

## Presentation Description and Information

**Presenter:** Gail M. Van Tatenhove, MS, CCC-SLP

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**Brief Professional Bio:** Gail Van Tatenhove is a speech-language pathologist in private practice, working with children and adults who use AAC strategies and devices. Her contributions to the field of AAC include development of a loaner bank of AAC devices; development of AAC-based therapy and classroom products; participation in ASHA projects on AAC implementation; editor of the ASHA newsletter for the AAC Special Interest Division; board member of USSAAC; and past president of FSAAC, the Florida chapter of USSAAC.

**Title of the Presentation:** Using Core Vocabulary with Individuals with Emergent and Context-Dependent Communication Skills

**Length of Presentation:** 1 day (6 hours)

**OPTIONAL FOLLOW-UP WEBINAR** (120 minutes) An optional follow-up webinar is available that reviews key points from the live, full-day presentation; addresses evaluation/assessment issues, and provides practical ideas for using core vocabulary in seven common types of classroom communication interaction (i.e., requesting/choice making, visual schedules, information transfer, social closeness, social etiquette, lessons/curriculum, emerging literacy.)

**Level of Presentation:** Beginner – Introductory

**Target Audience:** The target audience is Speech-Language Therapists and Teachers who serve students with severe intellectual disabilities who need AAC systems for both expressive and receptive language development. These students should have the capability to use AAC systems that use pictures to represent language. They would be described as having emergent or context-dependent communication skills.

**Presentation Abstract (50 words):** Intervention for individuals with emerging and context-dependent communication skills often focuses on “concrete” vocabulary. This presentation shows use of core vocabulary that helps individuals generate real language regardless of context. The presenter will demonstrate the teaching and use of core words with manual communication boards, apps, and speech output devices.

**Presentation Description:** Individuals with emerging communication skills are in the early stages of learning how to use an augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) system. Individuals with context-dependent skills often have been provided with AAC systems that were developed for specific activities or contexts. In both cases, the vocabulary selected for emergent and context-dependent communicators often focuses on “concrete” vocabulary because it is assumed that these words are “easy” and meet the communication needs of emerging and context-dependent communicators. Communication intervention is typically conducted through activity-based instruction.

Activity-based instruction is a teaching technique that focuses on hands-on, active participation as the primary means of learning. With students with severe intellectual disabilities, who have emerging and/or context-dependent communication skills, activity-based instruction often takes the form of a curriculum that is geared to a schedule of daily activities. For students using AAC systems, special AAC displays are often created to coordinate with activities within the curriculum with the target vocabulary

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specific to each activity. The result is often that outside of these specific activities, the student remains limited in his/her communication. The student is stuck in being a context-dependent communicator. An alternative approach is to emphasize core vocabulary words, instead of context-specific words; and to replace context-specific displays with core vocabulary displays that can be used across all activities. This is often described as a “core vocabulary classroom.”

The presentation will demonstrate, via classroom-based videotape, the use of a 150 – 200 word core vocabulary and its use in all classroom activities with students with severe intellectual disabilities who are emergent and context-dependent communicators. In order for participants to replicate the success of this approach, as demonstrated by the communication skills of the students in the videos, specific information will be provided on the following: (1) selecting an appropriate target core vocabulary, (2) representing the vocabulary, (3) designing simple, language-friendly AAC systems, (4) creating appropriate learning environments; and (5) identifying critical communication partner skills, such as engineering activities to create opportunities for core, using modeling, and implementing a prompt hierarchy.

The materials used in classrooms videos will primarily be from the Pixon Project Kit – a commercial product that provides pre-made communication boards and other classroom materials, including a curriculum, for teaching core vocabulary with emergent and context-dependent communicators. Group activities will use materials from the Pixon Project Kit, along with an app that simulates the 50-location core board from the Pixon Project. However, the principles and strategies presented are NOT dependent on using the Pixon Project Kit.

### Timed Agenda: 6 hours of Instruction and Activities

- 1) Who are Emergent and Context-Dependent Communicators (E/CD) (20 min)
- 2) Common Education Practices with E/CD Communicators (30 min)
- 3) Why and Why Not Do Core Vocabulary with E/CD Communicators (20 min)
- 4) Core Vocabulary-Driven AAC Systems for E/CD Communicators (20 min)
- 5) Activity-Based Instruction Meets Core Vocabulary (75 min)
  - Introduction
  - Video: Art Activity (6 clips)
  - Small Group Activities
- 6) Five Teaching Strategies for Supporting AAC Learning (180 min)
  - Life Experience
  - Guided Motor Patterns
  - Scripting
  - Direct Language Instruction
  - All Day Exposure
- 7) Summary and Q & A (15 min)

### Learning Outcomes:

1. Participants will define emergent and context-dependent communication skills relative to use of core vocabulary.
2. Participants will describe how principles of environmental communication training can be implemented with core vocabulary training in activity-based instruction.
3. Participants will identify high frequency, re-useable core vocabulary versus activity-specific, infrequently used extended vocabulary.

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4. Participants will discuss the effect of manual communication board designs on language production.
5. Participants will list 5 teaching strategies for teaching picture-based core vocabulary in a classroom.

### Post-Test Questions: (1 set of T/F)

1. T F The principles of environmental communication training are not compatible with the principles of a core vocabulary classroom.
2. T F There is objective and subjective evidence that core vocabulary is used by children and adults with emergent and context-dependent communication skills.
3. T F To promote independent language, a communication display for a person with emergent and/or context-dependent skills should have a visible display of 4 parts core to 1 part extended vocabulary.
4. T F When using the communication partner strategy of “expectant delay,” it is only necessary for the partner to wait 2 or 3 seconds before talking again or prompting the person using the AAC device.
5. T F Scripts for activity-based instruction must be followed exactly as written.

ANSWERS: 1-F, 2-T, 3-T, 4-F, 5-F

### Audio-Visual Requirements:

1. Lavalier Microphone
2. LCD Data Projector
3. Speakers to play audio from PPT slides
4. Flip chart and markers
5. Table to display materials

**Internet Access:** Not necessary, but useful

### Services Needed:

1. Posting/Printing of Handout Packet (photocopy or post any handout materials ON-LINE before or after the presentation) which would include the following:
  - a. PowerPoint handout of the presentation
  - b. Sample set of picture-based Manual Communication Board (1 sided, black & white)
2. Handle any registration locally
3. Handle continuing education requirements locally

### Travel Assistance Needed:

1. Inform Gail of the best airport(s) in which to fly. Gail will book her own flight (for later reimbursement).
2. Book or recommend hotel(s).
3. Arrange or recommend ground transportation to/from airport and presentation venue.