

# Language All Day:

## Partner Strategies for Increasing Engagement and Opportunities



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# Hello !

**Lauren S. Enders, M.A., CCC-SLP**

- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Full-Time AAC/ AT Consultant
- Active on social media



You can find me at [lenders@bucksiu.org](mailto:lenders@bucksiu.org)



# Learning Objectives



- 1. Name 3 of the communication partner strategies described as best practices in today's session.**
- 2. Define the term "descriptive labels" and describe how they can be used to support language immersion and modeling throughout a student's day.**
- 3. Describe 2 ways student photos or videos can be incorporated into common classroom activities to increase engagement.**

# Handout



**All resources  
presented in this  
course will be  
available in a resource  
document that  
I'll share (via a link)  
at the end!**



**Relax  
&  
Listen**



# 1

## AAC: What is the goal?



We need to teach communication..but WHERE should we focus?

# Language is about Connection



“

The goal of AAC should be to say **anything that you want to say**. It isn't about telling a person what you need and want. It's about becoming an effective communicator, so you can **build relationships**. Building relationships helps you to network, which helps you become anything that you want to become.”

Chris Klein



# Chris Klein says:

## People Who Use AAC...

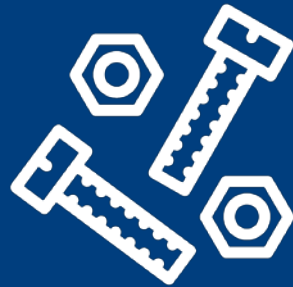
- experience social isolation
- “tend to have limited access to common, everyday language, which prevents them from building relationships.”
- “..need access to at least 150 core words, so that they can start to learn how to develop sentences.”





# 2

## AAC Nuts & Bolts: A Quick Review



Let's quickly review a bit about vocabulary selection and best practices in AAC implementation

# Core Vocabulary

- Used with high frequency
- Make up 75 to 80% of the words we use every day
- Should be a basis of robust AAC systems



# Fringe Vocabulary

- Used 20 to 25% of the time
- Includes words from curricular themes
- Includes personal words

Christopher Columbus



Cheerios



stamen



- Quick
- Frequently used
- Social exchanges
- Emergencies
- Reporting abuse
- Don't forget about these!

# Pre-Stored Vocabulary



# Robust AAC Systems...

**Balance the essentials!**

*core vocabulary*

Pre-stored phrases &  
sentences

*fringe vocabulary*



# SNUG: Our Goal!



Spontaneous

Novel

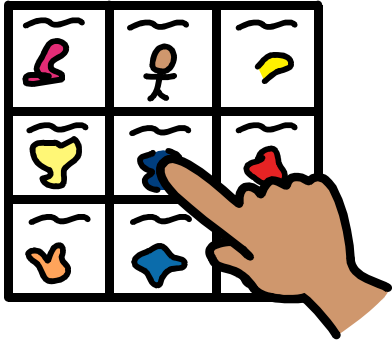
Utterance

Generation

Allows us to say  
**WHAT** we want  
to say, **WHEN**  
we want to say  
it, to **WHOM** we  
want to say it

Gayle Porter

# ESSENTIAL AAC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: Aided Language Stimulation (ALgS)

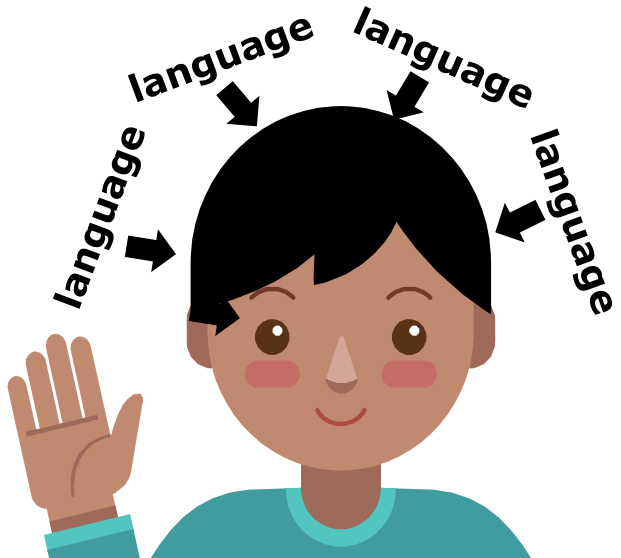


A language stimulation approach in which the facilitator points out picture symbols on the child's communication display in conjunction with all ongoing language stimulation. Through the modeling process, the concept of using the pictorial symbols interactively is demonstrated for the individual.

**Goossens, Crain, & Elder (1992)**



But WHY must we model?



because learning the  
“language of AAC”  
mirrors how we ALL  
learn language...  
through **immersion** in  
that language!



# EXPAND!

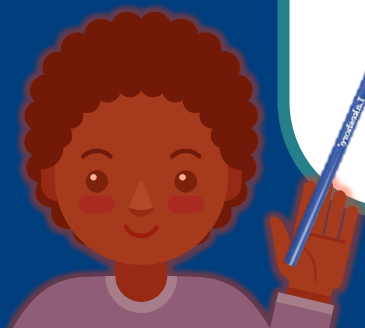
Model utterances  
that are 1 to 2 words  
*beyond*  
what the communicator  
is typically using.

## Rule of Thumb



# Benefits of Modeling

- Slows down **OUR** rate of speech
- Forces us to simplify our language and include more core/target vocabulary
- Provides visual input to support processing of our statements, comments, directions, and questions
- Provides peers with a model of *how* to use ALgS with their peers who use AAC

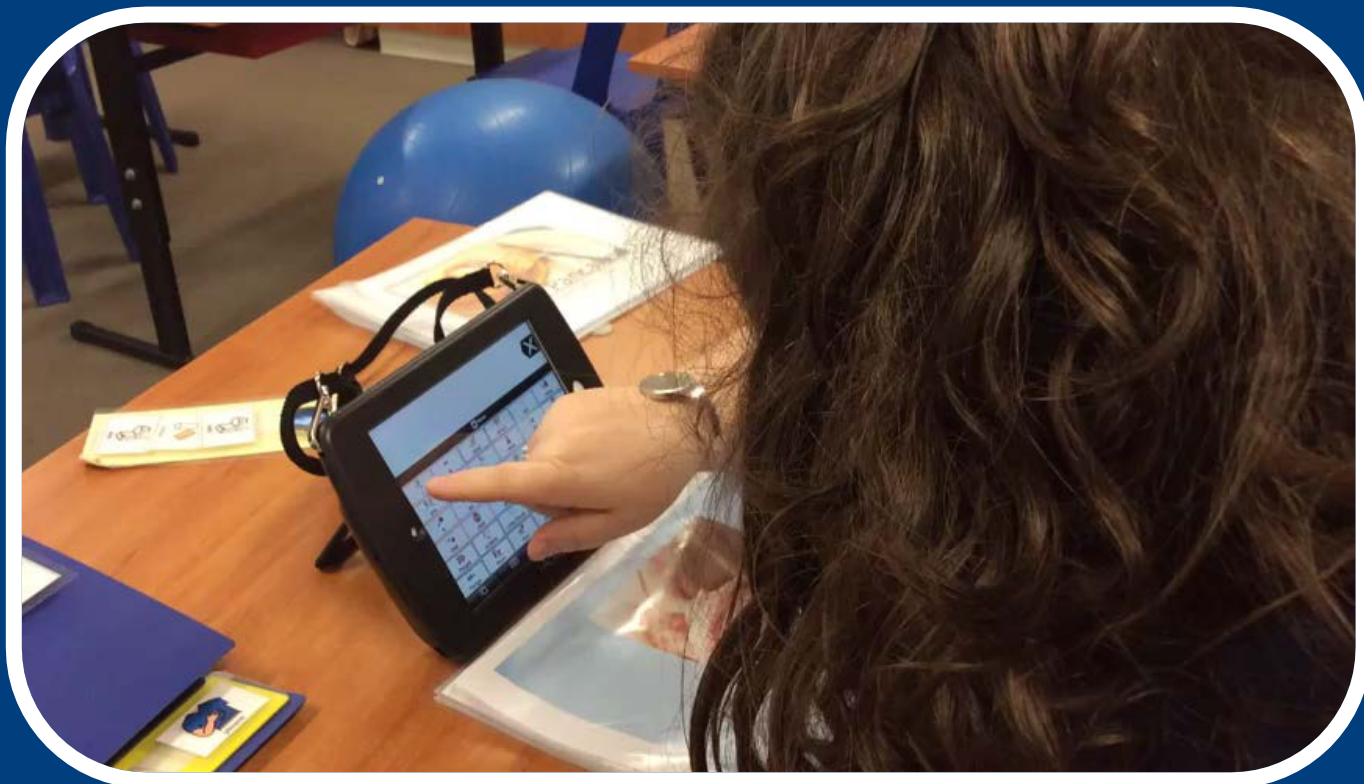


# What does Modeling AAC (ALgS) LOOK LIKE?



# Modeling During Shared Reading

## By Jane Farrall





# But I need MORE video examples of modeling!



Gail Van  
Tatenhove



AAC Chicks



Kate Ahern



Amanda  
Hartman

# When you model...

## Talk through & model navigation paths too!



Kate Ahern, M.S.Ed



**Even if the AAC system is high-tech, modeling does NOT have to be done on the high-tech system!**



# Paper and other static options work!

# 3

## Communication Partner Strategies



Communication partners are KEY! Let's discuss some essential communication partner behaviors.



# How to Be a **Respectful** Communication Partner



1. Respect the effort AAC takes.
2. Be patient and WAIT.
3. Help manage noise.
4. Help manage physical space.
5. Watch the person, not the device.
6. Pay attention to the message and other cues.
7. Do not dominate the conversation.
8. Respect an AAC user's voice and words.
9. Ask before touching/ using someone's AAC system.
10. Accept that communication is on the AAC user's terms.



# Consider the user's WHOLE AAC SYSTEM

- Facial expressions
  - Eye Gaze
  - Body language
  - Movements
  - Behaviors
  - Gestures
  - Vital signs
- No tech methods
  - Low tech methods
  - High tech devices
  - Natural speech



YES  
NO

# Top 5 Communication Partner Tips:

1. Make it FUN!
2. Limit test-style questions
3. Listen & Listen some more
4. Wait & Wait some more
5. Provide TONS of self talk  
and parallel talk *WITH* modeling





# 5 Things **NOT** to say to AAC Learners

1. “Show me [on your device].” or “Find the word [xxxx].”

2. “Press the switch” or “Hit the Switch!”

3. “Tell me on your talker!” (*or “Use Your Words!”*)

4. “I know you can do it. You did it yesterday. You’re just being stubborn.”

5. “Hurry up.”



Dr. Carole Zangari

# GREAT RESOURCE!!



## PARTNER STRATEGIES PACKET

Supporting Children to Communicate with AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)



ONE KIDS PLACE

### PARTNER STRATEGIES

Supporting Children to Communicate with AAC  
(Augmentative and Alternative Communication)

An important predictor of success in learning to use AAC systems is having  
**Good Communication Partners**

What makes a "Good Communication Partner"?

1. Understanding that Communication goes beyond "I want...", "It is..."
2. Presuming the *Potential of Competence*
3. Modeling communication with pictures (Aided Language Input)
4. Creating Opportunities to teach meaningful, functional communication
5. Reading and Responding appropriately to the child's non-verbal signals
6. Making and Implementing a Communication Plan that includes:
  - a. Specific Routines
  - b. Specific Words/Messages
  - c. A prompt hierarchy
  - d. Instructive Feedback



Kirkland Lake Site- 5 Tweedsmuir Road, Kirkland Lake, Ontario P2N 1H5  
Muskoka Site- 100 Frank Miller Drive, Unit 2, Huntsville, Ontario P1H 1H7  
New Liskeard Site- 213 Whitewood Avenue, New Liskeard, Ontario P2J 1P0  
Nipissing Site- 400 McEwen Avenue, North Bay, Ontario P1B 0B2  
Perry Sound Site- 70 Joseph Street, unit 304, Perry Sound, Ontario P2A 2G5





Need more info about  
partner strategies  
with a focus on  
**HOW** to model?

**These amazing folks have  
you covered!**

- Dr. Jill E. Senner & Matt Baud
- Tabi Jones-Wohleber
- Gail Van Tatenhove

# S'MORRES

Technology & Language Center, Inc.

Dr. Jill E. Senner and Matt Baud

<http://www.talcaac.com/>



## S'MORRES



### S SLOW RATE

- Use a slow speech rate.
- Speak in slow, clearly articulated manner.



### Mo MODEL

- Say words/phrases that are related to the contextual information available while simultaneously pointing to pictures on the child's board or device.
- Parallel talk (i.e., describing what the student is doing as he or she is doing it) and self talk (i.e., talking about what you're doing as you're doing it) are helpful tools for modeling.
- Think about modeling as providing the color commentary for ongoing classroom activities.



### R RESPECT AND REFLECT

- Provide the words to code the child's wants, feelings, and intended messages.
- When the child communicates something through gesture or word approximation, model a word or phrase to communicate the same thought or feeling without making the child repeat him or herself on the device. For example, if the child points to a water fountain, the adult might model: "DRINK. WANT DRINK."



### R REPEAT

- Frequently repeat utterances. When you model a sentence, say it again. It's ok to vary how you say it (e.g., "I WANT A RED BALLOON," "A RED BALLOON, PLEASE").



### E EXPAND

- Repeat and rephrase, building upon your own single word utterances by adding one to two words to provide a more complete phrase or sentence. You can build upon the child's communication as well (i.e., if he/she use one word or symbol such as "BUBBLE" try expanding the comment to two or three words, for example, "BIG BUBBLE," or "BLOW A BIG BUBBLE").



### S STOP

- Provide an expectant pause to allow the child time to respond. Count to 10 (or longer) in your head after you model a phrase to give the child an opportunity to take a turn in the conversation.

Senner & Baud (2013)

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# Model as a MASTER PAL Modules!

Tabi Jones-Wohleber, MS, CCC-SLP



1. Overview of 'Model as a MASTER PAL'
2. Modeling, an Overview
3. Motivate
4. Accept Multiple Modalities
5. Statements more than Questions
6. **Time** (wait time & time for language to develop)
7. Engage Naturally
8. Response NOT Required
9. Presume Competence
10. Appropriate Prompting
11. Let the Child Lead

**FREE!**



# POWER:AAC

12 Professional  
Development Modules for  
those supporting students  
with complex  
communication needs and  
who need or use AAC.

**FREE!!**

Gail  
Van Tatenhove



<https://www.pattan.net/>



# Communication Partners...

## YOU have the power

to change the world of someone  
learning to communicate using AAC

# 4

## Embedding Rich Language Instruction Throughout the Day



Now it's time to explore HOW you can teach language all day long!



**Keep an eye  
out for THIS  
symbol!**

**It indicates a  
strategy, technique  
or activity that can  
be used throughout  
the day to teach  
AAC.**



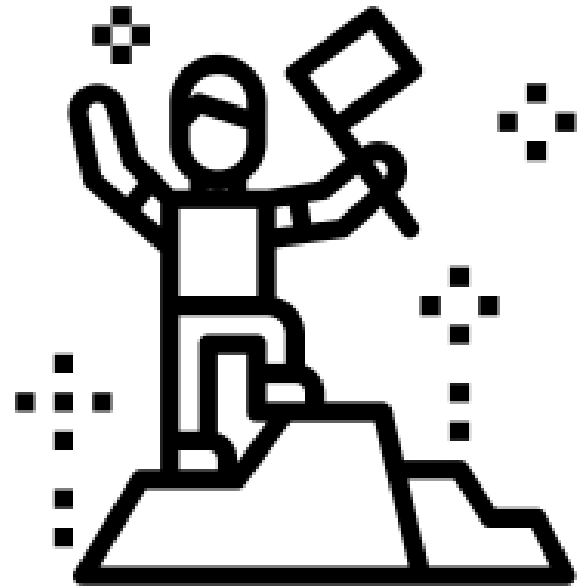
# Our Ultimate Goal for Students

- learn the concepts being taught as part of the curriculum
- be able to show knowledge
- learn words that enable them to achieve **SNUG** *while* learning important curricular content



S - SPONTANEOUS  
N - NOVEL  
U - UTTERANCE  
G - GENERATION

- achieve efficient and effective access to the vocabulary they need



Slide created with Kate Ahern

# DESCRIPTIVE TEACHING METHOD



Created by  
**Gail Van Tatenhove**



# The DTM is...

"a method of teaching that focuses on teaching curricular content using the core words that every student needs as opposed to a set of very specific words that will do nothing to help the student communicate on a daily basis"

**Gail Van Tatenhove**



# Use Descriptive, Not Referential Language



The following chart shows the difference in question asking between the referential and descriptive styles of teaching using two different lessons. (Van Tatenhove 2009)

## Science: *The Nature of Matter*

REFERENTIAL STYLE (Closed)	DESCRIPTIVE STYLE (Open)
Q: Name 3 states of matter.	Q: Describe something when it is a solid.
A: solid, liquid, gas	A: Keep shape, hard, hard all the way through
Q: What is the effect of extreme cold on a liquid?	Q: What does it mean for something to evaporate?
A: freezes	A: change, go from 1 way to another, go away



# Redefine Curricular Vocabulary with Core!

- **Form** = way something looks because of way it is put together
- **Flexible** = easy to move
- **Stiff** = hard to move shape, hard all the way through



# Re-define with critical words



Erin  
Sheldon

ATIA 2018



# DESCRIPTIVE TEACHING METHOD ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES...

A class is going on a bushwalk to learn about native plants and animals:

Referential Style (closed)	Descriptive Style (open)
Q. What animal did we see on the path? A. bandicoot	Q. What can you tell me about the bandicoot? A. Small, brown, soft, long nose, run, go fast

A primary school class has dinosaurs as their theme for the term:

Referential Style (closed)	Descriptive Style (open)
Q. Is the Tyrannosaurus Rex a herbivore, omnivore or carnivore? A. Carnivore	Q. What does the Tyrannosaurus Rex eat? A. eat meat, eat other animals

From Gail Van Tatenhove 2009

[http://ilc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Core\\_vocabulary\\_and\\_descriptive\\_teaching.pdf](http://ilc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Core_vocabulary_and_descriptive_teaching.pdf)

**WHEN YOU CAN'T  
FIND A WORD**

CURVED  
YELLOW FRUIT  
40¢

**DESCRIBE IT!**

*Rachael Langley - AAC Specialist*



Rachael Langley,  
AAC Specialist

# WHAT DO WE **NEED** TO USE the DTM?

- 50-400 permanently available, appropriate, high frequency, re-usable words and word variations in the student's AAC system
- “language-friendly” AAC system designs
- easy-to-use, teacher-friendly and therapist-friendly visual supports
- supplemental, student-accessible curriculum materials



Source: Start Talking in Class:  
Helping Students Using AAC Devices  
Gail Van Tatenhove

# HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT curricular words that are NOT in the system/device?

## Create **TEMPORARY** Solutions

- Quick topic-based manual boards
- Sticky notes on a wall/core board
- Write in erasable marker in “Parking Lot”
- Teach word-altering strategies like:
  - same as
  - starts with
  - part of
  - opposite of
  - sounds like, etc.



food	hamburger	Pizza	burrito	spaghetti
bread	cheese	French fries	hot dog	popcorn
fruit	banana	ice cream	cookie	candy
drink	water	juice	soft drink	coffee

# You can **TRY** the DTM!

Activity from Kate Ahern



1. Pick a curricular theme/topic
2. Identify 3 curricular vocabulary words
3. Describe each word using only core
4. Type your description into the Upgoer5  
<https://splasho.com/upgoer5/>
5. See if any of your words get flagged!





Classes typically cover a wide range of topics each year. It can be useful to think about what words will be most useful for our students using AAC, and how we can support them to join in discussion about the varied topics that arise.

Core vocabulary refers to high frequency, re-usable common words. Approximately 80% of the words we use daily are drawn from a core of fewer than 400 words. These words are relatively consistent across groups of people, activities, places, and topics. Core vocabulary is primarily made up of pronouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions, with a relative absence of nouns. While many may be considered simple words, they can be combined to communicate more complex sentences. Core vocabulary words overlap a lot with other high frequency word lists used by teachers such as the Dolch list.

Other words which make up the remaining 20% of our messages may be referred to as fringe or content vocabulary. These words, including a high proportion of nouns, vary depending on the topic or activity.

(Van Tatenhove, 2009, Witkowski & Baker, 2012)

Core vocabulary is an important part of an AAC system, and crucial for students learning to combine words into sentences. Most comprehensive communication systems include both core vocabulary and fringe vocabulary.

A number of core vocabulary word lists are available online  
<http://www.vantatenhove.com/papers.shtml>

**Want to see the power of core vocabulary?**

Watch this video clip for an example of how much can be communicated using only core words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqfVAPuGzpl>





# DTM Planning Forms

## Appendix A

### Descriptive teaching – topic plan

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

Descriptive style (open) questions to review or assess this topic:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

"Using a descriptive style, the teacher mentions and references the context-specific words, then teaches concepts behind the words using high frequency, re-usable, common words" (Van Tatenhove 2009).



## Descriptive Teaching Model Lesson Planning Form

Subject Area:			
Textbook/Material Information:			
Curriculum Goal:			
Other:			
Date Developed:		By:	

### Key Concepts of the Lesson

### Content Words/Vocabulary

[illegible]

©Van Tatenhove, 2001; Modified June 2008

# Descriptive Labels

- Post around the classroom/ home/ work
- Include path to words
- Model using the labels
- Gail says to use "Materials that say, "what do" instead of "what is"!



# More About Descriptive Labels

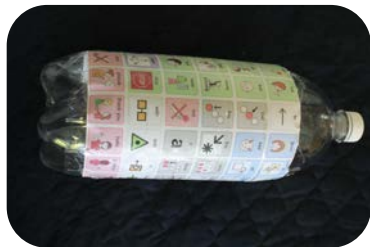
- Label the room: symbols & related core words
- Use the descriptive language as you move about, talking and pointing as you go
- Encourage peers, visitors and others to use the descriptive labels
- Color code descriptive labels by part of speech.
- Make sure labels are reachable.
- **MUST include NAVIGATIONAL PATH!!**



# Using the DTM combats these stressors!

1. Scrambling to program
2. Getting words programmed in “just in time”
3. Constantly adding words that are not likely to be used
4. Wondering how to teach language/core words AND academic content





Specialcraftsforspecialkids blog

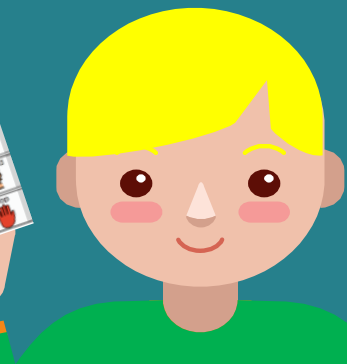


Posted by Pam Harris on Twitter –  
Proloquo2Go



Posted by Assistiveware

# AAC Everywhere!



# Create an AAC Rich Environment!

- Big Core Boards
- Descriptive labels everywhere
- Wearables
- Manual boards for ALL family members



# 5

## Let's Think About **HOW** we teach AAC Learners



Is our instruction engaging? Does it capitalize on student interest, build experiences and foster connection?

**ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF:**  
**Would I think this is fun?**

If your answer is **NO**...  
think about how you can teach the  
same language/skill that's **FUN!**



**Our best learning happens  
when we are engaged!**





WHEN TEACHING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

 UNFUN  
SHOULDN'T  
BE DONE.

- AMANDA HARTMANN



Quote from  
Amanda  
Hartman



Graphic by  
Rachael  
Langley

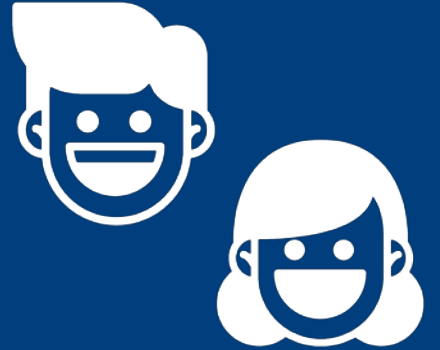
# Remember...

- Language is about connection and *not* testing or academics.
- Focus on the INTERACTION
- Worry less about elaborate activities
- Follow the AAC user's lead!!!



# 6

## A Few Fun & Versatile Activities



What about a few open-ended and exciting activities that can be used and re-used throughout the day to teach language?

Connect Though Personal Experiences  
&  
Foster Language Growth!

How??



Use Photos and Videos!!



# Experience Books:

An AMAZING tool for communication  
and literacy!

What is an  
experience book  
or album?



# Experience Books/ Albums

Books that allow an individual to tell a story about a life event

- Use Power Point or websites like Tarheel Reader or Tarheel Shared Reader
- Low or High-Tech Photo album
- Create within AAC systems
- Use apps such as Pictello, Book Creator, Kid in Story, etc.



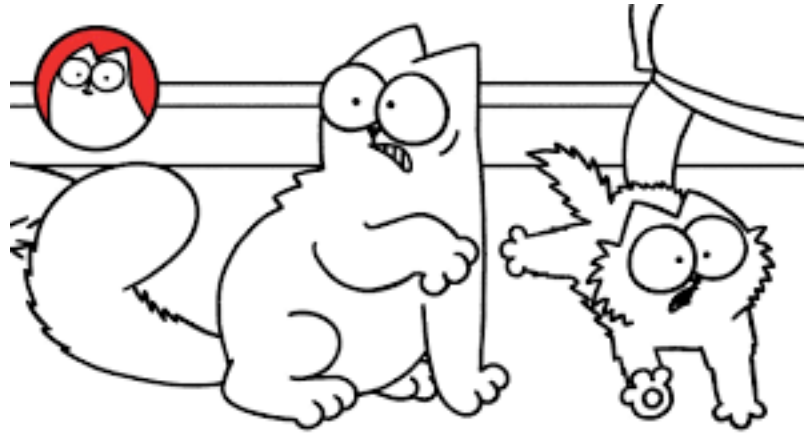
**What does an  
experience  
album  
LOOK LIKE?**



Experience  
album  
made  
entirely in  
PowerPoint



# Wordless Animated Short Videos are AMAZING for Language!



# How to Use Animated Shorts (Wordless Videos) to Elicit Language in AAC Users

Rachel Madel



Susan Berkowitz



- 1) Set Your Intention
- 2) Pause-Model-Rewind
- 3) Repeat
- 4) Get Creative



Want to learn more? Check out their full webinar on YouTube!









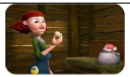
# Jurassic Fart

By  
Dino Island



# My Wordless Video List

You'll find this video list in your resource document! Stay tuned at the end of the session for a link!

List of Wordless Animated Short Videos on YouTube			Film Length
	Rollin' Wild – What if Animals Were Round?	<a href="#">Animated Short Films by Rollin' Wild</a>	Varied: very short clips <i>These are hysterical and nice and short!</i>
	Simon's Cat short films (Simon Tofield)	<a href="#">Simon's Cat Short Films</a>	Varied: Short clips <i>Also great and short!</i>
	Trouble in Paradise Film Series	<a href="#">Trouble in Paradise Videos</a>	varied
	Minions Fart... and Fart Again	<a href="#">Minions Fart and Fart Again</a>	1:02
	Bitzer Over Easy – Shaun the Sheep	<a href="#">Bitzer Over Easy - Shaun the Sheep</a>	1:20
	Caminandes: Llama Drama (Pablo Vazquez)	<a href="#">Caminandes: Llama Drama</a>	1:30
	Western Spaghetti (PES)	<a href="#">Western Spaghetti</a>	1:42
	EggsChange (Hee Won Ahn)	<a href="#">EggsChange</a>	1:58

# Capture video with the AAC user as the subject!

- Make books with videos
- Create video models (WordToob)
- Add filters
- Use like wordless videos!



# Resource List



# Thank You!!



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