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**Team collaboration to support students who use Augmentative and  
Alternative Communication to communicate  
in inclusive classroom settings.**

A thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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## **Abstract**

The ultimate goal of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) intervention is to enable students with complex communication needs to participate actively across different settings and to be able to have a voice in decision making relating to their life. This study utilized a case study methodology to identify aspects of team collaboration that supported the successful inclusion of two students who used AAC to communicate in the mainstream classroom.

Two school teams supporting students who used AAC were recruited from the researcher's existing caseload. Multiple methods of data collection including interviews, classroom observations and researcher reflections were used to obtain an in-depth description of participant perspectives. Both barriers and supports for AAC use in the classroom were discussed.

The results identified that there are similarities between the perspectives of New Zealand parents and teachers of students who use AAC and those identified in international research. Key findings included: the importance of effective teaming to support these students, the need to allow extra time both for the team to meet and for the provision of in-class support, how technical difficulties with AAC devices can be a barrier to AAC use, and the impact of a positive team attitude for the successful inclusion of these students. The research findings also highlighted student participation in goal-setting as a crucial factor for achieving successful outcomes.