It is my pleasure to introduce Lisa REAL she is a CCESLP who has also work as a Pediatric speech language pathologist for eight years at the Pennsylvania school for blind for children. [ INDISCERNIBLE ] Providing early intervention services for children ages birth to three, and their families she's currently completing a Master's certificate program in special education supervision through the University of Pittsburgh. Welcome to Perkins Lisa.

Thank you, Robin. It's really nice to be here, and welcome back everyone who attended part one of our presentation, communication and vision when worlds collide. Today our focus is going to shift a little bit from assessment which Diane had covered a lot in the first week to using those assessments to formulate goals and objectives and how to come up with program programming and strategies that are going to best meet the needs of each of our students.

Before we begin and move through our slides, I just wanted to take a minute to just emphasize the fact that it is really normal when parents are talking with me and they seem a little bit confused or a little bit hesitant in understanding exactly how to teach communication, because when you think about teaching communication, it's really very complicated and it really is such an abstract concept because unless you're presented with a delay or a disorder, in some mode of communication, people don't naturally think about teaching it. Parents talk to their children from the day that they're born, and kids are exposed to a lot of different interactions and social exchanges that you wouldn't really even think that were happening, so some of the strategies that we're going to talk about today are with the intent of, with the intent in understanding that it really is a complicated and abstract things to teach and we're trying create something concrete out of a topic that a lot of times is not. So and for children with multiple disabilities, we're not thinking about pronoun use, is a man tick, syntax, we're really talking about the fundamental act of gaining another person's attention. Doing so intentionally, and then learning what to do with it once you have it. Because those are going to be the underpinnings that are going to allow communication and language to grow and develop.

So first we're going to look at turning assessments into interventions. And when we're doing this, it's really important no matter what age the child is that you're working with to look at the long range planning. You're going to consider several different really broad categories such as community presence or participation, a student's ability to own their ability to make choices, different competencies and to develop their own commune TIF respect. So when you're looking at present levels of commune TIF performance, you're really looking to not only establish a baseline of their information of, of measurable information but also to serve as a starting point from which you're going to grow all of these skills, and while the categories that you see on this slide are really broad, it's really important to talk with the family and to talk with your educational team to prioritize where you're going to focus your, where you're going to lay your focus at that time, because as a child grows, that priority may shift. Something that is really privilege tall and really important for a today letter or a kinder Gartner may evolve into something completely different for a young adolescent or for someone entering into adult hood, so the expectation should be that the goals are going to, are going to fluctuate as the child ages, and as they gain skills, but the benefit of long range planning is you have a vision, and you create a vision for where you anticipate what you would like to see this child do, so every goal that you write and every strategy that you use is intentionally determined with the intent of moving to the next step.

So in order to create, to prioritize and to determine educationally and communicatively where we want to take your students. Consultation and collaboration is really critical, and here at the western Pennsylvania school for blind children, we are very fortunate that we participate an integrated therapy model and that we work alongside families very closely to collaborate and develop all of their IEP goals. A lot of times for people who are functioning as a ten rants, this can be really challenging because you may only have one snapshot. You may have one opportunity to go in there, meet a family, try to get a sense of what their, what is most important to them, and then also to complete an evaluation and interpret your results to create goals that are going to be appropriate to carry out what that student may be more and entire school year, and that can be a little intimidating and it's really, the more input you can get from other players on the team, the more likely you'll be to nail it when you determine what those goals should be. In the area of communication specifically team input can be really essential when determining motor skill acquisition for access modes. For students who are going to be using American Sign Language, having, being able to have that finger dexterity in isolation and being able to make different hand shapes is going to be critical. If a child is accessing a voice output device that requires, again, finger isolation or activating a switch and perhaps they can't use their hands, what is going to be the best mode of access for them? We work really closely with our teach evidence of the visually impaired to determine what visual accommodations and what adaptations to materials will be needed to be most beneficial. A lot of our students use symbol sets that vary from objects down to picture images, and we accommodate those to make it as efficient and make them as easy to understand as possible for those children.

So when we move on toward goal development. It's really important to remember that the assessment directs your FOEL writing. A lot of times if you're writing your re-evaluation report and that occurs months before you sit down to write an IEP, occasionally we might forget to go back and see what we determined were those, the biggest needs for that child. They may have changed. There might be changes in that child's performance, there may be changes in their current levels of functioning and all of that will factor into how we determine the goal development. But you want to look at what component of communication you're targeting. There are typically four major categories, and while you cannot work on all of them simultaneously, again, you can prioritize depending on the student's need and this is especially true for students with complex disabilities. And when we look at those, when we look at each of those components, things like cinder, the receiver of the information, what the topic is going to be, and the means of expression, are all going to be pivotal to teaching and for the student to learn prior to building on skills for a symbolic system. So if you talk about writing a goal that's teaching a goal as a sender you're thinking about things like can they control the events in their environment? Will they understand that their behavior will cause someone else to respond? Those are, these are really fundamental skills, again, going back to Diane's presentation last week, these are going to be the foundation for which you're going to build a topic and preferences and making choices. They first have to understand that their behavior acting on another, acting on another person is going to carry meaning and is going to get them essentially what they're looking for. If you're teaching a child skills that are necessary to be a receiver of information, are you teaching the importance of having someone to communicate to? One example that really struck me in a previous seminar that I attended, is the importance of having a person there especially when using things like sign language or any sort of augmented device. There was a mother saying how she had taught her son had learned the sign for more, and they had really worked diligently on this sign, and whenever she was around, they were in the living room playing and he was asking for more and they were playing a game, and then she got up and walked into the kitchen, and the little boy was still in the living room, and she peaked her head out, and she could see him and he was in the living room alone and he was still signing more. And so that tells me that there's a skill that needs to be taught there because without a person to communicate that sign to, that sign for more simply become a motor pattern, because where the communication comes is that there's a person there to receive that message to interpret the message, and then to respond back in some way. So this is, again, a really important foundational skill for these students to develop and it is worth the time and the energy to make sure that it's taught and understood well.

Once, once the child understands how to be a sender and receiver of information, you're going to examine topics. These are going to be derived from a child's experiences in their world. A lot of times the educators, myself and the team members, we have to remind ourselves that it's really not about what we want the topic to be, but that it has to be something that is meaningful to the child, it has to be something that is, relates to an experience that they've had, that they can express a preference or a dislike for and that is going to motivate them enough to continue to want, to want to continue that communicative exchange. This is also the time when joint attention is taught, and I know Diane spoke a lot about that in week one. Being able to direct another person's attention toward something that interests them is incredibly powerful and motivating for, especially young and early communicators. for. Lastly of those four modes of communication, we want to think about the means of expression, and this is where we really have to look at the child's entire skill set. Not just, not just one area. Not just motor, not just vision, not just communication, but how are we going to teach them, how are we going to teach them to express whatever that topic is whatever their opinion is that they want to share? And we don't want to go straight to a symbolic form if that is not yet where the child is functioning. There are a lot of ways that our students can communicate to us that don't require high tech devices, that don't require eye pads and [ INDISCERNIBLE ] and symbol sets that are really complex and might require a lot of learning, and that's not to say that those aren't, again on that continuum of priorities, and on that continuum of where we envision this child to go. That might be, we might see those things along the continuum, because a child doesn't have an iPad or a device when they're three, doesn't mean that they won't have one when they're 13. But if they don't have the foundational skills to grow on, and if we skip straight to the device, we're missing out on an opportunity to really ensure that they understand what the function of that device truly is. And to really make sure when they have it that they're using it for a commune TIF purpose.

Okay. So now we're going to it take a quick little break for an audience participation poll so that I can get some feedback on all of the roles that each of you serve in the areas you work and see where your general interests are. We'll give you a few seconds to do that and we'll move on. Okay.

So now we're going to move onto discussion regarding the child's current level of functioning, and again, just a reminder to always use your assessments. We spend our time really getting to know these kids and how they're functioning, and that information is so critical to the development of the goals that we create. And we're looking at social contingency awareness. Learning the necessity of having someone to communicate with. Joint attention. Again there's means of expression, is it going to be pre-symbolic or are they ready for a symbolic system? When you look at all of these components, you're looking at the child's total communication skill set. You're not looking at any one segment in a vacuum but you're looking at the entire way that they communicate with those around them.

So now we're going to spend a little time talking about the elements that are beyond the system or the device. And again, we're focusing on teaching that child to demonstrate a means of SXRGS, but it's not enough to just acquire the means of expression. We want them to be able to detect and respond to it consistently. So we may, let's say that there's a goal written to air child to use an eye gaze system, and to begin to detect and fixate on a symbol to make a choice. And let's say that they are working within an array of two. When they acquire that skill, it doesn't necessarily mean that we move onto something else, but it means that we have to figure out how to grow that skill. Whether it's increasing the array, whether it's increasing the time in which they can respond, or the level, decreasing the level of assistance. There's a lot of ways to continue to make these skills stronger and more efficient, which is ultimately the goal that we're looking for in communication. So the intervention may be, again, building, something as building rapport with a communication partner. Understanding the reciprocity of a communicative exchange with other people, and being able to access and explore the environment, so that you have something you want to talk about. And that on the part of the therapist and the educational team, that take some creaty to sort of set up opportunities that may not otherwise present themselves to our students.

And, again, one of the take home messages of part two of our presentation, again, is prioritizing. Always, always referring back to their current level of functioning and the stage of learning to help you determine where to move them next. You want to consider a variety of things, again, we were talking previously about skill acquisition. That is typically the focus is the learn it stage, so that's when maybe a child is stemable for a new skill and you're just working to help them increase the prevalence and the frequency that they do it.

Proficiency is going to move, is going to be the next step moving from acquisition, and it, this is when you're really targeting, you're increasing the speed. You're increasing the rate, the duration and the late ENSy of the skill that they are practicing. For several students then moving into the maintenance phase, is using a skill routinely, so perhaps previously a communicative, a communication goal was used in 1 or 2 activities a day, and now we're hoping to move it toward some level, the child toward some level of independence. So perhaps they're going to use it with less assistance from me or with fewer cues, because ultimately the fourth and last stage of learning being generalization is that they're going to use the skill anywhere and everywhere. That communication is not only going to occur in two activities a day, but it's going to occur from the minute they wake up until they go to sleep at night. Both at home and at school in the community in a way that is functional, efficient and meaningful for them. And again, this really, we want to shine a light on the fact that when you're thinking about the means of expression and you're applying it to these stages of learning, we really want to pick the mean of expression that is best suited for the child. It's, it's really has to be about where the child is functioning and not where we want them to be, because the more realistic we are about meeting them and beginning their education where they're functioning, the greater likelihood that we're going to get them to where we ultimately want them to be.

Okay. So now we're going to take a look at some goal writing. And, again, being a part of an integrated therapy team, we're very fortunate that we have a lot of collaboration that takes place in formulating our goals, and we are lucky enough to be able to meet with our team once a week to have those discussions, share ideas and PRAN storm together. But the reality is there are a lot of us out there who have to make these decisions on our own, and so it's really important to consider the method of instruction but before you began writing those communication goals. A goal is generally not going to be written separately from the activity in which it's used. So you want to think about where the child is going to perform the skill, and how they're going to do that before you write the goal, because it's a lot harder to create, to write a skill and then try to figure out how you're going to embed that into your day.

Again, you're going to look at a sequence. You're going, you're going to look at not, you're not going to look at skills necessarily in isolation. And you're going to prioritize the skills that are going to lead the students to the greatest chance of functioning in a natural setting. There's two different ways that you can go about this. We're going to take a look at some video of a student who is working on a skill that is more of a task analyzed approach. He's not, he's able to perform a bunch of different skills in isolation, but but what we are really looking for is to get him to do those altogether, because that is what's going to make him an efficient and effective communicator, and we're going to really do an assessment of, we're going to look at what's happening in his environment, what we can do to support him and make him as successful as possible. And then we're also going to look at some video of a student who's working more on a skill based discrete trial, and the one example of this that is, that I see most often is when a child is, starting to use a device for developing vocabulary, and I really want to know that they understand the vocabulary that is represented in those images, and so some of my students just need repetitive opportunities to visually locate and find that symbol and to ask over and over and over, and we may create a segmented activity that offers them 5 to 10 opportunities to do that. But it really depends on the child, and it depends on the assessment that you've completed how you determine which method you're going to use. Because both can provide great data, really accurate information, and can be important in determining where the deficits are and what skills still need to be practiced. So the key factors in determining the communication goals for our students is determining thousand create a communicative system that supports these two things. Efficiency and independence. Teaching communication doesn't mean you're going to find another area of need, and try to motivate the child to grow that skill in order to communicate. So if a child is working incredibly hard to maintain a bright head posture or to reach with a non-dominant arm, that is not going to be, the access mode that I use for a communication skill. There might be a really nice way to embed in some recreational reinforcement or some positive reinforcement but it's not going to be it the place to create an opportunity for communication because then you're working on two really challenging skills all at one time, and the communication and the language growth is, is the skill that I am targeting. So I want to make sure that the access mode is as efficient and easy and consistent as it can possibly be for this child. Because that's thousand we're going to make it independent for them.

I'm going to look at areas where their needs are. I'm going to look at their strength. Is their vision the greatest strength? Is it their motor control, is it their cognition or hearing, then I'm going to build their communication plan off of those strengths because that's how I'm going to be able to target their language development. Which is ultimately the goal. So once we develop an IEP goal, we, here at the school create instructional programs. And the instructional program is really the meat of, the meat of the information that we're going to give to the family and to the classroom so that they can best carry out the instruction of the skills to achieve that goal, so we're going to include a ton of information in here, and while it may seem overwhelming. It's all the little nuances and all the little pieces of information that the child, that has been determined that this child needs in order to be successful. Usually specially designed instruction. You're going to see the level of assistance, you're going to see how many steps, you're going to determine what is considered a successful trial, what is considered an error. How are you going to measure that. What are you going to do if there is an error. How are you going to correct that and teach that, it's also a nice way to measure progress. Here at the school, we take these programs and that is how we collect our data, and then it is transferred onto a graph. It is transferred onto a graph for parents for progress reports and then we as a team are also able to see any gaps in progress, any decreases in performance, and then we can determine if there is any intervention that is necessary or any changes that need to take place.

Okay. So now the fun part starts. We're going to look at some videos of some great, great preschoolers that are using different modes of communication but are all working on language acquisition, so the first little boy that you're going to see, his diagnoses are listed there on the slide. His communication diagnoses, he's a non-verbal student. With a moderate to severe receptive language delay, and severe to profound expressive language delay. He's four years old in this video. His previous communication goal prior to this video was to visually select a symbol that was paired with a speech generating device to answer activity specific questions. And his criteria was set at 80%, so what we were really looking for was how accurate, how accurate was his access mode? And we struggled a lot with determining how, what the symbol selection was going to be. His teacher, the visually impaired and I worked very closely to accommodate his needs for his diagnosis of cortical visual impairment, and actually found that adding, that using symbols that had dimensional properties to them, that were actually easier for him visually to combined and access. Cognitively he probably could have understood line drawings and photographs, but visually it was, they were so challenging for him that, again, we weren't looking -- he may work to grow his, his vision skills at a separate time, but when it comes to his practice of using his communication device, I didn't want to set something up that was so challenging for him visually that it held him back communicatively as well. So let's take a minute and watch this video. It's about two minutes long and then we'll talk about it afterward.

What do you think, Henry.

That's right. That's it. Are you ready for more. Blue?

Uh-huh. Here's yellow. Find yellow over here. That's it. Good. All right. Are you ready? Which one? Blue, okay. Okay. Good job. Around, and around, and around. All the way to the bottom. You want to clap it out. Yea. Should we do it again?

Yeah, yeah, okay. Can you find more on your talker. Find more. Remember it's the red circle. I'm going to help you. Can you bring your eyes. There you go it's the red circle. Good job. Here you go. Here's your next ball. You ready to put it in. I'll hold it . Come get it.

Okay. So in that video, there's a lot, there's a lot of going on. First and foremost if I talk about all of the different modalities that he's using to communicate. He is, he had recently learned how to use his voice in a very purposeful and meaningful yeah, so we take, we took advantage of that as often as we could, because that is using your voice is obviously the most efficient and natural means of expression, and in addition to that, we were working on the use of a voice output device, however, you'll see in that video that the voice output was actually turned off because it was a little bit of a distraction, and we were really, the focus really was, can we connect his visitation with his ability to reach and isolate a target, so that we could use a device for communicative purposes. When we looked back on that video, if we had to say things we would do differently, we probably would have switched the time of day to early aier in the day, because that was later in the afternoon, and he was a little bit more fatigued but he was still able with a little bit of assistance to, to visually locate that target and get his hand to the cell with the correct symbol.

So we will continue on because I think I have some more videos to show you here. So this is just a snapshot of what the progress report looked like for that goal. Now that was the goal that he had had the previous school year, so you'll see a slight dip in his performance. He did have a, an extended absence for a while, and, which is what we attributed that decrease in performance to, and but then upon his return to school, you will see that positive trend progressing back up, and he is still working with that device at this time and we're working to grow that symbol set. His ability to answer yes/no questions accurately gave us a lot of information about his cognition and his receptive language, so we decided as a team that using core vocabulary was definitely the best way to go it for him rather than having to start with more concrete labels for specific objects and nouns because he was able to use the core vocabulary efficiently in other activities in unaided means of expression.

And then this is, again, for his new IEP goal you'll see that this was the first quarter that it was implemented and you can see the change in, the change in the graph, and we had a little spike in accuracy in the second week, and again the environment in that context was really controlled. We had very little auditory or visual distractions. It was a really quiet environment, and at that point he was still in need of greater physical assistance, so he was getting higher levels of support. When he had achieved that goal, we did lower the physical assistance to try to move him toward a more proficient means of access, and so that, that explains, or that's what we attributed to the decrease in his performance at that time.

Okay. So now we're going to look at our second example. And this student is working on verbal speech. His communication diagnoses are dysarthria of speech with severe expressive language delay, and moderate to severe receptive language delay. His, the communication goal that he came to school with what he was three was to expand his vocabulary to 20 words, to express his wants and needs and they wanted that to occur 100%. He has since far and exceeded this goal. And you will see a little bit of that in, in the video clips of him as well. And then we're going to take a look at his progress reports here. And what you will see is he started out when the, the initial level of ass answer was that he would use these words with an imitate TIF model and as soon as we got to a point where he was achieving that goal at criteria, we began using some indirect verbal cues, open-ended questions to prompt him to use these words. He was using them in single, single word utterances, and, again, at the single word level his speech was becoming more and more clear, and he was having a lot of, you'll see a lot of success, and as his vocabulary improved, you'll also see that he was able to get, have his needs met or at least to express himself much more efficiently, and which we also directly correlated to his improvement in positive behavior. So we're going to a look at video number two here and we'll talk a little bit about what we see.

Great job, that's the red one. Let's get in there. Now what do we do?

Open.

Open, yeah. We turn it and go up. You want to push the button on top?

Yeah.

1, 2 , 3, go.

Beep beep.

Beep beep beep.

Uh-huh.

Bye bye. >> Bye bye, red truck.

Bye bye truck.

Bye bye, truck.

Bye bye truck. Bye bye bye.

Bye bye bye.

Beep beep. Beep beep.

Orange truck is back do you want to build a tower? Okay. Hold on, let's build a tower. Oh, what happened? We're going to knock it down.

Whoa. Crash.

Do you want a hat. Here's a purple hat. You going to put it on your head.

Reach up. Oh, get it up there. I'll help you. Up, up, up, up. Yes. Oh, two hats. Which color do you want?

Green.

Green. Here you go. I'm going to wear blue.

 Okay. So in that video, there's a few things to talk about. While his goal was only to use single word utterances, when I was, when I had the opportunity through play, I was able to get, to expand that a little bit. So you'll notice when he said bye bye, and then I said bye bye truck. And then he responded with bye bye, truck. He was, he really able to follow cues very nicely. Another thing to look at, which I know Diane talked about the week prior was, the importance of making the activity fun, and giving the child an opportunity to take it where they want it to go because if you notice when I went to get the tower to build the tower to knock it down, he took that immediate opportunity to knock my truck onto the floor, because that's really what he wanted to do. He wanted to crash things and make things fall down and that's where he found the humor in that activity. And then completely spontaneously on his own, he took those plastic cups that we were using as a tower but he saw them and thought, I think that's a hat and I want to put that on my head, and what I could have done and said no, no, we're building a tower and taken it back to the activity, the sequence that I had seen in my head but instead it gave me a really good opportunity to see how his play skills are developing, which is going to give me more information as I write his next goals, because a child's play skills, especially when they're young is so important to teaching communication, so the more advanced and more creative I can be and he can be with his play skills, the more success and the more, he and I are going to have to talk about, which again goes back to those, those components of communication that, that means of expression and the topic that we're going to share.

Now WEESH going to go back and watch the first student again and we'll see his modes of communication and we'll talk about the activity whenever he's finished.

Yes.

Do you hear it?

Yeah. It sounds funny, doesn't it. Look at those gears moving. Dance, dance. You like the way that sounds. Stop. Uh-huh. Do you want to do another one? Oh, I think you're asking me for more. Did you find your red circle. Put your hands down, you're almost there. Very nice. Let's put the gear together. Do you want to use your reasons? Okay. Okay. More gears? Let me ask you this, we could use the ball or we could do more with the gears, look at both, there's the gears, where's the ball, find it first, good. Okay. Now, here we go. Are you ready? Which one? Gears it is. Do you want to put that one on next? Okay. Let's do T here we go. Let's use your right hand. Okay. Let's use this hand to hold on. Let's use your right hand. Great. Oh, Henry, that is awesome. Will you help me to turn it on. You have to reach way down here. Good. How do you ask for more? Yes you feel it, I see. More good job , Henry.

Okay. In that video what the pros and the cons in what I so he in that video, again is he is able to express himself using gestures, using facial gestures in away that's very interpreted by the communication partner who is me at that time. You can tell where his needs are, and what he needs to continue to develop, because where he struggles is with access. There was a lot of collaboration regarding positioning, regarding placement of the device because his movements can tend to be more rigid and with greater amount of force than maybe we would want to see he is visually able to locate those symbols, it's whenever you add the visual component with the motor component that he is still practicing and trying hard. That is why if we go back to the discussion about whether or not it should be a direct, a discrete trial versus a task analysis, in isolation his visual skills are, they're improving, they're really good, but whenever you layer in that access component with using his upper extremities to activate a device, he really had a hard time, and so despite that, it was still the most effective means of access that we had found, and he was, had been using a single switch with a multi-message speech generating device prior and had done exceptionally well but we were really limited in vocabulary access that way, we were hoping if we could improve his ability to isolate a target and to activate a symbol on a device in various target locations that that would expand his ability to access language and vocabulary to be an expressive communicator .

Okay. So we took all these skills and together created a task analysis, new IEP goal that involves his ability to visually locate, discriminate and touch five new core vocabulary symbols during a preferred activity, so I'm going to work directly on teaching him those vocabulary symbols and the teacher, the visually impaired is really working on improving his vision so he can find them in different, in different quadrants, in different plains and then together working with his occupational therapist rally working on figuring out how far we can push his access, his access using his hands, so that he can be as accurate and access as many different cells on a device as possible, and again this was, this is the prime example of a team goal, and a team approach because there's really no way to progress this goal unless it is worked on across his day and even to be creative with the vocabulary and be creative with the activity so he has as many opportunities to practice locating visual, visually locating and discriminating to practice using the vocabulary so that it's used in appropriate manner, and also to have the opportunity to really have to refine his reach and touch so that we can transfer that back to that device.

Okay so this fourth video we're going to listen to this student, again, he's got more self Jen TIF language in these next two videos but again just looking at the importance of play and the interaction that we have in these, in this video.

What do you think, do you want to use the drum some more or get something else out?

Drum.

Do you want to keep playing the drum?

Yeah. Can I play too?

Yeah.

Here we go. What let's do ABCs, what do you think?

A, B, C, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, K, L, MNOPQ, Q. >> R. >> S TU VWXYZ.

Z. >> Now. >> Now.

Know my AFRJTS BFRJTS KRFRJTS, next time won't you sing with me.

Beautiful job.

Beautiful job. What do you think? Do you want to get these out again.

Stay with the drum, okay. >> A, B, C, DEFG.

So in that video, it really was about giving him some ownership of what the activity was going to be using his language to make some choices, and then modeling for him but trying to do a 1 to 1 exchange of, you know, the ABCs is a predictable sequence, it's a predictable pattern but with his diagnosis with the [ INDISCERNIBLE ] speech, generating some of those letters is really challenging for him. Toward the end you can tell that he was a little bit fatigued and that he was starting to lose some coordination and he was holding out for me to just kind of finish, to carry him through to the end, but starting out with a motivating activity like that is a really nice way to lead into a lesson because, again, I've captured Hayes tension. I have his interest. I'm honoring his request to participate in an activity that is motivating to him. Again, it's finding that topic that he, that is motivating and is a preference to him, so when we look at the last video after this IEP goal, we took the skill that he had, which clearly he had mastered 20 words by the end of his IEP and really thought that it was time to start challenging him toward two-word combinations to start making some requests and to answer some questions. Because he, his receptive vocabulary and his cognition was actually starting to get pretty far ahead of his expressive speech and language, and so we were starting to get a little bit of frustration, a little bit of anxiety about losing control of his decision making powers so we tried to give some of that back to him and really working toward expanding his phrase length and utterances so that he can engage more in communication conversational exchanges with a partner both adults and peers.

And again an emphasis here is that with both of these students, we really are looking at total communication, and just because it's not a goal doesn't mean that you don't recognize it and use it because while the DPIRS student with the device that we were looking at is working really hard to find, we're working really hard to find a voice output system that's going to be effective for him, when he goes out in the community at this point in time, his unaided skills and his unaided communication strategies are still the most efficient and most, and give him the most independence, so that is what he's going to use, and it's rally important that people communicating with him honor those strengths that he has because they are going to be able to go with him anywhere he goes, even when that device is not there. And that's okay. That's empowering for him and should be applauded and he should be commended for having those skills because the more, the more modalities he has, the more effective of a communicator he's going to be. And again to just capitalize on the teachable moments. Sitting down and singing ABCs and playing a drum for the first ten minutes of an activity may not have been exactly what I had in mind, but it was a really nice way to bond with that, with that child and to begin play with him in a way that was going to engage him, that was going to motivate him and that was going to make communicating with me fun and exciting, which is ultimately where I was trying to go before I begin any sort of lesson.

To build off of his current IEB goal we can use things like visual scenes, sentence strips, continuing these preferred activities and also embedding in some positive behavior reinforcement because communication when you're happens really easy, but for today leaves, young communicators all the way up to adults, communication breakdowns take place frequently when you're frustrated, when you're upset, when you're trying, when you're angry, and so it's important that we try to have tools in place to model these communication, these communicative attempts before the breakdown takes place or before there's, maybe a negative behavior or a negative experience, because teaching communication in that moment is going to be virtually impossible. You need to teach those skills before, before they have the anxious moment or before they have the frustration or communication breakdown, so that they have the tools to retrieve those skills in those moments because that's how they're going to be the most effective.

So this last video really just pulls all, pulls together all of the different skills that this child is working on, and really emphasizes the importance of the team collaboration. I am very aware of what my, the other therapists on the team are working on with this student, and so I'm doing the best that I can to embed them and work on those within the context of my communication language lessons with him. And it's a really nice way to slowdown the activity, to make him an active participant, and to really give him some power to direct the activity, because so often we get caught up in going quickly and doing everything for our students that we don't realize that if we take the time to move through each section, or each segment of a play activity or task that it's really going to be a lot more meaningful to the child, and I think that you'll get that same impression after you see this last video.

Look. Do you like bubbles?

Yeah.

Yeah. Do you want to help me blow bubbles.

Yeah.

Okay.

Open.

Can you bring your other hand up.

Great. And help me hold on to the bubbles, bring it all the way up. And I'll help you open it, let's use both hands okay.

Yeah.

That is hard. Can you turn it a little bit.

Yeah.

Good. All right. And we're going to put this hand on top nice job. Let's give it a little bit of a twist. Can you get that top off? Yes. Now what do you see.

Bubble.

Bubbles. Can you get that out. >> Mine.

Your turn, okay? Use both hands so that you can hold the bubble bottle, remember. Turn open that hand up. You've got it. Nice job. Now can you find it in there. Because it might have fallen in. Let me help a little bit. There you go that's it. Do you put bubbles in your mouth.

Yes.

No. Because they taste yucky.

What do we do now we dip it .

All right. Are you ready? >> Oh, splashed me.

Blow.

And again there wasn't a lot of language per se in that, in the beginning of that activity, but there was so much time allotted for him to really manipulate the materials and to really be in charge of how we were going to use them, and to experience, if he tastes bubbles, he tastes bubbles, you know, but it really made it interactive and fun, and you could see by his body and his non-verbal communication that he was really concentrating and working really hard. And if I would repeat, if I were to repeat that same activity today, his language would include phrases like, give me that, and open it, and it's my turn, and I'm all done so his language has really grown through activities just like this. And he's continued to make fantastic progress. There is discussion about eventually having to explore the use of a high tech dynamic display device simply because the longer his phrase length and sentence length gets, the more difficult it becomes to understand his speech, and we definitely don't want to restrict his language development and growth or create a situation where he is frustrated when he's communicating because he cannot be understood, so those are things that are on the horizon for him as well, and again we will walk right back through this entire process of how we determine and prioritize his needs and where, to when we develop his goals for his next IEP.

So that brings me to my final slide, which again is just to really drive home the message that communicative interventions are about more than just form. It's about more than the type of device or the signing or the symbols. It's about having access to topics, and really developing a desire to engage with other people and again understanding the necessity of doing so. It goes back to that little boy signing more in the living room. You into he had to understand the value of the human interaction because that's what makes communication what it is, and what make it so powerful, and which is why it's so fundamental to the learning of students and why it's so important that as an educational team we advocate for communication in all of its form. With that that will conclude this presentation and I hope that it was enjoyable and I thank you to Perkins and to Robin for allowing us to participate and to share something that we, Diane and I are so passionate about with all of you, so thank you again.

Thank you, Lisa. We do have a few questions if you have a few minutes to stay with us. I want to echo what a lot of people are just putting in comments, just thanking you and I'm going to agree with FAI, that your students are wonderfully adorable, is her comment. One question that was specific to your first student, the one who's using the device, the communication device, and Kathy asks, did you consider using an auditory scanning device for him so that he didn't have to rely on his motor skills to access those switches?

We, we did consider that, and it hasn't rally, it hasn't been ruled out at this point. We were finding that it was limiting his vocabulary access, and it was limiting, it was not as functional within the context of the classroom, and with collaboration with his family, they were really hoping that if we could be successful with his, if his motor skills could improve the way that his language had, that perhaps this direct selection would be effective. We worked with him off of a December device just with him reaching, connecting with a objects on a flat surface and also within, his teacher did a lot of work with him, again, with, with access, using his hands, so we're giving it a go. He's not on my case load anymore at this time unfortunately. But we are, he is still, he does still have some access to auditory scanning opportunities because if the motor access does not work out for him and if he isn't able to get past the percentage of success that he was having at the end of the school year, then that might, a revision might need to take place there. So that is definitely on the radar.

Thanks, and another question that came in while we were looking at video of him, which I think you answered by, by showing us your other student but it had to do with teaching students to initiate their own communication rather than simply responding to questions or choosing between you know A or B, and I think we did see that by the time we saw the second student really initiating what song he wants to sing, and how he wants the bubbles to go.

Yeah, and that is definitely, again, a skill to grow on with student number one. Unfortunately for where he was functioning at the time it is so dependent on the adult, and dependent on what is presented to him, but when he is more ambulatory and mobile within the classroom, he does a pretty great job of using, again using his unaided strategies to get over to items that he wants. Things that he wants, and he'll vocalize to call out for people that he wants. Those skills are emerging I mean, that's such a great point, because again we don't just want our students to be responders, because having the ability to initiate those interactions is what really gives them power and motivates them to want to communicate more, so.

Thanks. I'm going to one more question, I'm actually just going to acknowledge. The Texas, you see the TCBI outreach program, has asked for assessment it's a fairly detailed, I imagine your answer will probably be lengthy I'm going to table that and you guys can take that offline. This will be our last week, students who are tactile learners and how you might set up a communication system for them to learn primarily through that tactile means, particularly when they're at a point where they need access to multiple symbols at a time.

Well, we have several devices here, but even beginning unaided and Diane if you want to jump in on this at any point. But I do have several students who are tactile learners and who are using tactile schedules and symbols throughout their day, some students, we pair those with voice output when it's appropriate. When, if not, sometimes we'll use like a 1 to 1 exchange. It depends how they're using it. It really kind of depends on the level of, how the student is, what they understand as far as how to communicate with those symbols, so if the student understands the meaning behind them and the vocabulary that they represent, and they understand how to use them to, as a means of expression to a communication partner, then we can bypass and kind of jump ahead to teaching that exchange. There are some students that are learning how to pair tactile symbols together to, again, grow to what you would quote unquote call phrases or longer utterances. There are other students that are simply learning how to use tactile symbols or schedules to learn about, to anticipate what's coming next and to move throughout their day, so we have tons of students that use those, and again, if that is the student's primary best mode to learn, even if, let's say they have vision, but they are a tactile learner and that's how they learn information most efficiently, then that's as a communicative less on, that's how we, that would be the mode that we would choose, because again it's really always going to go back to what's efficient and what's going to be the most independent. And it can change as the child ages, but if I have a child who can discriminate between objects faster than they can visually identify them, then I'm going to pick the tactile system every time. So I don't know if that answers the question but.

I think you did touch on some of the points, and as I mentioned we also had some questions, Fay, says thank you from last week that we didn't get to. We're going to try to handle them offline with Lisa and Diane, and present those as a handout with this part two. So let me thanks Lisa and also Diane [ INDISCERNIBLE ] who is also there with us today in body as well as in spirit. Today's presentation owes a great deal to the western Pennsylvania school and to their staff and an additional thank you to tech support by peg [ INDISCERNIBLE ] as always on our side, and let me thanks all of you for attending and participating with your questions, and comments. We always are looking for your feedback, and you'll be receiving a feedback survey from us in the next couple of days. We hope that you will let us know other topics and speakers that you're interested in hearing from. And until we do that, I am Robin [ INDISCERNIBLE ] For Perkins eLearning, join us again next month. Coming up will be signs based inquiry for students with visual impairments and blindness. Thanks everybody.

Thank you. [ EVENT CONCLUDED ]