

Ho, K. M. (2001). *Examining the effectiveness of two teaching strategies on the learning of graphic symbols for AAC users*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, West Lafayette. Lyle L. Lloyd (Advisor): 96 pages of text, 101 references, 22 appendices, 28 tables, and 21 figures.

The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of two methods of graphic symbol instruction for children with little or no functional speech and no cognitive impairment. The three male participants were four, five, and seven years of age, respectively, and at a preliterate stage of reading (i.e., less than a first grade reading level). Each participant was taught two separate lists of 12 symbols by two teaching strategies, (1) Modeling symbol use in a natural storybook-reading context, and (2) Paired-associate (PA) instruction where the symbol was presented along with the symbol name and the participant was asked to point to the symbol. The symbols taught in the PA condition were labeled 12 times during instruction, while symbols taught through modeling were modeled only four times during instruction. A parallel treatments design was used to compare the effects of modeling and PA instruction on number and percentage of symbols identified during baseline, intervention, maintenance, and generalization phases of the experiment. The Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed Ranks Test (Wilcoxon, 1945; Huck, 2000) was used to compare the word sets taught via modeling instruction to word sets taught via PA instruction. Results indicated that participant one and two learned and retained significantly more symbols taught through PA than modeling instruction. Participant one and two consistently reached criterion first during PA instruction, and participant three reached criterion first during PA instruction for two out of the three pairs of word sets. Participant one generalized symbol identification to symbol production significantly more for symbols taught through PA instruction. Findings indicate that PA instruction may be a more efficient teaching strategy as an initial symbol instructional method for AAC users with normal receptive language. Suggestions are made regarding the integration of both modeling and PA instruction at different stages of learning for this population of AAC users.