

Video Transcript

Aided Language Input

Slide 1. [Project Core Presents]

Slide 2. Welcome to the Project Core professional development modules. This module, *Aided Language Input*, describes how adults in the classroom can demonstrate the use of augmentative and alternative communication symbols to help beginning communicators learn to use symbols to communicate. Project Core is being conducted by the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, a unit in the Allied Health Sciences Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Slide 3. Teaching students how to use symbols to communicate starts with all students having access to their own personal communication system. Students may not be using these communication systems yet, but they need to have a system that they know is their very own. Adults in the classroom can access these student communication systems to demonstrate use. This teaching strategy of using an augmentative and alternative communication or AAC system to show students how to communicate with symbols is called aided language input.

Slide 4. Adults can also create their own communication systems that are the same or very similar to students' personal communication systems. This allows them to always have an AAC system handy to show students the power of using symbols for communication. Some adults carry their own around with them and/or tape them down in different areas of the classroom or around the school.

Slide 5. Some adults choose to use poster size communication displays that allow them to demonstrate use of symbols during group lessons. When designing or choosing a format for a classroom size communication display you want it to be as consistent as possible with your students' personal communication systems. As you are demonstrating use of symbols during group lessons, you want your students to have access to the same symbols, and ideally in the same locations as they appear on their personal systems, to maximize learning opportunities.

- Slide 6. For beginning communicators, aided language input involves adults using symbols during meaningful interactions. As students see adults using symbols during interactions that are motivating and interesting to them, they start to learn the meaning of symbols and how to use the symbols to communicate with others.
- Slide 7. Adults do not have to limit the words they use to the words that appear on the communication display. They can say anything they want but should try to think about the students when choosing symbols they do use. Demonstrate symbols and symbol combinations that show students the power of the words they have available to them. Consider what they could say and what they would likely want to say.
- Slide 8. Let's consider an example. There is a school dance coming up. As soon as the teacher mentioned it, this girl moved her arm and vocalized making lots of noise. The teacher saw and heard the girl. As she walked over, the teacher said, "I hear you. I see you're waving your arms." Then she sat down, pointed to GO and said, "Are you ready to GO to the dance?" The teacher then stopped talking but held the point on GO until the student looked. With her other hand, the teacher grabbed a stack of photos from last year's dance. They looked at the photos together as the teacher said things like, "She is a GOOD dancer," while holding her point on the word GOOD, and pausing to give the student time to look and respond by pointing to a symbol, moving or vocalizing. When the student did nothing, the teacher kept going. She found a picture of fancy dresses and said, "I will NOT wear a fancy dress." Once again, the teacher held her point on NOT. After a few seconds, the student vocalized and made a face. The teacher interpreted this to mean that the student did not want a fancy dress either. The adult pointed to NOT again and said, "I hear you, you will NOT wear fancy dresses either". The adult also added the comment, "We are the SAME", while holding her point on the word SAME. The student then reached over and took the picture of a girl dressed in a ball gown. The adult said, "Oh, maybe you do WANT a fancy dress" as she pointed to WANT.
- Slide 9. Here's another example. It was field day at school. This student walked over to the bleachers. An adult followed him. She used her communication board and said, "Do you WANT a break?" She held her finger on WANT until he looked at the board. Then she asked, "Are you FINISHED with field day?" Again, she held her finger on FINISHED and waited. The boy looked out at his classmates, sighed and smiled. The adult pointed to WANT and said,

“You WANT to watch?” After a brief pause she added, “You can just LOOK” and pointed to LOOK.

- Slide 10. When you get started with aided language input point to one, maybe two, symbols that match what you are saying. The idea is to demonstrate how the symbols work, but do **NOT** require students to use the symbols you use. You are not modeling what you want them to say, you are showing them what is possible.
- Slide 11. When providing aided language input, keep in mind that students have to see you point. If they can't see, they have to feel the symbols you are using or hear the word as you scan to it on their AAC system.
- Slide 12. Help each other remember that it is only a point if the student sees you doing it.
- Slide 13. Typically developing children hear people say thousands and thousands of words before we expect them to say even a single word. Students who are learning to communicate with symbols need the same opportunities to learn. We must let them see us use symbols for real purposes, thousands and thousands of times before we can expect them to use them.
- Slide 14. Aided language input is a way is a way for us to begin providing the thousands of examples that students need.
- Slide 15. Pause for activity one.
- Slide 16. As adults demonstrate how symbols are used, they can encourage students to use the symbols to communicate, but they should **NOT** require it.
- Slide 17. This means that you should avoid taking a student's hand and helping her touch a symbol. You also should continue to accept all of the ways that the students communicate.
- Slide 18. You may be wondering who should provide aided language input. We believe everyone should. That means all of the adults at school should provide aided language input as they communicate with students who are learning to use symbols. This includes teachers, teaching assistants, paraprofessionals, nurses, principals, OTs, PTs SLPs, custodians, volunteers, and any other adult who interacts with the student. Everyone also includes peers. This might

- include peers with or without disabilities. Encourage everyone who interacts with the student who is learning to use symbols to provide aided language input.
- Slide 19. Show students how to use symbols by providing aided language input as often as possible. Using symbols in meaningful contexts builds students' understanding of the concepts the symbols represent and how to use them. The Universal Core vocabulary words are extremely flexible and can be used to talk about countless topics during academic and daily routines, and social conversations. Because the Universal Core vocabulary applies across all of these contexts, you can use these words and symbols in the classroom, the cafeteria, on the playground, getting on or off the bus, or anywhere you go. One of the most valuable aspects of the Universal Core vocabulary is that you can you highlight key communication symbols no matter where you are as long as the communication system is available.
- Slide 20. Highlighting symbols in different communication contexts helps students see the many ways words may be used. In this example, a paraprofessional demonstrated the use of the word WANT across a variety of activities for multiple days. One afternoon, her student began to touch WANT to get bites of freshly baked brownies. While the student's chocolate covered hand clearly touched all over the page of her flip book, you can see that WANT was touched more often than any other symbols on the page. After lots of aided language input, this student was beginning to understand the power of symbol use.
- Slide 21. Once your students begin to use single symbols, continue to provide aided language AND start pointing to and repeating the symbol the student used. After repeating the symbol the student used, demonstrate a slightly more complete message by adding one more symbol. This is a way to work on language development. For example, this student and teacher were playing an alphabet game and the student pointed to the symbol GO and looked outside at the sunshine.
- Slide 22. The teacher responded by repeating and pointing to the word GO, and then adding WANT and saying "You WANT to GO" as she pointed to WANT and then GO. They negotiated a bit. The teacher told him they CAN GO when FINISHED as she pointed to CAN GO and FINISHED. When the student then pointed to the word, FINISHED, she repeated it by pointing to and saying

FINISHED. Then she added, NOT as she told him they were NOT FINISHED and pointed to NOT and FINISHED.

- Slide 23. In a previous module you learned that everyone communicates. In addition to showing students how to use key core vocabulary symbols through aided language input, adults can help students connect the communication behaviors they already have with symbols. First, label the behavior you observe, honor the behavior with a response if you can, and then demonstrate how that same idea could be expressed with a symbol.
- Slide 24. For example, this boy points to things he wants. In this case, he is pointing to a trampoline in the gym. The PE teacher saw him pointing and said, "I see you pointing. You are pointing at the trampoline." Then she models on his core board, "You like to bounce UP and down" as she pointed to UP and paused. The student started bouncing in the wagon and the PE teacher said, "I see you bouncing. You WANT to get on the trampoline" as she pointed to WANT and held her point and then helped him out of the wagon so he could jump.
- Slide 25. Similarly, this student was pointing to his favorite thing on the playground, the slide. His teaching assistant said, "I see you pointing to the slide, You want to DO it," as she pointed to DO and held her point for just a second before he reached out, touched her hand, and ran toward the slide.
- Slide 26. Pause for activity two.
- Slide 27. Most classrooms have students who communicate in a variety of ways. Some students will use only body movements and facial expressions, some will use single symbols or words, and some will be putting together 2 or more symbols or spoken words. Let's consider how one teacher provided aided language input to a diverse group of communicators during a lesson about snow. Just before the lesson, the teacher went outside and scooped up a cup full of snow. Each student had a chance to see and touch the snow. The teacher watched student reactions including facial expressions, body movements, and/or vocalizations and used them to demonstrate symbols that expressed those reactions.
- Slide 28. One student smiled when she touched the snow and the teacher said, "I see you smiling. I think you LIKE snow" while pointing to the symbol, LIKE.

- Slide 29. When another student reached out for the snow after it was removed, the teacher said, "I see you reaching. You want MORE" and pointed to the symbol for MORE.
- Slide 30. Another student pointed to the symbol LIKE after feeling the snow. The teacher repeated, "LIKE" and pointed to the symbol. Then she added THAT while saying, "You LIKE THAT." and pointed to LIKE and THAT. This teacher used the Universal Core all day long, with all of her students. She always provided aided language input. This helped some students learn to use symbols for the first time while it helped those who were already using single words, signs and symbols learn to combine two or more symbols or words.
- Slide 31. As we encourage students to communicate, we need to slow ourselves down and be patient. For many of our students this means waiting 10 seconds or more, before we add to or repeat our comment or question. Most of us tend to want to keep things going, but sometimes our students need us to pause and give them a chance to respond and interact.
- Slide 32. Slowing down and being patient will help adults start to think in core. This means learning to say things in a way that maximizes the use of the Universal Core symbols throughout the day. If adults slow down and start thinking in core, they will find they can use one or more of the 36 words to communicate in just about every setting.
- Slide 33. Remember, teaching communication using aided language input requires that AAC systems with the Universal Core vocabulary are available to all students who could benefit and all adults with whom they interact.
- Slide 34. This concludes the module. Your feedback is important to us. Please take a couple of minutes to complete a brief survey about this module by going to project-core.com/pdsurvey. Thank you for your participation. To learn more about Project Core and to access free resources and materials visit the website at project-core.com.
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- Slide 36. [Project Core]