

Making AAC Work in the Classroom



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What words do children
and adults really use to
communicate?



78% of the words
we use daily are drawn
from a core of fewer
than 400 words



Core vocabulary makes
up 3/4 of what adults
and children actually say
and is often ignored in
the design of AAC
systems

Top Words Used by Toddlers



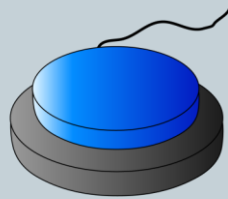
1. a
2. all done/finished
3. go
4. help
5. here
6. I
7. in
8. is
9. it
10. mine
11. more
12. my
13. no
14. off
15. on
16. out
17. some
18. that
19. the
20. want
21. what
22. yes/yeah
23. you

Toddler Words by Frequency of Use

<u>Words</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
I	9.5
No	8.5
Yes/yea	7.6
my	5.8
the	5.2
want	5.0
is	4.9
it	4.9
that	4.9
a	4.6
go	4.4
mine	3.8
you	3.2
what	3.1
on	2.8
in	2.7
here	2.7
more	2.6
out	2.4
off	2.3
some	2.3
help	2.1
all done/finished	<u>1.0</u>
	96.3%

Banajee, 2003

How many of those words
were noun labels or picture
producers?



Picture Producers



- The majority of words used in sentences are NOT picture producers
 - Only 1 word is a picture producer in the following sentence: “I went on a trip and saw a mountain.” What is it?
- Fewer than 5 percent of words used in any activity by toddlers are picture producers
(Banajee, Dicarolo & Stricklin, *AAC*, 2003)
- More than 90 percent of core vocabulary words are **not** picture producers

(Hill, Dissertation, Establishment of Performance Indices, 2001)

Clinical Application



First 8 Words: all done, help, want, mine, more, stop, that, what

First 15 Words: all done, away, go, help, here, I, it, like, mine, more, stop, that, want, what, you

First 30 Words: again, all done, away, big, do, down, get, go, help, here, I, in, it, like, little, mine, more my, off, on, out, put, some, stop, that, there, up, want, what, you

First 50 Words:



again, all, all done, away, bad, big, come, do, don't,
down, drink, eat, feel, get, go, good, happy, help,
here, I, in, it, like, little, make, me, mine, more,
my, not, now, off, on, out, play, put, read, said,
some, stop, tell, that, there, turn, up want, what,
where, who, why, you

AAC

Vocabulary Considerations

- Typical language is 1 noun: 4 other words
- Vocabulary/labels are not language
- 96.3% of toddler vocabulary is 23 words

(Banajee, DiCarlo, Stricklin, AAC 2003)

Language Development



- Reasons to communicate (pragmatics)
- Word meanings (semantics)
- Word building (morphology)
- Sentence building (syntax)
- The communication dance (discourse)

Have a Vision



- Team approach
- Long range vs. immediate
- Evaluate vocabulary needs
- Whose vocabulary is it?

Building Communication Competence



- Functional activities
- Repetition and routine
- Technology in these classrooms (both hi and low)
- Language learning & use



Importance of Core

Core vocabulary is consistent across:



- **Populations**

- toddlers, adolescents, adults, elderly, people w/ DD, CP, Syndromes, Autism

- **Places**

- at home, school, centers, restaurants, malls, churches, outdoors, hospitals, cars,

- **Topics**

- work, fact finding, food, family life, gossip, judgments, biography, education, life experiences

- **Activities**

- Talking to friends/family/on phone, eating, playground, shopping, playing games, hobbies, watching movies, driving, “visiting”



How do you make a communication display if Core Vocabulary is not a Picture Producer?



Communication Displays



- Activity Based or Situation Specific
- Core words?
- Allow for Expansion
- Expressive vs Interpretation vocabulary
- Ever changing vocabulary

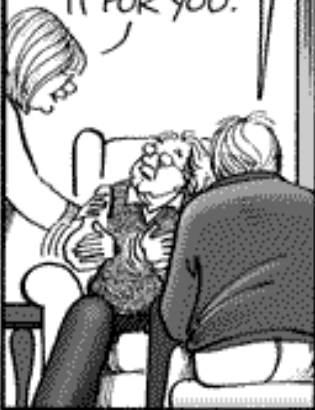
SORRY, GRANDPA-I'VE BEEN TALKING WAY TOO FAST!-IT'S JUST THAT I'M SO PUMPED!

UH!



YOU KNOW...PUMPED? LIKE, REALLY EXCITED?

YES, DEAR. I'LL GET IT FOR YOU.



HE FINDS PICTURES USEFUL WHEN HE CAN'T EXPRESS HIMSELF.



WHAT'S THAT, JIM? ... HE'S POINTING TO A CAR...AND... A GAS STATION!



THANKS, GRANDPA. -I'M GLAD YOU'RE PUMPED TOO!!



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Design Features



- Motor Considerations
- Visual features to maximize linguistic and cognitive organization
 - Color code
 - Grammatical-semantic-alphabetic
 - Left-to-right
 - Sensory input
 - Memory information

Supporting Aided Communication in the Classroom



- Model what you expect
- Don't feel student needs to identify symbol before they can use it
- Teach in a functional environment
- Create language rich learning environment
- Provides receptive language base with expectation that expressive language will follow

Aided Language Stimulation - Why?



- Make language visual/tangible (King-DeBaun, 1999)
- Slows your rate of speech so comprehension is improved
- Initially emphasis is on receptive with the idea that expressive will follow
- Provides models for students they can use in the future
- Engages all children in group activities
- You have to start somewhere!

Facilitating Communication in an AAC

User



- Be at their eye level & keep eye contact
- Maintain open body posture
- WAIT for them to respond
- Use open-ended ?s
- SILENCE IS OK!
- Confirm message and Prompt (only if ok w/ AAC user!)
- PAUSE



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Everyone Communicates!



- Unintentional
- Intentional but not symbolic
- Intentional and symbolic

Basic Communication Skills



- Shared focus
- Early gestural complex (look, point at, reach for, give to)
- Multi-modal communication (eyes, gestures, voice, body)
 - Unaided versus aided communication

Enhancing Communication



- Analyze the Environment
- Identify opportunities to emphasize communication
- Sabotage Environment
- Model the use of communication tools (light & high tech)

Success in life can be directly related to the ability to communicate. Full interpersonal communication substantially enhances an individual's potential for education, employment, and independence.

Therefore, it is imperative that the goal of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) use be **the most effective interactive communication possible**. Anything less represents a compromise of the individual's human potential.

ASHA website, 2011 Adapted from a paper by Katya Hill, M.A., CCC-SLP, Assistant Professor, Speech-Language Pathology, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Resources

- 12 Texts a Day – Maximizing Down Time! (Musselwhite, 2008) June 2008 Tip of the Month; www.aacintervention.com
- Augmentative Communication, Carol Goosens' and Sharon Crain (Blue & Red binders); Don Johnston Developmental Equipment, Inc.
- “Communicatin’ in the community”, Pat Bryant, Closing the Gap, April/May 2008 (pat@aimeesolutions.com)
- <http://www.lburkhart.com>
- Caufield, Freda, Carrillo, Debbie, “200 A Day the Easy Way: Putting it in Practice” Closing the Gap, June/July 2010.
- Carlson, Faith, Creating Communication Displays, Poppin and Company, 1997
- Orange County Public Schools Assistive Technology Team, Orange County, Florida
- Gail Van Tatenhove, PA, MS, CCC-SLP; UAACT, 2/2011
- Dynavox and PRC websites
- <http://enablingdevices.com/catalog> resources for implementing voice output switches into every environment