

## Using Photo Filters to Motivate Communication

### Why should communication be motivating?

Communication should be fun! Think about all the reasons you communicated today – greeting people, sharing something funny that happened to you yesterday, requesting your favourite coffee and more! Now think of some of the goals we have for individuals who are learning to use a communication system – request to go toilet, request help when they don't really want to do that activity - these don't sound super fun and motivating, so why should they put effort into using their communication system? These are important and functional goals but should be worked on when the individual is able to use their communication system a bit more independently and understands the power of being able to communicate with AAC.

In the words of Rachel Madel **“Inspire don't require”!**\* This is the mantra we'd love to see when teaching communication! Requiring someone to say a certain word will not lead to autonomous communication in the future.

(quote from Nathan Wallis - <https://www.facebook.com/nathanwallisfactoreducation/photos/a.2099641410053306/2585467534804022>)

**"Scientists have recently determined that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain - unless it is done with play, in which case it takes between 10 and 20 repetitions"**  
**Dr Karyn Purvis**

Evidence that human physiology is fine-tuned for learning through play. All children know that, can we catch up?



### How to use face filter apps to motivate and inspire communication?

Lots of apps now have photo filters. Here are some ideas of how to turn photo filters into a communication interaction rather than only a time to make choices.

#### Facebook Messenger

Why not video call a friend or family member and then try out some filters. You can talk about 'whose turn' to choose a filter, whether you 'like' or 'don't like' the filter, direct the other person to choose a filter with 'lots of little pink' to describe a filter with little pink hearts. Comment on whether the other person looks 'silly, handsome, great'.



#### SnapChat or Instagram stories

You could ask for a 'different one' or 'more' filters or comment that you are 'finished' using SnapChat. You could also screen shot photos and print them out to make into a book of funny photos and then write captions for each one. Or use an online book creation app, such as Book Creator or Story Creator. Ideas in a previous TalkLink tip of the month: <https://talklink.org.nz/resources/tip-of-the-month-may-2015-apps-for-sharing-and-schedules>





### YouCam Fun

Another fun app where you can try animated face filters and wild animal makeovers using virtual face paint. Talk about who wants to be the face in the camera, what animal do you want to be, what did you think? Was it silly, funny, scary? Do you want a different one?

### Epic Photo Stickers Toon Blitz

Another fun but more animated app. Use your describing words to talk about what colour, size, and shape you want your hat to be, whether you want long or short hair/beard, what type accessories you want.



### Masks and Cartoon Animals feature from QuiverVision

Download and print a physical colouring in page from the QuiverVision website. <http://www.quivervision.com/apps/masks/> Colour it in and then use the QuiverVision app to make the mask come alive on you! Use your communication system to request coloured pencils/markers, sharing that you have a 'problem' and need a pencil to be sharpened or that you need a 'different' colour or are 'finished' looking at your virtual mask.

## Tips

- **Play TOGETHER and make it interactive**



The goal of using photo filters is to inspire or motivate communication, so you can't just open up the app, hand the iPad or phone over and then leave. Be present, enjoy choosing different filters, take turns, make lots of comments together!

- **The adult always has control over the device being used for photo filters**

Don't let the activity descend into a battle of who gets to hold the iPad. Establish at the start that you will hold the tablet or phone but can put it on your lap or to one side when you are chatting on the communication system. Establishing those boundaries as soon as you start playing avoids the battle. This allows the focus to be on the interaction, not just on pushing buttons to choose new filters on the tablet.

- **Decrease demands / increase invitations**

In the past, we have expected individuals who use AAC to 'show' us that they know where words are located on their communication systems and what those words mean. We made lots of demands on them, which is like continually testing them. Instead we should be teaching them through increasing the number of invitations we give them to communicate about motivating topics! Look how different the morning tea interaction example above is depending on whether the adult demands the child to 'show' what they know, verses inviting them to communicate because communication looks and sounds like so much fun! It is such a subtle shift in our language from telling what to say, to inviting communication.

Decrease Demands	Increase Invitations
	
"Where's <i>cake</i> ?"	"Mmm <i>cake</i> !"
"Show me <i>cake</i> "	"Let's <i>eat</i> <i>cake</i> "
"Find <i>cake</i> "	"It looks like you want <i>cake</i> "
"Tell me on your device"	"You could tell me if you want <i>cake</i> "

Graphic from <https://www.rachelmadel.com/>

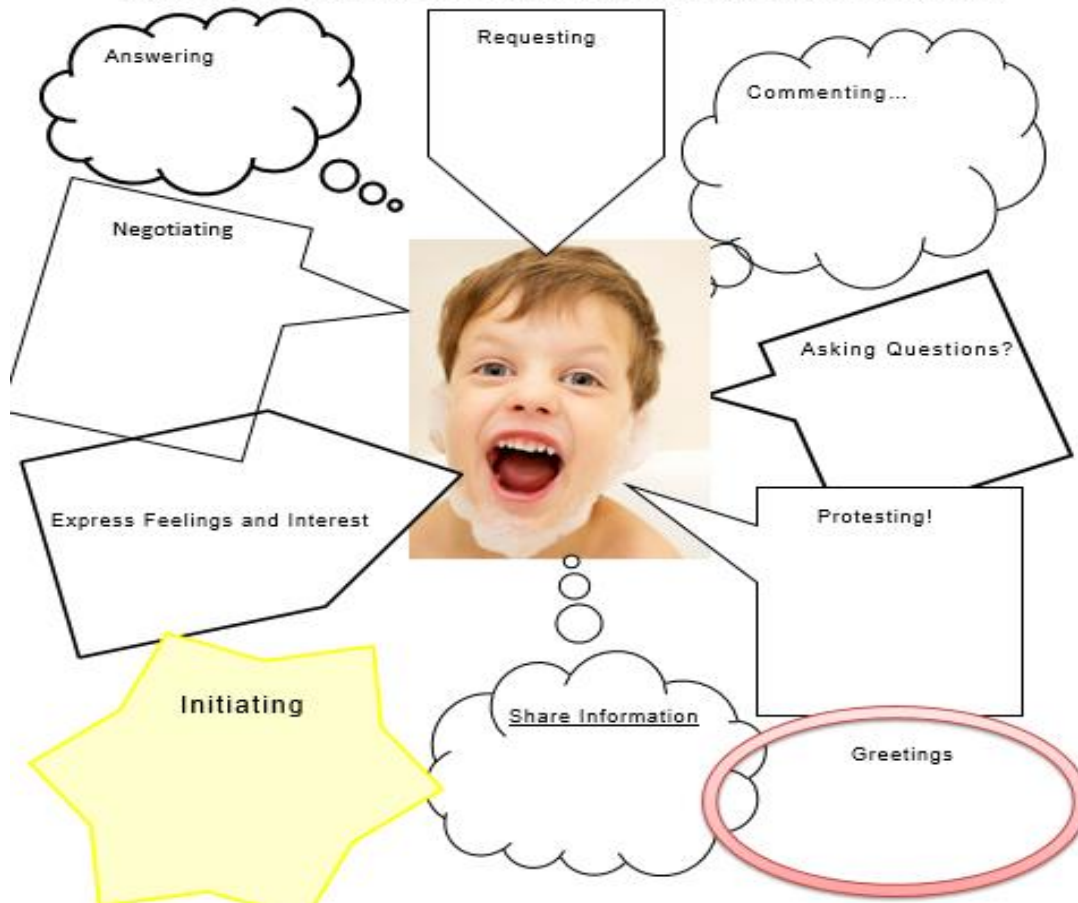
- **Have two separate devices if you use high tech AAC**

Use one device to take photos and use filters and make sure your AAC app is on a different device. This way you can talk about what is happening in the motivating photo filters game at the same time as playing. This also ensure that the AAC device is only for communication.

- **Model a wide range of language functions not just requesting**

We use language for so many purposes beyond simply talking about what we want. We can create opportunities to give individuals the option to comment/protest/ask and answer questions/tell stories/describe things/tell a joke/greet people/ talk about feelings while playing these motivating apps.

Ideas to ensure you are using Assistive Technology to meet a range of communication functions:



\*Reference: <https://ussaac.org/speakup/articles/inspiring-communication/>