



# More than Words

Redesigning AAC  
to support reading instruction

## THE PROBLEM

How can we help students who use AAC to read aloud the connected text in mainstream books through AAC design?

## Phonics and AAC

- General principles of phonics instruction still apply, including the teaching sequence and the need for explicit systematic instruction
- AAC methodologies for phonics instruction include:
  - replacing verbal output with a selection task using symbols and letters to represent words and sounds
  - encouraging students to use their internal voice to sound out words with a verbal model (Nonverbal Reading Approach)
- AAC design must incorporate sounding out so that students have the opportunity to sound out unfamiliar words encountered in the text



## Fluency and AAC

- Developing reading fluency is critical for reading proficiency because it acts as a bridge between decoding and comprehension
- Developing reading fluency requires lots of opportunities to practise reading connected texts
- Using AAC technology to parse books can improve students' opportunities to practise reading and develop reading fluency by:
  - eliminating time consuming vocabulary entry for caregivers and teachers
  - reducing cognitive load and speeding up symbol selection by dynamically changing the grid to display the base symbol for each word in the text



## Learning to read with symbols

- Learning to read using a symbol-based representational system involves a different learning process than using the oral representation of spoken words
- Students must comprehend the word they have decoded to select the corresponding symbol
- Students need opportunities to pre-learn new words and symbols and their grid location so they can invest their cognitive resources in decoding and comprehending the text when reading



## THE SOLUTION

To read aloud connected text in books students need AAC systems to provide:

- opportunities to sound out words
- opportunities to pre-learn symbols
- preloaded vocabulary
- efficient symbol navigation



For more detailed information including references and a video please scan the QR code