

Hackney College

The Communication folder



HACKNEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Output 1 is a communication folder presented within a case study of a predominantly non-verbal student with learning difficulties. It demonstrates a visual communication resource unique to a non-verbal learner which has been shared with his parent to use at home thus maintaining a consistent approach to behaviour management that has resulted in significant improvements in behaviour. The case study includes examples taken from the learner's communication folder, feedback from his mother and a video clip of the folder in use. The communication folder and how it is used at home is an approach which other providers can implement.

The Communication Folder: Context and implementation

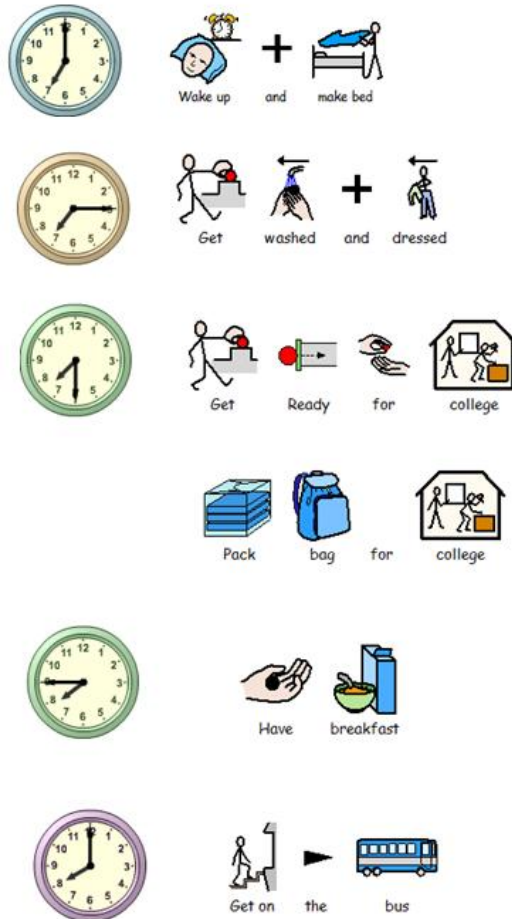
Student B is 20 years old and progressed from a local special school in 2010. He is a student at Hackney Independent Specialist Provider at the College and is predominantly non-verbal. His understanding is good and he is able to indicate 'Yes' or 'No' through loud sounds. Documentation from his school indicated that, although there were no behavioural issues at school, his behaviour was aggressive at home. Initially he appeared frustrated at not being able to communicate at College which was when his tutor had the idea of creating his own individual communication folder. This involved building a communication folder around his individual learning needs as they occur in new situations, collating pictures and symbols on every aspect of B's life, feelings, opinions, interests, eating out, clothes, all his classmates and staff who work with him. His tutor regularly went through the pictures with Student B to develop his understanding of their meaning and they were then incorporated into the folder, thus extending his vocabulary.

[Please see DVD clip of learner](#)

Output 1b: Behaviour chart for morning schedule



Student B getting ready for College



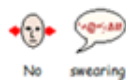
At the end of the induction period his tutor had a conversation with Student B's mother who reiterated that his behaviour at home was deteriorating – he was hitting his younger brother and father and throwing things around. Student B was arriving at College in a bad mood – he wasn't ready for the bus so he often had to miss breakfast. His mother asked if his tutor could help. The communication folder work was then extended to incorporate use at home. His tutor included schedules for morning (between getting up and boarding the bus to college) and evening (the period from arriving home to going to bed) to help structure his day. These included picture symbols so that Student B could understand it.















The communication folder goes with Student B to every lesson, and during breaks and lunchtime. He uses it to communicate with College services staff (e.g. in the refectory), the library staff, in the leisure centre, with his support worker when he goes to the local shops. He uses it independently to communicate with his fellow classmates. The folder has been extended to include behaviour charts for use at home.

Output 1c: Behaviour chart for evening schedule

Student B's behaviour goals:

Student B will get a reward sticker from Mum for:



	Home from College  Home	Show mum Diary  Diary	Snack  Snack	Watch TV  Watch TV	Go to room  Bedroom	Supper  Supper	Free time  Free time	Hot drink  Hot drink	Ready for bed  Bed time
 Monday									
 Tuesday									
 Wednesday									
 Thursday									
 Friday									

The tutor spoke to Student B's mother on a weekly basis to review progress, to see if she wanted to add or change the structure. Initially B was resistant to using the behaviour charts but after his tutor had spoken to him about how the charts and symbols could help him get ready for college without stress, he began to cooperate with his mother and be less agitated when he arrived in the morning. Student B's mother wanted to extend the charts to half term because she was concerned that the work which had been started would be undone over the holiday. Student B's tutor spoke to his mother (who is a second language speaker) on the telephone.

Output 1d: Telephone interview with Student B's mother

24th February 2012

Tutor: Can you tell me how you are using the communication booklet and behaviour charts?

Mother: We are using them.

Tutor: Can you give me an example of how/when you use them?

Mother: I show him the folder and he points to symbols to tell me how he feels or when he wants something.

Tutor: Has his behaviour changed from he started using the communication folder?

Mother: Yes.

Tutor: What can I do to improve the communication folder, would you like me to add more symbols, perhaps ones that relate more to home, e.g. the food he eats, the things he does in the evening and weekend?

Mother: Yes, I think that would be a good idea.

Tutor: Can you begin to make a list of items from home that I could make symbols of to add to the folder? Plus I think it would be a good idea if we had pictures of family members to replace the symbols, could you send in some pictures?

Mother: OK, I will.

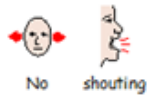
Tutor: Would it benefit you and B if I came to see him at home?








Mother: Yes, that would be good, that might help. My son didn't have this before. He is better at home now.

Output 1e: Half term behaviour chart schedule

Student B's behaviour

Student B will get a reward sticker from Mum for:



	Morning	Lunchtime	Afternoon	Snack time	Supper time	Evening	Ready for bed
 Monday							
 Tuesday							
 Wednesday							
 Thursday							
 Friday							
 Saturday							
 Sunday							

Impact and next steps

The Communication Folder has helped Student B to express himself much more effectively which in turn has improved his behaviour, particularly at home. Student B is arriving at College in a more positive mood and there have been no further reports from his mother about outbursts at home. His tutor has observed that he is more enthusiastic to communicate than he ever was before – he wants to please and is doing his work.

Feedback from the Speech and Language Therapist identified that the Communication Folder in its current format can prevent Student B from accessing the precise symbols that

he is seeking due to the growing number of pages on offer. She also noted that the folder itself is too bulky to be used in some learning situations, e.g. ordering a drink in the cafe or purchasing ingredients in the local shop. She has therefore suggested reducing the number of symbols and halving the size of the folder to make it more portable. The next step for this learner is to secure an iPad with specialised software which resembles an electronic version of the Communication Folder and allows greater portability with the added advantage of a facility which vocalises the selected symbol (although care needs to be taken when it is the learner's goal to vocalise himself).

The Communication Folder is now being developed for another young learner with autism and limited vocabulary. The College Learning Support Assistants are supporting the tutor to create this.