Connecting to the Curriculum

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angelman syndrome foundation | COMMUNICATION TRAINING SERIES

Alert:

You will need an AAC system during today's webinar

Today's Webinar

- Explore ***why*** and ***how*** we can support emergent AAC users to participate in the general education curriculum

General education classrooms

- ~ 1 in 10 students with Angelman spends the day in a regular classroom
- ~ 6 in 10 students spend a significant portion of their day in the regular classroom
- Most students join a regular classroom for "specials" rather than the general curriculum

Today's webinar in the 5 STEPS

Targets	**Language development versus content mastery**
Teaching	**Creating access to the language and ideas of the curriculum**
Tools	**Robust AAC**
Testing	**Student response**
Team	

What is the purpose of the general curriculum?

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- Create a sense of national or social identity and history: our similarities

Does the general curriculum apply to *our* students?

- Create a sense of national or social identity and history: our similarities
- Establish a common baseline of knowledge and skills that we consider essential to participate and contribute as citizens
- Make sense of our experiences and place in the world: learn how to answer our own questions

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Black history month

Ruby Bridges was “black”, “beautiful”, and “brave”.

What is the purpose of the general curriculum?

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Ancient civilizations: Egypt

Mummies are “old” and “nasty”.

M is for Maggie, Maisy, Mom and mummies.

Egypt

by Maggie

S is for sarcophagus.

P is for pyramid.

Dead bodies were put in the sacrcophagus.

A pyramid is big and old.
It is made from triangles.

Strategies used in these units?

- Peers modelled use of AAC to describe, define, and comment on unit vocabulary
- Alphabet books of unit-specific vocabulary
- Adapted books: electronic, video, Tar Heel Reader
- Hands-on exploration: visited museum, watched videos

What did Maggie learn from these units?

- How to access valuable language in her AAC
- Deeper awareness of the alphabet
- How to participate in the dialogue and ideas around her by producing a response
- That there are similarities and differences in her own lived experiences and that of others

What do you remember learning about?

- Ancient Greece?
- The Civil War? World War II?
- The Pythagorean theorem?
- Shakespeare's Macbeth?

What if we had asked her:

- "Show me the mummy"
- "Point to Ruby Bridges"
- "Touch the color black"
- "Where is the letter B?"

What you remember can be predicted by whether you thought it mattered.

- 40-60% of American high school students are disengaged from the content of their classrooms

Sir Kenneth Robinson

What is the most valuable for our students?

Power is what really matters

- The power of language and a good story
- The power of imagination
- The power of individuals to make change
- The power to explain our own experiences and relate to the experiences of others

Planning access to the general curriculum

1. **Why does this idea matter?**
   What is the "so what"?

What is the essential meaning of this unit? What will students still remember in 20 years?

It's OK to skip a unit or lesson.
Your student's time is too valuable to waste.

The general curriculum is the application of language

- How words tell our stories and share our ideas and experiences, even after we are dead or gone
- How symbols (words, letters, visuals) are arranged and re-arranged
- *Why* we communicate
- *Why* words matter

General Curriculum

2. **What language is needed for this idea?**

Emphasize the words in AAC that we can use the most frequently.

Nouns only set the topic and can usually be represented visually.

Verbs and adjectives share and explore the idea.

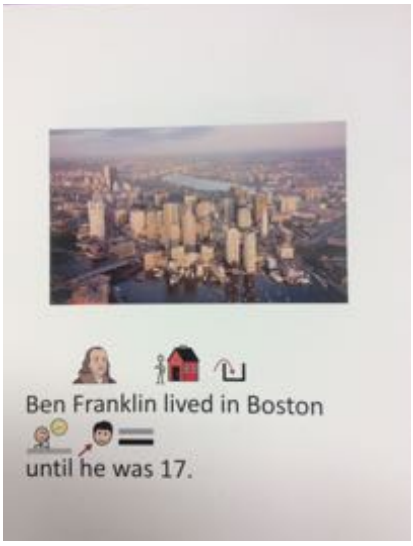
American History: Benjamin Franklin

General Curriculum

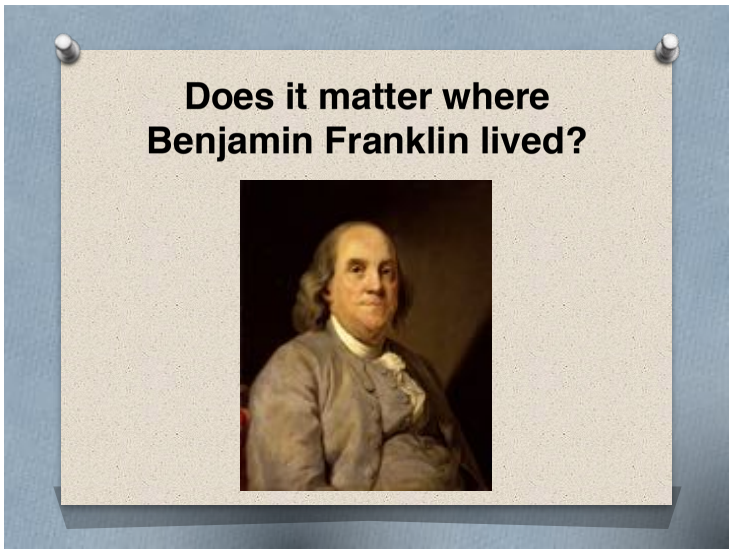
3. **Use repetition with variation**

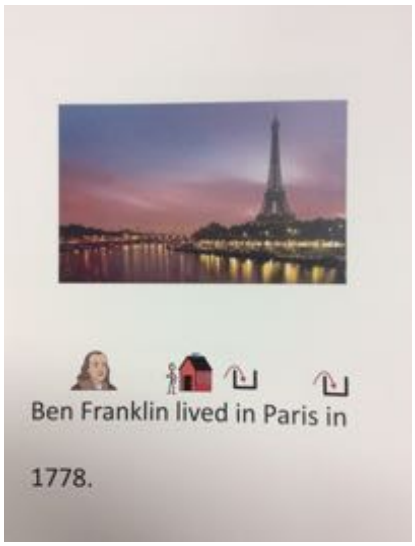
Model and elicit the strategies that you can use all day across many different topics.

Description applies language to share the idea: describe all day long!

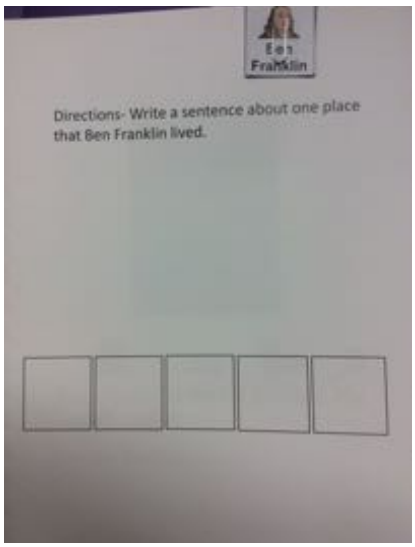


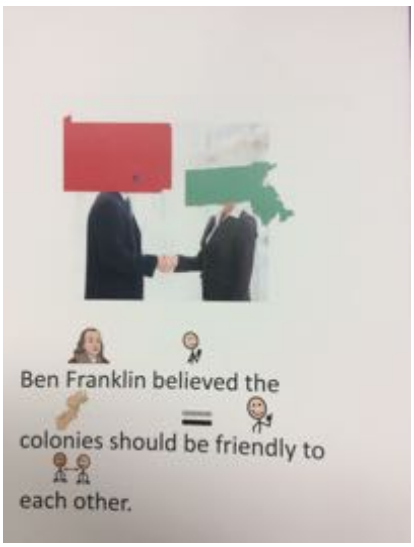
Ben Franklin lived in
Philadelphia in 1723.


Does it matter where Benjamin Franklin lived?


Ben Franklin lived in Paris in
1778.

Ben Franklin believed everyone
was equal.


Directions- Write a sentence about one place that Ben Franklin lived.


Ben Franklin believed the
colonies should be friendly to
each other.

Does it matter what he believed?

"Franklin was foundational in defining the American ethos as a marriage of the practical values of thrift, hard work, education, community spirit, self-governing institutions, and opposition to authoritarianism both political and religious, with the scientific and tolerant values of the Enlightenment."

American History: Declaration of Independence

What matters about Ben Franklin?

Can you say it with AAC?

What is independence?

Can you say it with AAC?

Ben Franklin was American.
I am American.

He said all people are equal.
I am equal.

He worked hard.
I work hard when I…

He wanted everyone to learn.
I learn when I…

Ben Franklin wanted everyone to be free. I am free when I…

He wanted everyone to take care of others.
I take care of others when I…

What is freedom?

Can you say it with AAC?

What is representation?

Can you say it with AAC?

What do we learn from history?

- Ideas expressed in language are important
- Ideas and language can correct wrongs and fix mistakes
- Everyone has hard times
- Everyone has a voice

What is protest?

Can you say it with AAC?

Science: Butterfly lifecycle

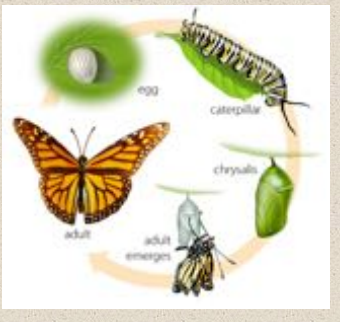
- Why does it matter?
- What language do we need?

Independence
Freedom
Representation
Protest

Are these relevant to our students with Angelman?

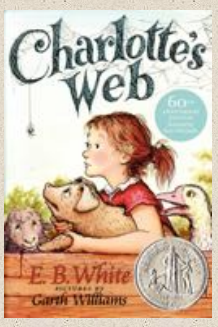
Are these relevant to all students?

Science: Butterfly lifecycle

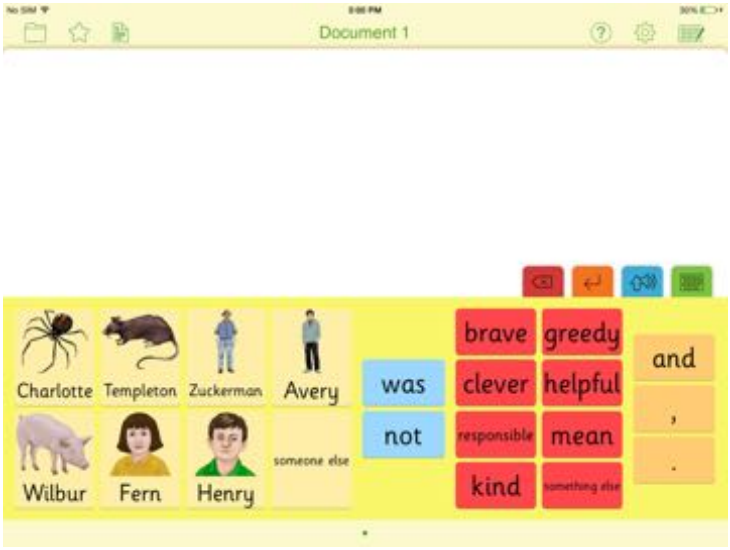


- First, then, last
- Little, big
- Round, long, pretty
- Change, grow

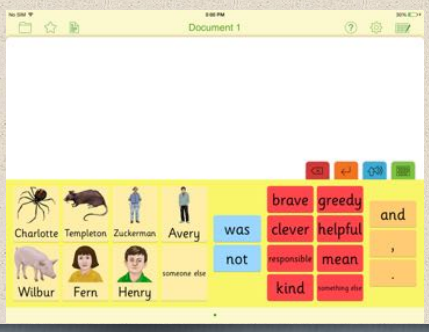
Language Arts: Charlotte's Web



- First, then, last
- Little, big
- Friend, help
- Character traits



When is a word bank appropriate?



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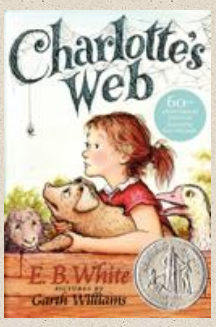
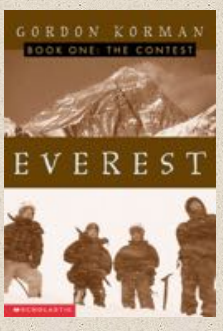
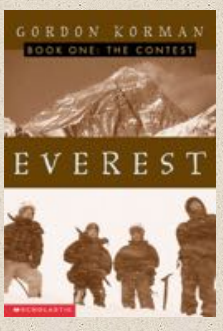


- Explore word order and sentence structure after they have been selected from AAC
- To produce something to hang on the wall or fridge

What did Maggie learn from this lesson with "Everest?"

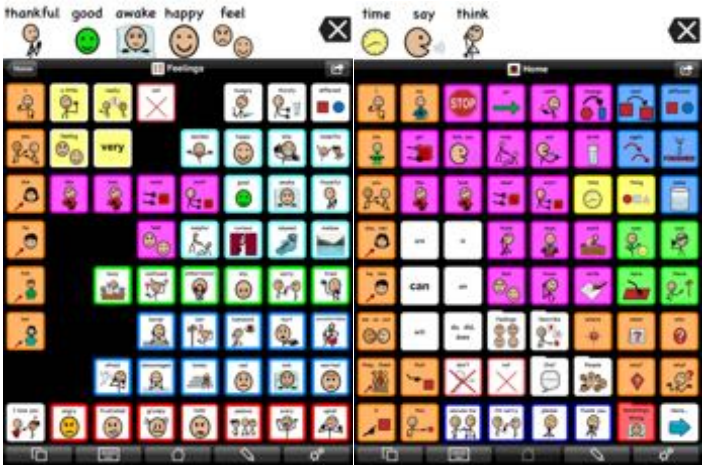


Language Arts: Reading comprehension with "Everest."



Possible Next Steps

- Identify an upcoming topic in the curriculum
- Identify why it matters, what power it has
- Brainstorm, model, and elicit the language around the **idea**
- Share your experiences in the Facebook group!



Questions?

Thank You!

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