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Let's Get to the "Core" of Language

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools
Diane Drakulic, MA, CCC-SLP
Cindy Monroe, MS, CCC-SLP
Joanna Zanni, MA, CCC-SLP

Our story…..

We support 170 schools
182 EC self contained classrooms

- It's taken time for us to educate teachers and therapists about core
- We use high tech when appropriate
- We have found light tech can be powerful in the classroom
  - less intimidating
  - higher implementation - would rather see light tech being used than high tech sitting on the shelf

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Core Vocabulary

- What does the research tell us?
  - **80%** of the words we say comes from a list of 200 words; **85-90%** of the words we say comes from a list of 300-400 words (Baker & Hill, 2000)
- When was the last time you said…

go	**Dolly Parton**	more	get	**cinnamon**
	Neptune	see	and	**jeopardy**
like	**tornado**	**Dora**	run	is	are

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Core vs Fringe
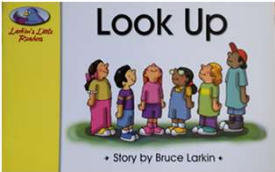
CHARACTERISTIC	CORE VOCABULARY	FRINGE VOCABULARY
Number of words	Small number of words	Very large number of words
Frequency of use	High frequency	Low frequency, occur infrequently
Applicability across environments	Applicable to all environments	Applicable to limited environments, lack versatility
Applicability across topics	Applicable to all topics	Applicable to limited topics
Types of words	Includes a variety of parts of speech	Includes mostly proper names and other nouns

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Core Vocabulary: Multi-meaning words

- Go
  - Make the car go
  - Go home/go outside
  - Go away!
- Turn
  - Turn on/off
  - Turn around
  - Turn the page
  - Turn up/down
  - My turn
- Up
  - Wake up
  - Shut up!
  - Open up
  - Put up
- Stop
  - Stop that!
  - Make it stop
  - I want to stop
  - It's time to stop

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Literacy and Core Vocabulary

- Less than 10% of individuals who use AAC systems will read beyond the second grade level (Erickson, 2003).
- Most sight word lists used in schools are made up of core vocabulary words
  - Dolch words lists
  - Fry word lists

Look Up

Larkin's Little Readers

• Story by Bruce Larkin •

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Typical Topic Board

pizza	Doritos	milk
sandwich	cheese curls	juice
popsicle	goldfish	water
candy	crackers	cookies

Typical Problems

- Lack of range of parts of speech, heavy use of nouns
- Restricted communicative functions
- Commonly interpret function as labeling or requesting objects
- Nouns often present in context
- Higher quantity of nouns to learn

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Functions/Purposes of Communication

greet	hello, what's up?, hey	redirection/change	different, another
part	bye, see you later	existence	that, there, look
affirm	Yes, okay, I agree	nonexistence	none, not
rejection	stop, all done, finished, no more,	disappearance	away, all gone
negation	no, not, stop	possession	mine, yours, his, hers
cessation	stop	comment	like, bad, good, silly
request assistance	Help, can you….	describe	fat, tall, cold, fast, under
request recurrence	again, more	person	I, you, mom, dad
request information	what, why	interject	Wow!, cool!, no way!
request object	that, this, the	question	Who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, how?, how many/much?
request action	want, get, do, turn, put, open		
direct	go, get, try, help, come, up		

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Core Vocabulary in Communication in Everyday Situations

- Preschool Age
- Example: Brown Bear, Brown Bear book
  - "What do you see?" (I see a…)
- Instead of only asking the child "what do you see?" and only requiring a label…
  - "Tell me something about the bear…" (he is big; he is brown; I don't like)
  - Have the child ask you or other children "what do you see" in other environments for carry over activity

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Core Vocabulary in Communication in Everyday Situations

- Elementary Age
- Example: Weather lesson

Questions	Responses
What happens when something evaporates?	What goes in air
What is atmosphere?	Air around us
What is precipitation?	Water fall on ground
Tell me about a hurricane?	Big turning storm; big storm that turns over water
What is condensation?	When air turn to water
What is a blizzard?	Lots of snow

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Core Vocabulary in Communication in Everyday Situations

- Middle School
- Example: Solar System unit
- Typical vocabulary chosen: Mercury, Venus, Earth, etc.

Questions	Responses
Tell me something about Jupiter	Very hot; biggest one; has red spot
Tell me something about Mercury	Close to sun; smallest one
What is the sun?	Big hot star
How does an eclipse happen?	Moon goes in front of sun

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The Language Stealers

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOVm8qomCYA

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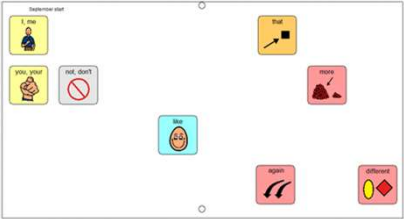Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
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Motor Automaticity

- "Location learning" vs symbolic discrimination
- Developing motor patterns associated with specific symbols
- Makes communication faster, easier
- Requires consistent layout, symbols don't move

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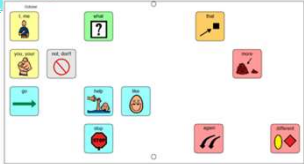

Progressive Core Communication Boards

- We started with a 3 year old EC classroom.
- We wanted a way to make core available and wanted the teachers to "buy in".
- We started with 8 words and added 4 more words each month.
- After 7 months (March) entire board was filled. We used Tech Speak template - 32 cells.
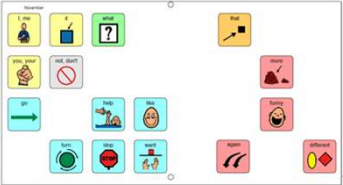
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October

November

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March

Large core board used during a literacy activity

Large core board used during a science activity

Core boards used during snack time

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Core board used during small group time

Core board on a Tech Speak device

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Core board used during individual speech therapy

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Core Fringe Vocabulary Flip Book

- Portable
- Good for students who are in general education classrooms
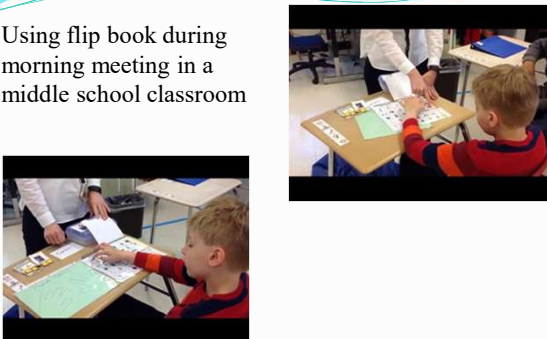- Easy to customize the fringe

Some classrooms have found that using a three ring notebook is more durable

Using flip book in a three year old EC preschool classroom

Using flip book during morning meeting in a middle school classroom

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How do I help my teachers teach core words?

Activities to Teach Core Words

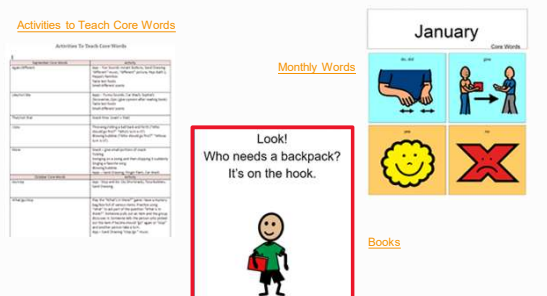Monthly Words

January

Look!
Who needs a backpack?
It's on the hook.

Books

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References

The original core/fringe template can be found at:
Boardmakerachieve.com
The boards were posted by Csmith0920 and are called:
15 Core Communication Flipboard
12 Core Communication Flipboard
9 Bubbles Fringe Vocabulary Communication Flipboard

Getting Started with Core Vocabulary December 15th, 2010
Communications Connection Series Presentation 1
Maureen Nevers, M.S. CCC-SLP
Augmentative Communication Consultant
Vermont Iteam in collaboration with
CDCI AT Try-out Center & VT AT Program

Assistive Technology Exchange Center
www.atec-oc.org
A Program of Goodwill Orange County
Julie Dunbar, M.S. ED.
julied@ocgoodwill.org

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