



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
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Faculty of Humanities

***Meaning making in Interpersonal Interactions:
Moving beyond exchanging messages in
interaction with children and adults with severe
communication problems***

Presented by Prof Erna Alant
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, US

PROGRAMME - 24 May 2017

08:30 - 09:00

Registration

09:00 - 09:05

Welcome and Introduction

09:05 - 10:30

What is a meaning-based approach to interaction?

10:30 - 11:00

Tea/Coffee break

11:00 - 11:45

What are the principles of assessment and intervention?

11:45 - 12:00

Closure and Evaluation

Abstract

Over the past decade, AAC therapists, teachers and parents have become increasingly aware of the limitations of the use of scripted messages in interactions of users of AAC. The use of pre-recorded messages and limited access to vocabulary restrict users of AAC not only in what they can communicate but also negatively impact the authenticity of their interactions with communication partners. The AAC system can therefore become a hindrance, rather than a facilitator in interactions between the user of AAC and their communication partners. It is not surprising therefore that parents often prefer not to use their child's AAC device at home as they feel they are better off not using it.

This presentation will explore a new approach focused on meaning-making in interactions between children and adults with severe communication difficulties and their communication partners. The theoretical basis is described in *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Engagement and Participation* authored by Erna Alant (2017). The challenges of using AAC technology in interactions between users of AAC and their communication partners will be discussed and ways of conducting partner training will be highlighted.

This presentation will address the following:

- The theoretical perspective will be briefly explained by highlighting the main components, (i.e. intention, inter-subjectivity and exchanges) of a meaning-based approach to communication
- An assessment protocol will be described to assess engagement and participation based on the three components
- Case studies will be discussed to highlight specific strategies to facilitate meaning-based interactions
- Intervention strategies to facilitate meaning-making will be highlighted.

