



The AAC Classroom

Creating an Educational Environment to Support
Unity Users

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What is the AAC Classroom?



An educational setting for children who use AAC and AT as their primary tools for learning and participation



An environment that supports developing competence using AAC and AT



A program that provides access to a modified general education curriculum with necessary accommodations



A community that maximizes inclusion opportunities for all students

Why do we need it?

- Students need to develop mastery with tools for communication and writing.
- Students need to be active participants in the educational setting.
- Students require additional support in AAC, language and literacy development due to their unique needs.
- AAC classroom teams are most knowledgeable in developing and supporting Participation Plans for Students using AAC/AT in the general education setting.

Best Practices in the AAC Classroom

Classroom
Engineering

Interactive
Strategies

Technology
& Materials

Instructional
Strategies

Curriculum

Students are entitled by law to have :

- Access to general education curriculum
- Assistive technology equipment and services as determined by the IEP team
- Accommodations and modifications necessary to participate in a general education curriculum
- Measureable benefit from their educational program as demonstrated in appropriate and ongoing assessment



Start from Scratch!

Classroom Engineering

Furnishings



Horseshoe
Table for
large
group
instruction



Half-moon
Table for
small
group
instruction



Rolling
Chairs for
staff

More Furnishings



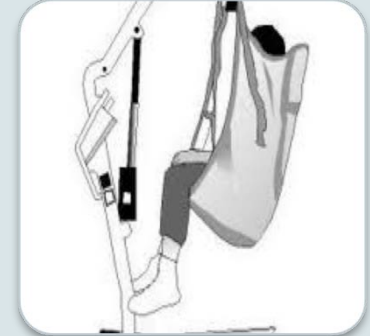
Room
dividers
for
distraction
free work
areas



Pocket
Charts for
schedule
and other
visual
supports'



Hi Lo
Changing
Table for
bathroom



Hoyer lift
for
transfers

Equipment & Materials



Desktop
Computers



Multifunction
Printer



Large
supply of
Printer
cartridges



Printer
Paper



Laminator
&
Laminating
sheets

Additional Hardware



ELMO Doc-Tor:
Document camera and Projector Bundle Systems



Screen for Projector:
Essential for projecting instructional materials



Switch interface(s):
Alternative input to the desktop computer via switch



Intelliswitch:
Wireless switch interface offering greater access to software

Access to Computer Options



Intellikeys: provides keyboard alternative access for individuals who have difficulty using standard keyboard



Key guards for standard keyboards, made by Tap Plastics



Envoy/Discover Pro: provides onscreen keyboard access for MAC or PC users: Can be used in combination with a Tracker



Traxsys Roller Ball: mouse emulation



Traxsys Joystick: mouse emulation



Big Red Switches, Jelly Beans & Spec Switches

Educational Software



Microsoft Office Student Edition



Intellitools Classroom Suite



Clicker 5



D.J. Solo 6 Literacy Suite



D.J. Start To Finish Core Content



D.J. Start to Finish Literacy Starters

Additional Software Needs



PASS Software



Boardmaker with
Unity Symbols



PeRT

Internet Resources



www.bookshare.org

Register a student to receive free text materials in an electronic format. Search online for 42,000 digital books, textbooks, and other reading materials.



<https://unique.n2y.com/>

Teach age-appropriate material to students. Lessons are aligned to content standards and include differentiated tasks to meet every students' needs.



www.news-2-you.com

A weekly on-line newspaper for beginning readers and downloadable activities related to a given weekly topic.



www.raz-kids.com

On-line leveled books and reading quizzes program. Students listen to books read aloud with vocabulary and pronunciation support, or read without support



www.accessiblebookcollection.org

Site provides electronic books for all grade levels. Change font and background color . Download book from web site.

Additional Internet Resources



www.aex.intellitools.com/main.php

Free Classroom Suite Activities can be downloaded, used, or modified. Over 4299 specifically for Unity Users.



<http://www.aaclanguagelab.com/resources>

Free language lesson plans, materials, and teaching resources available on the Prentke Romich web site.



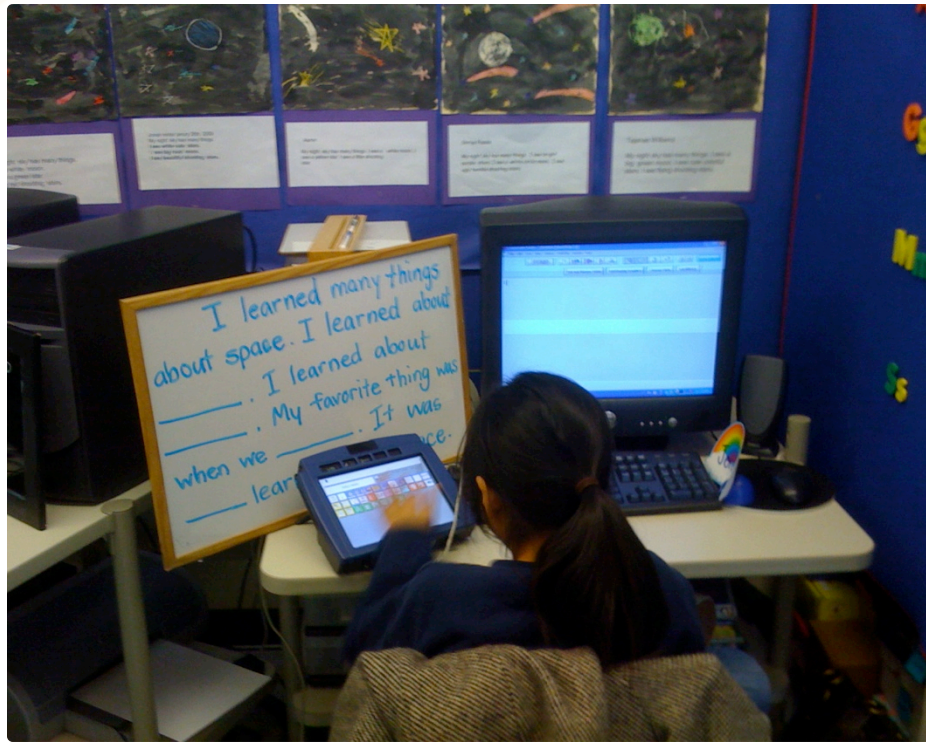
www.learningmagicinc.com

Download setups for free to use with Classroom Suite, Clicker 5, and My Own Book Shelf. Includes media video clips



<http://bridgeschool.org/transition/multimodal/index.php>

Teaching and communication strategies and activities are available online along with ideas for implementing AAC/AT in the classroom



Engineering the Classroom for Learning and Communication

AAC Classroom at Patterson Elementary, Fremont, CA

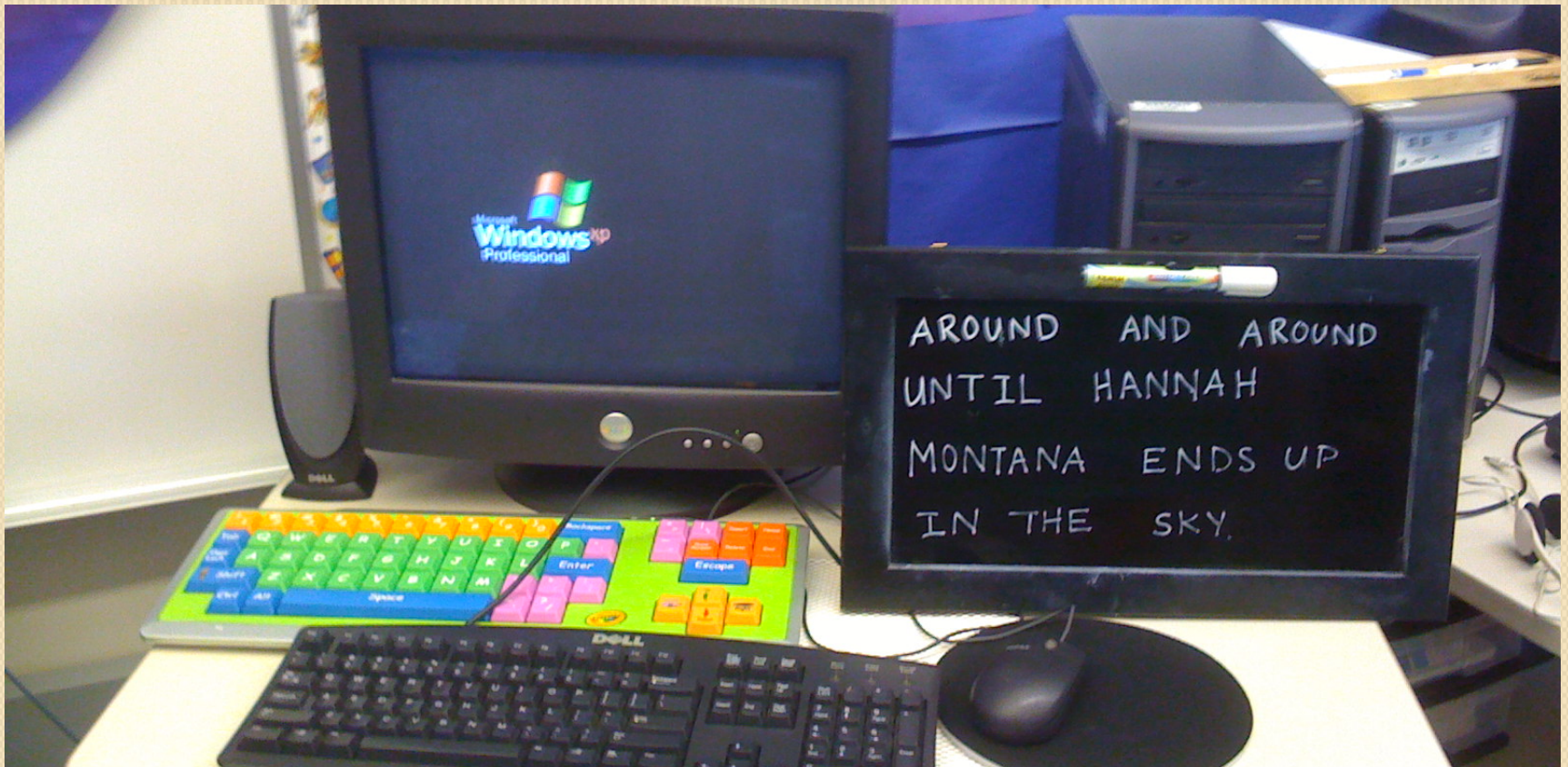
UNITY WALL



WRITING WORKSTATIONS



WRITING CENTER



INDIVIDUAL WORK STATION



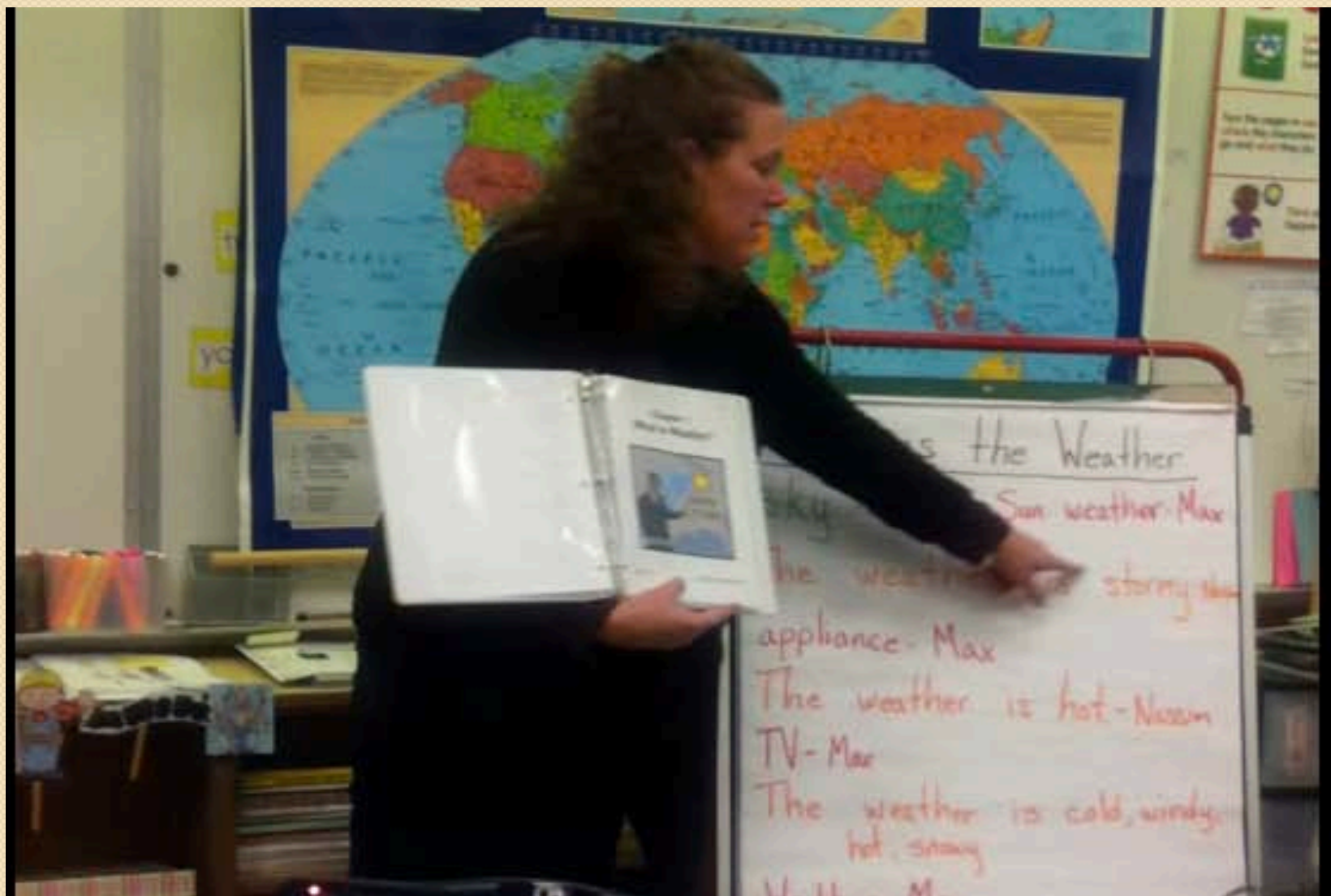
MORNING MEETING



SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION



LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION



COMMUNICATION GROUP





COMMUNICATION GROUP

iChat Communication Group at Fairmont Elementary

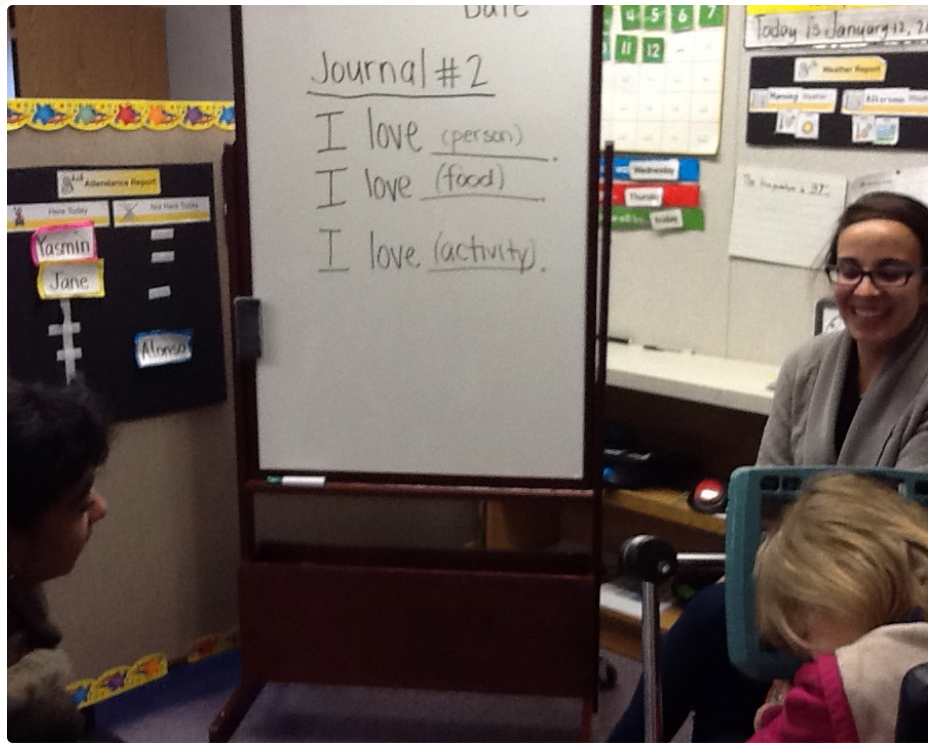
LITERACY INSTRUCTION





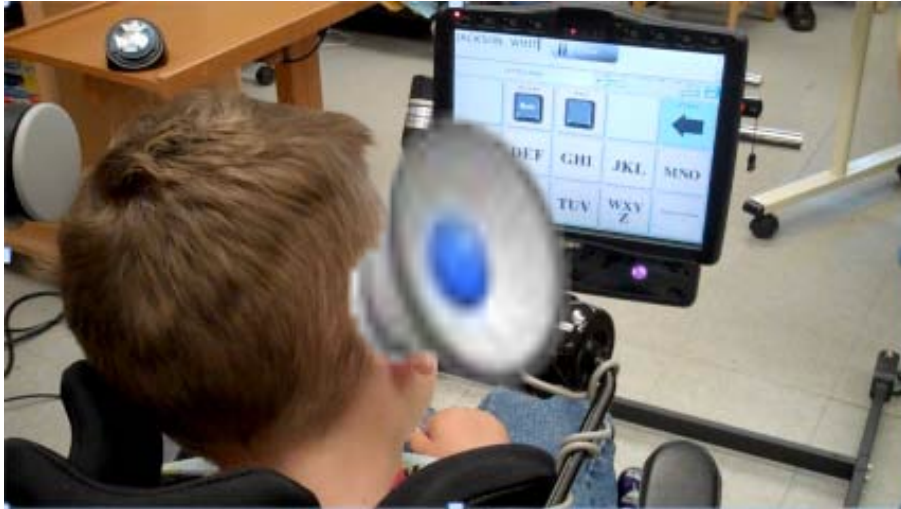
LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Low Technology used for instructionally demanding literacy activity for this student



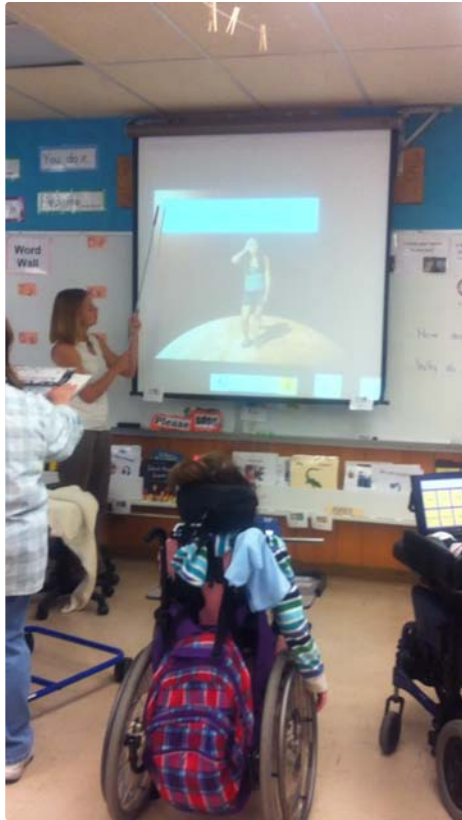
SENTENCE FRAMES

Teacher introduces Journal activity



USING SGD KEYBOARD

Student using eye gaze input on the Eco2
with EcoPoint SGD



USE OF LCD PANEL

Don Johnson Literacy Starters



Access Literature

**SPACES ARE
CLEARLY DEFINED
AND LABELED**

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ARE LABELED AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE





**CLASSROOM IS
NEAT AND WELL
ORGANIZED**

Categorically Grouped Literature

STUDENTS CAN EASILY ACCESS MATERIALS



POSTED CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

| Period | Duration | Class |
|--------|-------------|---------------------|
| 4 | 8:12-8:59 | Workshops |
| 5 | 9:03-9:46 | PE |
| Brunch | 9:46-9:56 | |
| 6 | 10:00-10:43 | Language Arts |
| 7 | 10:47-11:32 | History or Art |
| 1 | 11:36-12:19 | Communication Group |
| Lunch | 12:19-12:49 | |
| 2 | 12:53-1:36 | Workshops |

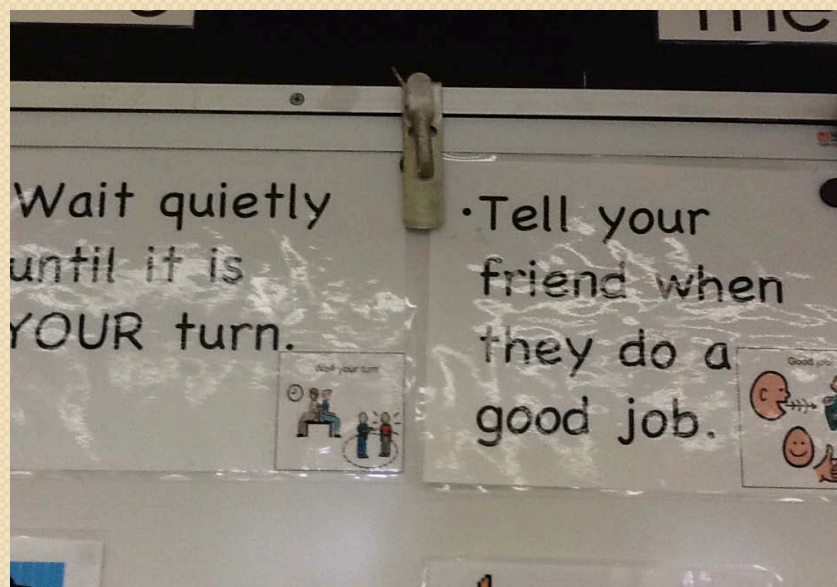
Wednesday, January 18th

eat
art
Wednesday you
front time
me early
your teacher,
Ms. Conner



POSTED CLASSROOM RULES

POSTED COMMUNICATION RULES





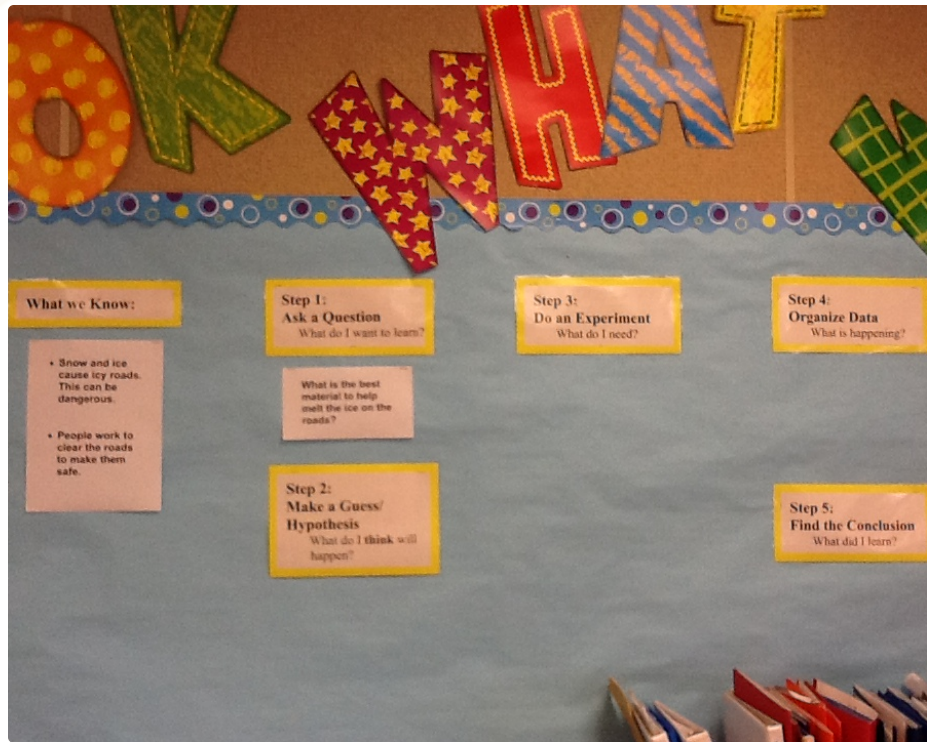
Large Multi Color Coded Keys and Display Board

COMPUTER PERIPHERALS



Science unit on the planets

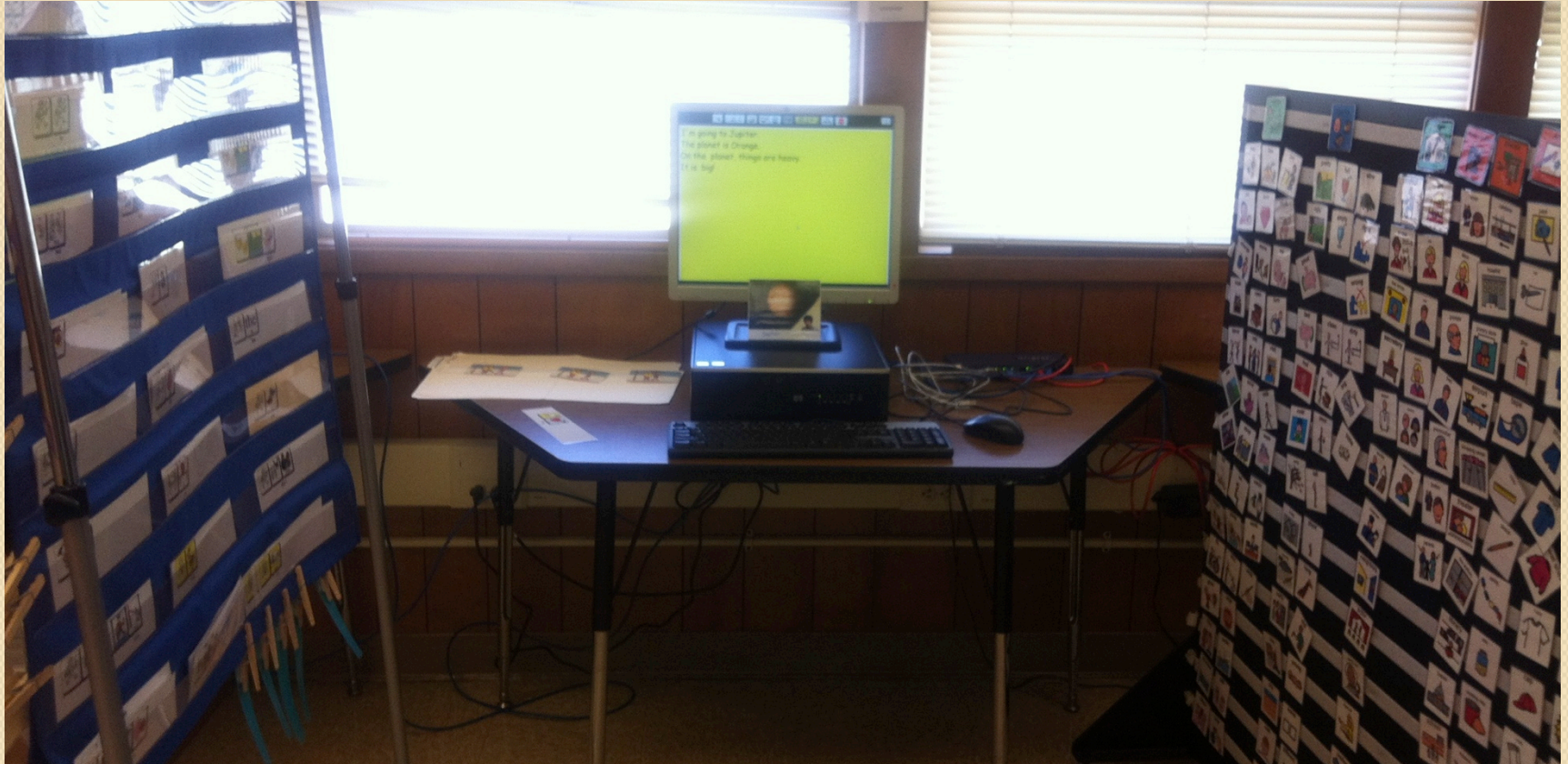
DISPLAYED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS



INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS

What we know and what we want to find out

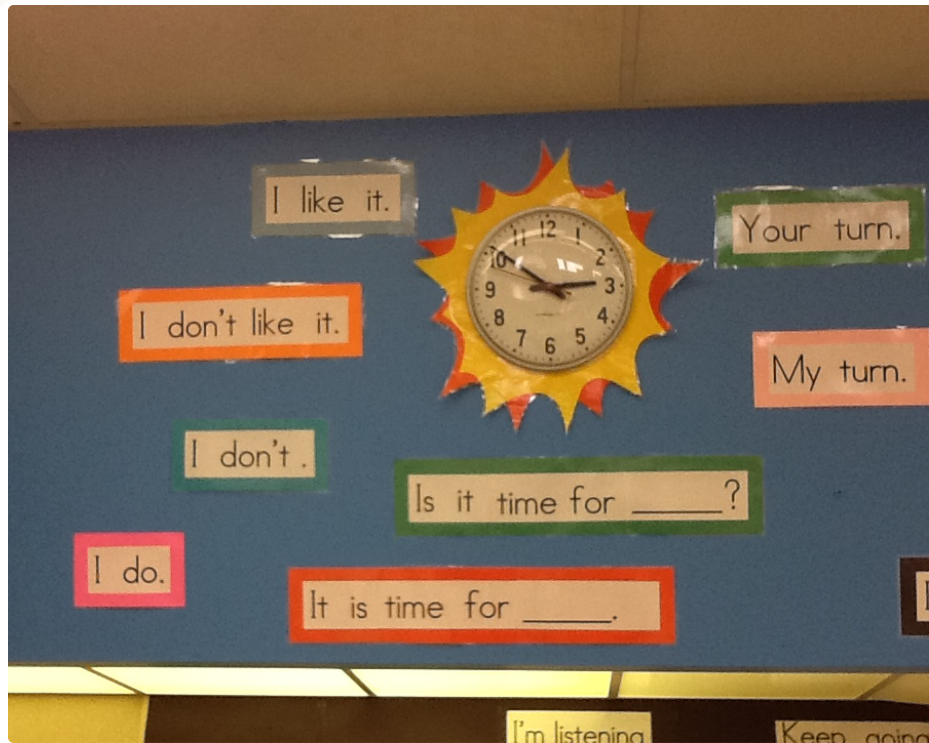
DISTRACTION FREE WORK STATIONS





VISUAL SUPPORTS ARE POSTED ON DISPLAY BOARDS

Icon sequences for phrases on movable display board



Targeted sentence frames on classroom wall

BULLETIN BOARDS AS VISUAL SUPPORTS



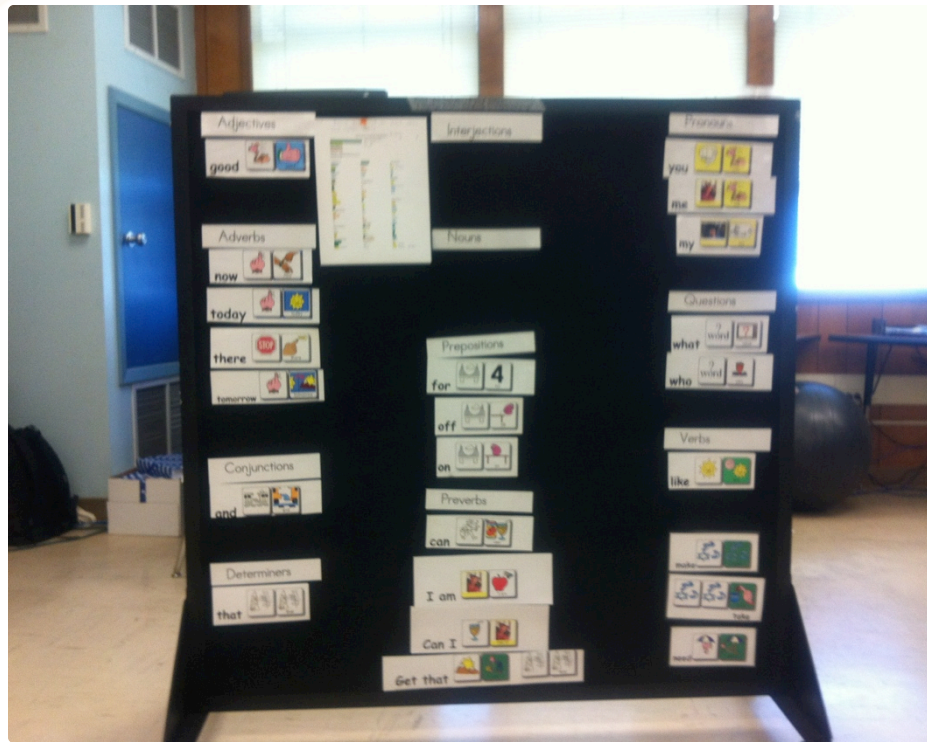
Targeted phrases and sentence frames

**TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF ALL THE
BOARD AREAS**



Unity action words on classroom wall board

**CREATE BOARDS
TO GO WITH
INSTRUCTIONAL
UNITS**



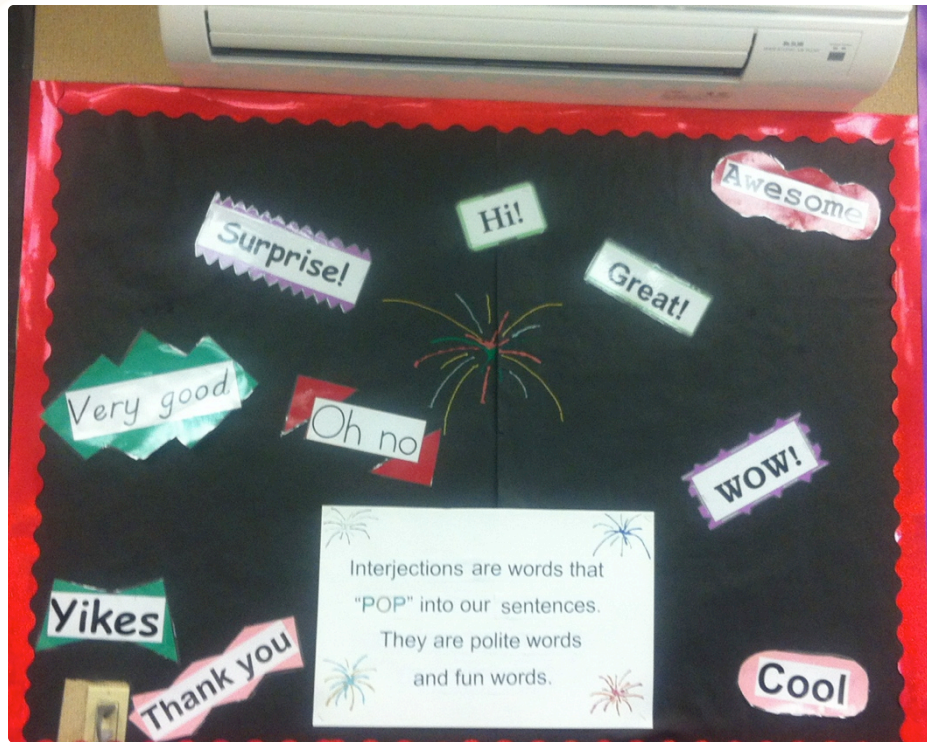
CREATE THE VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR NEEDED VOCABULARY

Unity vocabulary and phrases targeted in IEP

TARGETED PHRASES

Instructing another teacher





Unity on fireworks words on classroom display board

**MAKE YOUR
DISPLAYS FUN
AND ENTICING
TO THE EYE**



ICON WALL

Visual supports for 45 one-hit, 45 sequenced, 60 one-hit and 60 sequenced



DISPLAY BOARD

Vantage Lite 60-icon velcroed on felt board



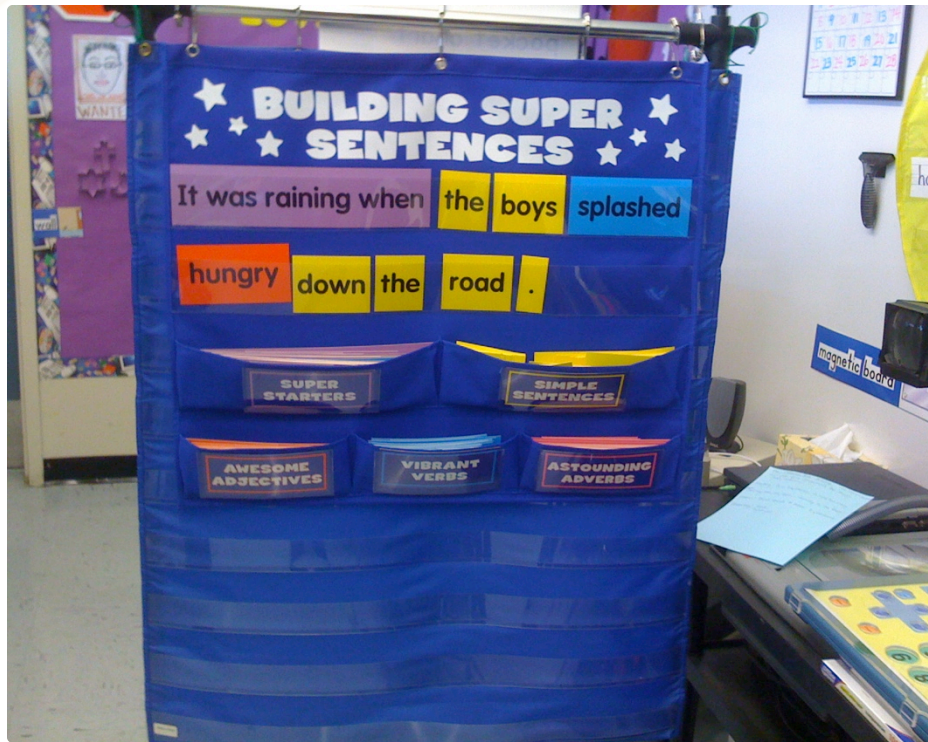
Unity 84 icons velcroed on felt display board

**PORTABILITY OF
THIS DISPLAY
MAKES IT EASY TO
GRAB AND USE**



FRINGE VOCABULARY

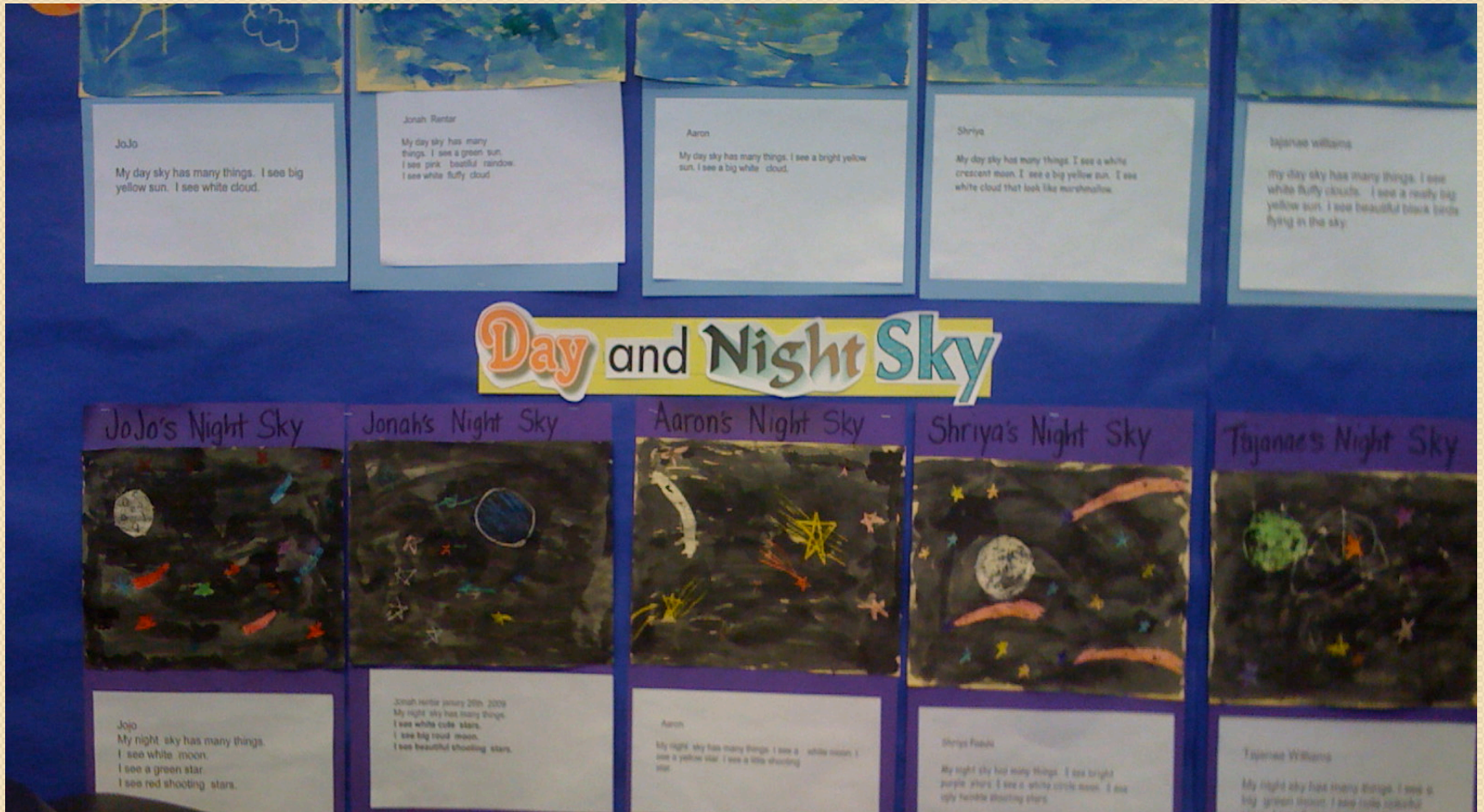
Fringe vocabulary on display board



SENTENCE BUILDING

Display board to support sentence formulation

STUDENT WORK DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT THE ROOM





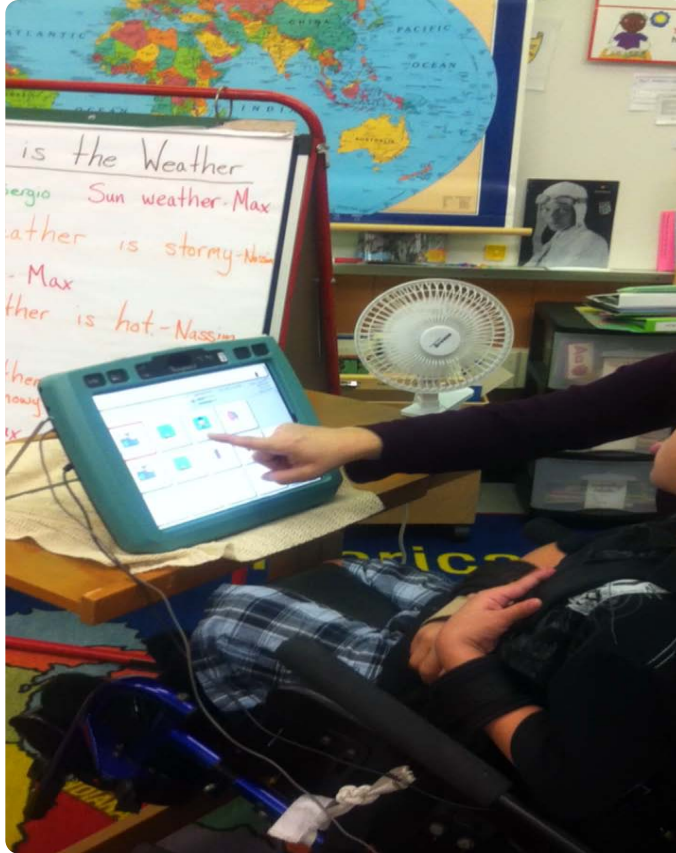
BULLETIN BOARDS ARE STUDENT- FOCUSED

Word wall serves as a dictionary reference for students



SGD SETUP

Single Spec Switch access to a Vanguard Plus



Classroom Staff are familiar with the basic operation of the SGD in the classroom.



Classroom staff are able to use single/multiple digitized voice recording devices appropriately to support students' needs.

Reading the Class Letter with LSBS



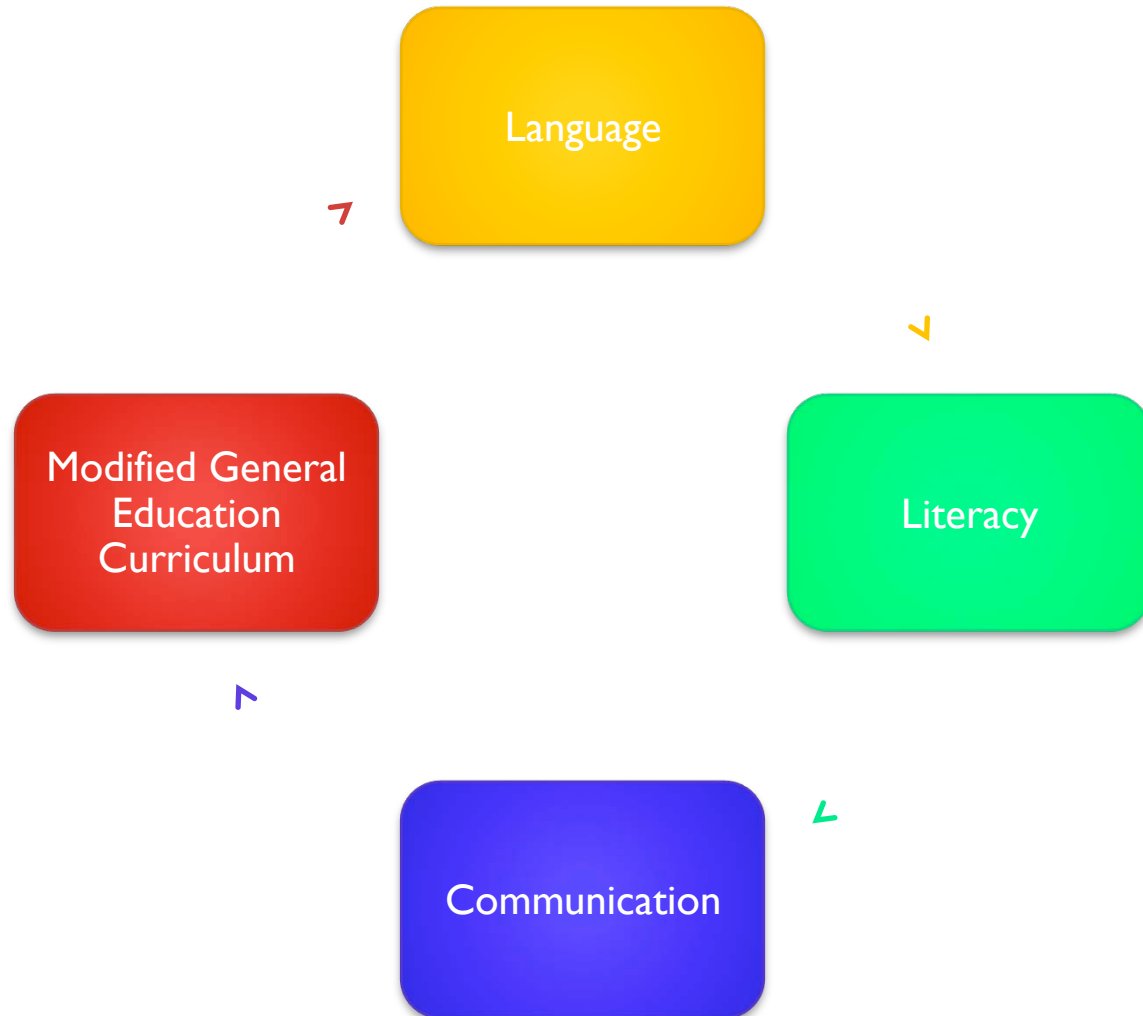
Classroom staff are able to use multiple communication systems appropriately during instructional activities.

LSBS for specific vocabulary repeated in story, Use of SGD for "Can I turn the page?" and use of low tech systems for student in a stander.

Classroom Staff are able to:

- Use hardware and software applications competently
- Maintain the operation of the SGDs in the classroom
- Demonstrate familiarity with vocabulary organization on SGDs
- Program communication software on the SGD
- Set up students' SGDs and computers for participation in instructional activities

Curriculum: What are we teaching?

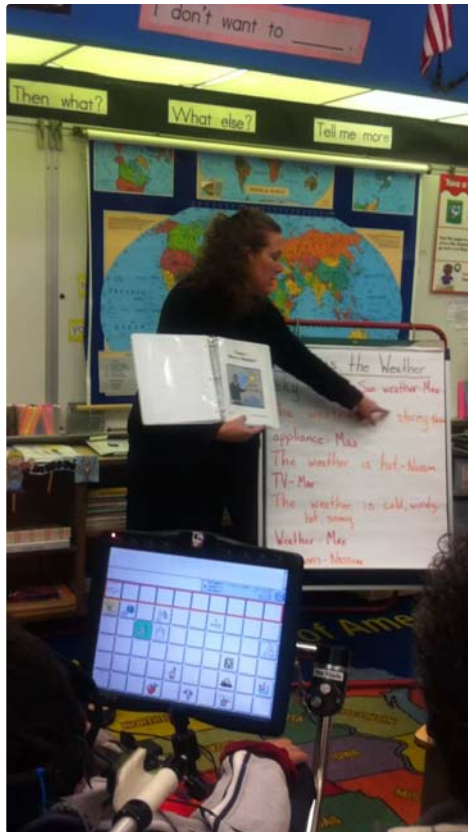


How do we do it?

- Use standards-based curriculum modified to meet the language needs of the students
- Use supplementary curriculum (Unique Learning) based on the Common Core Standards
 - Each month Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies Lessons are selected
 - Visual supports for all of the lessons are generated using the PASS software for Unity users as well as the visual supports that come with the monthly units

Standards Based Curriculum: Unique Learning





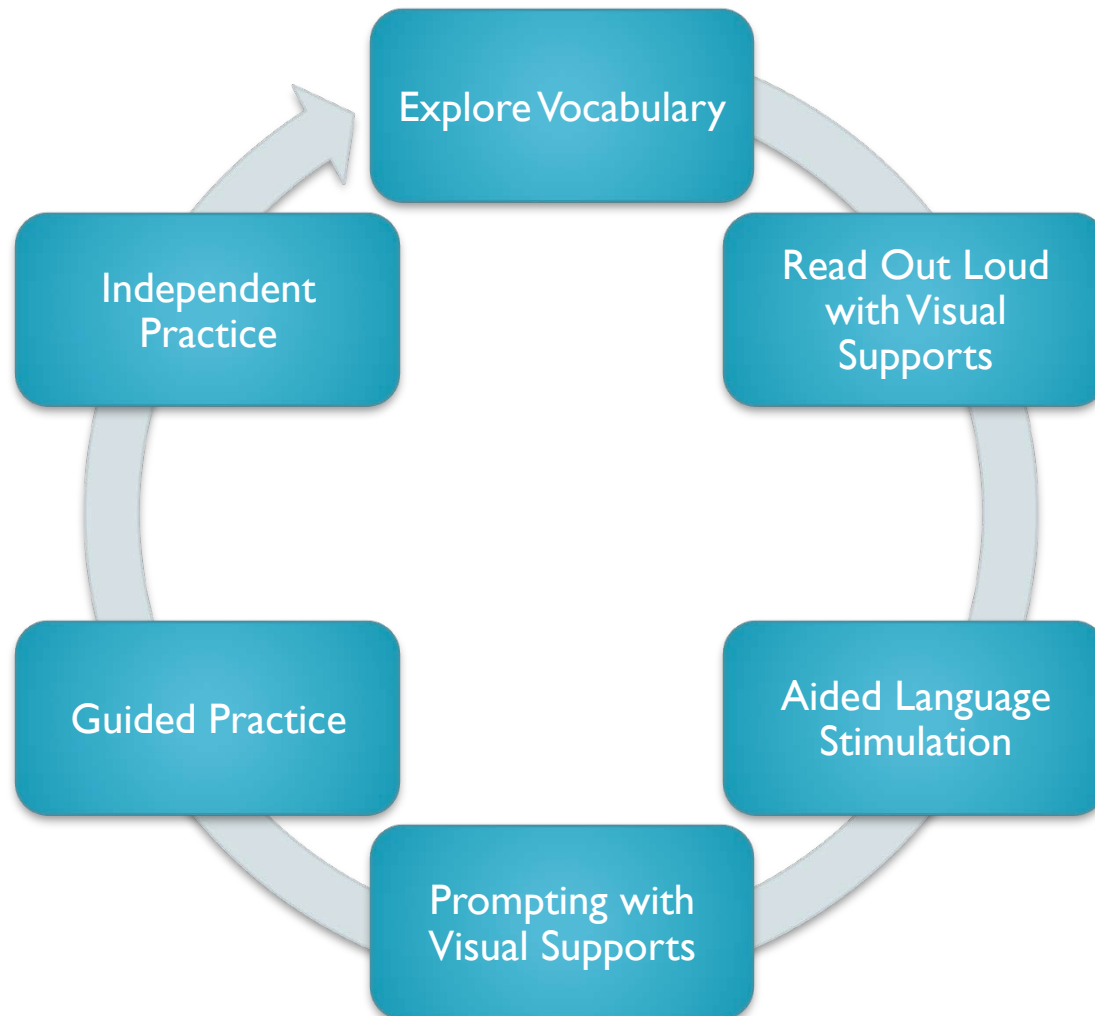
Teacher is able to modify curriculum based on the standards to meet students' needs.

Relating Instruction to Grade Level Curriculum

Language Arts: Reading

- Teacher selects what phrase, sentence, or passage the student is responsible for reading so every student can participate.
- A vocabulary set in Language Builder is created for each student so only vocabulary necessary for reading the story is visible to the student.
- Students are encouraged to explore their vocabulary when Vocabulary Builder is turned on and prior to the start of the reading lesson.

Instructional & Interactive Strategies



Repetition as a Teaching Strategy

- Teacher reads through the story and students focus on the text.
- The second time the teacher reads the story the para-educators model with aided language stimulation using the visual supports
- The third time the teacher reads the story students read their line or phrase using the visual supports

Read Out Loud with Visual Supports





PROMPTING WITH VISUAL SUPPORTS



AIDED LANGUAGE STIMULATION

Para educator uses visual supports and ALS to model the language required for the activity.



Para educator uses visual supports and SGD to model the language.

Para educators are able to use Aided Language Stimulation appropriately with students

What is Aided Language Stimulation?


Aided Language Stimulation is “the process of providing an aided language model to the student using AAC strategies” (Goossens’, Crain, & Elder, 1992).

Process for ALS

Make sure the student is attending.



Provide visual input at a slow pace, allowing student to see what you are pointing to and process the information.



Vary the amount of visual model provided based on the proficiency of the student.



Pair the visual model with verbal input



GUIDED PRACTICE

Student using proximity switch to scan Eco2 with Language Builder on.



Reading Targeted Sentences

Students take turns reading.



Students read independently.



INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Student generating language independently

More Instructional Strategies

- Students are provided as much time as they need to “read” their selected text.
- Para-educators observe (from behind) and offer support after observing the student attempting 3 times (Rule of 3).
- Students always have their visual supports available as a reference.
- Students take story and visual supports home to practice with their families.



**Para-educator
observes student
carefully and
provides support
when necessary
after three attempts**

Paraeducator implementing the “RULE OF 3”



Para educator providing visual support to student

Para educators support students during instruction.

Prompting

- Prompting is a systematic method for assisting a student in learning or acquiring a new skill.
- Prompts are used as a support when necessary and phased out as the skill is firmly established

Prompting Hierarchies

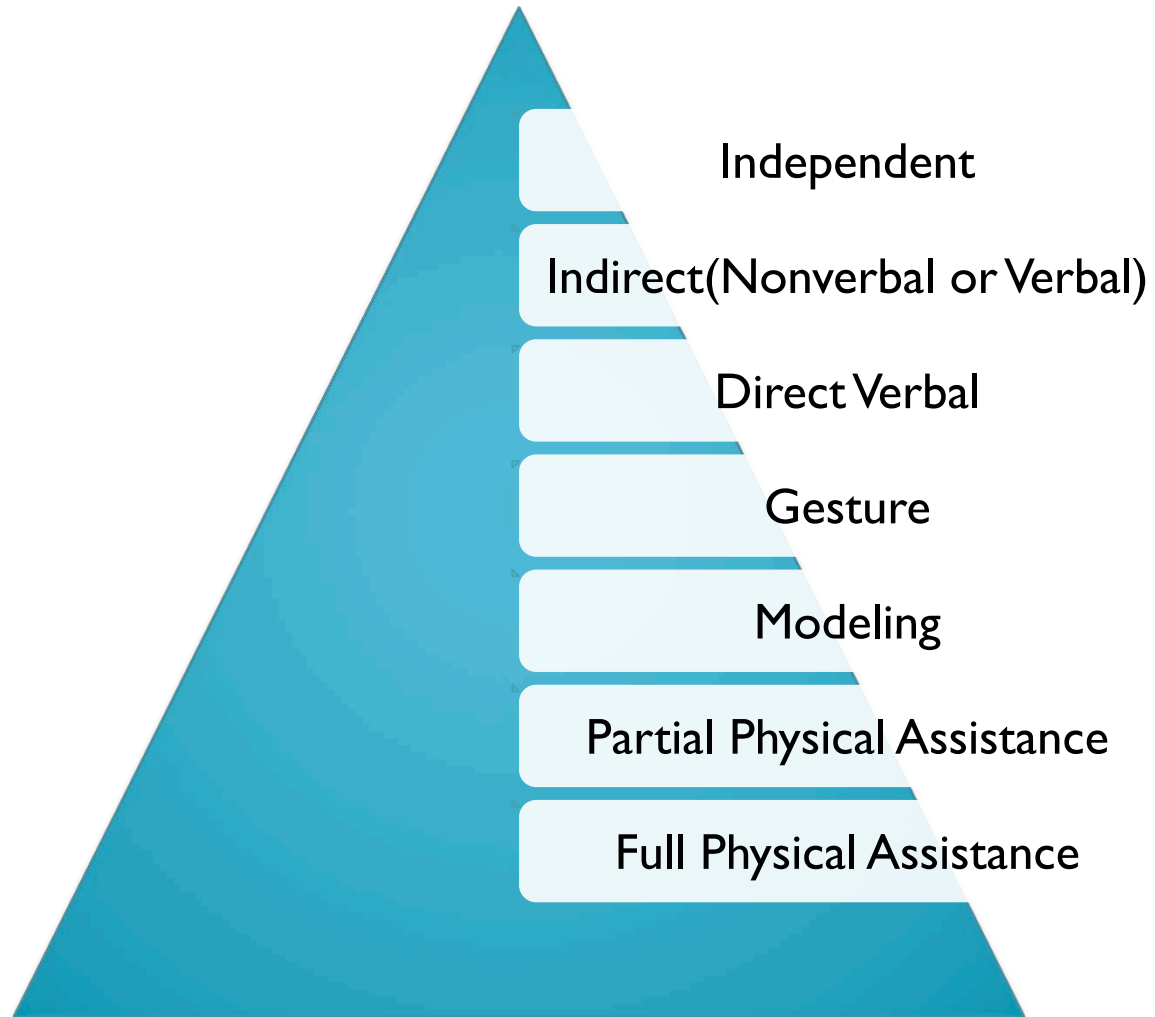


Use a most-to-least prompting hierarchy when learning a new skill

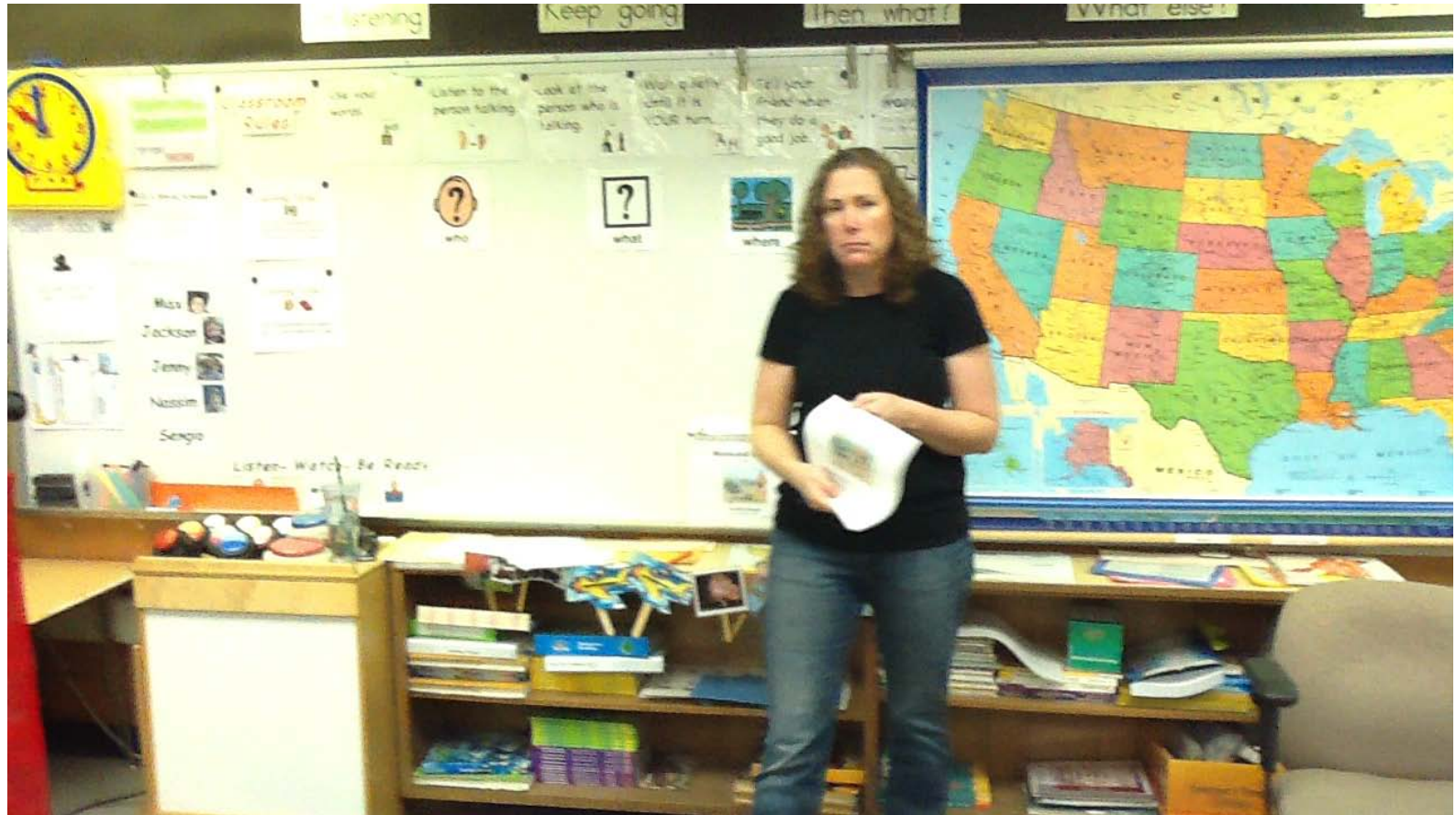


After the skill is established, use a least-to-most hierarchy to allow the student to attempt the task before providing support.

Prompting Hierarchy Levels



Comprehension Strategies



More Instructional Strategies

- Para Educators are able to implement curricular modifications
- Classroom Staff are able to support students in mainstreamed settings and maximize participation
- Classroom staff are able to collect data on student performance
- Para Educators maintain a low profile when supporting students during instructional or interactive activities.

Partner Interaction Strategies



Observational Skills


Observe student as he/she interacts with familiar partners (teacher, specialists)



Determine what makes it possible for the student to communicate effectively

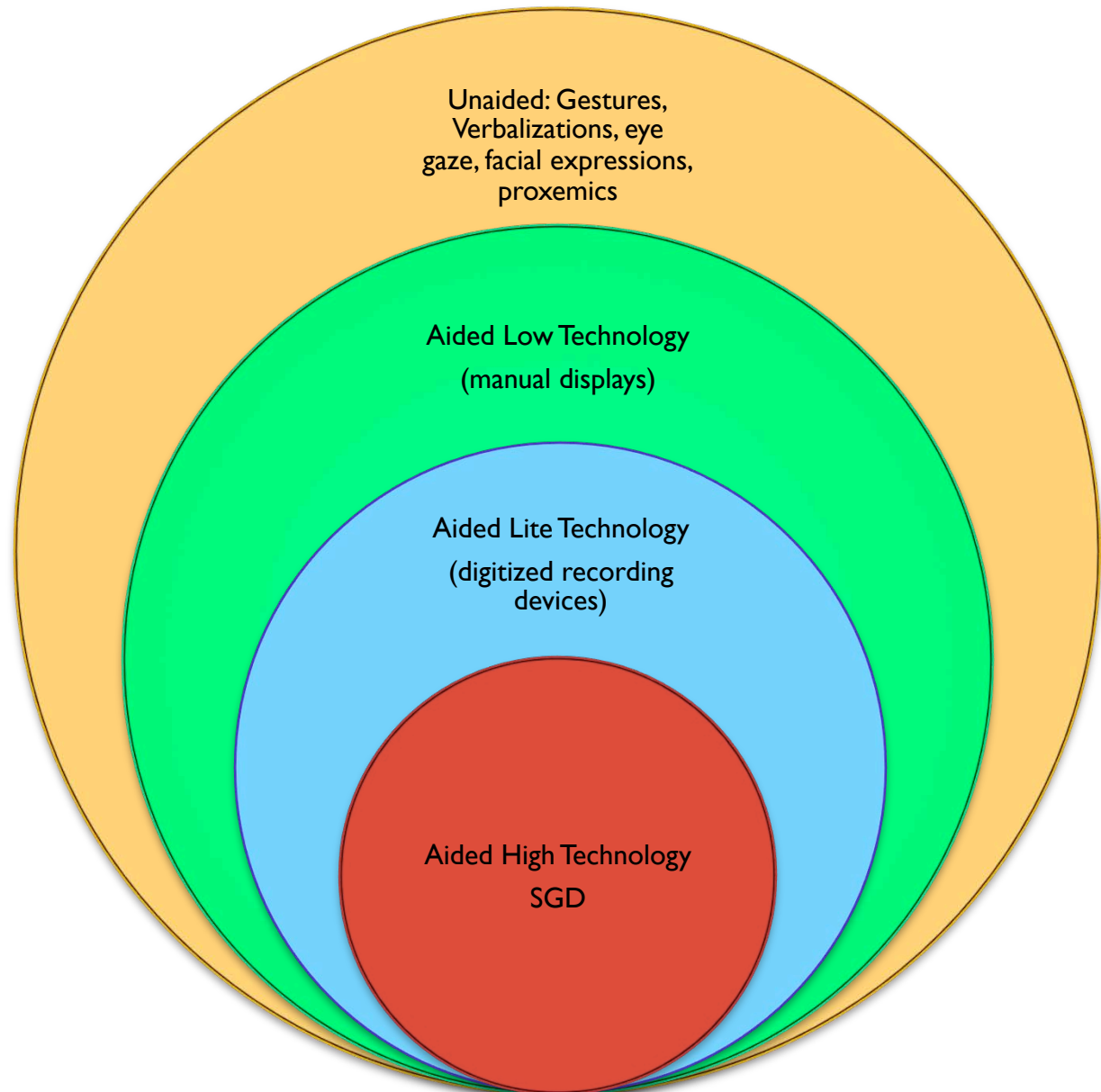


Familiarize yourself with the vocabulary available in the AAC systems



Maintain focus on the student at all times

Validate Communication



Allow them to have their own voice

Resist the urge to interpret, embellish, and talk for the child



Try not to “predict” what they are going to say

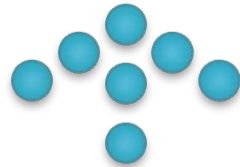


Give them an opportunity to say what they want to say in their own words

Age-Appropriate Interaction

- Regardless of the perceived level of functioning it is essential that you interact with the student at a level appropriate to his/her chronological age.

Natural Communication Style



Minimize your focus on the tools they are using to communicate.



Respond to what the student is saying and not “how” the student is saying it.

Increase Communication Opportunities

Make statements, comments, and questions, and elicit communication and language from the student



Expect a response



Wait for a response



Monitor the number and quality of opportunities provided throughout the day

Stop Talking





- Students who use AAC need more time to process what you say and to formulate a response
- Speak less and require more (Communication Participation) from the student
- Keep track of what you said, so when the student produces an utterance, you can determine if the response is related



- Refrain from dominating the speaking turn
- Do not walk away when the student is formulating a response to your statement, questions, or comment
- Wait patiently, orient toward them, and try not to “fill in” with unnecessary speech



**Position yourself
for face to face
interaction.**

Your body language conveys to the communicator that you are willing to wait, and stay focused entirely on them.



Encourage and Support Communication

Seek out opportunities for students to communicate with other adults and peers during unstructured time.



Students are having a good time goofing around with their talkers and making animal sounds.

**Provide
opportunities for
AAC Peer-to-Peer
Interaction**

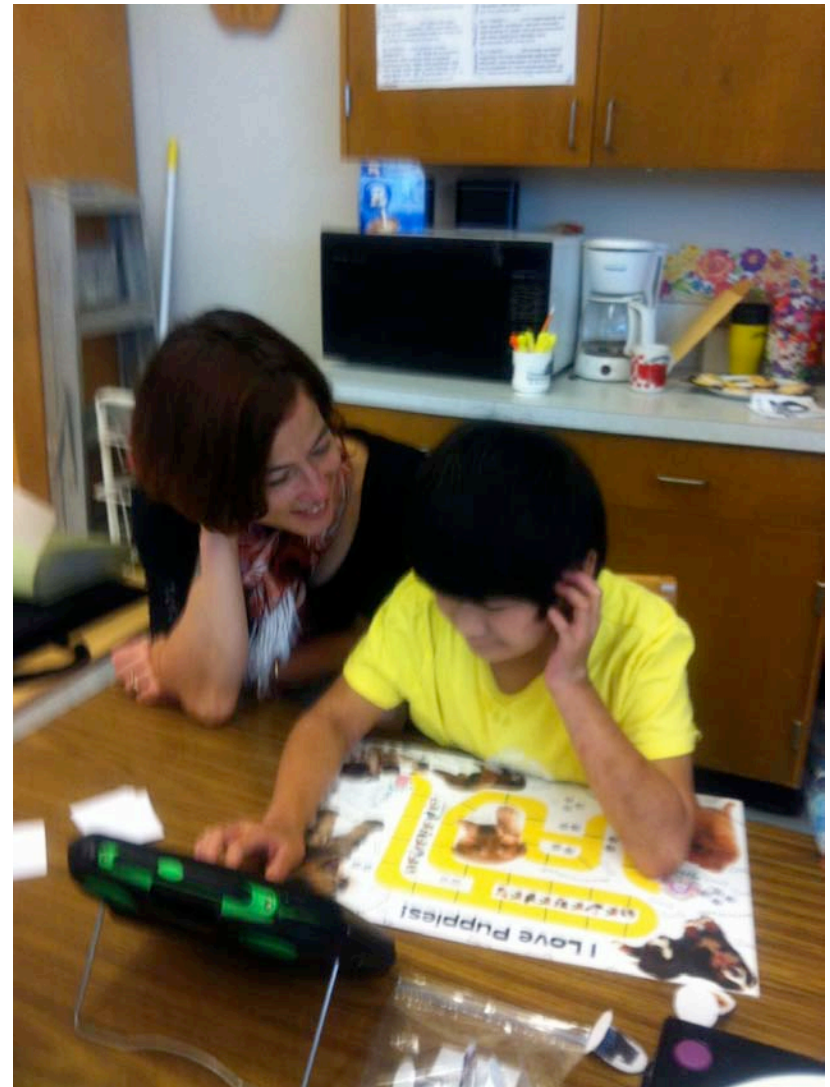
Make it a Priority!

- Make communication the priority and sacrifice your agenda
- Help unfamiliar partners interact appropriately with the student
- Avoid serving in the role of “interpreter”

Follow Student's Lead

- Students will communicate about what interests them
- Let them be in control
- Help them say what **THEY** want to say

Talk about what
they feel or think,
not just about
what they want



Tools for Communication

- Don't let the “tool” get in the way of communication
- Recognize that the student is making the most out of the system they have
- Understand that they may have to use what they have flexibly if they lack the specific vocabulary they need
- Don't focus on their device, focus on them

Direct Feedback

- Let the student know exactly what you need clarification on when you are uncertain about what is being communicated
- Elicit more information to assist in resolving the communication breakdown
- Restate the “utterance” and ask student to affirm/deny the intent

Avoid yes/no question

- Partners can take away the student's control by asking yes/no and forced choice questions exclusively.
- Use a variety of open ended questions, comments, and statements and insist on a response (unaided or aided) from the communicator so he/she learns that there is an expectation for reciprocal interaction

Go Slow

- Pace yourself in accordance with the communication rate of the students
- Provide ample time for the student to process and initiate a response (e.g. 20 seconds) before providing additional cues (least-most)



**Slow Pace to
Accommodate
Processing Needs
of Students**

Unique Learning Unit on Health: Adolescence

Maintain Positive Attitude

- Convey a positive attitude toward the student
- Believe in their ability to learn
- Believe in their ability to communicate
- Take seriously your role as a person who enables them to communicate