Supporting Students with Complex Communication Needs in the Secondary Setting

Facilitators:

ERICA ROBERTS, MS, CCC-SLP

Erica Roberts is a speech and language pathologist supporting students with complex communication needs in a public school setting. Since completing her undergraduate degree at The Pennsylvania State University and her master's degree at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, she has been working as a clinician providing services to individuals with Augmentative and Alternative Communication needs for the past 14 years. She holds the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence, is licensed in the state of Pennsylvania, and has completed a graduate certificate program in the area of Assistive Technology.

ALYS STETS, M. Ed., NBCT

Alys Stets is a special education teacher for students with complex instructional and communication needs. She holds Elementary and Special Education certification from Waynesburg University. Her masters degree from West Virginia University specialized in severe and profound multiple disabilities. Alys is a National Board Certified Teacher in the area of severe disabilities. She has presented about supporting the most complex learners at Closing the Gap, ATIA, and ATCNE. This is her 13th year teaching special education.

Contact Information: Derry Township School District, P.O. Box 898, 30 East Granada Avenue, Hershey, PA 17033

eroberts@hershey.k12.pa.us
   astets@hershey.k12.pa.us

About us

- Our setting

- Our philosophy

- Our inspiration

Objectives

◉ Discuss strategies for engineering the school environment to support communication.

◉ List strategies for promoting communication during academic and functional tasks.

◉ Describe at least two ideas that can be implemented with your students that will promote access to communication across settings, contexts, and environments in the secondary setting.
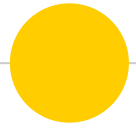
What makes working with the secondary population unique?

FEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE

maintaining HIGH expectations

Transition Planning

BALANCING DEMANDS

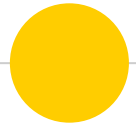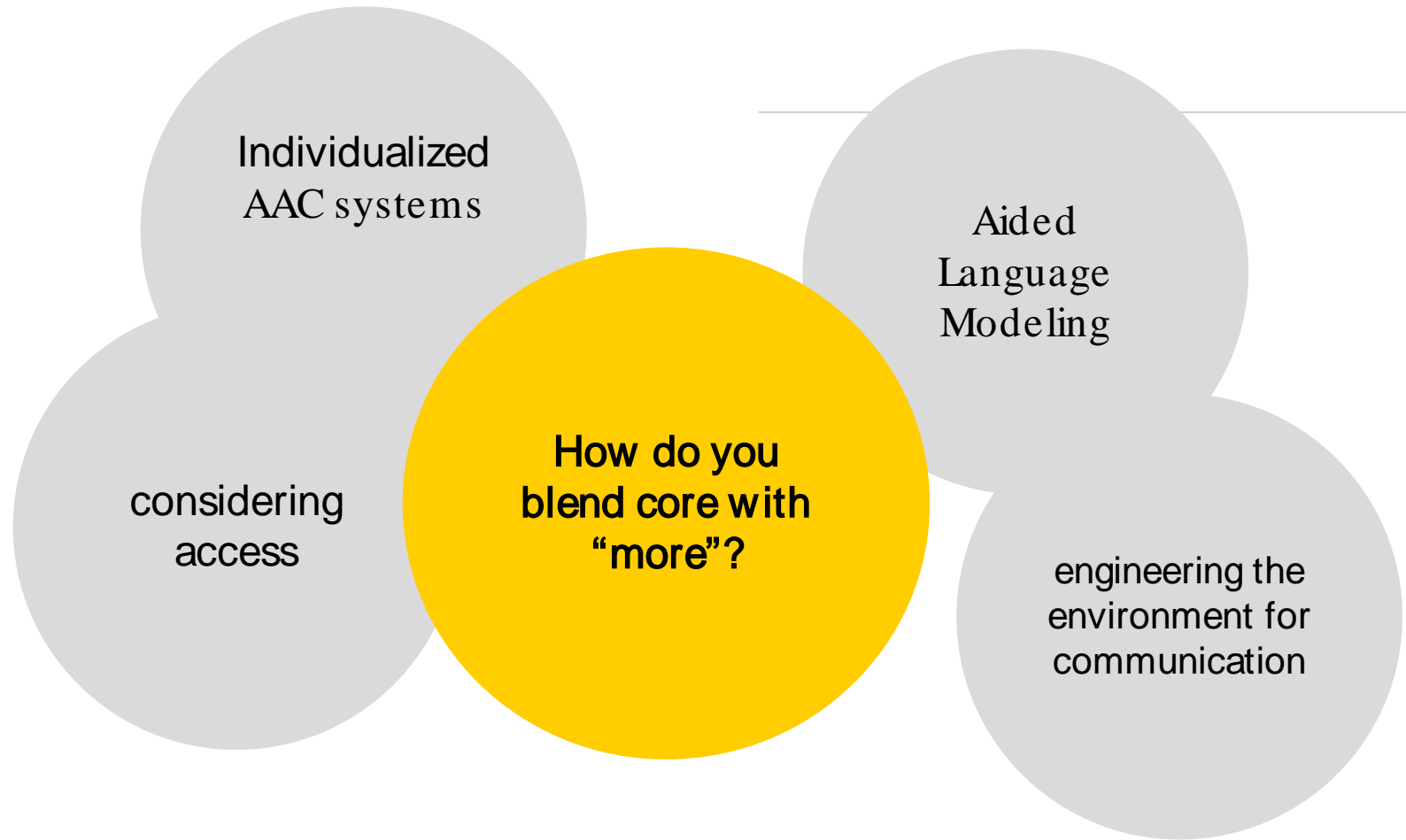Increasingly activity and topic specific vocabulary AND core vocabulary

academic versus functional philosophy

scheduling

commensurate skills & concepts

interests, ideas & activities that are meaningful

Core Vocabulary

Individualized AAC systems

Aided Language Modeling

considering access

How do you blend core with "more"?

engineering the environment for communication
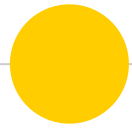
Engineering the Environment for Communication

📌 Do it everywhere! *might look different across task types*

Academics

- use student desks to post visual supports for communication, behavior, and academics

- write on desks with dry erase marker

- Use topic specific fringe vocabulary boards (printed on paper) for content vocabulary that is needed for a lesson (organize by content area in a binder)

- incorporate partner assisted scanning/auditory scanning for student responses

- post content words and topics (using a process of simplifying complex vocabulary) on a word wall

may be needed for a specific unit but not necessarily generalizable or needed in other settings or contexts

📌 Do it everywhere! *might look different across task types*

Vocational

- Have options for "quick" communication available (white boards, language boards, phrase based communication for efficiency and speed)

- Create video models for specific tasks and post them via QR code near area where task occurs (or if this is not possible in the job setting, consider making available digitally)

- incorporate fringe vocabulary into an individualized AAC system or into a "one-stop shop" binder or digital repository to limit what needs to be carried or remembered

- focus on scripts for routine social interactions that occur and options for communication breakdown repair (most likely to encounter novel partners)

Needs to be portable and adaptable based on tasks

📌 Do it everywhere! *might look different across task types*

Functional

- Create video models for specific tasks and post them via QR code in the area where task occurs

- Create visual task analysis and post or store in area where task occurs

- post sentence strips or relevant core vocabulary concepts (use packing tape to post on a wall or appliance)

- use single message switches or other mid-technology voice output devices to record messages needed for tasks and mount them or store them where needed

Can be more "permanent" because the environment and daily tasks are usually static and predictable

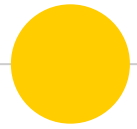# Embedding Communication Practice

Embedding communication practice

- ◉ Teacher beliefs are critical!

- ◉ Importance of paraeducator buy-in and implementation

- ◉ Aided Language Input/Modeling…modeling, modeling and more modeling!

- ◉ Beyond requesting…

Integrated Therapy Model

Integrated Therapy Model

- Rare to implement pull out therapy for any related service

- Push in support during an existing routine or activity

- Direct service becomes less critically important with embedded practice

- Consultation and collaboration becomes key

Instructional Strategy:
Aided Language Input and Modeling

Aided Language Input

- modeling language by using a student's communication system, environmental engineering, or supplemental visual supports **without** an expectation of the student to imitate the models

Aided Language Modeling

- modeling language by using a student's communication system, environmental engineering, or supplemental visual supports **with** an expectation of the student to imitate the models if possible

Prompt Hierarchy:

- we use a least to most prompting hierarchy (wait time, expectant delay, visual cues, indirect verbal prompts, verbal prompts, etc).
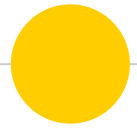
Communication and Academics
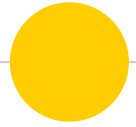
Communication and Academics

Principles

- Age-appropriate topics
- Alignment to Alternate Eligible Content (AEC) and general education curriculum
- Vocabulary selection: core and more

Langauge and LiterAACy

- Use grade level text or literature
- Model language concepts using AAC devices
- RAA
  - Read + Model
  - Ask + Model
  - Answer + Model
- RAAP
  - Read + Model 2 symbols
  - Ask + Model 2 symbols
  - Answer + Model 2 symbols
  - Prompt + Model 2 symbols

Resources

- Alignment cards
- AEC
- Pictello (expression)
- Books written by users of AAC
  - Romeo Riley Series for Middle School
- Graphic organizers to support and promote academic concept development

(RAA and RAAP strategies from Binger presentation at PaTTAN 2014)

Communication and Vocational Tasks

Communication and Vocational Tasks

Flip Rings

- Use index cards for individual tasks or steps

- add pictures or icons as needed

- laminate and assemble as a flip system

Visually Mediated Task Analysis

- break down a task into each specific step

- use simple and concise language

- add pictures or icons for each step

Scripts for Communication

- include language needed for predictable and repeated language routines for each job site or job task

- sentence starters relevant to job or task (and then use dry erase marker to fill in as needed)

Folders for Needed Language in high technology AAC system

- program job or task specific fringe vocabulary (names of people, places, whole phrases for speed and efficiency of communication, etc)

No Technology Language Boards

- make paper based language boards that include the job or task specific fringe vocabulary (names of people, places, whole phrases for speed and efficiency of communication, etc)

QR codes to video models

- create video models of a specific task or job routine

- model the core vocabulary or language needed for the task in the video along with the task

- print QR code links to videos and place in needed context
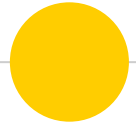
# Communication and Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Communication and ADLs

Appliances/Leisure/Hygiene/Self-care

- specific items or locations in a home environment/setting that are always the same and in the same location

- consider the applicable core vocabulary concepts that can be embedded or modeled

- consider the relevant fringe vocabulary and how it could be displayed

- create visual supports to engineer the space using your preferred symbol set

- consider mounting voice output communication aids in the area where a communication interaction would naturally occur

**Example resource will be shared- stay tuned!!
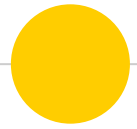
Professional Collaboration

Professional Collaboration

- ◎ Support to School Personnel (SSP) including SLP, OT, PT, DHH, TVI when possible
- ◎ Planning time for lessons and environmental engineering
- ◎ Delivering Professional Development to relevant stakeholders (e.g., paraeducators, general education teachers, employers, job trainers, parents)

How to Start NOW!

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Thanks!

Any **questions** *?*