Introduction to Core Word AAC Systems

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Disclaimer

I work for AssistiveWare, and designed Crescendo, Proloquo2Go's core word vocabulary.

This presentation is intended to be unbiased, but inevitably some of my preferences and opinions have crept in.

Contact makers of other apps directly for clarification and additional information.

bit.ly/Compare-Core
What are Core Words?

- 50 words account for 40-50% of what we say
- 100 words account for 60%
- 200-400 words account for 80%
- Similar results across languages (though different words and different grammatical parts of speech in top words)

Why use Core Words?

- Say exactly what you want to say to anyone at any time
  - True self-expression
  - Spontaneous Novel Utterance Generation - you need small reusable building blocks to create unique sentences
  - Not possible to do this with preprogrammed sentences
  - Most effective AAC system is literacy - 26 symbols can say anything
  - Next most effective is core words - 50-400 words can say 40-80% of what most people say

What kind of words are Core Words?

- Verbs, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, articles, conjunctions
- Using Dynamic Learning Maps word frequency data for English:
  - No nouns in first 50 words
  - One noun in first 100 words
  - 18 nouns in first 200
  - 37 nouns in first 300
  - 82 nouns in first 400

Source: [www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/core-vocabulary](http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/core-vocabulary)
What can you say?

Getting and Giving Information

Social Interaction

AAC Repair Strategies

Expressing Needs and Wants

What can we say without nouns?

• Requesting:
  • Get it
  • You go
  • Put it in here
  • More my turn
  • Do it again

• Refuse / Reject / Protest
  • Make it stop
  • Not that again
  • You get out
  • I like it different
  • Put that not here

• Commenting:
  • Look here
  • I like go
  • That not good
  • You have more
  • It go out there

• Asking a question:
  • Where that go?
  • When this stop?
  • What in there?
  • Who turn now?
  • How do it?

• Social Interaction:
  • How are you?
  • Can I do it now?
  • You look good!
  • I have to go
  • That is bad!

• Communication Repair:
  • What you say?
  • Say more / again
  • I not say that
  • Help find it
  • I not know

What can we say without nouns?

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What are Fringe Words?

- All the other words – nouns, specific verbs and adjectives
- Some fringe is "personal core" - words that are very important to a particular individual but not used a lot by general population ("Harry Potter", "BBQ potato chips")
- Fringe words are just as important as core words, but are individually less powerful than core words
- Core words are always useful – fringe words are useful only in particular situations

What is a Core Word AAC system?

- Main page with core words
- Fringe words reachable in some way from the main page
- Grammar support
- Some preprogrammed sentences for information that needs to be said frequently and quickly ("I need help!")
- Access to alphabet and word prediction
- (Optional) Different grid sizes and vocabulary levels
- (Optional) Activity-specific pages
- (Optional) Search / Word Find
How to choose a Core Word AAC System?

- Which one is most intuitive to you, your son/daughter, and your team?
- Which one will you and your team be able and willing to learn and model?
- Which one will be the easiest to get buy-in from your school or adult day program?
- Cost
- Support
- Community

Major Core Word AAC Systems to Compare

- Proloquo2Go Crescendo
- WordPower
- LAMP Words for Life
- Speak for Yourself

Proloquo2Go Crescendo Features

- Inspiration: Explore Language
- Platform: iOS iPad / iPhone / iPod
- Grid Sizes: 3x3 - 9x16
- Progressive language to allow gradual increase in language for fixed grid size
- Navigation: category and subcategory folders; navigation can be several levels deep
- Related core words on fringe pages, in same position as on home page
**Proloquo2Go Crescendo**

- Grammar: all inflections for verbs, adjectives, nouns, pronouns; auditory preview available
- Common pre-programmed sentences in Chat, Help, Something's Wrong, About Me
- Activity Templates based on core words
- Typing view with word prediction

**WordPower**

- Nancy Inman

**Features**

- Inspiration: Efficiency
- Platform: iOS (TouchChat), dedicated devices from TobiiDynavox, Saltillo, PRC, Smartbox
- Grid Sizes: 20 - 108
- Several different language level configurations, varies by platform
- Navigation: category and subcategory folders; navigation 3-5 levels deep; predictive navigation for some smaller grid size configurations
WordPower

**Features**

- Grammar: varies by platform; predictive inflection for some verb forms
- Sentence starters on some fringe pages
- Common pre-programmed sentences on Social page
- Typing view with word prediction

**Resources**

- [www.inmaninnovations.com](http://www.inmaninnovations.com)
- [saltillo.com/products/option/chatpower](http://saltillo.com/products/option/chatpower)
- [thinksmartbox.com/product/wordpower/](http://thinksmartbox.com/product/wordpower/)

LAMP Words for Life

**Prentke-Romich**

**Features**

- Inspiration: Motor Planning
- Platform: iPad and PRC dedicated devices
- Grid size: 7x12
- Vocabulary levels: 1 Hit, Transition, Full
- Vocabulary builder to limit buttons shown for certain activities
- Navigation: Multiple meaning icons with single unique motor plan for each word; 1-3 hits per word
LAMP Words for Life

Features

• Grammar: verb, adjectives, noun inflections
• No activity specific pages and only 3 preprogrammed sentences
• Typing view, no word prediction (on iOS - may have on dedicated systems)
• Pixon multi-meaning symbols

Resources

• www.prentrom.com/support/lamp-words-of-life
• www.aacandautism.com

Speak for Yourself

Heidi LoStracco & Renee Shevchenko

Features

• Inspiration: Motor Planning
• Platform: iPad and iPhone
• Grid size: 8x15
• Beginner’s vocabulary template or full vocabulary
• Hide buttons and reveal all hidden buttons using Babble
• Navigation: Single unique 2-hit motor plan for each word; max 2 hits for all words
**Features**

- Grammar: verb, adjective, noun inflections
- No activity specific pages
- No preprogrammed sentences
- Typing with system keyboard, which may have word prediction
- Smarty Symbols

**Resources**

- [www.speakforyourself.org](http://www.speakforyourself.org)
- [www.youdontsayaac.com](http://www.youdontsayaac.com)
- [www.facebook.com/SpeakForYourselfAAC/](http://www.facebook.com/SpeakForYourselfAAC/)
- David Rosenblatt and Karen Hoerst

**Other systems**

- Gateway - [gatewaytolanguageandlearning.com](http://gatewaytolanguageandlearning.com)
  - Similar to WordPower, with more activity specific pages
  - New and still buggy

**What about PODD?**

- **Better** than core word system for:
  - Significant physical access issues
  - Significant vision impairment
  - Strong preference for low-tech
  - Gives access to same language as core word systems, but navigation is very different
  - Choice depends on preferences of user, family, school team