

Abstract No. 4.2

Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

Title: Adventurous learning and declarative communication in a tactile multi-partner way

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Co-presenters: Lieke van Buuren

Main focus: Mainly practice/Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: Summary

This presentation is a case description of a 19 year old young man with congenital deafblindness, a student at the Royal Dutch Kentalis Rafaël school. He learned to use declarative communication by experiencing different adventures in a bodily tactile manner, in a multi-partner setting. Through reconstruction of the adventure the two more-competent communication partners were able to scaffold the use of declarative communication for this young man.

Main content

Since 2013 we are using Tactile Multi-partner Interaction and Communication (TMIC) at Kentalis Rafaël, a school for children with congenital deafblindness in the age of 3 to 20. TMIC is based on three-party communication. We wanted to find out what impact tactile communication with multiple partners would have on our students. The young man in this case was one of the first to experience this new approach.

This young man is dependent on touch for the development of his active communication. He performs his gestures and signs in a subtle way, therefore one should know him well to understand him. Before starting the TMIC sessions he mostly used imperative communication while being at school. He tended to cease his communication initiatives when he was not fast enough understood.

At the beginning of a new school year this young man and two, more competent communicationpartners started engaging in new adventures, all in which gross motor skills play a role. During the adventures we engaged in, we needed to be close to each other and help each other. The first new adventure created an opportunity for the partners to add declarative tactile communication to the young man's concept of this activity. This was a turnaround. From that moment on he accepted reconstruction of the adventure by his partners. He even took an active part in the reconstruction of the adventure, having fun while doing this.

After that the number of adventures was expanded. We also started to capture the story of the adventures in a tactile manner. Later on an auditory component was added to the tactile story. Both components turned out to have their own added value.

It seems the TMIC adventure-sessions encouraged connection and created a bond in which trust and confidence were able to grow. After 1,5 years of TMIC adventure-sessions in school this young man uses more and more declarative communication, not only regarding the adventures, but also in general! He has become much more persistent and creative in his communicative efforts when he is not directly understood. This is a beautiful development, which we are proud to present to you!