Preserving Legacy: A Guide to Message Banking

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www.childrenshospital.org/acp

Begin with THANK YOU to many extraordinary people with ALS

Patient Video
Notice the term ‘Message banking’

NOT

‘Voice Banking’

Children’s Hospital Boston
History of ‘Voice’ Banking

Some non-speaking conditions may be anticipated before surgery

- Maxillofacial/Orofacial surgery
- Organ transplantation (lung, heart)
- Disorders of the airway requiring tracheolaryngeal or tracheoesophageal reconstruction
- Oncology related interventions
- Scheduled ventilation supports
- Tracheostomy
Potential conditions leading to nonspeaking condition:

- Airway problems
- Lung problems
- Other
  - Respiratory disorders
  - Neuromuscular diseases
  - Head injuries
  - Spinal cord injuries

Neuromuscular Diseases Affecting Respiration

- Arnold Chiari Malformation
- Cerebral palsy
- Muscular dystrophy
- Myasthenia gravis
- Spinal muscular atrophy

Patient Video
What do we know?

- We know that being unable to speak in the ICU/hospital is extremely stressful to the patient, family, and medical staff.

- We know that positive correlation has been suggested between the inability to communicate and poorer recovery time in the hospital setting.

- We know positive correlation has been suggested between a patient’s ability to communicate and the quality and quantity of communication interactions with the nursing staff.

- We know that some patients in the hospital have planned operative procedures and a nonspeaking condition was anticipated before hospital admission.

Stress to patient, family and medical staff
Inability to communicate correlated with poorer recovery time
Correlation between ability to communicate and interaction with nurse
Nonspeaking condition anticipated before getting to hospital

Patient Video

The Temporary Nonspeaking Condition in the ICU = High Emotional Distress Coupled with a Sense of Loss

ICU stay in an inopportune time for new learning:

**RESULT**

Ineffective processing of new information
1994: CHBG founded a model of AAC service delivery in the ICU including preoperative 'voice banking'.

Patient Video

Patient Video

Programmed devices awaiting patient admission
Postoperative Intervention

- Bedside screening of awareness, sensory and motor skills
- Mounting of AAC device
- Assessment of functional use of communication tools
- Family and staff inservicing

Studies reveal that nurse communication with patient is positively correlated with the patient’s ability to give feedback.

Ashworth (1984)

Ashworth (1978) reported a study from five established ICUs

- 32% of verbal communication was short term info (I’m going to suction you)
- 38% were commands or requests (lift your arm)
- 21% were questions (most related to physical care)
- 7% longer information such as teaching or orienting

Tracked interaction between nurses and patients with endotracheal tubes
General model for ‘voice banking’

- Patient directed focus
- Patients are asked to imagine nonspeaking condition or reflect on previous experience
  ***many had previous experience
- Patient and family members ‘free flow’ selection

Vocabulary Selection part II

- Encourage vocabulary that focuses on representing individual personality, personal interests, personal humor or phrases particular to the individual
- No message was ‘rejected’ by the clinician
Some patients were tempted to ‘reject’ but I learned a valuable lesson from an 11-year-old!

Categories of banked messages
(analysis of messages banked by 50 patients age 4 – 27 years)

- Personal needs
- Social
- Control
- Positioning
- Statements/directives
- Questions
- Emotions/Feelings
- Leisure/entertainment
- Sarcasm
- Clarifications
- Comfort
- Medical

2006
CHB Augmentative Communication Program asked by local ALS provider to see PALS.

2009
- Pilot program launched under grant for fast-forwarding SGD assessments
- Through fast-forward, Initial PALS referrals for high-tech SGD candidates seen by J. Gosnell
- Referrals diversified to head/neck cancer patients post-op
- Suggested our pediatric pre-op model could be applied.
Sidebar:

Let’s examine terminology

The term ‘voice banking’ has continued to be used since we introduced it in the early 90’s BUT technology has changed!

With research and advanced technology, the term **Voice Banking** is now used to define a more sophisticated strategy.
"So I finally finished recording the inventory of phrases. There are about 1600 phrases and I would think you would need to dedicate a good 2 weeks of 1 or 2 hours a day. But it is worth it. From those recorded phrases the Speech Research Laboratory and the University of Delaware synthesized a voice based on my recorded phrases—and it sounds amazing. Far better than I expected. It still sounds a bit electronic—but it sounds better than any other voice synthesizer I've heard such as the one Stephen Heywood had—and best of all it sounds like ME!

So now I can write anything (even if the words were not in my recorded vocabulary) and it will be converted into speech using my voice. I was almost in tears when I first heard it and I can't express what it means to know, whatever happens to me, I will be able to communicate with my own voice. The whole process and software are FREE and just requires some commitment on your part. The whole process can take from 3-6 weeks and depends on how much time you can commit to it. I urge all PALS to do this now before it is too late."
Professor Simon King presents his Inaugural Lecture entitled, "Using speech synthesis to give everyone their own voice" (excerpt)
Research behind the technology by Dr. Junichi Yamagishi
Edinburgh Voice Banking and Reconstruction project
Proposed Definitions:

**Voice Banking**

**Message Banking**

*(Voice Banking)* is a process of recording a large inventory of your speech that is then used to create a synthetic voice that approximates your natural voice. Done successfully, this would allow one to spell and create unique messages and then speak them through a synthesizer that approximates one's natural speech. The science behind this process continues to be in development with beta-versions of available software. The ModelTalker is one such project from the University of Delaware Speech Research Lab. The website is: www.asel.udel.edu/speech/ModelTalker.html

*http://www.cereproc.com/en/home*
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The website is:
http://www.modeltalker.com/
(AgoraNet is the business partner for the speech research lab ModelTalker project)

Message Banking with your own voice digitally record and store words, phrases, sentences, personally meaningful sounds and/or stories using your natural voice, inflection and intonation.

These messages are catalogued as .wav files and may then be linked to messages in a variety of augmentative communication technologies or sound storage files. This will allow you to ‘retrieve’ a message and speak it in your own voice but does not allow you to create novel messages by spelling. If you have recorded individual words, you may combine those words to create unique messages, although the output will sound more staccato than your natural speaking.

Message Banking by proxy is the election of a proxy voice to do all recordings because issues of fatigue, pain or intelligibility may make it difficult for an individual to bank all messages. In this case, the patient may still bank ‘legacy messages’ but the majority will be banked by proxy.
Message Banking: historically, typical strategy used

- Acquire high quality microphone
- Create a list of appropriate message
- Use a recording software on your computer such as sound recorder
- Try to record message that sound as natural as possible

Patient Video

Outcomes?

- Patients report is ‘hard’ to know what to record
- “I can’t figure out what I am going to want to say”
- Some prioritize and record specific messages to loved ones (terms of endearment, appreciation to loved ones)
- Is tedious and artificial so is a ‘chore’ to accomplish
- Informal survey of colleagues nationally reveals banking of 10 – 20 messages on average with some instances of about 100
Message Banking:

We can do better!

My dilemma

Email referral: March 04, 2010
Friday @ 7:10 PM

“John, I want to send a patient to you next week for voice banking - he is a 46 y.o. heading into surgery April 3 for a likely total glossectomy/total laryngectomy. Surgeon does not know if he needs to take the whole tongue but he likely will. The patient is calling Monday to schedule this. His name is: Bob XX. Let me know what you need - The MD is faxing a referral to you”.

What would make this process easier and more functional?

• Record any time and on the spot
• Have each recording be a .wav file
  – Highest quality so we have flexibility of all platforms at highest quality
• Easily download to a computer and determine communication platform later
On-line search for 'handheld .wav file audio recorder'

- Kept finding 'zoom' products

- Wanted to be certain so called the US distributor: Samson Technologies Corp.
  45 Gilpin Avenue, Hauppauge, NY 11788

- Described my exact mission and was directed to Zoom H1 which I purchased from Amazon and received next day delivery

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**Demonstration of .wav file creation**

- set at 16/44 baud rate
- Must use wind guard
- Hold close to mouth for best quality
- Practice timing of push - speak – push

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Note:
Going to stay focused on today’s topic

Clearly, the broader topic of AAC, alternative access strategies and Feature Matching must be addressed with each patient as early as possible.
Need to bank more, body is changing

Has been banking messages in many formats for children

Patient Video

Vocabulary

- Vocal play with children
- Many loving messages to children
- Many messages to wife
- Vacation/quality family time messages
- Anger
- Defending selfdignity anticipating severe disability
- Directives to anticipated staff
- Changes in physical state
- Refusal of medical treatment

Strategies/categories identified by patients

- Personal care list
- Messages related to special events over the next two years
- Not what I meant
Strategies/categories identified by patients

- Daily needs
- Personal care
- Food or drink
- Social
- Medical appointments
- Emotions
- Need help
- Occasion
- Entertaiment
- Personal need
- Unlisted

Messages related to special events over the next two years

Not what I meant..

Pillow list

Drinks list
Without patient involvement, having meaningful vocabulary is as likely as finding a...
Categories of messages banked (initial analysis)

- Personal messages/noises/sounds that are uniquely meaningful
- Appreciation
- Conversational modifiers
- Family routines
- Initiation of social activity
- Explanation of condition
- Expletives
- Personally relevant locations
- Social – time of day related

Patient Video

Beta My Talk page 1
Vocabulary selection

Categories of messages banked (initial analysis)

- Sports/cheers
- Conversational starters
- Conversational enders
- Compassion toward others
- Complaints
- Personal info (biographical)
- Personal state

Categories of messages banked (initial analysis)

- Messages to children
  - Daily routine
  - Pride
  - Tender moments
  - Discipline
  - Future
- Requesting assistance
- Phone conversation
- References to future
- Humor and Sarcasm
- Social questions
Early referral of PALS

- Determining goals and motivations
- Voice vs Message banking
- Bank now, select platform later
- Vocabulary and counseling

Tools and options to consider (based on patient's interest)
- Simple/low tech
- iDevice options
- Dedicated/integrated SGD

(costello, j.m. Boston Children's Hospital © 2013)
Paul, age 52

Diagnosis: ALS ten months prior to first visit

June, 2011

Patient Video

Patient Video

Patient Video
Patient Video

Categories

- Greetings
- Need ‘food/drink’
- Need ‘medical’
- Need ‘personal’
- Advice to boys
- Apologies
- Appointments
- Communication with doctors
- Phone calls to friends
- Car related messages
- Change of location/position in the house
- Social initiation ‘do you wanna…’
- Environmental needs/control
- Encouragement to others
- General social
- Gratitude
- To family ‘be there for each other’
- Silly intonations
- Statements about medical status
- Special occasions
- Sports
- Thanks and love to others
- Thanks (general)

Meaghan, age 11

dx: Juvenile Huntington’s Disease

Message Bank on iPad
Current, challenge with .aiff format and will use other banking strategy

Patient Video
What Platform??

There are MANY but here are a few possibilities

Dynavox products

Embedding audio files on SGD
Today

www.childrenshospital.org/acp

In mid-August

http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org
From the ALS on-line forum

There are a few key phrases that I want to make sure I record with my own voice - such as:

• "Take a picture - it will last longer"
• "I’ve got ALS - what’s your excuse?" I should make this into a T-Shirt
• "You’re barking on thin ice" my father’s favourite mixed metaphor
• “Oops - sorry for the drool - I’m just happy to see you”
• “I know you are but what am I?” the ultimate come back
• “Do you want some fries with that shake”

Next steps

• Continue to work with current patients to have full access to Messages
• Learn from categories created how to better inform new patients
• Explore additional organizational strategies including Amy Roman’s ‘WordCore’
• Explore hybrid approaches of banked and synthetic for generative communication
• Complete the CHB Message Banking Guide
  (preliminary is on website)
  – http://www.childrenshospital.org
  https://www.facebook.com/ACPCHBoston