



# NSW Speech Pathology Evidence Based Practice Interest Group

## Critically Appraised Paper (CAP)

**CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE:** Training in supported conversation can significantly improve the practice of volunteers working with aphasic people.

**Clinical Question [patient/problem, intervention, (comparison), outcome]:** Does supported conversation in groups maintain or improve communication skills following a CVA.

**Search Terms:**

**Search Systems:**

**Citation:** Rayner, H. and Marshall, J. (2003). Training volunteers as conversation partners for people with aphasia. *International Journal of Communication Disorders*, 38(2), 149-164.

**Design:** Case series design (n=4), with pre and post -& maintenance measure and training course (based on Kagan, 9hrs over 3 sessions). Pre and post assessment included video taping and questionnaire. The questionnaire had a factual (knowledge of aphasia condition) and strategic component (knowledge of strategies to use in conversation). Videotapes were rated using a 9-point scale adapted from Kagan ('99, 2001) by 5 SLP raters – randomly presented order of video clips.

**Participants:** n=6 volunteers from “aphasia club” based on pure social aims, no previous training in supported conversation or similar techniques.  
N=6 aphasics, 1yr post CVA and D/C from Speech pathology, Stable language functioning.

**Experimental Group:** Volunteers randomly assigned to aphasic partners.

**Control Group:** Nil, quasi control Group n=8 volunteers, questionnaire administered twice to give some reliability.

**Results:** 1) No relationship between length of volunteer experience and response to training. 2) Suggested an increase in volunteers and aphasics peoples level of participation. 3) Significant improvement in the volunteers knowledge of factual information about aphasia.

**Comments on Design:** Stable pre training performance of volunteers was obtained for the video component of the assessment.

**Level of Evidence (NH&MRC):** Level 1V

**Appraised By:** Adult Speech and Language and Dysphagia Gp

**Date:** 10/06/2003