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NTERVENTION MEETING

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AGATE A‑C

STRENGTHENING VOCABULARY USE THROUGH DIALOGUES

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>>: Hello. Good afternoon. I'm so excited that you are here for our presentation. I am Dr. Patrick Graham. I'm a professor at Western Oregon University.

>>: I'm Christi Batamula. I'm at Gallaudet University, faculty member.

>>: Our topic today is this topic here on the screen.

Strengthening Vocabulary Use Through Dialogues.

>>: I'm going to give you a few ‑‑ I'm going to give you a few minutes to read through this slide.

Many deaf and hard of hearing children struggle with vocabulary where they choose the aural method or visual language and that's because they don't have one a hundred percent access to their environment. You can have the best hearing through use of a cochlear implant or through visual language or hearing aid, but so much of the world and the communication that happens in the world is not accessible to deaf and hard of hearing children.

We have proposed and encouraged the dialogues to occur in order for deaf and hard of hearing children to be able to access the world around them.

>>: Take a moment to read. So that's really the difference between learning and what you plan to teach. So incidental learning I really want to focus directly with the incidental learning which is learning through experience and learning through everyday life. That's really key and important to think about as we're doing this as a profession, as a family, as parents. We tend to be very busy and we have our lives that go on. We don't really take the pauses and the time to think about that incidental learning. So we want to explore more of that together, how we can expand the vocabulary and language use and their experiences in the world.

>>: So what is incidental learning? I'll let you read through this slide.

Children learn about the world by observation. We used to say that children should be seen and not heard, which means through history and throughout the years, children will observe what we're doing, and sometimes we are shocked by what children say and do because they are constantly observing other behavior and children will imitate us and we'll often tell them what they're doing is cute as they imitate us but there's so much power that goes with that.

>>: And we're not using that power to corral their questions about the world, and to increase their understanding of what's happening in the world.

So we may look odd talking all the time or describing things to the children, but it's so important for them to have that constant exposure to what's happening in the world. If we're telling them what we're doing, we're narrating as we go, children don't often know what we're doing. They just assume what we're doing because it's something that needs to be done. They don't understand why we're doing something and the purpose behind our action.

>>: And I want to tie to that comment that they'll copy what you say. Children are watching us constantly. They're observing us constantly. You don't know that they may be thinking that, but they do make sense of the world through their observations. So they have to figure out what the world means and we have to try to figure out a way to give them the opportunity to connect what they're observed to what's really going on in the world.

We want to make sure that it's based on truth and not assumption. So we want to make sure that we actually are described those events to them to give them more language access so that they have the opportunity to consider what they're observing and put them into a complex world situations and be able to express their deeper thoughts and expand their vocabularies.

So based on what we just said, I want you to take some time to think about the students that you've worked with in your life. The children that you've met, your children that you may have raised, and deaf and hard of hearing children are so used to being told never mind. They're used to being told that someone will explain something to them later. But we know that later never happens. Those deaf and hard of hearing children are waiting, and they're forgotten about and when they ask what was going to be told to them later, oftentimes parents and teachers don't remember what was even being talked about. So that child has that gap in their life. They are missing something.

And oftentimes, we will have a long, drawn‑out conversation, with another adult and then a deaf and hard of hearing person will come up and ask what we had talked about and we'll give them just the summary of what the conversation was. They are still missing so much information and they're missing out on the opportunity for incidental learning. So we need to stop paraphrasing. We need to start including the child in the conversation, or tell them everything that has been talked about. So we started with this conversation. That led to this which ultimately led us to where we ended off.

Children have that emotional understanding, and they struggle to have a rational understanding of why a conversation occurs. So we're trying to eliminate these behaviors. Instead of saying never mind or I'll tell a child later, we want to give them that information.

>>: I'll add too, the intention. It's not easy. Often times we don't intend to tell them I'll tell you later or paraphrase it. We're busy. We have other things going on and with whatever we're doing we have to take those moments to actually narrate what's going on. But if we think about the consequences of not giving them those few minutes, not letting them feel included, not giving them the opportunity to increase their vocabularies and language, that may change our behaviors.

How many of you listen to NPR? Just on your commute while you're in your car? How many deaf and hard of hearing children are missing out on NPR? And how many of you keep the TV on just as background noise as you're milling around the house, you may be in the kitchen, and you'll hear something on the news, something that's happened, and you're able to pause what you're doing to pay attention. But if a deaf and hard of hearing child is sitting at the breakfast table, they may be wondering why you paused, why you stopped doing what you were doing to pay attention to the TV, and you are able to decide whether you pause or not. And because you have the opportunity to pause, that gives you privilege. You can stop and listen. Deaf and hard of hearing children don't have that kind of privilege until we are able to stand in the living room with our eyes glued to the TV with the captions on. We can't do things at the same time. It's difficult to watch TV and do something else. You may be able to clean your table and watch the caption at the same time but you have to keep your eyes on the captions for communication purposes.

I talk with my early childhood education students about how important a bus ride is for students. There are so many conversations happening on the bus. There's great people watching. You can get that same experience in an airport. But deaf and hard of hearing children miss out on those conversations. They'll see two people walking in the airport, talking as they're in a hurry to catch their flight. The deaf and hard of hearing child may understand that they're in a hurry but they may not understand why or where they're going. They're not getting ‑‑ we're not giving 100 percent access to those conversations and we want to make sure deaf and hard of hearing children have that access.

Hearing children whether they want to or not are receiving information all day long that they may not be aware of it, they may not pay attention to it, they may not focus on it but it is mechanically being presented. They can't stop that. It's a thing that just happens to them. So we need ‑‑ we don't really that about that with our hearing children, but how much more are deaf children missing because they don't have that opportunity for the incidental environmental around them. They're only learning from directed family activities or teacher activities or peers or they have access to communication and they miss so much. We need to actually fill that in and add that information so that they have the equitable opportunity to language.

The example that I usually share with people is if ‑‑ well, I was in a classroom at a School for the Deaf in a third grade classroom. And the phone rang, and the teacher told the class to hold on while she answered the phone, and she spoke on the phone. She did not sign. She spoke in English. And one of the deaf kids raised their hand and asked what the teacher was just talking about on the phone and the teacher said it's none of your business.

In a hearing classroom hour, think about how the kids would be able to hear at least half of the conversation unless it was hushed, the teacher was with his perfecting on the ‑‑ whispering on the phone. But if the teacher was speaking loudly in the classroom with deaf and hard of hearing, they are missing out on that information, and power dynamics come into play there. So I suggest the teacher could at least sign while she was talking on the phone to give the student some information if she was maybe speaking with a librarian, then she could indicate to the students who she was speaking with through sign language. Keep it short and simple and any kind of information is better than no information.

>>: Now, I would like to focus on expanding on how we can provide the opportunities for language experience, acquisition and all that sort of stuff, incidental learning.

>>: We will go through each of those on the slide, and we invite audience members to think about some examples, some things that you have seen in your classroom, and feel free to add in. This is a collaborative efforts. We want to have this open dialogue.

So first is narratives. How can we encourage narratives with our students? With our children?

Let me give you an example of what a narrative might mean.

When I'm getting gas, I have a four year old son who is deaf. If he's sitting in the back seat he'll sign through the window what are you doing. We're getting gas. Let me preface this by saying I live in Oregon so I am not able to fill up my own gas tank. We have people who are by law required to do it for us. It's the butt of everyone's joke. But I explain to my son that there's a person putting gas into the car and I explain that there are four different types of gas. Unleaded, led and there's the super unleaded gas for sports cars. I don't drive one. It has a V8 but ‑‑ so I go through all of that with my son. And he gets all of that vocabulary. He learns what a V8 is and he knows what diesel fuel is. I tell him if I put diesel into my car it could ruin my engine and the ball really gets rolling for him and he starts to spell things out. Diesel will ruin your car. And I don't have to have him repeat the information back to me. I just throw that information out there with the dialogue. We don't always do that with hearing children because they receive access through conversation. They may hear me talking to the gas attendant and I'll tell him I don't want to use diesel. It will ruin my car and I don't have to sign for my child.

And my child is learning through narratives. How many of you are doing that in your classrooms or with your own kids? Can you give me an example of what that looks like?

>>: I know that the light is not great in this room. Let me move up front. Really it just depends on the situation. We have a lot of visual information coming into too like who is this person coming. We can explain they're from the state. They're here to do something with the classroom. So we have to talk a lot about what kind of people are coming into our world, what's the interpreter's role. It's really just ‑‑ the idea is to whoever comes into the environment, let them know who that person is and what their role and function is.

>>: Yes.

>>: Our project just set up a new playground. We have a new fence. So the kids look and see the workers putting up the fence and they keep asking me what are they doing why are they here. So I describe they're making the ground soft, putting in the posts. So even at snack time we can have these dialogues with our children just to let them know what's going on.

>>: And there are so many vocabulary words that can be learned during that process. You can talk about a bulldozer, a backhoe, and when you have visitors who come into your classroom, through narratives, we can talk about social studies, we can talk about science, we can explain to our students why a visitor is in the classroom. It might be an audiologist who comes into the classroom. Narratives are so important for everyday conversations, and our children miss out on those every day conversation and we need to ensure they have access.

So experiential learning. It can be anything from a new experience at a museum or something or a vacation trip or whatever that may be, but it can also be something included for everyday life. Again kid miss a lot of information and it depends on the school or at home or what kind of access that is provided, which language they're using or who is really taking the time to do ‑‑ like, for example, if I'm cooking, I now have eight children. I may not have time to explain to all eight children. However, it's important to take those moments to explain briefly what's going on. Like I have a recipe. What do we need in a recipe. Just expose them to the language briefly just to add the vocabulary, and hopefully someday they'll have cooked skills in the future so I don't have to cook. So the experience really becomes the language. They don't know what I'm doing. They don't know that it's language with cooked, but in my mind I'm pretty much giving them the vocabulary for what cooked skills are. So that has a very positive benefit and of course has talked about that. If ‑‑ as Patrick talked about going on the bus or the zoo, the point is to get to the zoo but what happens on the bus. Talk about what's happening outside the bus window. See where we're going. How we get there. We take a right, we take a left or just explaining what's going on on the trip to the zoo, not just let them sit on the bus, wait until they finely get to the zoo and then at that point we think that's when the learning begins. So that brings up other questions but it starts with even the car seats. Getting them buckled into the car seats. Making sure they're safe and that's why you have to put seatbelts on them. Any kind of learning experience can be narrated.

How many remember that hold YouTube video with those two Chinese boys sitting in the back seat of the car talking about airplanes and they're having a dialogue between the two of them? That can happen to any child and it should. How many deaf people are in this room right now? Okay. So for you deaf people, how many of you have gotten into a car with your parents having no idea where you were going, waiting until you get there before you finally realize where you were going?

I've heard stories from so many deaf adults who say they will get into a car having no idea where they were going, only to find out they were going to go dentist and they didn't know until they got there. Important to have that narrative. I'm guilty of doing it sometimes with my children. I'll say we're in a rush. We need to go now. Then I remember I need to take the time to tell my children where we're going. As a parent I don't want to be late to doctor's appointments and sometimes if we're going to the doctor I try not to tell the kid where they're going because they won't get into the car. Once they're in the car and they're buckled in, then we say now we're going to the doctor.

Teachable moments is one of my favorite things that's happening. I taught kindergarten for six years and I loved those teachable moments. If a child was to spill something or a kid is to vomit on my desk, the ‑‑ would ‑‑ they're ready to start cleaning up but sometimes we use that as a teachable moment. We can say so‑and‑so was sick. They weren't feeling well. They didn't make it to the bathroom and then you do the cleanup process.

Or if someone has a new ring in the classroom, during a lesson, and we could talk about where their ring came from, how they got the ring. Children are able to learn through those teachable moments and narratives.

I tell my student teacher all the time, it is okay to pause your lesson for a couple of minutes. If it's something the kids are interested in, a lot of the teachers think that they need to finish up with their lesson plan and they need to get to their conclusion. If they don't they've failed as a teacher. There's always tomorrow.

That's my motto. There's always tomorrow. If you need to finish up a lesson.

But you need to harness those children's interests and make sure that they remain interested in school.

>>: Really that teachable moments can be the lesson. It becomes the lesson. It can do that. I know a teacher often thinks the lesson is one thing but they're not interested. Follow what the children are interested in. That becomes the lesson.

>>: And that happens so often.

>>: I know we have to end here soon but the accessible environment, so what is accessible, how do we create access. We have to find ways that ‑‑ for example, if you're going into a new place or a new restaurant, how can we communicate about the environment so it becomes accessible. What's going on around them teach what's going on around them. They need to know what's happening in that environment. Adapt to the situation. Figure out. But empower them to be brave enough to advocate for themselves to ask what's going on. Really kids are very young. They watch everything. They pick it up anyway. They know what's going on. We have to provide the experience and the language with deaf kids and deaf families to remind them that they need to get the vocabulary. We're here. People sometimes may not sign, people don't always sign in the world and deaf kid need to know that. So we need to practice that with them. They need to know how to keep themselves safe in the environment and it's okay that not everybody signs. Just explain to them what's going on. Encourage their curiosity and give them the language available.

>>: A language rich environment is really self‑explanatory. Whether you're at home or whether a child is in school, they need to have access to ASL and printed English. I'm sure you have seen Harry Potter and those people who are in the picture frames in the movies. I wish it was possible to have people signing in those different picture frames in order for children to have access to both language to have the printed language there as well. A language‑rich environment includes a couldn't constant explanation to children of what's happening whether using books or magazines. Talk kids through what they're reading. Give them more context and information. Looking at advertisements, give them more picture that can help them understand what they're saying.

I'm not sure you know the phrase double your pleasure double your fun, kids don't know what that means and you have to give them the entire run down.

>>: We'll go to the next one. We want to take the opportunity ‑‑ well, if kid make paying, they do ‑‑ painting. We need to talk with them about it. What kind of things do we ask the children doing their project if they're making art? What would you ask? What is that. That would be great. Or maybe wow, that looks like pretty or can you tell me what that is. Oh, yes.

>>: [away from mic]

>>: Can you stand up and say that again.

>>: Sometimes a student is very quiet. They come up with their own story in their brain related to that, so I'll think that they've made something. I'll ask and they'll go no. That's not what it is and they go on and really explain what it is. Exactly that's what helps their mind. We give them a stimulus and they ‑‑ sometimes they even do it in a teasing way to lighten the mood so they can explain to me. But we have to ask them. I really like that. You're using a lot of red. Why did you pick red. And sometimes they'll give me a lot of information or I'll see your painting has a lot of circles. How did you do that. I take a look at what's going on and I question them opened endedly so they can ‑‑ I actually am trying to do this vocabulary rich environment as well, but I might actually spell out unique words to them or give me them more specifically things they notice about their work. Maybe they didn't even really notice and they didn't have any purpose behind their circles, but I still want to get them to think more so they can talk to me more about how they come to those decisions. So I want open‑ended questions with the students so they can have the opportunity to have a longer dialogue with me and it becomes a longer and longer and longer dialogue which becomes communication. And then I also wanted to add about those rare word and the new vocabulary. Many people say they're afraid to fingerspell or add things the kids won't understand or maybe a concept of vulnerability or oppression. But that's fine. You can still expose them to that. The kids need the exposure. They will pick up the language eventually. So that is part of this whole scaffolding of language concept and that really is where the children currently are. They have their own experiences which help them make the connections and then we add some language to scaffold them to the next level. So now where they are, they'll have a better understanding and yet they're continuing to move forward and learn more.

>>: One thing I do right now with my 4‑year‑old son when it comes to scaffolding is that I'll stop signing words that only have three letters in them like cat, dog, bus, car. So I will sign car then I will spell out car and eventually I will stop using the sign and I will instead fingerspell. So my 4‑year‑old son can fingerspell all these three letter words and he's on his way to learning how to read English and eventually we will incorporate those signs again. Instead of saying stop hitting the dog and spelling it out, I'll just use the sign. And eventually I will incorporate more and more fingerspelling appear use that as a bridge ‑‑ and use that as a bridge to English literacy.

Give you just a moment to read this slide.

>>: I think that being aware as adults we don't notice that. We're busy. We're thinking about everything that we have to do. We don't recognize that our children are watching us do everything that we do. You said that, for example, when you're outside playing in the playground ‑‑ or they were making the new fence on the playground, that's a great opportunity. Oftentimes as adults we don't think about that or if a visitor comes they just come into the room and we sort of don't mention anything. We need to be aware of what's happening in the environment and use that as a teachable moment.

>>: Be patient because you may have things that you're in a hurry to do and explanations are not one of the things you had planned to do but we need to be patient and take the time to do that.

>>: When it comes to being patient, I want to give you a quick example.

Just today I was watching a girl ‑‑ I don't recall if it was downstairs or upstairs. Wherever they were giving out popcorn and ice cream. I saw her ask where the popcorn was and the mom said it's over there. So her mother could have incorporated more vocabulary. She could have said you need to get a bowl. You need to get the scoop. The word scoop may have been a new vocabulary word for the child and then you say, once you get the scoop you pour the popcorn into the bag. But instead the mother just pointed to the direction of the popcorn. She could have taken that opportunity to provide her daughter with more vocabulary which will lead to an increased literacy level.

>>: We want to require children to use their vocabulary as well. We often get a little tired and just point. We know what it means. They know what it means. We know what they want. Et cetera. But they know they want the cut. But we don't ‑‑ we want to ask the child in a ways what are you pointing at. Force them to use their vocabulary. Don't just know what it means and accept that. Ask them to use their vocabulary to increase their vocabulary building and reinforce that idea that you can tell me what you want, not just point at it.

The purposeful repetitive, that's very important.

>>: We love to be repetitive, don't we? We're just like a broken record. But sometimes it's necessary.

>>: And again, learning should be natural. It should not be a forced thing. If it's forced I mean all of us really would say ‑‑ I mean we all prefer to have natural language environments if we made our preference known. When you experience something, that's a great opportunity to take that as a natural experience opportunity to increase learning and vocabulary. If it's natural in their world in their environment, in their everyday lives if they're interested in it they will actually learn it.

>>: Remember the child takes the lead. Follow their lead. If the child want to talk about something, let them take the lead. You'll eventually get to your lesson.

>>: Okay. Well, we have it looks like one minute left for questions. Are there any questions?

>>: Oh, we do. Yes. One question.

>>: I really appreciate this. You should be doing this every year. As a parent, I sometimes forget all of the different opportunities because as parents we're in a rush. We're too busy. We just don't think about this. So we get distracted. It's nice to be remind that had this needs to happen. It would be nice to have this happen every year to have parents and teachers here in the room.

>>: All right. Thank you. Thanks for coming everyone. Bye‑bye.

(End of session. )