

## Employment Communication Skills Using Dual Communication Boards

**Objective:** To improve receptive and expressive communication with coworkers using a dual communication board at community employment sites

### Setting and Materials

#### Setting:

1. Simulated instruction: Special education classroom
2. A variety of community employment sites could be used including:
  - a) Drugstore
  - b) Nursery
  - c) Bakery in a grocery store
  - d) Floral department in a grocery store
  - e) Produce section in a grocery store
  - f) Restaurant
  - g) Hair dressers
  - h) Cafeteria in a hospital
  - i) Fast food restaurant
  - j) Animal trails in a tourist attraction

#### Materials:

1. Two identical dual communication boards
  - a) 1 board is for student
  - b) 1 board is for communication partner (co-worker)
  - c) Each board consists of five to seven cards that are covered in clear plastic or yellow acetate to enhance the contrast, if needed
    - i. Three types of communication cards were created including
      - Socialization
      - Core vocabulary
      - Site-specific vocabulary
    - ii. Each card contained high-contrast line drawings with written explanations of the pictures
    - iii. Card size was based on student need

### Content Taught

The student is taught to communicate with co-workers using dual communication boards in employment settings. The communication boards promoted communication by including vocabulary related to (a) socialization, (b) core vocabulary, and (c) site-specific vocabulary that reflect the cognitive ability of the student.

1. Socialization cards included vocabulary primarily useful for interacting with others (e.g., to greet a person, to socialize during break times). Some examples are *What is your name?*, *How are you?*, *Like*, *Break-time*, and *Want*.

2. Core vocabulary cards included words that were used frequently throughout all training sites. Some examples are *Watch, Show you, Go do, What job now?, Need help, Get, Wait, and Supervisor, Try again, Good job, Is this OK, Understand, and Finished.*
3. Site-specific vocabulary cards included all of the expressive and receptive words needed to successfully complete work tasks. Verbs were placed on the left side of the board. Nouns were placed on the right. Vocabulary words may include verbs such as *Straighten, Match, Fill, Sort/ stock, Clean, Price/label, Wash hands, Feed, and Replace* and nouns such as *Meat cooler, Price gun, Front desk, Stockroom, Shoes, and Railing.*

### **Teaching Procedures**

Provide training in both simulated (i.e., special education classroom) and six community vocational settings.

1. Prior to student instruction, determine the site-specific vocabulary required for students to successfully complete work tasks.
2. Create the dual communication boards including (a) socialization words, (b) core employment words, and (c) site-specific words that the student can read.
3. Show the boards to the co-workers and demonstrate how the communication boards work. Leave one board at the site so co-workers can become familiar with it. Encourage co-workers to suggest additional vocabulary for communication board.
4. Use a system of least prompts to teach students to use dual communication boards with co-workers. To assist a student in successfully using communication boards with a co-worker, prompts should be provided in the following order:
  - a) Independent (i.e., no prompting)
  - b) Gesture
  - c) Manual sign to provide direction
  - d) Model to illustrate steps
5. When students are familiar with vocabulary on communication board, instruct students to use communication board in all interactions.
6. For situations where the board can not contain all of the vocabulary (i.e., all produce in grocery store), use gestures to communicate specific items.

## Evaluation

Collect student performance data on the number of steps completed independently and correctly.

### Lesson Plan Based on:

Heller, K. W., Allgood, M. H., Ware, S. P., & Castelle, M. D. (1996). Use of dual communication boards at vocational sites by students who are deaf-blind. *Re:View*, 27(4), 180-191.

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