

AAC: The Problem with Prompting

There are so many things we want to teach when it comes to AAC. We might think that prompting will help our AAC learners. We have good intentions, but we need to be very careful.

Here's why:

- **IT'S THEIR VOICE!** Their AAC has to say what THEY want to say. We can guess what our learner wants to say based on context. We might get it right, close, or be totally off base. When we prompt language that does not match their internal thought, we teach them that the device/book isn't really their voice. We teach them that it's another task others impose on them.
- **When we use lots of prompts for communication, we teach our learners to be responders, not initiators.** Everything we want for them in the long term requires that they initiate their own thoughts! Our teaching needs to reflect that!
- **How do our learners perceive our prompts and cues?** Are they helpful? Annoying? Do we increase their stress or add to overwhelm? Do they make us fun to be with? Do they put our connection at risk? Communication is about relationships. Without strong relationships, we can't be effective teachers!



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