Knowledge and Skills and Professional Development Needs in AAC

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Purpose of the Survey

• Ratcliff, Koul and Lloyd (2008) reported that 73% of the training programs in communication disorders had one or more course in AAC and 33% of these programs felt that 76% to 100% of their students were prepared to work with people with AAC needs.

• The three specific goals of this survey include:
  – Description and demographic characteristics of school-based SLPs who provide services to students who use AAC.
  – Current knowledge and skills of school-based SLPs related to AAC.
  – Professional development needs of school-based SLPs related to AAC.
Methods

- An online survey was developed and sent to randomly selected 300 school-based SLPs in Chicago metro area.
- The survey included 15 questions (multiple choices, and rating tasks).
- A reminder to complete the survey was sent after one week.
- Eighty-five (85) school-based SLPs completed the survey.
- Results were tabulated using descriptive statistics and are presented graphically.
Results

1. How many years have you been working as an SLP?

- A. 10: 52.3%
- B. 1-5: 14.1%
- C. 5-10: 5.1%
- D. 15+ years or more: 38.4%

2. How many years of work experience do you have related to AAC?

- A. None: 15.7%
- B. 1-5: 44.6%
- C. 6-10: 12.8%
- D. 10 years or more: 27.9%
7. How did you acquire knowledge and skills in AAC? Please rank order the following sources by placing a 1 by the source that provided you with the most AAC information, a 2 by the second most informative source, up to 5.

A. By attending seminars at professional meetings
B. By attending seminars organized by school district
C. By taking a college-level course
D. By taking online CEUs or online courses
E. By self-instruction through books and journal articles
8. If you acquired knowledge and skills in AAC through a college-level course, did you take a separate course in AAC?

- A. Yes - 42.1%
- B. No - 57.9%

10. Was this a required course?

- A. Yes - 37.5%
- B. No - 62.5%

9. If yes, what was the level for this course?

- A. Undergraduate - 83.3%
- B. Graduate - 83.3%
- C. Both - 83.3%

11. What was the course format/delivery? Please check all that apply:

- A. Traditional classroom - 91.7%
- B. Traditional classroom with lecture, discussions, demonstrations - 16.7%
- C. Distance learning (via the web, email, conferencing, chat room, etc.) - 4.2%
- D. Other (please specify) - 4.2%
12. What types of practical training did you receive in terms of learning AAC technology and associated materials/strategies? Check all that apply:

A. Observed instructor demonstrate activities and/or technology
B. Hands-on experience with an AAC device/stage
C. None
D. Other (please specify)

13. If you acquired knowledge and skills in AAC through attending seminars or online courses, how many hours of continuing education did you obtain related to AAC?

A. Not applicable
B. Less than 5 hours
C. 6-10 hours
D. 11-15 hours
E. More than 15 hours
14. How much continuing education do you believe you need in AAC? Please check the circle corresponding to the level of need you feel for each of the groups.

- Recent Advancements in Technology: 4.29
- Language Intervention for AAC users: 4.21
- Language Assessment of AAC users: 4.19
- Autism Spectrum Disorders: 4.13
- Individuals with Severe Disabilities: 3.86
- Elementary School: 3.82
- Other: 3.35
15. What is your preferred method to meet your professional developments needs? Check all that apply:

- A. Seminars and workshops
- B. Online courses or CEU activities
- C. Self-instruction through books and journal articles
- Other (please specify)

A. Seminars and workshops: 100%
B. Online courses or CEU activities: 34.1%
C. Self-instruction through books and journal articles: 19.5%
Other (please specify): 4.9%
Conclusions

• Most school-based SLPs (44.1%) have 1-5 years and 27.1% have 10 or more years of experience related to AAC.

• Majority of the children who receive school-based services are in elementary schools.

• Preferred method to acquire knowledge and skills in AAC is through workshops and seminars.

• Professional development needs are in recent advancement in technology, language assessment and intervention for AAC users, autism spectrum disorders, and severe intellectual and developmental disabilities.
References


