Critical Review:

Is the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices associated with positive behavioural and social performance outcomes for students with complex communication needs in the classroom?

Shannon Costello M.CI.Sc. SLP Candidate University of Western Ontario: School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

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Selection Criteria

The following criteria were used to identify studies for inclusion: students 21 years of age and younger, have complex communication needs, and use AAC devices in the classroom. The age of 21 was chosen given that students with disabilities can attend high school until that age.

Data Collection

Based on the search strategy used, four studies were identified, which satisfied all inclusion criteria. This included two qualitative research designs, one single group experimental design, and one multiple baseline single-subject design.

Results

majority of measures. However, the author did not report questionnaire details, which makes it difficult to replicate by other researchers and it raises questions about the content included on the questionnaire. Prior to the start of the study, observers received at least twelve hours of training for data coding, until 80% reliability was obtained on all variables, which increases credibility of findings. Interobserver reliability was obtained for identifying and coding communicative acts and multiple analysts were used for findings, which increases the credibility of research findings.

Contrary to the previous study (Chung et al., 2012), Carter (2003) included observation of a variety of activities, which provides more reliable data concerning social interactions. It is noteworthy to mention that the children attended a special school for severe and multiple disabilities, which means there was no access to typical peers for interactions. This could contribute to the limited peer interactions observed in this study. Considering the strengths and limitations, this study provides somewhat suggestive evidence regarding the effectiveness of AAC on improving social interaction in the classroom. These results should be considered cautiously since all Tf [(s1(ngt) 4 (hs) 2 ()-59 (a) 0 41 0 0 (t 41 0 (r) 21 (a) -2 (b)-3 41 0 0 41 0 0

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when investigating interactions between typically developing peers and students with complex communication needs using AAC. Not only does it demonstrate the effectiveness of treatment, it allows for multiple participants to be included.

Causton-Theoharis & Malmgren (2005) explored the success of a training program that taught paraprofessionals how to facilitate interactions between students with autism or cerebral palsy and their typically developing peers. Participants included four pairs of paraprofessionals and elementary students (ages 6 to 11)

Reichle, J., & Wacker, D. P. (1993). Communicative alternatives to challenging behavior: Integrating functional assessment and intervention strategies. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.