

Tagging On!

Providing Powerful Responses to Questions

WHAT? 'Tagging on' (my terminology) refers to responding to a question by using the language of the question. For example, if asked:

- a) "Would you help me with this?" you might respond, "Yes, I would.";
- b) "Does this color look good?" you might answer, "Yes, it does.";
- c) "Can you meet me next week?" your response might be, "Yes, I can."

WHY TEACH THIS STRATEGY? 'Tagging on' can support people who use AAC in the following ways:

- Show that the individual is listening (by using the language of the question);
- Demonstrate clear and powerful communication (showing the partner that this individual understands the questions, and has good communication skills);
- More socially interactive than simply using a stark 'yes' or 'no.'
- Provide a quick 'placeholder' while you think of a more extensive answer (e.g., for 'b' above, you might add "It looks great with your eyes.")

WHO IS THIS FOR? This strategy is for individuals who already have good communication skills, but want to fully demonstrate their communicative competence for an interview, a high school or college class, a panel, etc. For example, we first developed this strategy when a teen I worked with was going to be at a booth at a large conference representing the company that made her AAC device. It was highly effective, and has been helpful in a range of other situations.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

Practice and Model. Ask sample questions and model how to tag on. Emphasize the part of the question that shows how to tag on. For example, "**Does** that phone work?" = "Yes, it does." For individuals who are literate, it might be helpful to write the question, and underline the 'helping verb' that suggests how to 'tag on.'

Will you come?
Yes, I will.

Role Play. Role play, using the types of questions that are likely in the situation, such as:

Classroom. "Did you read . . ." = "Yes, I did / No I didn't."

Panel. "Do you think . . ." = "Yes, I do / No I don't."

Interview. "Have you ever worked with younger students who use AAC?" = "Yes, I have." <then add more, such as "I worked with many children who use AAC. They did great.">

Working at a Booth. "Will you show me how this works?" = "Yes, I will. <then add more, such as "It's not hard.">

