Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) & Core Vocabulary

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Main Components of Emergent Literacy
Symbol Based Communication (AAC)

Does the student:
Know most of the letters most of the time?
Engage actively during shared reading?
Have a means of communication and interaction?
Understand that writing involves letters and words?

No
Yes

Daily Emergent Interventions
Shared Reading
Predictable Chart Writing
Alphabet & Phonological Awareness
Independent Writing with access to full alphabet
Independent Reading
Symbol-based Communication (with few exceptions)

Daily Conventional Interventions
Guided Reading (Anchor-Read-Apply)
Word Study (Key Words + Word Wall + Making Words)
Writing
Independent Reading
Communication with symbols + spelling

From Karen Erickson & David Koppenhaver
Centre for Literacy & Disabilities Studies

DLM Videos on Communication:
• Beginning Communicators: http://dlmpd.com/beginning-communicators/
• Symbols: http://dlmpd.com/symbols/
• DLM Core Vocabulary: http://dlmpd.com/dlm-core-vocabulary-and-communication/
• Supporting Participation in Discussions: http://dlmpd.com/supporting-participation-in-discussions/
What is communication?

People who have **complex communication needs** are unable to communicate effectively using/understanding speech alone.

[www.eda.canada.com/](http://www.eda.canada.com/)
Who are students with Complex Communication Needs (CCN)?

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

AAC is an umbrella term that encompasses the communication tools and strategies used to supplement or replace speech for those with impairments in the production or comprehension of spoken or written language.

Range of Communication Skills and Needs for students with Complex Communication Disorders
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Non-aided:
Rely on the user’s body to convey messages.

Aided:
Require the use of tools or equipment in addition to the user's body.

Non-aided Methods of Communication
- Vocalizations
- Tone of voice
- Speech
- Facial expressions

Non-aided Methods of Communication
- Body Language
- Gestures
- Sign language
- Eye gaze
Is this “Communication”?  

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Aided Methods of communication

- braille
- tactile symbols
- objects
- pictures
- photographs
Aided Methods of Communication

- Symbol based communication
- Communicating with print

Voice Output Devices

Other terminology

Low tech/mid tech

No tech

High tech
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Aided:

Non-aided:

Require the use of tools or equipment in addition to the user's body.

Rely on the user's body to convey messages.

Symbol Based Communication

- word based symbols
- phrase based symbols
- nouns and verbs
- core vocabulary - high frequency words

Some Purposes for Communicating

Request
Protest/Reject
Gain attention
Greetings
Label
Comment
Give directions
Ask and answer questions
Share feelings
Share information, ideas
Give opinions
Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)

- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
  - mostly nouns and some verbs
  - mainly request or label things

Symbol Based Communication

What is a Core Vocabulary?

A relatively small set of highly useful words that apply across contexts

85% of spoken language comprised of 250 – 350 words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Vocabulary</th>
<th>Fringe Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high frequency words</td>
<td>lower frequency words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make up about 75-80% of the words we use everyday</td>
<td>make up about 20-25% of the words we use everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>include words for a variety of parts of speech (adjectives, verbs, questions, joining words, etc.)</td>
<td>limited to specific contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very few ‘Core Vocabulary’ words are nouns</td>
<td>limit student to communicating for labelling or requesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be used across contexts</td>
<td>e.g., ‘dinosaur’, ‘lego’, ‘french fries’, ‘swing’, ‘mountain’, ‘glacier’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be used to communicate a variety of messages (requests, protests, sharing/commenting, labelling, asking/answering questions, etc.)</td>
<td>e.g. ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘like’, ‘want’, ‘see’, ‘not’, ‘where’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘like’, ‘want’, ‘see’, ‘not’, ‘where’</td>
<td>Note - Many AAC Core Vocabulary words are also our high frequency sight words used in reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Core Vocabulary Example
(from Caroline Musselwhite)

Fitzgerald Key Color Coding System for AAC

AAC
Dynamic Learning Maps
Core Vocabulary

- Dynamic Learning Maps [http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/]
- List developed through research analysis looking at frequency of words needed for communication purposes
- Note - this is not all high Core Vocabulary but a good starting place
- Note - many of these words also tend to be high frequency sight words for reading

DLM™ First Forty Core Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>like</th>
<th>not</th>
<th>want</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>help</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where</td>
<td>up</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what</td>
<td>need</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some</td>
<td>put</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when</td>
<td>finished</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>turn</td>
<td>stop</td>
<td>over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Power of Core Vocabulary: Life Saving!
By Gail Van Tatenhove

* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqfVAPuGzpl&sns=em](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqfVAPuGzpl&sns=em)

Are symbols concrete and easy to read/interpret?

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Read the symbols below and follow the directions:
Is this what you did?

Concrete Symbols?

Concrete Symbols?
Using symbols versus photographs

You Must Teach Students to Use the Visuals Symbols

Importance of modelling using symbols

http://corevocabulary.weebly.com/planning--modelling--reflecting.html
Students with CCN need to see others using their communication systems for formulating language and have regular opportunities to use it themselves.

**Importance of modelling using symbols**

Students with CCN need to see others using their communication systems for formulating language and have regular opportunities to use it themselves.

**AAC**

**Dynamic Learning Maps**

**Core Vocabulary**

**DLM’s™ “First 40”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>it</th>
<th>like</th>
<th>not</th>
<th>want</th>
<th>want</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>help</td>
<td>it</td>
<td>move</td>
<td>different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>where</td>
<td>up</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>when</td>
<td>meet</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>put</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>start</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>did</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>finished</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>here</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>turn</td>
<td>stop</td>
<td>wear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Core - Core 36**
What do I do?
My student came already has an AAC system?
Add Core to PECS
Picture Exchange Communication System

Core vocabulary on a High Tech Voice Output Device

If students come with apps with too much vocabulary, consider:
- hiding some words and start modelling first DLM 40 Core vocabulary e.g. only show first 4...8...
- keep all their symbols visible but really focus on teaching a small set at a time (e.g. next week - focus on first 4 core from DLM

Resources for teaching Core: 'Core Set 1' - I, like, not, want

http://www.angelman.org/
Resources for teaching Core:
‘Core Set 1’ - I, like, not, want

Communication Training Series Webinars

+ Introduction Set (webinar #s 1 - 5)
  - Core 1 (webinar #s 6 - 7)

6. Introduction and First Set Four Core
   with Caroline Maccullum and Kim Tedder
   Mac & Tablet users view recording here
   Handouts: Presentation ‘Like Hot/Like We Like Each Other

7. Communication Practices: Core Vocabulary set
   with Mauveen Hawars

Project Core - Core 36
32 Location Core Overlay

9 Location and 8 Location Overlays Created Using DLM™’s “First Forty” Core Words

Go Talk 20
Aided Language Stimulation
Modelling AAC

Introducing a New Word
What can I do to support my students with communication?

Some final key points

Observe what they are already trying to communicate
Communication/Gesture Dictionary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What child does</th>
<th>What it means</th>
<th>What adult does</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child says ‘appo’</td>
<td>Student wants computer</td>
<td>Acknowledge meaning and take student to computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Model using a symbol for computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child pulls on his finger</td>
<td>Student needs to go to the bathroom for a bowel movement</td>
<td>Acknowledge meaning and take student to the bathroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Model using a symbol to communicate this meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observe what they are already trying to communicate

Model using symbols to match their message/intent

Behavior IS Communication
Escape Behaviors (This is too hard, I don't understand, I need help, I don't like this)

Communication Partner Strategies
Model and teach using core in daily routines in a systematic way

Communication Partner Strategies
● model using AAC - including core & fringe words
Communication Partner Strategies

- yes/no
- two hand choice
- wait time...
- attribute meaning to their attempts

Communication Partner Strategies

Use **partner assisted scanning** of choices e.g. Do you want this one? This one?

AAC Core versus Fringe Vocabulary

We need to provide more **low tech** access to vocabulary for our students

‘If an AAC system mainly consist of **nouns and descriptors**, we are limiting these students to using communication displays that allow them to **request and label**.’

‘So, in the best communication world, AAC users would have access to core and fringe vocabulary so that they have maximum communication power no matter where they are, who they are with, or what they are doing’. 
THANK YOU!

For more information, please go to:

- www.dynamiclearningmaps.org
- www.angelman.org

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