

Video Transcript

Supporting Individual Access

Slide 1. [Project Core Presents]

Slide 2. Welcome to the Project Core professional development modules. This module, *Supporting Individual Access to the Universal Core*, is designed to explain the importance of personal access to the Universal Core vocabulary and discuss how to identify an initial Universal Core vocabulary format for each student. Project Core is being conducted by the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, a unit in the Department of Allied Health Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Slide 3. Access to the Universal Core vocabulary may be provided via print-based communication boards or books, 3D symbols, or communication apps or devices.

Slide 4. Several formats are available to download and print from the Project website. These formats include 3D symbols.

Slide 5. An online selection tool offers support for making initial decisions about which format is best suited to each student.

Slide 6. Each of the formats is available in PCS, PCS high contrast, Symbol Stix, and Widgit Symbols. This allows schools and teams to match existing symbols if they have been using them.

Slide 7. The Universal Core vocabulary words can be found on many AAC systems with voice output, including communication apps for mobile platforms like iPads and speech generating devices.

Slide 8. A few examples of commercial apps that include access to the Universal Core vocabulary include: Crescendo from AssistiveWare, SuperCore from SmartBox, Snap + Core First from Tobii Dynavox, Project-Core 36 from Coughdrop, LAMP Words for Life from Prentke Romich Company, various core vocabulary programs from Saltillo, plus several more. If a student has a communication app or device, it is very likely core vocabulary is available on their system.

Slide 9. A simple key is provided on the project website to determine how to locate the words in the Universal Core vocabulary on commercial AAC apps and devices. For example, on the Indi, the words ALL, CAN, and DO are found on the core page while DIFFERENT is on the descriptions page.

- Slide 10. No matter what format they need, all students must have their own Universal Core vocabulary communication system at all times. There are no prerequisites. Many students who are beginning communicators will take some time to learn to use the system, but they must have access to learn. In addition to making sure that all students have their own system, adults must show students how to use them, or systems that are very similar, during meaningful interactions throughout the day.
- Slide 11. A range of Universal Core vocabulary formats are available for download from the Project website for students who do not yet have a core vocabulary communication system. These are intended to serve as an initial option so you and your students can get started right away. You will need to consider your students' abilities to select a format that they can learn to access and use. Each format is designed for students to have personal access to all day, every day, and for adults to use for teaching. Let's review the formats available for download from the Project website.
- Slide 12. The 36 location Universal Core communication board formats are best suited to students whose vision and physical abilities lead you to believe that the student can learn to touch one of 36 symbols to make selections. A standard 1-page format displays 1-inch symbols, and an enlarged 2-page format displays 2-inch symbols. High contrast versions are also available for students with certain visual impairments.
- Slide 13. The 9-location format shows 9 symbols on each page across a 4-page book. This format is best suited to students whose physical abilities lead you to believe they will require fewer symbols or larger targets as they learn to communicate with the system. Most students will need support to turn the pages or navigate to the desired page. A high contrast version is available.
- Slide 14. The 6-location format shows 6 symbols on each page across a 6-page book. This format is best suited to students who benefit from fewer symbols per page to visually scan or need larger targets to touch. A high contrast version is available.
- Slide 15. The 4-location format shows 4 symbols on each page across a 9-page book. This format is best suited to students who you believe require very large targets or very few targets on a single page. The 4 square format is designed for students who can point but may use their whole hand or fist. Almost all students who use this system will require support turning the pages or navigating to a desired page. A high contrast version is available for students with certain visual impairments.
- Slide 16. The 4 or 6 Inline format shows 4 or 6 symbols in a row across 9 or 6 pages. This format is designed to support access through partner-assisted scanning.

A high contrast version is available for students with visual impairments. Adults point to and say the name of each symbol from left-to-right. As symbols are presented, the adult waits for a student to respond. Students who are just getting started with partner-assisted scanning might benefit from 4 symbols while more experienced students might find more success with the 6 inline version. Partner-assisted scanning is discussed in more detail later in this module.

- Slide 17. The 4 Corners format shows 4 symbols across 9 transparent sheets. This format is best suited to students who you believe can learn to look reliably at each symbol in order to indicate a choice. A high contrast version is available.
- Slide 18. Finally, an initial set of 3D symbols are available to represent core vocabulary to students who have no usable vision. Each 3D symbol has a shape, color, texture, a unique raised element, and braille. Each is stamped with the printed word to ensure that adults label the symbol in the same way each time it is presented. The braille serves an important role in supporting consistent orientation when adults place the symbol in the student's hand or students pick up the symbols. If you believe your students require the 3D symbols, please check the Project Core website for specific resources to help you get started.
- Slide 19. The Universal Core Selection Tool is on the Project website to help you make decisions about which format might work best as a starting place for each student. To access the selection tool, go to the project-core.com website, choose Universal Core Communication Systems, then click on the link to take you to the Universal Core Selection Tool. You will use the Selection Tool for each student.
- Slide 20. Let's step through how the selection tool works using Leo's needs and abilities as an example. We'll answer the questions in the same way his team did, to help them choose his initial communication format.
- Slide 21. The first question was, does the student have useful vision?
- Slide 22. Leo's team answered yes, Leo is able to see.
- Slide 23. The next question was, is the student able to physically point?
- Slide 24. Leo's team answered yes again. While Leo does not point with a finger, he is able to point to locations on a page using his whole hand.
- Slide 25. The next question was, what is the smallest target the student can point to? The team had to choose from 1, 2, 3, or 4-inch squares.

- Slide 26. Leo's team thought he would be able to point to symbols that were in a 2-inch square.
- Slide 27. The last question was, Can the student visually scan 36 symbols on a page?
- Slide 28. Leo's team thought he would be able to do this.
- Slide 29. The online tool suggested that the enlarged version of the 36 location Universal Core vocabulary would be a good place to start. This is a two-page format. The link to download the file was provided.
- Slide 30. Leo's team was able to download, print and laminate an initial communication system that allowed the adults in his classroom to start using aided language input right away, and allow Leo to start learning how he can use symbols to communicate.
- Slide 31. Pause for Activity 1
- Slide 32. Partner-assisted scanning is one way that students who have complex bodies and limited use of their hands for pointing can use the Universal core. Partner-assisted scanning has minimal physical demands, which allows students to focus on the act of communication. Any student who cannot point to symbols and can hear could benefit from partner-assisted scanning.
- Slide 33. The first step in partner assisted scanning is recognizing that a student might have something to say. You might notice a facial expression, vocalization or gesture. You might say, "Do you have something to say?" Then, previewing the symbols on the first page before beginning pointing to and naming each symbol, move from left to right, one page at a time.
- Slide 34. Partner-assisted scanning requires us to teach students to indicate when we name and point to their selection.
- Slide 35. A student may learn to indicate when we name and point to their selection by using a body movement.
- Slide 36. They may use vocalizations,
- Slide 37. they may use eye gaze,
- Slide 38. or they may indicate when we are pointing to and naming their selection by activating a single message device
- Slide 39. Partners play an important role in partner-assisted scanning. They must identify when the student has something to say, preview the words on the starting page, and then start scanning. This means the partner points to and

names each item beginning on the first page or jumps to a specific page and scans the items if they have an idea of what the student might be trying to communicate.

- Slide 40. Partners move from symbol to symbol, left to right, page-by-page through the system, taking care to preview the symbols on each page before pointing to and naming them one-at-a-time.
- Slide 41. Partners provide sufficient wait-time after pointing to and naming each of the words. This time allows students to process and plan a response. Some students may need as few as 3-5 seconds of wait-time, but others may need as long as 20 seconds to 30 seconds or more. That means the adult points to and says the first word, then silently counts for the appropriate number of seconds while watching closely for the student to indicate a selection.
- Slide 42. Partner's pay close attention to the student to be sure they respond to all attempts to communicate. If the student does not indicate a selection after sufficient wait-time, the adult then points to and says the next word.
- Slide 43. There are a couple different approaches to using partner-assisted scanning. We'll discuss each approach briefly. Please look for additional resources about these approaches on the Project Core website. These resources will provide additional information to help you get started with partner-assisted scanning.
- Slide 44. The two-step approach to partner-assisted scanning is often the easiest option for students. Like all forms of partner assisted scanning, the two—step approach starts with the partner recognizing that the student has something to say. Then the partner previews the words on the starting page before pointing to and naming the first symbol. Then the partner waits.
- Slide 45. The partner will continue to wait until the student indicates, "*go to the next one*" or "*that's the one I want.*" This may be communicated using two different movements, vocalizations, and/or single message communication devices. This approach puts the student in control. Some students find it easier to attend since they are driving the interaction. Others experience more success because the approach forces the adult to provide wait-time since a student directive is needed to continue.
- Slide 46. With a 1-step approach, the partner is in control and the student indicates a selection when the partner presents the desired symbol. The partner recognizes that the student has something to say, selects the page that best matches what they think the student might want to communicate, and previews the words on the page. Next, the partner points to and names the symbols, one-at-a-time, left-to-right. After presenting each word, the partner pauses and looks carefully for a student response. If the student responds,

the adult acknowledges the communication, restates the word, and expands on it. If the student does not make a selection, the partner typically repeats the set of words on the page three times. If still no response, the partner decides whether to go to another page or simply show the student an example message, to provide aided language input.

- Slide 47. Sometimes teams make the decision to have students use YES as a response with one step partner-assisted scanning and YES and NO with two-step scanning. Learning a YES and NO response is fundamental to everyday communication, but we don't recommend it for beginning communicators. As partners point to and name the symbols in partner assisted scanning, we don't want to make it more complex by asking, Do you want LIKE? Which is the question that leads to a YES or NO reply. Worse, partners often skip the question and expect students to understand the implied question. As a result, we recommend teaching students a way to indicate "*that's the one I want*" for one-step scanning or "*go to the next one*" and "*that's the one I want*" for two-step scanning. In addition, teach students a way of indicating yes and no that requires nothing other than their body. Yes and no are fundamental to everyday interactions and should be available to students at all times and in all positions. This can be a challenge, but it is well worth the effort in the long run. Please look for additional resources on the Project website about the importance of students having unaided ways to indicate yes or no.
- Slide 48. Eye gaze is also an appropriate access method to consider for students with physical challenges. Eye gaze can be an effective option for students who can learn to reliably look at symbols in a manner that allows the communication partner to understand.
- Slide 49. It is important to keep in mind that beginning communicators are dependent on partners to interpret their behaviors. If the partner has to seek confirmation to make sure they have accurately interpreted the student's eye-gaze, consider another approach. Repeated confirmation shifts the focus away from the communication to the motor act of looking.
- Slide 50. For beginning communicators, eye gaze may be an access method that is used for some activities but not all. Eye-gaze can be used in combination with partner-assisted scanning. The key is to choose an access method that reduces the motor demands placed on the student to increase opportunity for them to focus on learning to use symbols for expressive communication.
- Slide 51. Direct selection is the most efficient way of making selections on a communication system. Students typically use some form of pointing to select desired symbols.

- Slide 52. We find that the vast majority of students can learn to use direct selection.
- Slide 53. They can directly select or point to the symbols if we adjust the size of targets to meet their range of motion and pointing skills. We also find that many students have to begin with large targets but can move to smaller targets as they learn the symbols and begin to understand more about using them to communicate.
- Slide 54. We can also adjust the number of symbols per page to make it easier to see the available choices. Again, many students who start with a system with fewer symbols per page can move to more symbols per page as they learn the symbols and how to use them to communicate.
- Slide 55. In summary, all students need to have access to their own core vocabulary communication system in order to learn to communicate. Project Core provides a variety of common formats that are available for download to help you and your students get started right away.
- Slide 56. 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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