Clinical Question [patient/problem, intervention, (comparison), outcome]:
Part 1: "Which communication partner training methods are effective in facilitating communication activities and participation for people with aphasia?"
Part 2: "Which patients and/or communication partner characteristics lead to better outcomes in communication partner training?"

Citation: Simmons-Mackie, N., Kearns, K., & Potechin, G. (2005) Treatment of aphasia through family member training Aphasiology, 1464-5041, volume 19(6), Pages 583 – 593

Design/Method:
- 2 participants, male and female spouses. Man was 4 years post stroke with Broca’s aphasia. 42 sessions.
- Treatment aimed at selected behaviours of ‘spouse interruptions’ and ‘excessive use of convergent questions’.
- The behaviour of ‘negative teaching’ was the control, and not selected for teaching
- Baseline data was collected on all 3 behaviours during conversation which was videotaped in 2 conditions: spontaneous conversations in clinic, discussions of television clips played in clinic, and audio taped: breakfast conversations at home.
- Each session began with wife and spouse videotaped in clinic for both conversation and television clip conditions, with breakfast audiotapes recorded during baseline and periodically
- Recognition training then began, 4x weekly with the spouse (wife)
- Each training session began with definitions of the target behaviours, including how to score recordings
- Training occurred only on “news” segments
- Wife and clinician scored a (-) for target behaviour absent, (+) for present
- Videos played for 10 seconds, they then both scored for 5 seconds.
- Tape was stopped and replayed at the 1 min mark – clinician and spouse compared scores and discussed discrepancies
- Termination of training on a behaviour was 90% recognition and 10% or fewer occurrences of the nonfacilitiative behaviour averaged across 2 training sessions.

Participants:
- 62 year old couple married for 40 years
- Husband: 4 years post onset aphasia due to L CVA
- Diagnosis consistent with Broca’s aphasia on WAB
- Received language therapy for 4 years
- Wife: year 12 educated, observed speech-language therapy and had received traditional “counselling and education”

Experimental Group: Single case study (with one dyad)
**Control Group:** N/A

**Results:**
- spouse training resulting in reduction of occurrence of target behaviours in training condition
- also generalised to both untrained conditions and untrained behaviours
- all results maintained in follow up probes
- wife claims also increased partner’s expressive communication in conversation (no data)
- took a total of 42 sessions to reach targets
- 1 condition: convergent questioning, needed to be modified in order for spouse to reach target

**Comments – Strengths/weaknesses of paper:**

**Strengths**
- Length of training sessions – 42 hours
- Testing of both untrained conditions and untrained behaviours to check for generalisation

**Weaknesses**
- Single case study
- No time limit on reaching targets
- No data to support claims of partner’s results
- Follow up probes only 1 month post treatment
- Possible interference of communication samples being knowingly recorded- ? accurate sampling
- 1 condition: convergent questioning, needed to be modified in order for spouse to reach target

**Level of Evidence (NH&MRC):** IV

**Appraised By:** Adult Language EBP Group  
**Date:** 2011