

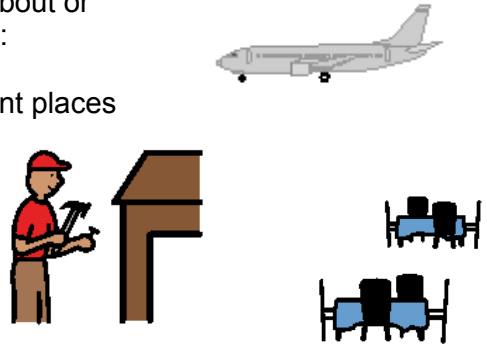
Personal Narratives—Decision-making for Adults

This handout and worksheet provide you information about narratives for adults, hints for selecting narratives to program in the device, how to compose them and how to represent them on the device. Boxes like this one throughout this resource will provide you opportunities to make decisions about personal narratives for or with an AAC user. You will be directed to fill in responses on the worksheet on the last page so that you have them all in one location.

What is a personal narrative?

Personal narratives are stories. Not necessarily stories we've made up but stories about our lives, the lives of those around us and of those we hear about or observe. Just in the past 24 hours, I've told stories about:

- Overviews of trips that I've taken to four or five different places
- Specific things that happened on those trips
- How my mother grew up
- What happened during a dinner with a friend
- A friend's moving experience
- Things I'm working on in my job
- Plans I have for my house
- Experiences at different restaurants
- Etc.



What are the types of personal narratives?

According to Shank (1990) as quoted in Beukelman & Mirenda (2005), personal narratives include:

- First person stories – things that happen to us personally in the past or present as well as future plans or hopes (I....)
- Second person stories – things we learn by listening or reading (My brother bought a new..., My friend fell in the..., In this book, John..., The man in the movie....)
- Official stories – teach a lesson or explain a phenomenon, these are often used by families, schools and religious groups (Our country was founded in..., You have red hair because...)



- Fantasy stories – made up

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Why are personal narratives important to adults?

They help us establish and maintain relationships. They provide a way for us to demonstrate who we are (humor, struggles, interests and history). Narratives help us relate to others (show empathy, share lessons learned ourselves and from others). They encourage social closeness and help us share information. (Luo & Higginbotham, 2008, Beukelman & Mirenda, 2005)

Decision-making

Why are personal narratives important to the AAC user? Turn to question 1 of the worksheet (page 9 of this handout) and check off the reasons why narratives are important. Feel free to add your own as the reasons may be different for different people.

How do we identify stories to program?

There are a number of ways to do this.

- Ask the AAC user. *He/she might be able to tell some important memories by writing them down, providing key words, pointing to objects/people/photos in the environment.*
- Ask those who know the AAC user:
 - The narratives they recall that the AAC user shared
 - The topics they discussed and information the AAC user shared

Note: Ask people who are very close to the AAC user as well as those who might know him/her from fairly specific environments. Chances are you will get different stories.

- Look through photo albums, calendar's and schedule books
- Do a time line of the individual's life
- Use Blackstone & Hung-Berg's *Social Networks: Communication Inventory* (available from Mayer-Johnson Company, <http://www.mayer-johnson.com>)
- Use Garrett & Beukelman's *Aphasia Needs Assessment* (<http://aac.unl.edu/screen/aphasianneeds.pdf>)
- Consider the topics on our worksheet

Decision-making

What stories will we program in for or with the AAC user? Turn to question 2 of the worksheet (page 9) and check off the topics and write in specific story ideas. Feel free to add your own topics and attach additional pages for story ideas.



How do we write the narratives?

If the AAC user can write/type the narrative him/herself, they should, so that it is in his/her own words and with his/her style. If not, have him/her participate in writing the narratives as much as he/she can by selecting between words and telling you what in what order the story should be told or the details they want left in or taken out.

When writing narratives, keep the personality and skills of the AAC user in mind.

- Use words and grammar he/she would use
- Remember that these narratives will be spoken. We talk differently than we write. Read it out loud so that you know it sounds good as a spoken story.
- Be sure that the AAC user understands the story being spoken aloud him/herself.

Note: For individuals with language impairments, they may need you to simplify sentence structure a bit or to make the stories a bit shorter. Some AAC users with language impairments may want you to keep all the detail in a particular story because they are so familiar with it, or because it is very important to them. The AAC user's speech-language pathologist would probably be able to help make this decision.

Keep the audience for the narrative in mind. *If it is being shared with a young child versus an adult, use words and grammar appropriate. The story might be told to a familiar person/group in which case details could be left out where as an unfamiliar person/group would need more information. Where is the story being told - home, doctor's office, religious event, restaurant, card club?*

Decision-making

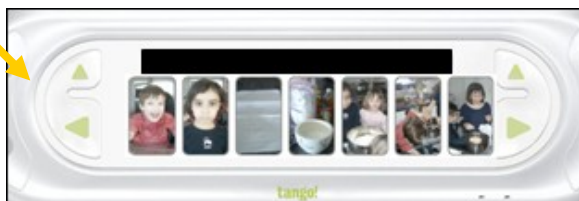
How long should the stories be for the AAC user? Who is the audience for the story? Go to question 3 on page 10.

Where do we program narratives in a device?

Of course, this decision depends on what kind of device the AAC user has (as well as a few other factors).

Options include:

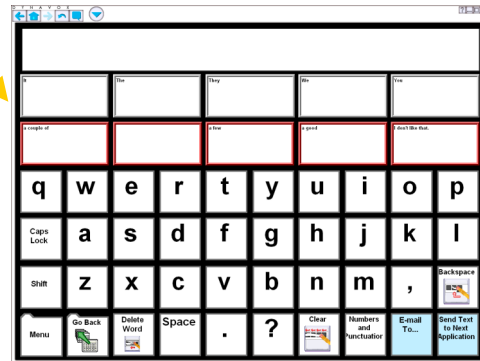
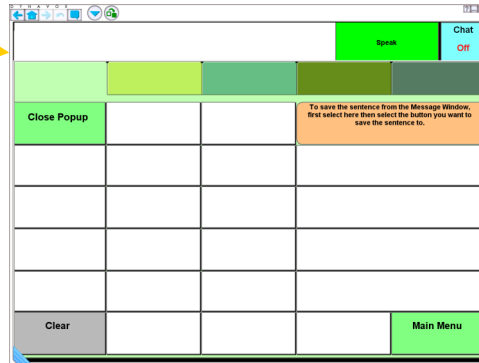
- Symbol/Photo pages are used when an AAC user needs or desires visual representation of the story (photograph, picture symbol or text). InterAACt page sets can be used to provide a way to store narratives with topically (e.g., car page, restaurant page, sports page) or with other photos. Tools on the Tango including Stories and Photo Albums are additional examples of ways to provide a visual representation of the story.



Where do we program narratives in a device con't...?

- Navigator is a user for literate adults in the V/Vmax/Maestro
- Keyboards are found on a variety of devices whether they are onscreen or physical keyboards

They are demonstrated in our "Personal Narratives video."



Below, we have a table that shows which options for storing narratives are available in each device.

<u>Device</u>	Symbol/Photo Pages	Navigator	Keyboards
V/Vmax/Maestro	X	X	X
M3	X		
DynaWrite			X
Xpress	X		X
Tango	X		

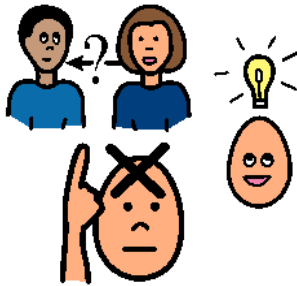
Note: The V/Vmax/Maestro and Xpress have more than one possible storage option. Discuss this with the AAC user's speech-language pathologist. Remember that to store narratives using the keyboards, it is required for an individual to have literacy skills and the same for Navigator.

Decision-making

Where will you store narratives for AAC user? For some individuals, you might use more than one method of storing narratives based on their skills and the device they are using. Go to question 4 on page 10.

We have resources to help you with the **technical side of programming** narratives. These resources are called: “Personal Narratives in Navigator” (in the V/Vmax/Maestro), “Personal Narratives in Symbol/Photo Pages” (in the V/Vmax/Maestro, Xpress and M³), “Personal Narratives with Keyboards” (in the V/Vmax/Maestro, Xpress, and DynaWrite) and “Personal Narratives in Tango”.

How do we program narratives?



You are probably wondering what else could possibly be considered when programming stories. It seems like you would write out the story and store it as you decided above. Done!

Think about what it is like when you tell a story. People usually have questions. They make comments. They want you to repeat portions. You need to remind them to listen sometimes. You may need to provide additional information or clarification based on your audience

If these are skills that the AAC user has (or that we are working on developing), we may not want to program every story under a single button. We may want to program narratives in sections based on where people usually ask questions or make comments or so the AAC user can make comments or provide direction.

Decision-making

Does the AAC user have (or is he/she working on) skills for which he/she needs to be able to produce stories in segments? Go to question 5 on page 10.

If this is true, you can program parts of the stories in different buttons or under different abbreviations or files. *This will make sense to you if you are familiar with the device the AAC user has or after reviewing the video and/or technical handouts.*

How does the AAC user know where the stories are programmed?

- Have them program themselves or with you so that they see under what button, abbreviation or file you stored it.

Note: Use our “Operational Skills—Participation in Programming” resources to help you. They are in the Implementation Toolkit if you search under Operational Skills.

- Have the AAC user participate in choosing the photograph(s), picture symbol(s), labels, abbreviations or file names.

Decision-making

If using Symbol/Photo pages, how will I represent the story? It could be a combination of photographs, picture symbols and text. Go to question 6 on page 10.

- Review the location of the story by showing them where it is, having them practice producing it with you a few times then trying it with someone else.

Note: Use our “Chain of Cues” resources to help you learn how to provide assistance to the AAC user as they learn to be more independent in communication. They are in the Implementation Toolkit if you search under “Communication Partner Skills.”

Do I use digitized (recorded) or synthesized speech for stories?

In the M³, you do not have the option of choosing the type of speech. The M³ only digitized speech. The V/Vmax/Maestro, Xpress, DynaWrite and the Tango all provide access to both.

In general, it is faster to store narratives using synthesized speech in these devices and makes for easier editing. You might use digitized speech if you have stories that an individual with a progressive condition has recorded (voice banking). *See our handout on this subject called, “Voice Banking.”* You might also use it if a story requires use of a “special voices” or sound effects.

Decision-making

Will the narratives be produced with digitized speech, synthesized or a combination? Go to question 7 on page 10.

How often do we change the stories?

Some stories will stay in the AAC user's device for as long as he/she has it. They are the stories we tell again and again.

Some stories will be used as much and the AAC user can decide (or help decide) when to remove them.

You might consider having "calendar pages" in devices such as the V/Vmax/Maestro, Xpress and M³. This provides you a place to program a story each day about that particular day. It might be a single sentence long or it might contain stories about several events. Family news, medical news, work news and home news buttons, abbreviations or files can also be developed. The information in these can change regularly. Some stories from these buttons might become permanent and can be programmed in a different location where as others will just be replaced.

Decision-making

Who will update the narratives? There may be several people who do this. Select people who understand the organization of the device and who will be around to help for the longer term. Make sure that there are always two people trained in programming so that one person can train another if one is no longer available. Go to question 8 on page 10.

Last thoughts...

Narratives need to be meaningful to the AAC user. AAC users may want to explain why they have/use a device. This is an important story in their lives but it is not the only one!

Research has shown that as we get older we communicate most often for social closeness. We have a desire to talk about our experiences. Stories are more than history though. They can be funny or sad. They can teach a lesson or highlight something that doesn't make sense. They can remind us of our past, illuminate our present and point us toward our future.

The End.

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Personal Narratives—Worksheet for Adults

1 Why are personal narratives important to the AAC user?
Check all the reasons why narratives are important. Feel free to add your own.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Establish relationships with new people | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss hobbies/interests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain relationships with family | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss current events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain relationship with friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Tease others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share humor | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share knowledge/wisdom | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share personal history | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share memories | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

2 What stories will we program in for or with the AAC user?
Check off the topics and write in specific story ideas. Feel free to add your own topics and attach additional pages for story ideas.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AAC user's birth
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Work
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent's histories
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> House/Apartment
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Education
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings births
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growing up years
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Travels
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adulthood
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends (relationships/lives)
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single years
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Joys
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Grief/sadness
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's births
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger/frustration
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's lives
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Events that have shaped life
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pets
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hobbies
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

3 How long should the stories be for the AAC user?

- Single sentence
- Two to three sentences
- Four to five sentences
- Multiple paragraphs

- Remember:
- Have the AAC user write or help write the narratives
 - Use words and grammar he/she would use
 - The story will be spoken, not read
 - The audience for the narrative

4 Where will you store narratives for AAC user?
Check all that apply.

- Symbol/Photo pages
- Navigator
- Keyboards

5 Does the AAC user have (or is he/she working on) skills for which he/she needs to be able to produce stories in segments?

- Yes *Program in multiple buttons or multiple abbreviations/files*
- No *Program in a single button or abbreviation/file*

6 If using Symbol/Photo pages, how will I represent the story?
Check all that apply.

- Picture symbols
- Photographs
- Text
- Picture symbols with text labels
- Photographs with text labels
- Picture symbols or photographs with text labels

7 Will the narratives be produced with digitized speech, synthesized or a combination?
Check all that apply.

- Synthesized
- Digitized
- Combination

8 Who will update the narratives?
Check all that apply.

- AAC user
- Family _____
- Caregiver _____
- Other _____