Caught Modeling Core

Jessica Gerth, M.S. CCC-SLP
Colleen Krasich, M.S. CCC-SLP
2020 ISHA Convention
Rosemont, Illinois

Financial Disclosures

- Jessica Gerth, M.S. CCC-SLP
  - Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative (BASSC)
  - jessica.gerth@bassc sped.org
  - Jessica Gerth has no financial or non-financial relationships to disclose.

- Colleen Krasich, M.S. CCC-SLP
  - Triad CUSD #2
  - colleen.krasich@tcusd2.org
  - Colleen Krasich has no financial or non-financial relationships to disclose.

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will be able to explain the difference between core and fringe vocabulary.
2. Participants will be able to explain the importance of embedding core vocabulary throughout the curriculum for students with communication needs to improve language and literacy – not just Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) users.
3. Participants will be able to explain how to think in core when developing lessons, activities, and visuals for students to embed core vocabulary words and visuals throughout their lives.
4. Participants will be able to list 10 strategies for implementing a core vocabulary initiative in their district and teach others (staff, parents, and students) the power of core.

Getting to Know You

- Speech Language Pathologists?
- Occupational Therapists?
- AT/AAC Consultants?
- BCBAs?
- Teachers?
- Administrators?
- Family Members/Caregivers?
- Anyone Else?

Who Are We?

- Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative (BASSC)
- 23 member districts
  - approximately 60 schools
  - 29,908 total enrollment
  - 5,474 students with IEPs
  - 41 classrooms within the BASSC programs
    - Program for students with Autism (ages 3-12)

Why Do We Communicate?

- Communicative Functions = purpose of communication.
  - Behavior Regulation
  - Social Interaction
  - Joint Attention
Behavior Regulation

- When a student communicates in a way to get or avoid something, it is thought of as behavior regulation. This communication changes the individual's environment.
  - Requesting Objects
  - Requesting Actions
  - Protesting

Social Interaction

- Social interactions are common exchanges that are typically completed for social reasons. Here, the child is not acting solely to meet his/her own needs, rather, they are engaging in a social opportunity.
  - Requesting Social Routines
  - Showing Off/Telling Jokes
  - Greetings/Closings
  - Telling Stories
  - Acknowledgement
  - Requesting Permission

Joint Attention

- Joint attention refers to moments when a child and adult are focused on the same thing; however, for most researchers it also includes the notion that the participants are both aware that the focus of attention is shared.
  - Commenting
  - Requesting Information
  - Asking Questions
  - Answering Questions
  - Initiating/Maintaining a Topic
  - Clarification

Function of AAC Intervention

- Beukelman and Mirenda (2005) list the following:
  - To make choices
  - To ask questions/give answers
  - To participate and join social group activities that are "age" and developmentally appropriate
  - To communicate efficiently and quickly in ALL situations
  - To express novel ideas

Core Words for Communicative Functions

- CORE VOCABULARY:
  - refers to words and phrases commonly used by a variety of people.

- FRINGE VOCABULARY:
  - refers to more specific/individual words that meet an individual's communication needs and interests.
  - not generic and will likely not be used across environments.
  - approximately 20% of our language.
  - typically nouns.
Core Vocabulary

• Core vocabulary is a statistical concept related to overall word frequency.
  - 250-400 of the most frequent words (verbs, adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions) which make up 80% of words actually spoken (Vanderheiden & Kelso, 1987).
  - Consists of words common to the vocabularies of peers similar in age.
  - Small repertoire of words that has the ability to make infinite amount of phrases and does not change across environments or individuals.
  - Usable across all environments, situations, and individuals.
  - Provides framework for functional language.

Importance of Core Vocabulary

• Based on research findings, Core Vocabulary has been found to be consistent across:
  - Environments/Settings
  - Populations/Demographics
  - Activities
  - Topics

Famous Quotes Using Core Vocabulary

• We’re not in _______ anymore.
• _______ is like a _____ of _________.
  You never know what you’re going to get.
• There’s no crying in ________
• Show me the ________.

Core Vocabulary Sets

• Derived from language samples collected during research studies.
  - Banajee list of 26 toddler words
  - Balandin list of 347 core words used by adults
  - Hill list of (top) 100 core words used by fluent AAC communicators
  - Marvin list of 333 alphabetized preschool core words
  - Stuart list of 174 core words used by seniors
• Approximately 400 words collected during the language samples in the research above accounted for 75-80% of words

Initial Core Vocabulary Set

• Banagee, DiCarlo, & Stricklin, 2003
  - 50 toddlers age 24-36 months old
  - Daycare and Nursery schools
  - Audiotaped interactions during child-directed free play activities as well as adult-directed activities

The Marvin Sampling

• 330 Most Frequently Occuring Preschool Words: The Marvin Sampling
  - 50 of the 330 words were specific nouns.
  - The other 280 words were core words.
Boenisch & Soto

- Boenisch & Soto (2015) compiled vocabulary samples from students in the following grades: 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th.
  - Looked at the word classes used in conversation.
  - Of the top 100 words, there were:
    - 26 verbs
    - 17 pronouns
    - 14 adverbs
    - 9 prepositions

Prentke Romich Company

Core Vocabulary Approach

- Different Symbol Set Choices

No and Low-Tech

- Tools that do not require technology or a power source (no tech).
- AAC aids that require a power source, but are simple and easy to program (infra battery powered system).

Mid-Tech

- Tools that do not require computer technology and are easy to program and use (low tech).
- Tools that do not require computer technology, but are somewhat complex, requiring some training to use (moderate tech).
- Examples include: voice output devices that have multiple symbols per page and sequential message boards.

High-Tech and AAC Apps

- Tools that require a power source and are complex, requiring extensive training to program and use (high tech).
- Examples of high-tech devices include computers, tablets, and speech generating devices (SGDs).

Color Coding Chart

- Color coding (based on the Fitzgerald Key) helps students and staff find words by the category they are in, making navigation easier.

Challenges for Professionals

- Boenisch & Soto, 2015: providing the children with vocabulary that addresses multiple and increasingly demanding needs, including:
  - Social interaction with family, friends and peers
  - Classroom participation
  - Language and literacy development
  - Academic achievement
Motivation for Caught Modeling Core

• First-time attendees at the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) Conference in Orlando, Florida (2017).
  – Especially inspired by the following sessions:
    • Hard “Core”: There’s More (Than Stop and Go) to Explore.
    • More with Core: Teaching Core Vocabulary using Literacy.
  – Attending these sessions made us question our role in core vocabulary, what we were doing in our school setting, how evidence-based our approach was, and how we could improve moving forward in the future.

Self-Reflection Questions We Had

• **QUESTION:** What does core vocabulary look like in our setting?
  – Answer: Classrooms had access to static core boards.

• **QUESTION:** How are we teaching core vocabulary to our staff/students?
  – Answer: Teaching to our students by modeling during both individual and group activities. Teaching to staff by having AT consultant come once a month.

• **QUESTION:** Why is there a limited focus on core vocabulary?
  – Answer: Trying to get people on board – people were invested in noun heavy communication options.

25

Just to Get You Thinking

“The average 18 month old has been exposed to 4,380 hours of oral language at the rate of 8 hours/day from birth. A child who has a communication system will reach this same amount of language exposure in 84 years.”

27

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support

• Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS)
  – term that refers to a system used to achieve important behavioral changes.
  – developed as an alternative to aversive interventions used with students with significant disabilities who engaged in extreme forms of self-injury and aggression.
  – not a new theory of behavior, but a behaviorally based approach to enhancing the schools’ ability to design effective environments that are conducive to quality teaching and learning.

28

Fundamental Concepts of PBIS

• Keyword = POSITIVE
• Treat people with dignity and understanding
• Adults must change their behavior first to bring about positive changes in students.
• Environment and context are considered
• Utilize functional assessment and data to guide decision making.
• As adults, we have a responsibility to:
  – Understand the disability
  – Create a positive learning environment
  – Support our students
  – Teach missing skills

29

Caught Modeling Core

• **WHO:**
  – Participants: school staff members (teachers, para-professionals)
  – Moderators: administrators, SLPs, PTs, OTs, Music Therapist

• **WHAT:**
  – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) program for adults.

• **WHERE:**
  – Classrooms in the Autism Program at BASSC

30
**Caught Modeling Core**

- **WHEN:**
  - 3-month program (March-May).

- **WHY:**
  - To understand how to be more effective/intentional with implementing core vocabulary throughout our environment.

- **HOW:**
  - Moderators tracking the use and modeling of core vocabulary across different activities/settings in our school.

---

**Framework For Program**

- Steps for starting the program:
  - Approval from Administration
  - Create a staff survey (pre- and post-) to gauge results
  - Plan staff meeting(s)
  - Plan core vocabulary training(s)
  - Figure out logistics of program (e.g., timeframe, tracking, prizes)

- Things to consider:
  - Needed to make Caught Modeling Core as simple as possible.
  - Combating staff hesitations.
  - Teachers/staff ‘buy in’ rather than providing ‘more work’.

---

**Introducing to Staff**

- Held staff meeting after school
  - Staff filled out a pre-program survey.
    - Turn in survey = ticket to ice cream.
    - Explained our motivation and ATIA influence.
    - Explained how it relates to the students we serve.
    - Explained the details of Caught Modeling Core.
    - Explained the tracking system and incentives.

---

**Staff Survey**

Pre- and post-program survey. Same questions to gauge effectiveness.

---

**Staff Hesitations**

- Teachers don’t get out of their classrooms often.
- Some students are verbal and don’t need it.
- It’s an additional thing that teachers have to do.
- SGD’s are expensive and don’t want them to get broken at lunch/recess.

---

**Combating Staff Hesitations**

- **HESITATION:** Speech Generating Devices are expensive and we don’t want them to get broken at lunch/recess.
  - Our Response: Environmental Labels
    - Placed labels around the school, outside the classroom:
      - Bathrooms
      - Playground
      - Sensory Gym
      - Classrooms
      - Cafeteria
Combating Staff Hesitations

- HESITATION: There’s not enough access to core vocabulary.
  - Our Response: More individualized access to core vocabulary.
    - Individualized core boards at each student’s seat.
    - Grab & go core vocabulary options
      - core boards and core lanyards

- HESITATION: This will take too much time/effort.
  - Our Response: Staff meetings/make and take opportunities.
    - Scheduled core vocabulary word of the month.
    - Provided access to pre-made activities and manipulatives to use in the classroom environment throughout the day.
    - Used time for teachers to create make and take boxes.

- HESITATION: There’s not enough access to core vocabulary.
  - Our Response: Staff trainings on implementing core vocabulary.
    - Core Vocabulary Training on Modeling
      - Individual sessions for each staff member that wanted it.
        - Reviewed research, explanations, Practiced, and answered questions.
    - Senner and Baud (2012) S’mores Model

- HESITATION: There’s not enough access to core vocabulary.
  - Our Response: Staff trainings on implementing core vocabulary.
    - Held monthly with our AAC Specialist
      - Focus: explain how core vocabulary should be a part of everything
        - not an additional task for teachers to implement.
        - focused on embedding core into academic activities.
Program Outcomes

- After the competition, modeling continued.
- Students received increased exposure from the modeling.
- Increased use of core vocabulary with both our non-verbal AND verbal students.
- Brought classrooms together and on the same page regarding the importance of communicating with our students.
- Increased understanding and comfort level of using core vocabulary.
- Increased number of activities in which core vocabulary is used throughout the school day.

Staff Affirmations

- "I can see how it impacts ALL students, not just the students who use AAC." - Debbie, Aide
- "The Caught Modeling Core program created a fun, engaging, and slightly competitive way to encourage staff to further expand the use of core words in the classroom. The activities and trainings were brief, fun, low stress, and encouraged participation by all staff. There was an increase in modeling of core words in all of our classrooms as well as throughout the school building." - Brooke, Administrator
- "It just makes sense to use it." - Hailey, Aide

Room For Improvements

- Make the program more cooperative, rather than competitive.
- Implementing core vocabulary training earlier.
- Expanding beyond the basic 10 core vocabulary words.
- Using core vocabulary throughout multiple environments.
- Pre-determining a core vocabulary word of the WEEK.

Advancements in The Caught Modeling Core Program

- Using "cored-out" directions for classroom based activities and snacks.
- Core activity boxes for teachers and staff to check out for their students.
- Core Vocabulary Word Wall(s)
Advancements in The Caught Modeling Core Program

• Connecting Core Vocabulary to the Zones of Regulation.

Advancements in The Caught Modeling Core Program

• Embedding Core Vocabulary in Academics.
  – Saltillo Activity Page

Core Vocabulary & Academics

• Core vocabulary + academics = easier than people realize.
  • Should be happening all the time.
    » Math
    » Science
    » Writing
    » Literacy
    » Spelling
    » Morning Circle
    » Centers

Core Vocabulary & Literacy

“For our students, Core Vocabulary is the gateway to communication. For typically developing students, Core Vocabulary is their access to Literacy”.

Core Vocabulary & Literacy

• Books allow you to target specific core vocabulary without drill.
  » Emergent Reader Books
  » Books with Repetition (Dr. Seuss)
  » Books with YouTube Videos
  » Student-Centered Books (i.e., social stories/field trips)
  » Squishy books
  » Create Your Own

• Tell Me Program: AAC in the Preschool Classroom
  » By Carole Zangari and Lori Wise

Core Vocabulary & Literacy

• Early sight words are largely made up of core vocabulary words.
  • Project by Maureen Castillo, M.A., CCC-SLP
    – Twin Powers Unite: AAC Core Words & Dolch Sight Words Project
      » Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) and the Alternative Assessment Consortium based on work
        by Karen Erickson at the University of North Carolina.
      » Dolch Sight Words (Pillar Two) was compiled by Edward William Dolch, PhD. These are 220
        “service words” that must be quickly recognized in order to achieve reading fluency.
    – Twin Powers Unite: Twenty words in common - Cross Referenced
      – 20 on DLM First 40 list AND 20 on Dolch Pre-Primer or Primer Lists
      – Chosen based on Scholastic Sight Word Readers
Core Vocabulary & Literacy

Core Vocabulary & Common Core

- The Dynamic Learning Maps Core Vocabulary
  [https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/core-vocabulary/](https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/core-vocabulary/)
- Ordered list of words for social and academic settings.
- Great list of resources for core vocabulary related to common core standards.
- Specifically a presentation done by: Penelope Hatch, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Karen Erickson, PhD and Allison Dennis, M.Ed (ASHA, 2013)

Developing Powerful Communicators

- When choosing vocabulary for AAC, consider teaching AND using core.
- Although many AAC systems have page sets that use core, it is important to know what is available for each specific system.
- Make sure to use evidence-based core word lists to determine the order in which you teach specific core words.
- Think outside of the box when teaching core. There's not a right versus wrong way to teach it, just start.

One Final Thought

Questions?

References

- DLM's First 40 Words
- Dolch Sight Words
- Twin Powers Unite 20 words
- DLM's First 40 Words
- Dolch Sight Words
- Twin Powers Unite 20 words
References continued


Thank You For Attending!

• Handouts
  - Handouts will be uploaded on ISHA’s portal.
  - The following are available online:
    • Saltillo
    • Dolch Sight Words
    • Core Board from Tell Me AAC: preschool

• Feel free to contact us:
  - Jessica Gerth: jessica.gerth@bassc-sped.org
  - Colleen Krasich: colleenkrasich@tcusd2.org

Contact Information

Jessica Gerth, M.S. CCC-SLP
Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative (BASSC)
jessica.gerth@bassc-sped.org
Instagram: ChaosCommunicationConverse

Colleen Krasich, M.S. CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
Triad CUSD #2
collenn.krasich@tcusd2.org
Instagram: TheGluenFree__SLP