

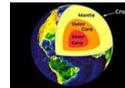
## A Year of Words in Action



- MA, SLP, Indiana University, 2000
- 15 years working for Forest Hills Special Education Cooperative
  - serving Ellettsville, western Monroe County, and Owen County
- Specialize in students with Complex Communication Needs
  - Cerebral Palsy
  - Autism
  - Traumatic Brain Injury
  - Septo-optic dysplasia
  - Seizure disorders
  - Chromosomal anomalies

### Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the value of teaching a limited set of core words per month
2. List at least 3 ideas for implementing monthly words when working with AAC learners
3. Identify resources for finding and developing additional activities.



## What is Core Vocabulary?

**Core vocabulary** is a small set of simple words, in any language, that are used frequently and across contexts (Cross, Baker, Klotz & Badman, 1997).

- High frequency
- Multi-purpose

## We have CORE Vocabulary, Now What?

- Just because we give students high-frequency words, it doesn't mean they know how to use them.
- Learning the words means finding them via their communication tool as well as using them meaningfully
- CORE words aren't easily represented, so how do we teach them?



## A Year of Words



- In 2013, Carole Zangari and bloggers at PrAACticalAAC.org introduced A Year of Words
- Core vocabulary words were divided across months, allowing a structured way of focusing on words to aid fluency
- Provided a set of 12 words per month, arranged in a grid for visual ease.
- The idea was so popular, it was expanded in 2014 with a second set of words.
- In early 2016, Heidi LoStracco developed another, structured plan for learning Core words, geared toward communication partners – Learning to Speak AAC.
- Angelman Syndrome Foundation via Caroline Musselwhite hosted a series of webinars (Communication Training Series) on teaching Core vocabulary. 10 sets of words.
- More recent developments: Project Core (through the Center on Literacy and Disability at UNC) – <http://www.project-core.com/> AND AssistiveWare's Core Word Classroom (<http://coreword.assistiveware.com/login>) provide training and materials to support teaching Core Words.



- By focusing on a specific set of words, we can draw attention to those words through modeling and conversational use
- Students (or communication partners!) can practice using the targeted words in structured settings, but also see how the words are used in natural settings and conversation.
- We can use masking to highlight words during structured teaching times, while allowing access to the full vocabulary during other times.
- Allows students to focus on the little words – great for carryover (writing, reading, spelling)
- Students who learn in chunks can break down the chunks, find the individual words, and learn to use them in new ways
  - Princess – “Do you have” automaticity vs. “do” “you” “have” non-automaticity

## Implementation

- Initially, I thought I could just jump in and focus on words
- PowerPoint books for illustrating
- Symbol-enhanced grids
- Rachel Langley’s calendars
- Ideas from PrAACticalAAC
- But I didn’t feel like I was effective in really teaching the words. Students didn’t appear to be generalizing beyond the activity of the day

## All the words, but she can’t use them

- Inspired by a student (Princess) who was able to use her Vantage Light with me fairly effectively, but failed to carryover to classroom
- Princess was developing motor plans for chunks of words (Do you have, She is *verb-ing*, etc.), but wasn’t really processing individual words.
- Additionally, inclusion teacher was struggling to assess her ability to read primary (Fry) sight words.



Do you have circle and red

## Implementation (cont’d)



- “Increasing AAC Core Vocabulary Carryover” (Speechy Musings blog, October 13, 2015) – my Aha! Moment
- Use Year of Words for my structure, and ideas from this blogger, in addition to some targeted (goal-related) activities and my student’s favorite activities.
- Shared YOW with inclusion, self-contained, and classroom teacher, explained what we were doing
- Adapted grids with symbol strategies for LWFL (increase initial success in retrieving words)
- Allowed Princess to choose Words of the Week (3 per week with set 1)
- Tape words to back of the device for reminders



- Practice retrieving individual words to create fluency
- Practice retrieving words to complete phrases or sentences (cloze sentences)
- Model using words in conversation, to construct sentences, to describe actions, etc.
- Have student help construct PowerPoint books to illustrate words (she didn't care for this activity)
- Play Go Fish with words (she loves this activity)
- Eventually practice using targeted words to describe pictures (these are CORE words, after all!)

### Sample Lesson Plan

May Words

Words	Tuesday (Introduction)	Thursday (Practice)
Good	Retrieve each word 5x	Review words (I say them, can she find them without visual prompt)
My	Model words in simple phrases/sentences	Cloze sentences (if needed to review)
Who	Cloze sentence (fill in the word) Words on back of device Go Fish (cumulative) if time	Use words in sentences – picture prompts (points toward reward)

Materials:

- May grid for cutting, May grid for data
- Go Fish cards
- Point markers
- Photo collections (Pinterest, apps, Verb cards, photo cards, magazines)
- Prize box

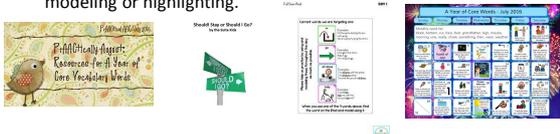
### Progress

- Initial CORE word knowledge (able to retrieve on demand): she, he, go, sleep, like, eat, drink
- Final testing is not complete, but now independently constructing sentences to describe pictures, using CORE words independently, and self-monitoring (skipping words she is familiar with and able to retrieve independently). Example: "He is working, calling wife, eat"



### Expanding the Idea

- Trying (again) to implement when working with students in the classroom
- Re-visiting some of my previous materials (different students, so different responses), along with new materials and ideas
- Prompt cards on a ring to remind me/teachers of words we are modeling or highlighting.



### Make and Take



### April Words

- Paint, copy, paste!
- Tarheel Reader

