communication functions are later to develop. Move onto these once the student has begun using the communication functions above.

I'm asking a question **8**	I'm telling you something **7**	I'm telling a story (not real) **7**	I have an idea (I'd like to) **7**	Let's pretend **7**	I want to show you something **3**