AAC & THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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Augmentative Communication Consultant
Muskegon Area ISD
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• Review the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Dynamic Learning Maps Essential Elements (DLMEE), identify resources, & look at a process for including students with complex communication needs who use augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC).
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- Muskegon ISD has done a lot of work with the CCSS for general education teachers and some districts have included their special education teachers who work with high incidence populations.
- We are just beginning our work with the Essential Elements for teachers of students with significant disabilities.
What we bring to the conversation…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Role</th>
<th>My Setting</th>
<th># of AAC Users</th>
<th>*Type of Communicators</th>
<th>**What I know about the CCSS &amp; EE</th>
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Type of AAC Communicators…

• Level 1: Very Beginning (not yet using words/symbols)
• Level 2: Beginning (1 word/1 cell)
• Level 3: Early Sentence Users (2-5 words, multiple cells)
• Level 4: More Complex Sentence Users
• Level 5: Age Appropriate Language Users
Knowledge About the Common Core & Essential Elements

Is that when a group of people share an apple?

I have some basic information.

I have done some work with the CCSS & EE and am beginning to use them.
“Even more basic than the freedom of speech… is the freedom to speak”
~Professor Stephen Hawking
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...and learn!
The Challenge for AAC Users…
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So how do we help our students who use AAC develop language and communication skills, while also meeting critical and mandated standards and IEP goals?
Learning Standards in Michigan
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- The Common Core State Standards define learning progressions for ELA in Michigan & 44 other states
- Are NOT a curriculum; every district is responsible for their own curriculum and pacing guides
- Are further clarified into essential elements for students with significant disabilities who will be taking an alternate assessment…
- Learning standards need to be carefully unpacked & represented by “students need to know and be able to do” statements
AAC Users & Standards-Based Instruction…
3 Important Considerations for Success!
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• Assessment and instructional planning must be collaborative to be effective.
• Access to the general education curriculum can and must happen concurrently with language learning.
• Instruction for language, communication & standards-based instruction must be intentionally interwoven.
5 Steps to Teach Language & Content for AAC Users
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5. Teach content and skills within and across curricular activities that are meaningful to the student and relevant to his abilities and needs.
Step 1: Identify AAC goal areas through assessment and collaborative planning
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- Interdisciplinary assessment and planning is critical
- Must identify what the student understands and is able to express
- A variety of informal and more formal assessments are needed
  - Observation
  - Language sampling
  - Parents' reports
  - Direct assessments
  - Other???
- Assess communication functions or intentions ([Communication Matrix](http://example.com), [Functional Communication Profile](http://example.com), [Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills](http://example.com))
- Use a developmental framework ([Brown’s Stages of Language Development](http://example.com))
- AAC Competence Areas Framework (Light, 1989; [Kovach, 2009](http://example.com)) Linguistic, Operational, Social, Strategic
STEP 2: Identify grade-level content standards from the Common Core State Standards
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ELA CCSS Strands:

• Reading (Literature, Informational Text, Foundational Skills –K5)
• Writing
• Speaking & Listening
• Language
Following a CCSS & the EE Bridge Across Grade Levels

- Find RL.K.3 – Reading Literature Kindergarten Standard 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCSS Grade-Level Standards</th>
<th>Common Core Essential Element</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RL.K.3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.</td>
<td>EE.RL.K.3 With guidance and support, identify characters and settings in a familiar story.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Following the same Standard from K – HS…

• RL.K.3 p.15
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• RL.K.3 p.15
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- RL.3.3 p.46
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- RL.3.3 p.46
- RL.4.3 p.59
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- RL.6.3 p.85
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- RL.6.3 p.85
- RL.7.3 p.97
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- RL.7.3 p.97
- RL.8.3 p.109
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- RL.9-10.3 p.121
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- RL.6.3 p.85
- RL.7.3 p.97
- RL.8.3 p.109
- RL.9-10.3 p.121
- RL.11-12.3 p.135
Looking Deeper…

- Take a few minutes to choose another standard and follow it across grade levels on your own or with a colleague…
- What did you notice as you looked through these?
Back to Step 2…Identifying Standards
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- Identify collaboratively communication and language skills that are a priority for accessing the content and skills in the standard.
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• This work is often called “Unpacking” and [North Carolina](http://www.ncreateregional.org/) (along with other states) has done this work—great resource!
Back to Step 2...Identifying Standards

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• Let’s look at our RL.K.3 and see if their “unpacking” is helpful…
• How might an AAC user be able to access this standard?
• What vocabulary would be helpful on their device…
Step 3: Identify the “essence” of each standard...
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• As it relates to language development and communicative competence
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• Does unpacking help us with identifying the essence of the standards?
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• As it relates to language development and communicative competence
• Teachers and SLPs must work together to identify performance outcomes for AAC students linked to priority skills.
• Ongoing review and assessment is essential.
• Does unpacking help us with identifying the essence of the standards?
• What other work might we need to do?
Step 4: Generate IEP goals and objectives to address performance outcomes
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- Example—McKenna, a kindergarten student who is at Brown’s Stage II (2 word utterances or symbol combinations such as “boy mad”)
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• Use the student’s developmental language level and other assessment information as a filter when writing goals aligned with the standards.
• Example-McKenna, a kindergarten student who is at Brown’s Stage II (2 word utterances or symbol combinations such as “boy mad”)
• Integrate her language goal (using her AAC device) with Standard RL.K.3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
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- Use the student’s developmental language level and other assessment information as a filter when writing goals aligned with the standards.
- Example-McKenna, a kindergarten student who is at Brown’s Stage II (2 word utterances or symbol combinations such as “boy mad”)
- Integrate her language goal (using her AAC device) with Standard RL.K.3 *With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.*
- Possible performance outcome: Will use 2-3 word/symbol combinations to describe settings and characters in a familiar story…could this lead to an IEP goal?
Step 5: Teach content and skills that are...
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• Chosen and adapted collaboratively
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- Within and across curricular activities and provide multiple opportunities to address
- Meaningful to the student
- Relevant to his abilities and needs
- Chosen and adapted collaboratively
- Supported by consistent and systematic instruction across learning environments and team members
Whew!

• Comments about the CCSS & the (DLM) EE…

• Comments about the 5 step process…
Resources to support this work…

- The entire ASHA Division 12 Perspectives Issue for September 2012
- North Carolina Common Core Unpacking Documents
- Aligning IEPs to the Common Core State Standards, Browder & Courtade, 2011
- 6 Successful Strategies for Teaching Common Core State Standards to Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities, Jimenez, Cortade, Browder, 2013