

Communicating with my iPad: Individualizing Proloquo2Go

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An overview of the comprehensive iPad and iPod Touch app for communication, Proloquo2Go, will be presented, with a quick tour of how the app arrives “out of the box;” including the various vocabulary and message organization methods it contains. Attendees will also briefly be shown how to use the ‘recents’ menu as a way to add the user’s own chosen words and messages as a programming short-cut.

There will then be a discussion of the debate over vocabulary organization for aac systems. The topic of vocabulary selection for aac users is a hotly debated one. It is probably the most intensely debated topic in ASHA history and has been the subject of courses, studies, guideline proposals, frequent charts and graphs, and many an argument. Proponents of core vocabulary use posit that the hours spent debating and providing unending lists of content specific vocabulary are wasted. Baker, Hill, Devylder (2000)¹ ask why we spend so much time making boards and programming pages for every field trip, curricular topic, activity based learning, special class, nature walk when we can be using core words with broad meanings, words based on

¹ Baker, et al. (2000). Core Vocabulary is the Same Across Environments, California State University at Northridge (CSUN) Conference, Los Angeles, California.

frequency of use, and words (only) that can be combined limitlessly rather than phrases that are static. For aac users appropriate use of core vocabulary means faster and more functional communication in all environments. Automatic access to the most frequently used words is important for communicating.

On the other hand, one of the greatest challenges in aac is providing sufficient vocabulary to not only meet the child's present communication needs but also to stimulate continued development of skills. Accessing the curriculum is another core need. While core vocabulary concepts focus on the small number of core words most of us use for the majority of our messages, pragmatic organization is a different way of organizing words and symbols that provides vocabulary for consistent communication all of the time, for a range of messages/intent, for any variety of topics, and in any environment². Pragmatic organizations provide access to both quick use vocabulary (i.e. "I need help") and extensive vocabulary for all types of messages. A major focus of the pragmatic organization process is training of communication partners, so that partners are modeling use of the system all the time (Aided Language Stimulation), so that the aac user develops an understanding of aac strategies. Pragmatic organizations provide an initial page of pragmatic branch starters that is used to indicate the type of messages being delivered, and then provide links from those that allow the user to find the vocabulary needed for the rest of the messages.

² Porter, G. (2007). Pragmatic Organization Dynamic Display Communication Books. Cerebral Palsy Education Centre. Victoria, Au.

Pragmatically organized systems use branch starters and categories to direct navigation, so the child can learn to control the intent of the messages.

Information about both the core vocabulary theory of vocabulary organization and the pragmatic organization of vocabulary will be presented. Attendees will learn about the importance of genuine message construction. They will learn about core vocabulary; including what it is, how it provides stability for learning, and how to use it to teach communication in multiple contexts. Examples will be given of multiple use core vocabulary words and the different contexts in which a single word can be used for many different intents. They will also learn about organization of vocabulary by pragmatic intent; including why and how to focus on message intents when building communication skills. The importance of partner training, access to maximum vocabulary, and consistent navigation conventions will be shared. Rationales for both sides of the debate will be presented, and suggestions for how to program pages of the app for their students/children/clients. Specific examples will be shown of communication page sets.