



REVIEW OF: Life Participation Approach to Aphasia: A Statement of Values for the Future. By: Chapey, R., Duchan, J., Elman, R. J., Garcia, L. J., Kagan, A., Lyon, J. G. & Simmons Mackie, N.*

Background Information

The “Life Participation Approach to Aphasia” (LPAA) is a philosophy that speech-language therapy should support meeting both immediate and longer-term life goals. A real-life goal shortly after a stroke might include effective communication with medical professionals. A real-life goal for the same individual later in the recovery process might be to return to a volunteer position. Since communication involves expressing and understanding messages as well as establishing and maintaining social links, both of these goals are appropriate to address in speech-language therapy.

Purpose of the Article

This article introduces the “Life Participation Approach to Aphasia” (LPAA) that proposes a new philosophy of service delivery for people with aphasia (PWA), better matching with expectations from a variety of sources. It should be noted that LPAA is a general philosophy rather than a specific technique to be used in therapy. Many different clinical approaches can be used within the LPAA philosophy.

Key Findings

- The authors developed LPAA from four basic concepts:
 1. Functional and pragmatic approaches to aphasia treatment
 2. Human rights issues and consumers’ ability to set their own goals
 3. Emphasis on competence and inclusion rather than deficits
 4. Changes in health care reimbursement and service delivery

By combining these concepts, the LPAA extends the effectiveness of any one on its own.

- LPAA makes two major changes to current speech-language service delivery.
 - First, the creation of therapy goals becomes consumer-driven rather than therapist-driven. People with aphasia, their family members, and caregivers become the center of all decision making.
 - Second, the focus of therapy becomes broader than ever before. With the overall goal of re-engagement in life, therapy activities must lead towards a more rapid return to an active life.
- Re-engaging in life requires changes on the part of the person with aphasia as well as the communication partners. For example, a technique designed to overcome issues with word finding will not be successful if the people in the environment do not support its use in daily life.
- LPAA supports the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) with PWA as a way to meet both immediate and longer-term goals. AAC can be one of the methods of communication used to participate in activities and establish or maintain social links.

Application of Key Findings in DynaVox Compass™

The development of the DynaVox Compass™ matches well with the philosophy of the LPAA. In both, there is a desire to provide supports for immediate success as well as growth and development into the future. DynaVox Compass™ provides a variety of communication tools for successful participation in a variety of life’s activities such as:

- **Visual Scenes/Topics and Topic Messages:** Clear, contextualized Visual Scenes are used to support successful communication. Both Visual Scenes and Topic Messages can be used to trigger speech, assist in repairing speech and/or serve as an alternative to speech.

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- **Shared Communication Space:** Both users and communication partners have access to a variety of compensatory strategies to maintain successful interactions. Both participants can utilize the Visual Scenes and additional compensatory tools such as the Whiteboard and Rating Scale for co-construction of meaning as well as support expression and comprehension.
- **Whiteboard:** The Whiteboard is one of the easily accessible and broadly applicable communicative tools within DynaVox Compass™. It provides a shared communication space for both the PWA and the communication partner to increase their participation in and understanding of the conversational topic through interactive drawing. Individuals will be able to store and retrieve previous drawings for use as a referent.
- **Rating Scale:** This tool supports written choice conversation as facilitated by the communication partner in a variety of conversations and settings as well as providing access to a pain scale with which many of us are familiar. The primary rating scale will be a horizontal line with arrows at both ends. The therapist/caregivers/PWA will have the following options:
 - With numbers (1-3, 1-5, 1-10).
 - With text (terrible, OK, great) or text with symbols.
 - Pain scale (1-10) with options of pained faces (no text).
- **Word Lists:** Word Lists are topical with semantic categories (e.g., food, drink, transportation, actions) linked to the Toolbar. The PWA has the option to use the Word Lists to produce single words within a topical interaction or to clarify or extend the current conversation topic or message. The Word Lists are customizable, with the option of with or without symbols and sorted alphabetically or by favorites.
- **Keyboard:** The keyboard has the option of being QWERTY, alphabetical or AEIOU and can be used to either spell a word letter-by-letter or, similar to the alphabet board, to self-cue or cue the communication partner to the first letter or letters of a word. If appropriate, an individual may also chose a Keyboard with Word Prediction that will predict a word as typed with or without symbols.
- **QuickFires:** QuickFires are messages that allow quick interaction in any conversation at any time, and in any place (e.g., Yes, No, Wait, What? Good, Bad, OK, Help). PWA can be use QuickFires as fillers, interjections, or generic comments. In DynaVox Compass™, the number of QuickFires is related to the number of topic messages (e.g., 20 Topic Messages, 20 QuickFires). Individuals can edit QuickFires as well as remove those they do not want to include.
- **Photo Album and Camera:** Both of these tools can be used for taking and storing photos of remnants (e.g., ticket, brochures, menus, daily or special events) to be used as Topic Pictures, a photo album, or pictures on buttons.

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