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AAC in the General Education Classroom: Using Descriptive Talking to Teach Students Using Robust AAC Systems

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Disclosure

- I have the **following relevant relationships** in the products or services described, reviewed, evaluated or compared in this presentation.
  - Financial
    - Speaking fee from SpeechPathology.com
    - Author/Seller of the Natural Aided Language Board and the Core Vocabulary Classroom Kit.
  - Non-Financial
    - Prentke Romich Application and Support Software (PASS)

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Learner Outcomes

- As a result of this Continuing Education Activity, participants will be able to:

  1) describe the vocabulary needed in an AAC system to support descriptive talking.

  2) describe the benefits of descriptive talking

  3) explain how to plan a lesson using the principles of descriptive talking

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Descriptive Talking

A technique that focuses on using core words for lesson-specific words

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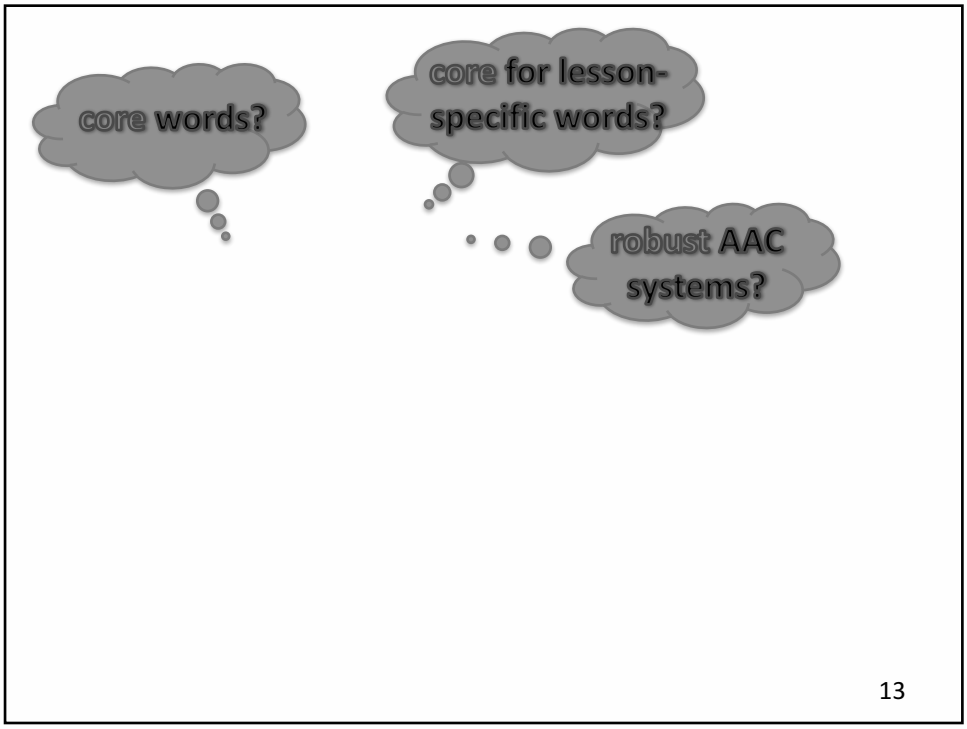
core words?
core for lesson-specific words?
robust AAC systems?
13

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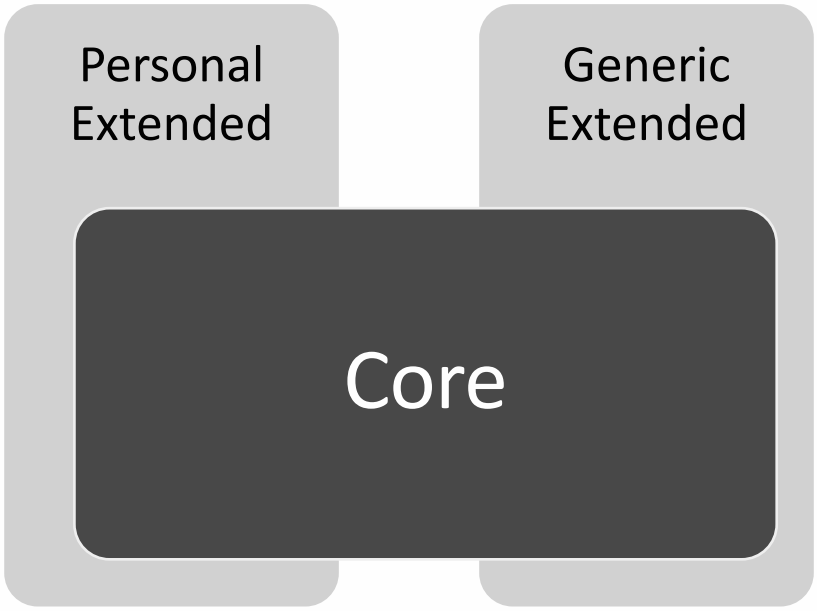

15

What is and is not core vocabulary?

- Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country. (John F. Kennedy)

common
frequently used
versatile

16

Re-Usable Words are Core!

ask not what your

country can do for you

17

More Math Facts

A person ….	Number of words known
starting school at 6*	5000 to 6000 words
without a formal education	35,000 words
with a high school education	50,000 words
with a college education	50,000 to 75,000 words

* David Crystal, linguist

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20,000 words in your active, speaking vocabulary

Susan Dent: http://www.lingholic.com

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Dr. Suess

255 words **50 words**

20

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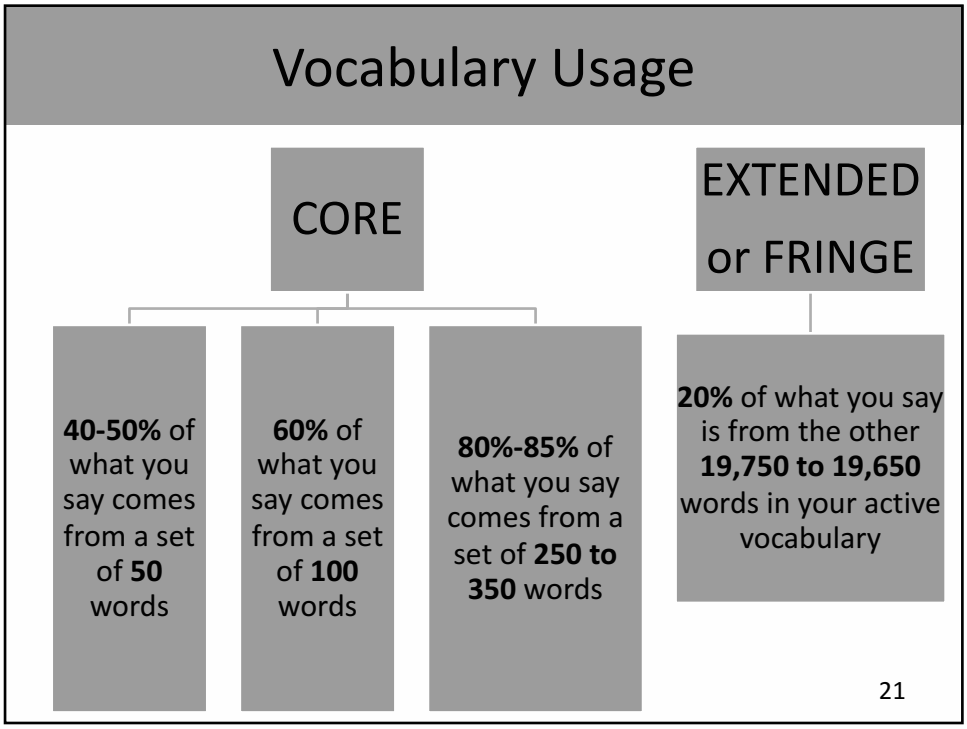
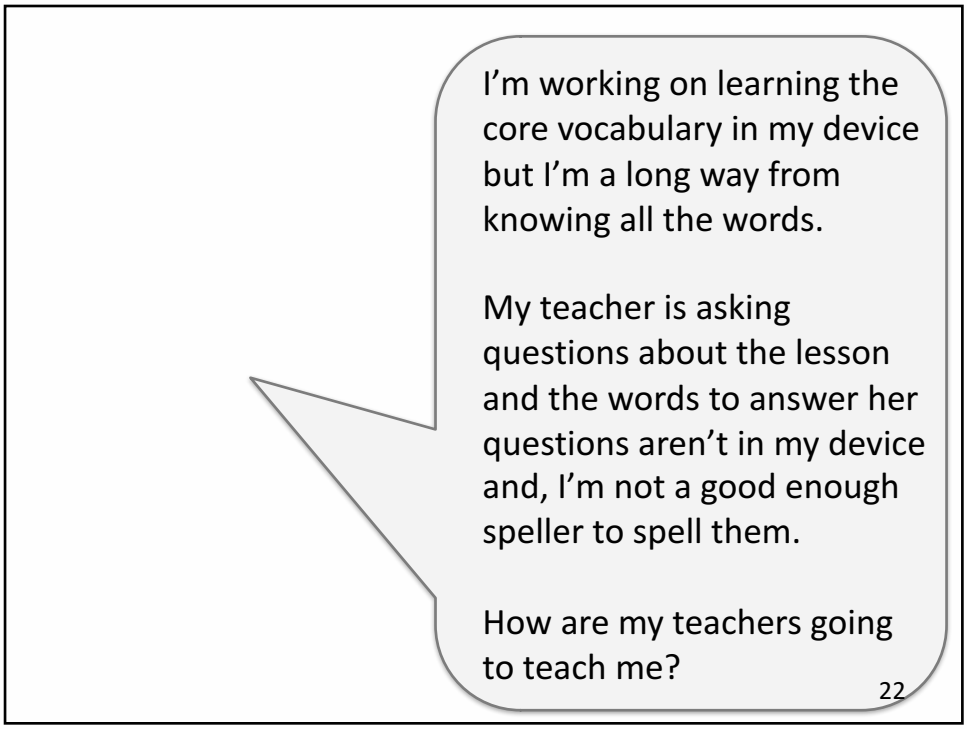
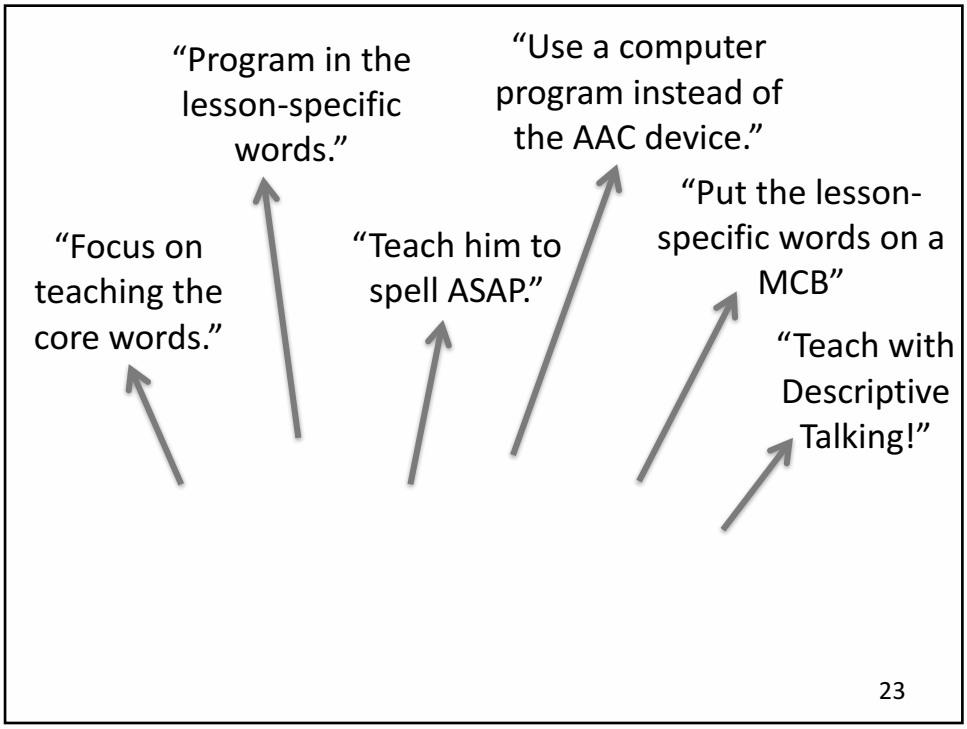

Vocabulary Usage
CORE
EXTENDED or FRINGE
40-50% of what you say comes from a set of 50 words
60% of what you say comes from a set of 100 words
80%-85% of what you say comes from a set of 250 to 350 words
20% of what you say is from the other 19,750 to 19,650 words in your active vocabulary
21


I'm working on learning the core vocabulary in my device but I'm a long way from knowing all the words.
My teacher is asking questions about the lesson and the words to answer her questions aren't in my device and, I'm not a good enough speller to spell them.
How are my teachers going to teach me?
22



Why Teach with Descriptive Talking?

Practical

Strategically Necessary

Educationally Sound

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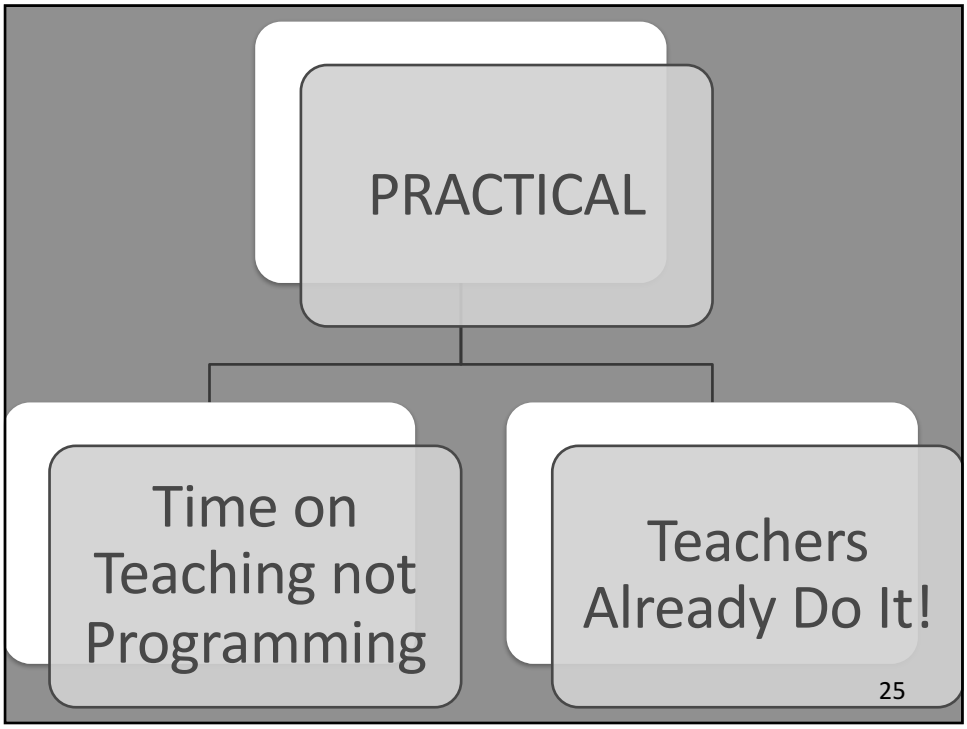
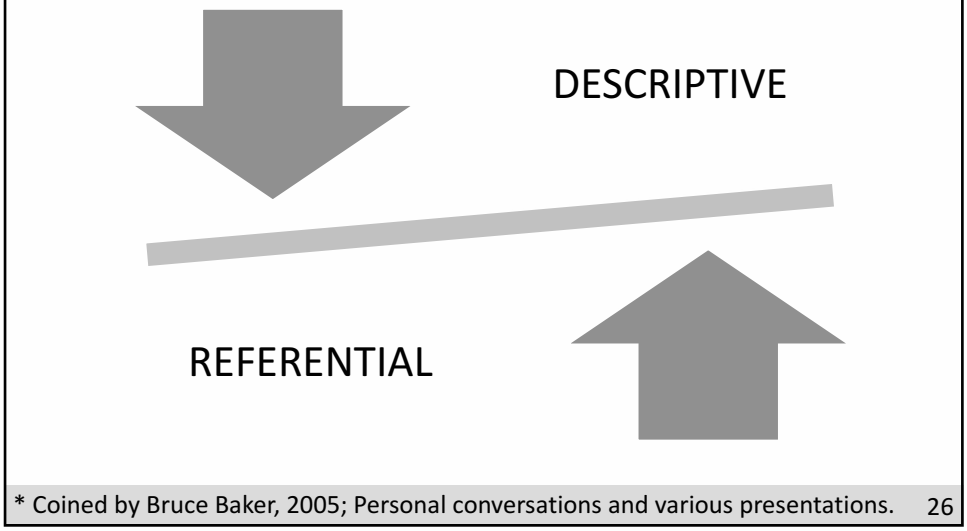
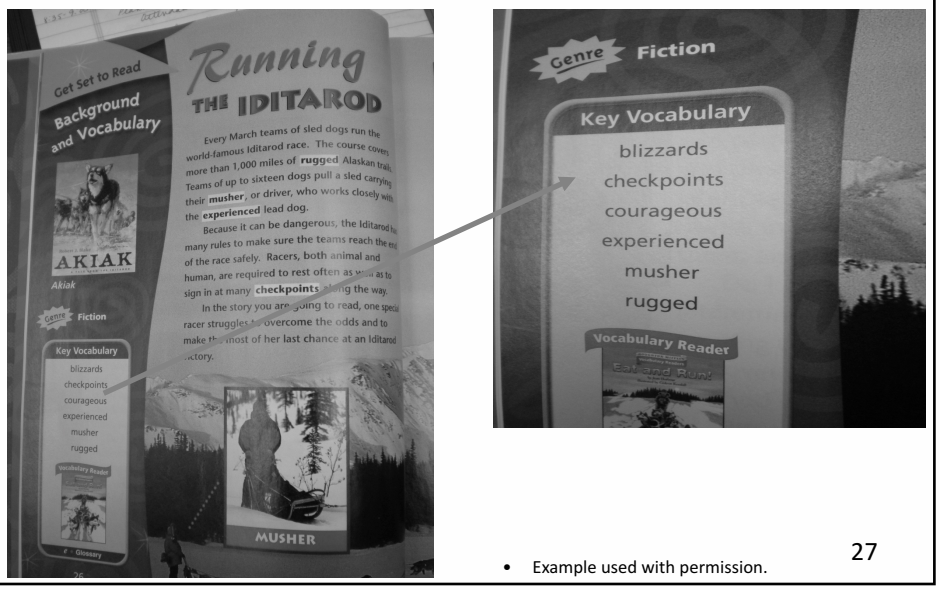


When Teaching-Testing with their students ALL teachers go back and forth between the use of Referential* and Descriptive* techniques.



* Coined by Bruce Baker, 2005; Personal conversations and various presentations. 26

Curriculum Materials



- Example used with permission.

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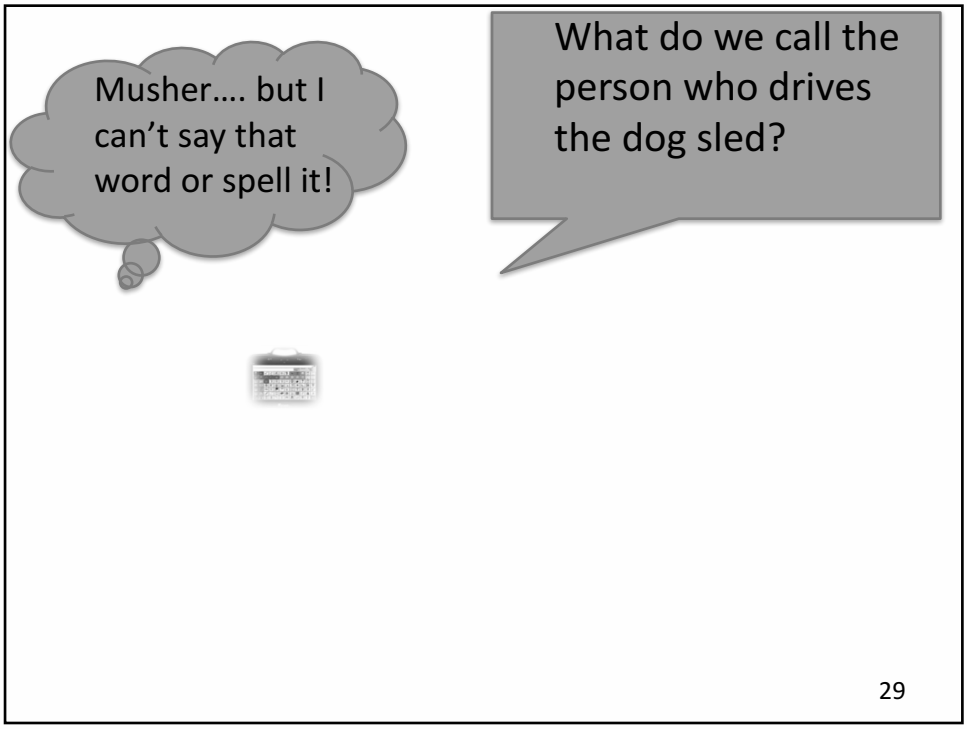
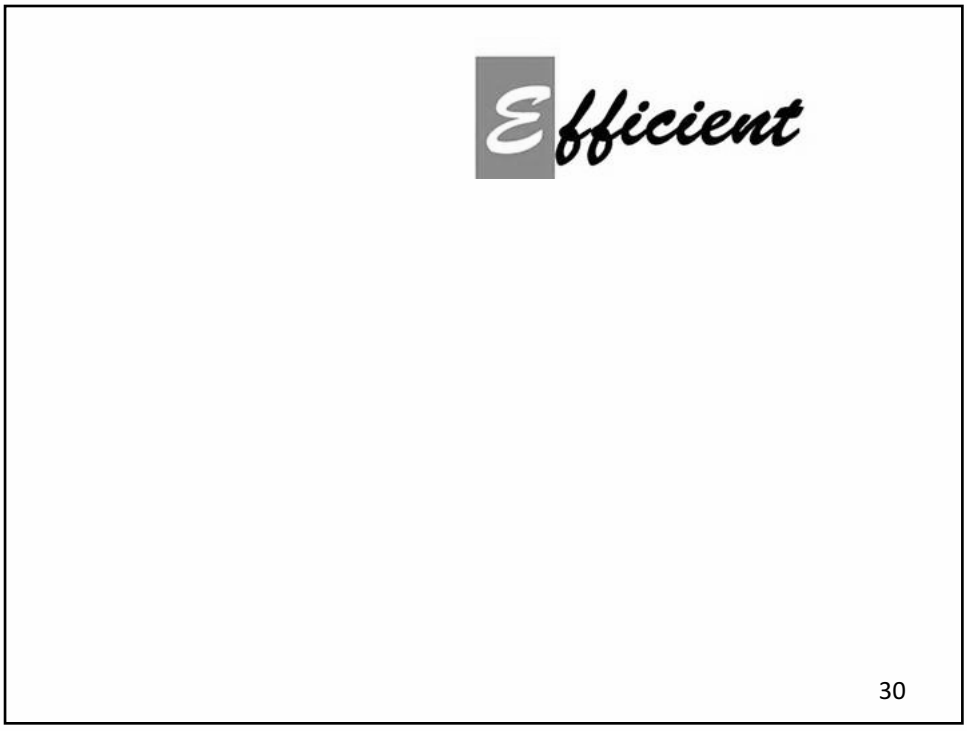
Referential Style with **Speaking Students**	Probe for the recall of facts	Where is the race held? What do we call the race? Who drives the sled?
	Quick, one-word answers, usually only one correct answer	Alaska Iditarod musher

28


Musher…. but I can't say that word or spell it!
What do we call the person who drives the dog sled?
29


Efficient
30

Descriptive Style with **Speaking Students**	Probe for understanding, application, opinion	What does it mean to be experienced?
		Why does a musher need an experienced lead dog?
	Answers are multi-word sentences, usually no one exact answer	did it before, knows how to do it, did already, good at it
		help stay safe, show the other dogs, all dogs work together

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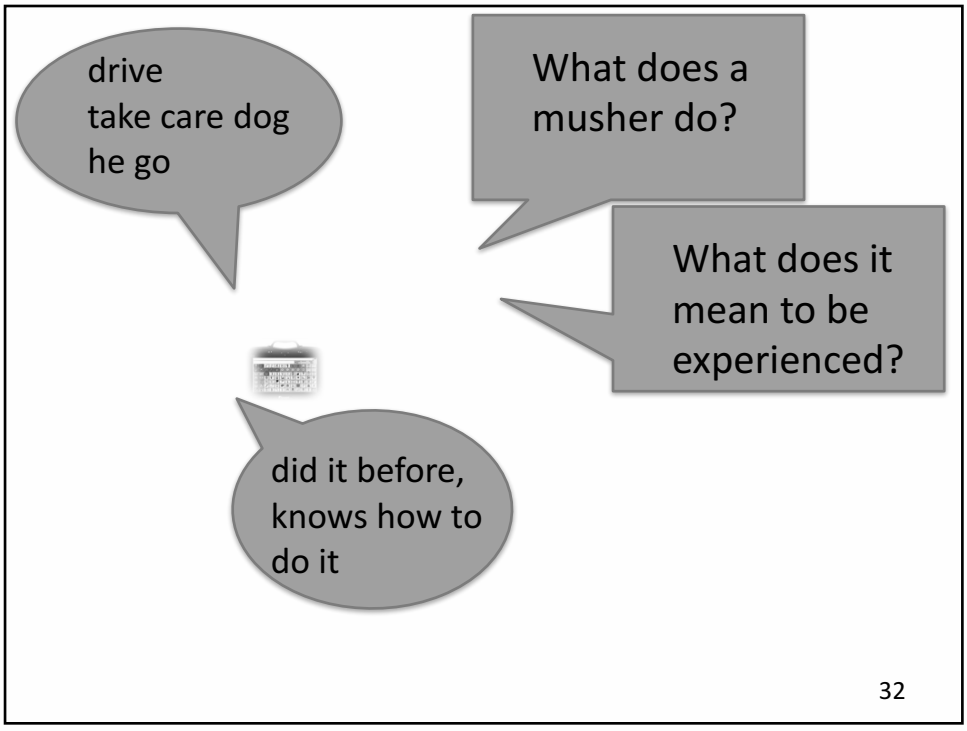

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Benefits of Descriptive Talking

- Stable vocabulary
- Practice putting words together
- Core vocabulary in different contexts
- Literacy learning

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Why Teach with Descriptive Talking?

✔Practical

Strategically Necessary

Educationally Sound

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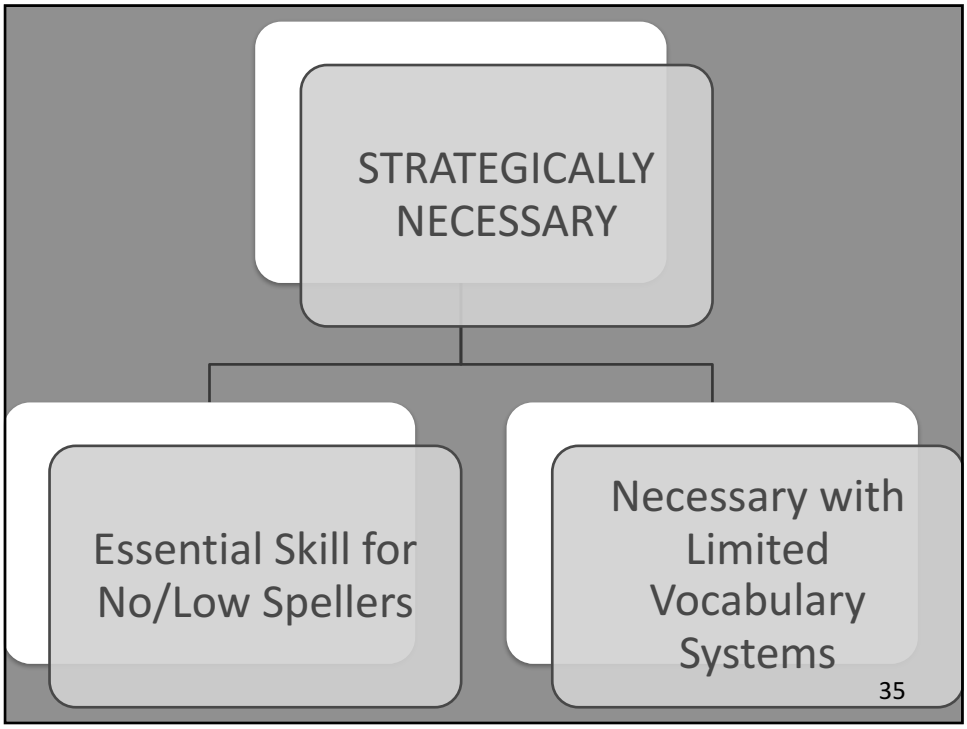
STRATEGICALLY NECESSARY
Essential Skill for No/Low Spellers
Necessary with Limited Vocabulary Systems
35

team team team weekend fun
drink, green, Taco Bell, fall, down
over water, up fast, loud, cold
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EDUCATIONALLY SOUND

Encourages Active Learning

Supports the "Verbs" of the CCSS

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Active Learning

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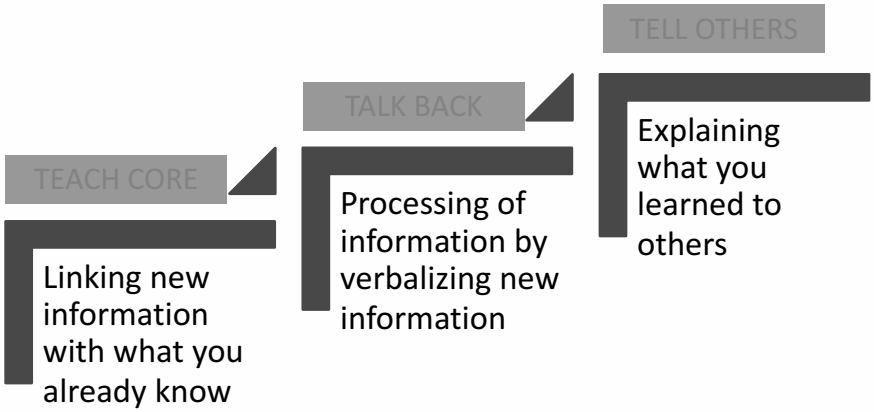
The Vocabulary Bits of Active Learning Involves….



Sandholtz, J., Ringstaff, C., & Dwyer, D. (1997). Teaching with technology: creating student-centered classrooms. New York: Teachers College Press.

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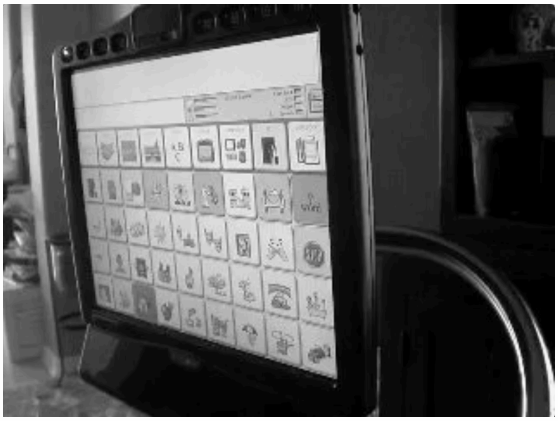
Teach with Core – Talk Back with Core

- **TEACH:** Information Input – Taught with core vocabulary words, modeled on the device.
- **TALK BACK**: Review and rehearse to support recall.
- **TELL:** Recall and explain to someone else.



40

Supports the "Verbs" of the CCSS

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3rd Grade Social Studies – Civics & Government

Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

Explain the purpose and need of government.

keep people safe, give people right s, take care of things I can't do myself

Describe how government gains its power from the people.

we pick them, say no when they do bad things

Identify the levels of government.

state, local, federal

Define civility, volunteerism, respect.

civility = be nice to others
volunteerism = do work for no money, do together what town needs
respect = everyone listen, no fighting when not thinking the same

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CONTINUED™

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How do you help teachers learn what words are and aren't in the device?

How do you organize and conduct lessons using descriptive talking?

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How do you help teachers learn what words are and aren't in the device?

Use terminology teachers know

- Core Vocabulary words = Dolch and/or Fry Sight Word Lists
- Extended Vocabulary words = Key Lesson Vocabulary

Use examples of vocabulary from their own classrooms

44

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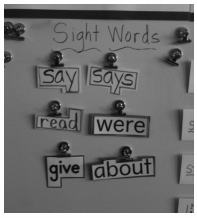
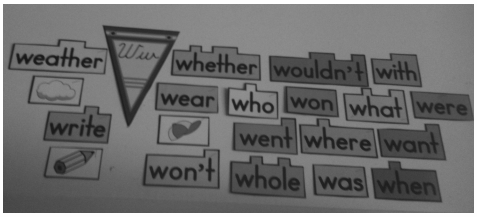
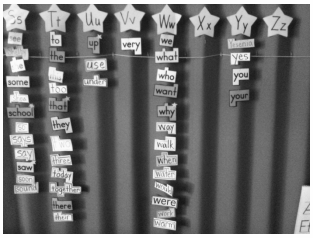
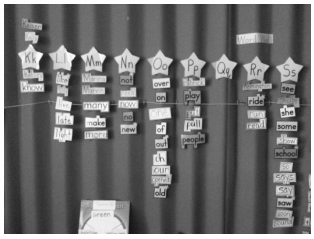
Core Vocabulary = High Frequency Words for Reading & Writing



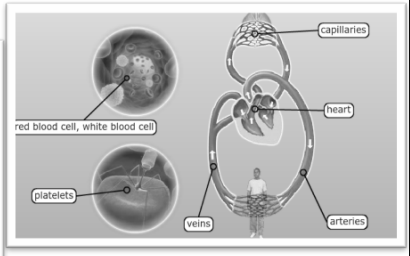






45

Extended Vocabulary = Subject and Lesson Specific Words



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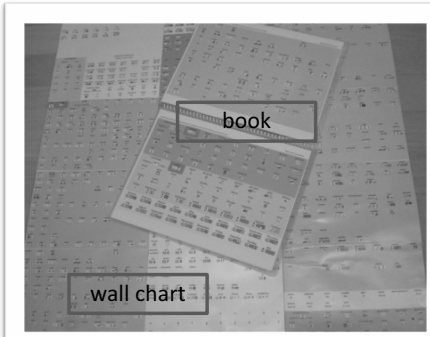
The Strategy Preferred by Gen Ed Teachers



- Provide an at-a-glance "visual dictionary"
  - that shows the most important words in the device (core and some extended) that the student needs to learn how to say
  - but not ALL the words that are in the device or which the student needs to learn how to say

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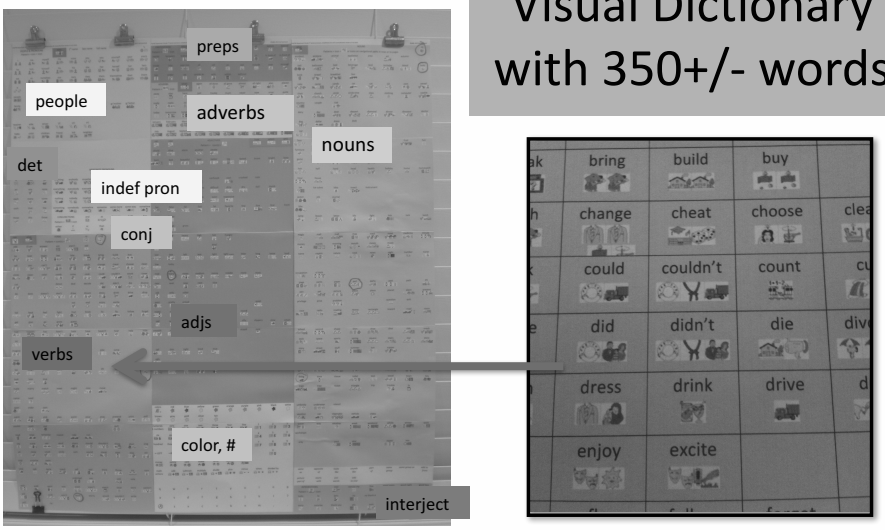
Visual Dictionary with 350+/- words



This visual dictionary is a commercial product (Natural Aided Language Board-NALB) sold by Gail Van Tatenhove and is pre-made for students using Unity or LAMP Words for Life; or with printed words only to customize for any program or AAC device/app. The NALB comes on a CD for you to print and put together. Go to www.vantatenhove.com for more information.

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What words ARE in the device?

- Teach how to look-up words NOT on the visual dictionary
  - check in the paper or e-manual (if provided)
  - use emulation software on an external computer (if available)
  - use the "dictionary" in the device (if available)
- ***Explain*** the purpose and need of government.
  - The government keeps people safe.
  - The government takes care of things I can't do myself.
  - They vote on stuff.
  - They pass laws.

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✔How do you help teachers learn what words are and aren't in the device?

How do you organize and conduct lessons using descriptive talking?

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Discuss use of Visual Dictionary

Teacher or Instructional Assistant:	Circle words to use during the lesson as single words or in phrases or short sentences
	Point at words as say words, phrases and short sentences
Student:	Visual reference when giving answers
	Visual reminder for new ideas

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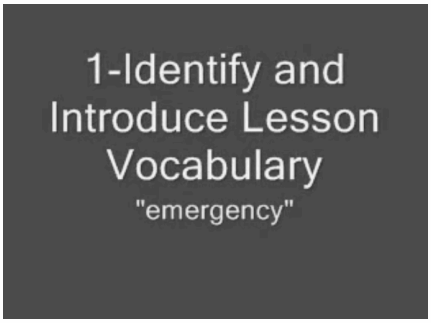
Example Lesson

Steps

- Identify and introduce the key concepts of the lesson
- Teach, Model and and "Talk Back" about the concepts
- Review and test learning

Identify



Available at Gail's YouTube Channel:gvantatenhove 52

Example Lesson

Teach/Model/Talk Back **Review/Test**

2-Teacher Teach and Student Talk
Define lesson key words with core vocabuary

3-Review and Test

Available at Gail's YouTube channel: gvantatenhove 53

Get Organized!

- Collect supplies for use with the visual dictionary / wall chart
  - dry-erase pen & eraser
  - foam paint brush
  - light pointer
  - clicker pointer

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CONTINUED™

Display the Wall Charts

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Adapt Activities, Lessons, and Materials

What, if anything, would you do to adapt this activity, lesson, or material to encourage the use of core vocabulary?

What is the role of the instructional assistant (or teacher)?

What kind of additional visual supports (beyond visual dictionary) are needed?

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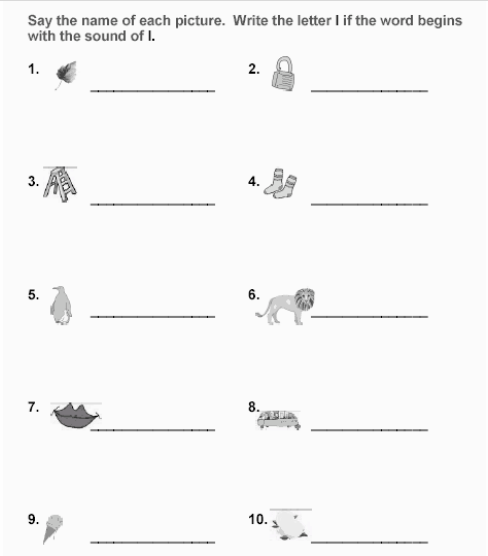
Show Simple, Sample DT Materials



1. What do to adapt?
2. What is role of IA?
3. What visual supports?

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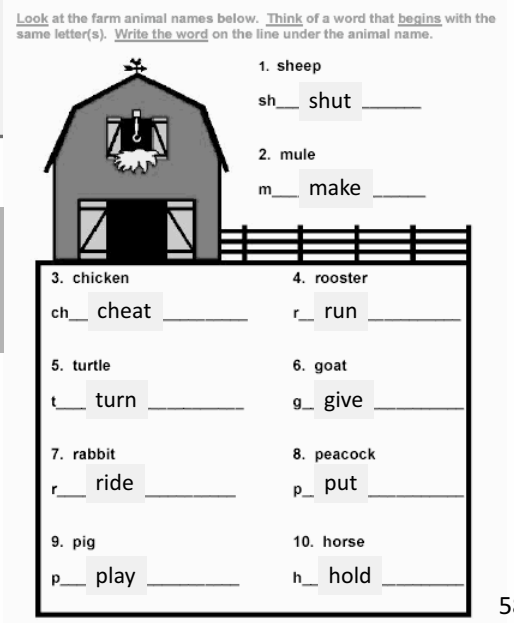
Work on the BIG WORD GROUPS – have lots of words from which to choose to do the activity.

1. Picked VERBS because pivot of any sentence.
2. The student was prompted to "find a green word" from his wall chart.

1. What do to adapt?
2. What is role of IA?
3. What visual supports?



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1. What do to adapt?
2. What is role of IA?
3. What visual supports?

Name _____ Date _____

Sequence

smart	cool	nice	funny	tall
Anna	Tim	Lisa	Paul	Karen
Beginning				End

Directions: Use the chart above to help you answer the following questions.

1. Start at the beginning of the chart. Who is 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th?

_____, _____, _____, _____, _____

2. Who is fifth in line? _____

3. Who is second in line? _____

4. Who is third in line? _____

5. Who is fourth in line? _____

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Plan a Lesson to Fully Implement Descriptive Talking

- Identify KEY vocabulary of the lesson
- Check for KEY vocabulary already in the device
- Define KEY vocabulary and lesson concepts with CORE (from visual dictionary)
- Address expectations & support questions

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Science Class Example: Current Lesson Plan on Plants

1. Plant seeds and watch the plants grow over the next 3 months
2. Describe the different parts of the plant
3. Discuss the functions of the plant parts in the growing process
4. Complete a worksheet on the parts of a plant
5. Write a response to an application question

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Step 1: Identify Key Vocabulary

1. plant (noun)
2. plant (verb)
3. flower
4. leaf/leaves
5. stem
6. root
7. ground
8. seed
9. water
10. light
11. sun
12. air
13. photosynthesis
14. support
15. absorb
16. nutrient

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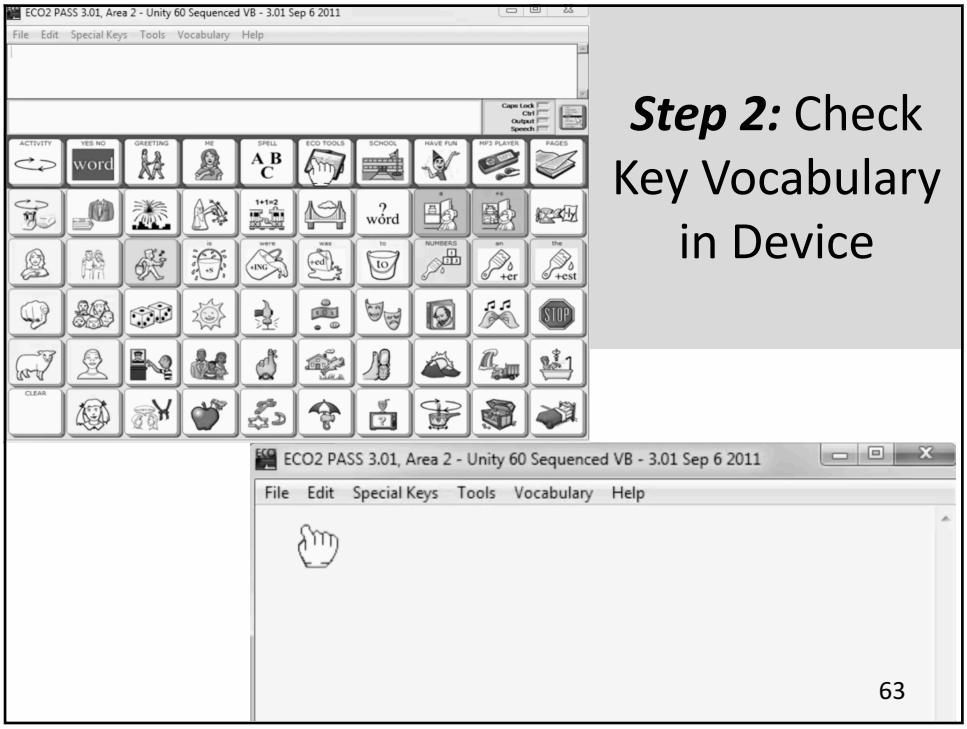
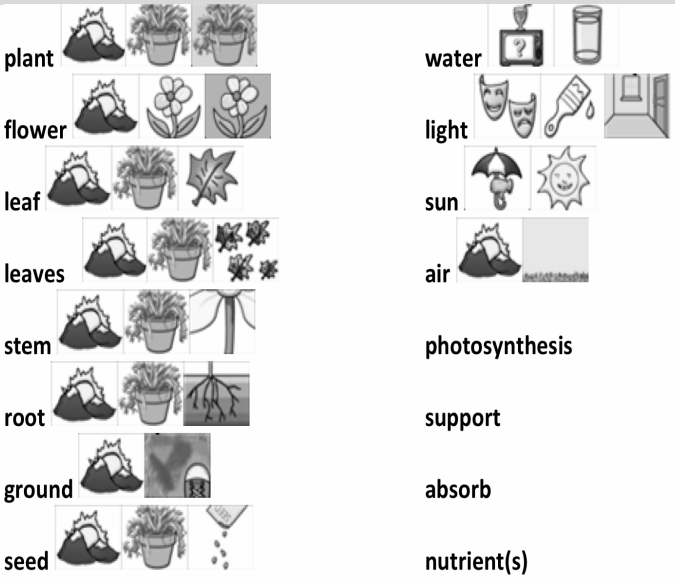
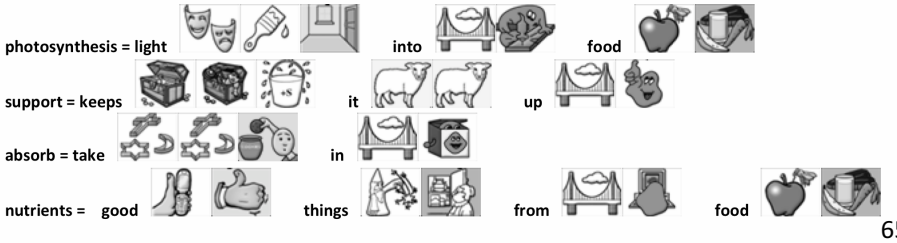


Step 2: Check Key Vocabulary in Device



Step 3: Define Key & Concepts with Core

1. photosynthesis – light into food
2. support – keeps it up
3. absorb – take in
4. nutrients – good things from food



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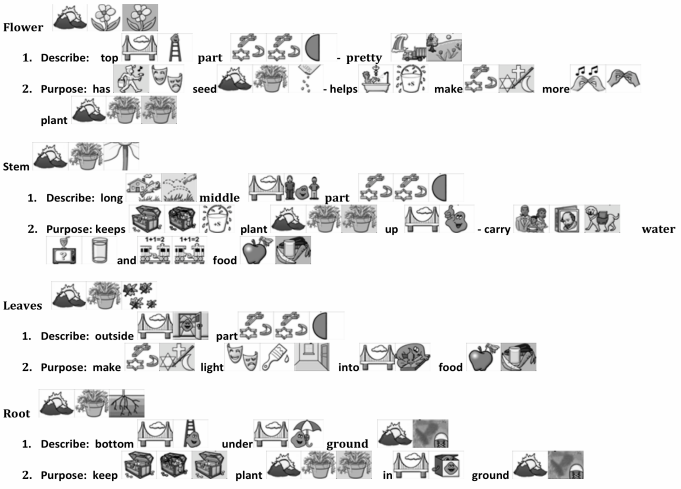
Step 3: Define Key & Concepts with Core

- Words to describe and discuss plant parts



If you are looking up the words using computer software, SAVE your work and turn it into a VSM to use during the lesson.

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Science Class Example: Current Lesson Plan on Plants

1. Plant seeds and watch the plants grow over the next 3 months
2. ***Describe the different parts of the plant***
3. ***Discuss the functions of the plant parts in the growing process***
4. Complete a worksheet on the parts of a plant
5. Write a response to an application question

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Step 4: Address Expectations & Educational Support Questions

All Students

- Plant seeds

Jordan will

- Opportunity: Plant a seed at same time as other students
- Accommodation: ***Direct*** others (dig up, put in, cover up, water over)
- Language: Use preposition and verbs in phrases
- IA Role: Modeling, Prompt hierarchy
- VS: VD book, Prep and verb cards

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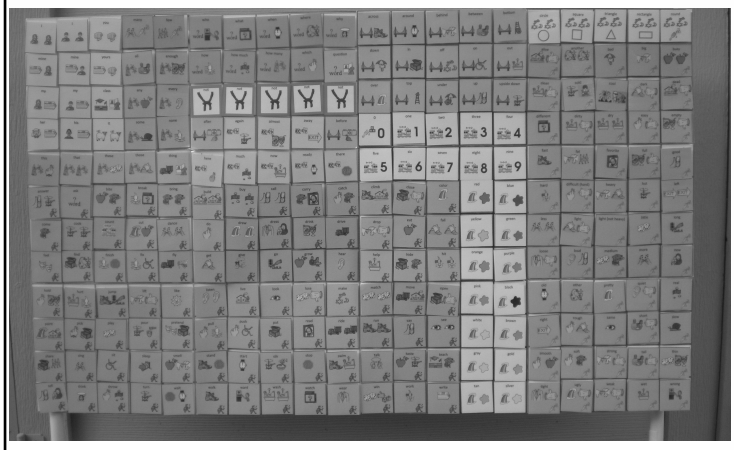
At-A-Glance "Sentence Builder Chart"



This sentence builder chart is a commercial product from a product (Core Vocabulary Classroom Kit) sold by Gail Van Tatenhove and is pre-made for students using Unity or LAMP Words for Life; or with printed words only to customize for any program or AAC device/app. The NALB comes on a CD for you to print and put together. Go to www.vantatenhove.com for more information.

Step 4: Address Expectations & Educational Support Questions

All Students

- Describe the parts of the plant
  - Flowers = top, pretty part
  - Stem = Long, middle part
  - Leaves = outside or side part
  - Root = bottom part, under ground, dirty part

Jordan will

- Opportunity: Describe at least 1 part during group activity, describe each part during 1:1 time
- Accommodation: Use CV descriptions from Step 3.
- Language: ***Describe*** with an adjective and/or preposition
- IA Role: Modeling, Prompt hierarchy
- VS: VD, adjective and preposition cards

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CONTINUED™

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Step 4: Address Expectations & Educational Support Questions

All Students

- Discuss the functions of the plant parts in the growing process
  - Flowers – has seeds, helps make more plants
  - Stem – keeps plant up, carries water and food
  - Leaves – makes light into food
  - Roots – keeps plant in ground, bring in food and water
  - Photosynthesis – light into food
  - Support – keeps up
  - Absorb – take in
  - Nutrients – good things from food

Jordan will

- Opportunity: Discuss 1 function during group activity, discuss each function during 1:1 time
- Accommodation: Use CV descriptions from Step 3.
- Language: ***Discuss*** with a simplified verb or verb phrase,
- IA Role: Modeling, Prompt hierarchy, circle words, present phrase cards
- VS: VD, function phrases

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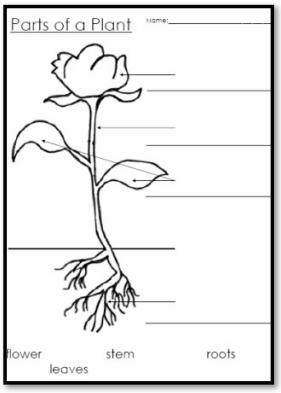
Step 4: Address Expectations & Educational Support Questions

All Students

- Complete a worksheet on parts of a plant



Jordan will

- Opportunity: Complete worksheet with a peer
- Accommodation: Number each line (1, 2, 3, 4); ABCD each part
- Language: Name of parts or A, B, C, D
- IA Role: Adapt worksheet, supervise completion with peer
- VS: codes for part words

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Step 4: Address Expectations & Educational Support Questions

All Students

- Write a short paragraph (of at least 3 sentences) on why plants are important to us

Jordan will

- Opportunity: Write with EcoPoint connected to computer with writing program
- Modification: Write 2 sentences
- Language: at least 3 words/sentence, prompt use of verbs
- IA Role: Prompt verbs, help arranging words, do capitalization and punctuation
- VSM: VD, vocabulary cards

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Realistic Expectations

Simple Start	one-on-one before small or large group
	short, manageable lessons
	limit use of extra materials and visuals
Selective Implementation	with the fellow students in small groups
	subjects/lessons
Systematic, Steady	build in accountability as a team
	incrementally increase use across subject areas, lessons, and communication partners
Some becomes Spontaneous	learned words in AAC system
	can implement DT "on-the-fly"

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Perspective on Extended Vocabulary

- Extended vocabulary words are usually the specific content words of a lesson
- The content words of the lesson are NOT bad words
- Hearing and learning content words is important for language enrichment,
  - but putting the emphasis on them in a lesson, when the student hasn't learned the core vocabulary, is not a good use of time when learning to talk with an AAC device/app

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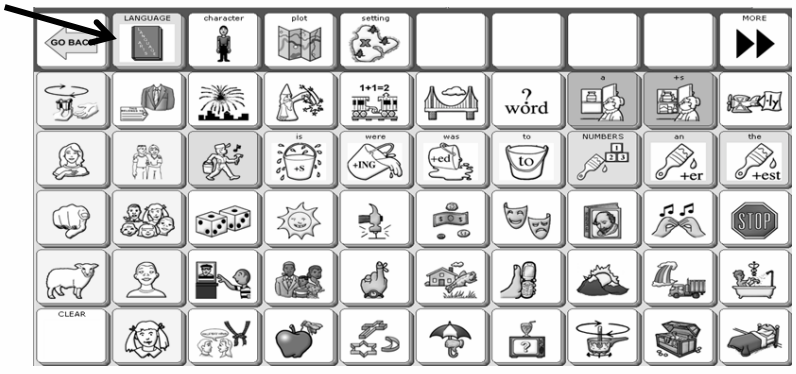
Essential Subject-Specific Words

- Some subject-specific content words are essential to a subject and should, if not already, be added.



Example from Unity®60 Sequenced, from Prentke Romich Company. Used with permission. 76

CONTINUED™

Subject-Specific Academic Words

- Identify essential subject-specific words
  - How many concepts of a subject are core vocabulary words?
  - What words make participation in a ***subject*** a lot easier because **they are programmed** in the device?
    - Example a: Add critical language arts words
    - Example 2: Add math words that NOT in most AAC vocabulary sets: fraction, difference, borrow, pattern, difference, equation, remainder

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Descriptive Talking and Writing

- Written text requires a topic sentence which generally requires specificity. After the topic sentence, then core vocabulary can take over to express supporting ideas, but for the topic sentence, you need lesson content words.
- Example: Which is the better topic sentence?
  - "My favorite ***person who writes books*** is the ***woman who wrote about old days when women needed a husband***."
  - "My favorite ***author*** is ***Jane Austin.***"

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Lesson Fact Writing

- Assignment: Write a paragraph of what you learned about Saturn. Include at least 3 facts.
- Peers writing: "***Saturn*** is the 6th ***planet*** from the ***sun***. We can see it from ***Earth***. It has ***rings*** and many ***moons***. It is made up of a lot of ***gas***. It is very light and turns fast."

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Lesson Fact Writing

- Assignment: Write a paragraph of what you learned about Saturn. Include at least 3 facts.
- Peers writing: " is the 6th from the . We can see it from . It has and many . It is made up of a lot of . It is very light and turns fast."

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Lesson Application Writing

- Assignment: What would it be like to live on Saturn?
- Peers writing: "Living on ***Saturn*** would be hard. You would need a floating house because it is made up of ***gas***. It is very cold and moves so fast you would blow right off. I don't think anyone should try and live there."

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Joshua's Writing

Paragraph with 3 Facts:

Saturn is 6.

Ring around it.

It goes around fast.

It is light.

Application:

I don't want to live

Saturn.

No fun because cold.

No Cars movie there.

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Simple, Supplemental AAC Solutions

1. Sticky Notes with words/drawings on them
   - Lay them out and student eye/hand selects needed word
2. Lesson-specific Manual Communication Boards
   - Develop manual boards with the lesson-specific vocabulary
   - Create and maintain a paper and/or e-file of board

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Simple, Supplemental AAC Solutions

3. Encoded Text
   - Add letters or numbers to key words in print-based materials
   - Student says the letter or number to "say" the word
4. Word Banks or Word Lists
   - Copy type or select from bank/list
   - Useful with print-based materials
   - An option with some educational software programs

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Simple, Supplemental AAC Solutions

3. Spelling Strategies
   - Traditional spelling (with use of word prediction)
   - Approximated Spelling (with use of word prediction)
   - Initial Sound Spelling
     - Student – provides initial letter or key letters (J A)
     - Teacher/Assistant spells the rest or helps student select word from Word Prediction window

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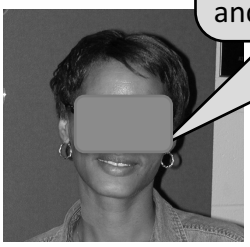
Testimonials



Lucy (IA): I never knew what was in the machine or how to say it. Now I do, I can model and I can help him!

Cynthia (teacher): It helps me know what the student has learned. And it is so much easier to work with him!

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Thank you.

To contact Gail for further discussion and questions, email her at gvantatenhove@cfl.rr.com

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