Building Communication with CORE Vocabulary

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What is CORE Vocabulary?

- The CORE vocabulary consists of the most frequent words of a language and is common to all native speakers of a language.

- Naturally occurring language begins with simple words that have multiple meanings.

- Words that you don’t “see” in the environment
• Approximately 80% of the words we use daily come from a set of fewer than 400 words.

• The 50 most frequently used words in daily communication account for about half of total words said.
- Multikinesthetic
- Follows the structure of language
- Takes focus off of nouns/less pictures
- Vocabulary remains stationary
- Includes many functions of language
- Vocabulary meets the needs of all situations
- Pragmatic flow is modeled
- Easily replaceable

**PROS**

- You can’t read, write, or speak without CORE vocabulary
- Efficient use of available resources
- Provides open ended communicative form
- Provides depth of communicative purposes
- Overlaps with high frequency sight words
PROS
- Generic and understandable based on the context of the situation.
- Knowledge of system not required in communication partner
- Doesn’t break or hurt others
- Can be used by multiple users
- System does not totally change when vocabulary increases
- Easily moves from Location to Location

Cons
- Have to point to words instead of activating device
- Can’t be specific without pointing
- Communication partner must be near the student
- Difficult for students with limited upper body mobility
- Difficult to talk about out of context events/items
- Boards can be visually overwhelming as they get larger
- Can get stuck in repetitive phrases.
- When just starting, requires the communication partner to do some pre-thinking.

Other Popular Strategies
Low Tech Strategies:
- Activity Boards
- Picture Exchange
- Picture Notebook
Activity Boards

Picture/Object Exchange

Request an item  Receive the item

Picture Exchange Notebook
Incorporating CORE into other Strategies

- Picture Dictionary
- Core/Exchange Book
- Topic Boards
What We Have Learned!

Branch out

Integrating CORE
ALL LEVELS
- Emerging Communicators
- Beginning Communicators
- Intermediate Communicators
- Limited Verbal Communicators
- Students working on Syntax
- Students with significant articulation challenges
- Emerging Readers

Emerging Communicators
Gestures, facial expressions, no formal system

On Communication Device with Beginning Communicators
Beginning Communicators
have a basic system for requesting, but
not functional communicators

Intermediate Communicators
able to use more symbols, more
functions of communication,
independent desire to
communicate

Limited Verbal Communicators
echolalic, may be off topic, may be
unintelligible

Verbal Communicators
Students who struggle with expressive
language difficulties may need to use
pictures to help them visualize and
access these words more frequently
when they communicate
Modeling (Aided Language Input)

- Researched Based
- Fastest way to learn the student's communication system
- Valuable for the learner
- Everyone can do it!
- It can be done anywhere
- It is contagious – for other to use it with your students

Why Model???

84 years

...amount of time it would take a child who has a communication system receiving speech/language therapy 2 times/week for 20-30 minute sessions to reach the same amount of language exposure the typically developing 18 month old child has been exposed to over 4380 hours of oral language at a rate of 8 hours/day from birth.

Jane Korsten:
http://www.buffalo.edu/registered/ATBasics/populard/ass/consider.php
FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Integrating CORE

Students with Significant Articulation Difficulties

• Best articulation “bang for your buck”
• All students in the school are using CORE vocabulary
• Improve intelligibility by improving most used words in our language

INTELLIGIBILITY

Integrating CORE
Schedules

Mini-Schedules

Word of the Week

CORE – Label the Room
“Up” Lesson

“Little and Big”

Books

Thinking about CORE Throughout the DAY

• Math
• Reading
• Transitions
• etc

Integrating CORE OTHER DISCIPLINES
Other Disciplines

- MT
- OT
- PT
- IHPT

Music Therapist

OT

Tall Line Down

Start on Blue

Stop on Pink
Integrating CORE

GOALS

Language

Semantics/Syntax

• Within 36 instructional weeks, with visual and verbal prompts, Student will demonstrate understanding of simple location terms IN, OUT, ON, OFF, AWAY in the context of functional routines or social activities with 70% accuracy as measured by data and observation.

• LABEL ACTIONS included in CORE vocabulary to describe pictures and events.

• Produce 2-3 word phrases including pronouns and verbs included in core vocabulary to describe pictures or events using words and/or picture symbols.

Pragmatics

• Improve her ability to understand and use language in the classroom in 80% of opportunities as evidenced by data collection.

• Use a core board to comment about activities and routines using 3+ word phrases.

• Ask a follow-up question such as, “What about you?” to appropriately maintain conversation with a familiar listener.
Articulation/Intelligibility

• Within 36 instructional weeks, with visual, tactile and verbal prompts during structured activities, Student will produce a functional set of VC and VCV words with 70% accuracy as measured by data and observation.

• Demonstrate increased intelligibility of speech in functional phrases including personal information and CORE vocabulary.

Concepts and Actions

• Big/Little
• In/out
• On/Off
• Stop/Go

5 Things to Do If You’re Not Confident Teaching Core

1. Breathe and forgive yourself.
2. Get your own copy of the student’s AAC board.
3. Give it a try.
4. Pick one core word for explicit teaching.
5. Spread the Word.

From Practical AAC blog.
References and Resources

  Great blog with great resources and ideas!
- MyDynavox.com - core lessons and books - https://www.mydynavox.com/Resources/IdeasForTherapy - You have to create a login first
- Pancake Manor - YouTube - http://youtube.com/user/billyreid - fun songs that can be great to use when teaching CORE!
- Boardmaker - http://www.mayer-johnson.com/boardmaker-software
- Picture APP that can be used is many different ways for therapy and instruction!
Make up a lesson with these ideas in mind:

1. Make a craft.
2. Make food.
3. Make up with a friend after an argument.
4. Make someone happy, sad, angry, etc through your actions and/or words.
5. Make up work you missed.
6. Make your bed.
7. Make a call.
8. Make friends.
9. Make a choice.
10. Make rules.
11. Make a plan.
12. Make a schedule for the day or for an activity.
13. Make up (write) a story.
14. Make believe during play.
15. Make music.
16. Make a wish.
17. Make a movie.
18. Give something or someone a makeover.
19. Make money.
20. Make a mess.
21. Make a mistake.

Apps:

- There are apps for making every kind of food you can imagine, including cookies, hot dogs, burritos, pizza, popcorn, cotton candy, Chinese food...
- I also found some apps by Sergey Burlakov that give lessons on making paper airplanes, origami, cartoons, and many more.
- There are all sorts of free apps for making photo collages. I like Pic Collage, but there are tons of others if you search “collage,” or “photo collage” in the app store. There are also some scrapbooking apps that would serve the same purpose.
- Make a story using photos and videos of your students doing daily activities or fun group activities. I like, Making Sequences and Kid in Story. StoryMaker looks fun but I haven’t explored it much. Any suggestions?
- Make a slideshow with photos and videos with Educreations or Explain Everything.
- Make a graphic organizer using an app called, Popplet Lite. Use it to tell about students, places, rules for the classroom...

Books:

Today I Feel Silly, and Other Moods that Make My Day by Jamie Lee Curtis
Germs Make Me Sick, by Melvin Berger
Pigs Make Me Sneeze, by Mo Willems
The Little Red Hen Makes a Pizza, by Philomen Sturges
It’s Okay to Make Mistakes, by Todd Parr
Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend, by Melanie Watt
Can You Make a Scary Face?, by Jan Thomas
Daddy Makes the Best Spaghetti, by Anna Grossnickle Hines
Henry Helps Make Cookies, by Beth Bracken

**or ANY book about MAKING something!**

Activities:

1. Make faces (and take lots of pictures to make a book or album to look at later).
2. Make any craft, food, drink, etc.
3. Make St. Patrick’s Day or Spring activities.
4. Make videos on how to do things (wash your hands, line up, etc).
5. Make photo albums about things in different categories.
6. Make sensory bottles, sand balloons, or any other type of sensory item that can be part of a sensory box for the classroom.
7. Talk about “making friends.” Try some of the great ideas we heard about on our most recent staff development day!
8. “Make a plan” for difficult or challenging situations as a social skills lesson, or just practice sequencing skills by creating directions for a functional task. Make sure to use lots of visuals.
9. Make music. Gather or make instruments and make a lot of noise!
10. If you have a mix of higher and lower level students in a group, have the more advanced students interpret and use idioms including the word, make: “make a difference,” “make money,” “make a move,” “make up your mind,” etc.
References and Resources


Gail Vantatenhove - http://www.vantatenhove.com/ - Pixon Project


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Interesting Blog About Word Walls