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John F. Kennedy Center

"The Art of AAC:
Creating Visual Supports to Inspire Communication
And Participation During Arts Instruction"

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>> LISA DAMICO: Good afternoon. Welcome to "The Art of AAC: Creating Visual Supports to Inspire Communication and Participation During Arts Instruction." I'm Lisa Damico, your moderator and webinar organizer, and today's webinar is part of a monthly series that comes out of the office of VSA and Accessibility here at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This series addresses topics related to arts, disability and education.

If you would like to view live streamed captioning of this webinar, you can follow the link you see on the slide. And in the chat box of the control panel located on the right side of the screen.

Before we get started, let's take a moment to be sure you are familiar with the go to webinar control panel on the right side of your screen. This control panel can be hidden by clicking on the orange arrow in the top left corner. If you need to leave the webinar early, you can exit out of the program by clicking on the X in the upper right corner. A recording of the webinar will be available afterwards so you can catch up on any parts you miss.

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If you would prefer to say the question instead of typing it, you can click on the raise your hand icon on the control panel and I will unmute your microphone.

Your questions will come directly to me, and during the designated question and answer time at the end of the presentation, I'll relay them to our presenters.

I want to emphasize that within the week, I will send out a follow-up E-mail with a link to the recording of today's presentation, a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, any handouts that our presenters have prepared, and a copy of the transcript. This means you don't need to worry about frantically taking notes during the presentation. You can always go back and watch a recording or review the supplemental materials at your leisure.

I would like to invite you to join us next month. Actually, next Tuesday, as Jennifer Nichols, a kindergarten through fifth grade music teacher, will present "Can you feel it? A tactile approach to music literacy" on Tuesday, December 1st at 3 p.m.. you can also click in the chat pane. You will see I've included the link, so if you want to register for that right now, you can do that as well.

If you're active in social media, I invite you to connect with us using the hashtag #VSAWebinar. You can find us on Facebook at VSAInternational, on twitter at VSAINTL, which is where our social media intern, Courtney, will be live tweeting today's webinar. So say hi to her over there using the hashtag.

You can also find us on Instagram @VSAInternational. And we're trying something new in this series. All of you should have received a handout about 15 minutes ago by E-mail. If not, you can also find it in the handout section of the control panel, but this is optional, but if you would like to complete this follow-along worksheet, you can do so. Today there's a word bank at the end, and then as you hear the answers to the different questions, you can write those in. Some people find it helpful. You're not required to do it, but that's something new and fun that we wanted to try today.

So with that, I will turn it over to today's presenters. We have Lisa Pierce-Goldstein and Aubrey Rubin.

>> LISA PIERCE-GOLDSTEIN: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the Art of AAC. I'm Lisa Pierce-Goldstein, I'm here with my colleague Aubrey Rubin. We're coming to you live from the historic city of Boston, Massachusetts and we are delighted to be able to share with you our collective two decades-plus of experience working with individuals with complex communication needs in the public school systems of New York City and Boston.

We wanted to say a quick hello in person before we vanish behind our slides, and we really hope that we're going to be able to give you a lot of practical information that you will be able to take and use in your practice right away after the presentation.

We're going to start today with a couple of definitions of terms that we are going to be using fairly frequently throughout the course of the presentation. Our first definition that we want to make sure we're all clear about is AAC. That stands for augmentative and alternative communication. And that would refer to communication supports that an individual might use when speech is not their most reliable method of communication.

AAC supports can include a wide range of low tech to high tech items such as photographs, picture symbols, written text, speech generating technology, such as an iPad with a voice output program on it. You might have Braille-to-speech, text-to-speech, and manual signs. Those are all examples of AAC supports.

Complex communication needs refers to any individual who faces significant challenges with one or more domains of their communicative functioning, which might include cognitive language, speech motor production or social pragmatic skills and executive functioning.

We have three learning objectives for you today. Today, we will learn to identify language levels of your students with complex communication needs. You'll learn to identify the seven functions of communication, as described by Dr. Howard Shane of Children's Hospital in Boston, and we will take you on a tour of visual supports that you can use for your classroom environment, for direct instruction and for behavior management.

The first thing we're going to take a look at today is levels of communication. And in order to do that, we're going to focus on two major aspects of cognitive development, communicative intent and symbolic language. In order to do that, we're going to take a little journey through typical language development, which starts with our adorable little sleeping infant here. Our infant in the first four to six months of life, roughly, will be a pre-intentional communicator. This means they will communicate. They'll reach, they'll grab, make eye contact, cry, giggle, et cetera, et cetera, but all of that communication will be reactive. They will be reacting to their internal drives and needs. They'll be reacting to caregivers and their environment and to the environment itself, whether it's too hot or too cold or too noisy.

Around four to six months, a child will make a developmental leap and become an intentional communicator. They will come to understand that they can intentionally act on people in their environment and on their environment itself to get their wants and needs met. Their communication is no longer reactive, and here's a great example of nice, intentional communication with our little baby pointing at something.

The next developmental leap comes somewhere between nine and 15 months, and this is when symbolic language is developed. Now, symbolic language means that a child or a person will come to understand that a symbol of some sort, whether that be a picture of spoken word, a signed word, can represent an object or a person or something in their environment. They will come to understand that when dad says cup, it means that cup on the table. The child, if they're producing words, if they say ball, that they know that that means the ball down there.

So with those two major developmental milestones in mind, let's take a look at the four levels of communication.

Now, we know that our students with complex communication needs don't necessarily follow a typical development time line, but these two concepts of intentional communication and symbolic language will apply to everyone. So our first group of communicators that you are likely to encounter are individuals who have not developed intentional communication, and are not symbolic.

Our second group of communicators are going to be those who have developed intentional communication, but have not yet developed symbolic language.

Our third group of communicators will be our individuals who have developed intentional communication, and symbolic language, and who communicate at the one to two-word utterance level, primarily about the here and now, and very concrete objects and people in their environment.

And our fourth group of communicators will be our intentional symbolic communicators who communicate at the multi-word utterance level.

Let's take a look at how each of these types of communicators is likely to communicate. Our pre-intentional, pre symbolic communicators are going to be using only non-conventional means of communication to get their message across. This means they're going to be grabbing, crying, throwing, laughing and giggling as well, and they're going to be communicating really just to get their basic wants and needs met.

Our intentional communicators, who are not yet symbolic, will be starting to develop some conventional communication. So in addition to using non-conventional communication, the crying and the throwing, they will also be developing some meaningful eye gaze, some meaningful vocalization, pointing, maybe some gestures. They may be -- this may be the communicator who will pull you over to something that they want that they can't reach. They may be using non-differentiated manual signs or non-specific picture exchange and what I mean by this is they may have learned a sign for "More" or a sign for "Drink" but they're not necessarily differentiating them. They just figured out that if they do something, they get something in return.

Our intentional symbolic, one to two-word utterance communicators may be using speech to communicate. They might be using photos or picture symbols. They might be using some voice output technology such as a single message device, or if they have a wider vocabulary, they might be using a static display voice output device. There's an example of that on your right. That's a Go Talk 20 and a static display device is a device where the page of vocabulary is not going to change when you pretty a button to make it speak.

Our intentional and symbolic multi-word utterance communicators might be using speech. They also might be using photos, picture symbols. They might be using text. They might be using predictive text and they might be using voice output communication device with dynamic display. And you have an example of that on the left. A dynamic display device means that the screen may change if you press one of the buttons. It either will speak or it might open to a new menu, and a dynamic

display device is a device that's capable of providing the communicator with a lot of vocabulary that they can use.

So which of these communicators needs visual support? The answer is everyone! Even the most well-developed communicator among us uses visual supports throughout their day to organize and manage their life.

-- now let's take a look at the seven functions of communication --

>> As Lisa mentioned, there are seven different functions of communication that we're going to talk about today. All of the individuals that you see we're going to talk about more specifically later during this communication. Each of the slides, you'll see some examples of these visuals. They are there so you can refer back to them after we've talked about them more specifically. You're going to see the same supports a little bit later so in the interest of time, I'm not going to explain them in detail here, but I will talk about them all later.

So the first function I'm going to talk about is protesting and refusal. A student or adult can protest an object, activity or person, simply by demonstrating an objection to it. They can push it away. They can turn their body. They can say no. They can crawl under the table and hide. These are all different ways to protest or refuse something. The difference between protesting and refusal is that refusal is when somebody rejects something that someone else has suggested. So if I say it's time to go to lunch and the student runs and hides under the table, they're refusing to go to lunch.

We use visuals to help all of our students use more conventional means of communication. So we want them to protest and refuse using either words or pictures or signs as opposed to running and hiding.

The next function of communication is organization and transitions, and this is often a forgotten function of communication because it's often the communication partner's responsibility to use these. Eventually, we do want the person with complex communication needs to use them on their own, but when they're first introduced, it's really the responsibility of the person working with that student. But even though we often don't think about this as a function of communication, it can be one of the most important to help your classes run more smoothly. It's really important to have organization and structure during your lessons, and visuals can help students with complex communication needs really understand what's expected of them, how long it's going to last, and what is coming next. And by simply visually reminding students of that, it can really make them much more active participants in what's

happening in the classroom. A lot of our students have a really hard time transitioning between activities. They often don't want to leave something that they really like and begin something that they may like a little bit less, and visuals can really provide a very clear understanding of what is ending and what is coming next, can decrease their anxiety. It also makes things very concrete to them so that they understand something's ending and something new is beginning.

The other piece about visuals around organization and transitions is that they're permanent. So when you say something, it's transient. You say it, and then it's gone. But if you use a visual, the visual remains, and the student can refer back to it to help them understand and process and retain the information that you've given them.

The next function is requesting, and this is the one that people most often think of when they think about students who use pictures or alternative means of communication. Although this is a very, very common function targeted for a student, it's really only a small part of what people generally communicate about. If you think about a typical classroom, you know, one of your lessons that you're giving, the students don't ask for things all that often. They may ask for a few things throughout the lesson but for the most part they're doing other things. They're commenting. They're answering questions. They're asking questions. However, for our students who are learning to use other means of communication, we often start with requesting because it's meaningful. They can get something that they want and it teaches them that pictures have meaning, or that words have meaning, or that signs have meaning. So it's often where we start, but we need to remember that it's only a small part of what we actually do at a school. Again, we use pictures and other visuals to allow our students to use conventional means of asking for things. We want them to use a picture to ask you for the type of instrument they want as opposed to guiding you to it and taking your hand.

The next function I want to talk about is directives, and this is a very common function in the classroom. Teachers are always giving directions to students. There are four types. There's instructional directions, which is what we use to teach when we're teaching different and new material, that is called intentional directives. Control are the directions we use to control someone's behavior. Come here, sit down, please take this. Routine-based directions are the directions you give every single time. Come in, put your backpack down, get your instrument and sit down. They become routine and they're done almost every time. And play-based directions are specifically associated with play schemes, so the directions that you would

give associated with the specific object. Again, we use visuals to help students process, understand and act on the directions given. And again, visuals are permanent, so the students can refer back to them if they have difficulty recalling or processing the information that was given.

The next function is commenting. Commenting is simply the act of exchanging information. There are two types of commenting. We can objectively comment about information that is part of a common experience. So I like how you use lots of colors in your painting. Both you and the communication partner experienced the painting. You're both there, so it's an objective comment. A subjective comment is about information that is unknown to the other person. I feel tired today. Again, visuals provide means for our less verbal students to share information. For our more verbal students, it may provide them with a queue that they need to make a comment or provide them with the words that they may have difficulty recalling in order to make a comment.

Questions. This, again, is a very, very common function in school. We ask a lot of questions. And questions are very, very difficult for students with complex communication needs. There's a lot of pieces that go in to asking and answering a question. First, you need to understand that a question has been asked. Then you need to understand what type of question has been asked. Then you need to generate a response. Then you need to come up with a way to relay that response and then you need to wait for the teacher to call on you to relay that response. So there's a lot of pieces to that. So visuals can really provide a way for our students to have access to questions at all of those different steps.

We provide visuals to help them process the question, and we also provide them a way to respond. It could be that they need some choices to help them formulate the response that they're giving verbally or they may need another way to respond to the question all together.

The last function that I'm going to talk about is social pragmatics, and this is the interactive part of communication, it is the back and forth that is expected during communication. And visuals allow our students to understand what is being said to them and how they're supposed to respond. They may need a queue that when someone comes up and says hello, you need to respond with hello, or they may need a completely non-verbal way to respond to what is being said to them.

>> LISA PIERCE-GOLDSTEIN: So now we have arrived at the moment you've all been waiting for. It's time to start our tour of the visual supports. We've grouped them in to three categories. First, we have environmental supports. These are

visual supports that you can put up in your classroom, or on your cart if you're doing art or music or theater on a cart. We have instructional visual supports. These are supports that you can use for direct curriculum or skill instruction, and behavioral visual supports. And these are supports that you can use to help manage behavior and expectations in your classroom. We do have a couple of caveats that we want to give you before we start. The supports that we're going to show you will tend to be for individuals who have developed at least a little symbolic language. Not that you can't use them for students who are still emerging symbolic communicators, though it will take a little more creativity and teamwork to figure out things that are tangible for that group of individuals, and our visual supports do tend to be a little skewed towards music and visual arts. This is not because we don't really love dance and theater. We do. It's more a question of access and exposure. For example, I'm a musician, so that's what I know. And also, in Aubrey's and my schools, we have art and music programs, but we don't have dance and theater programs. So all of the teachers of the arts that we were able to talk to and whose faces we were able to see were art and music teachers. So Aubrey is going to take us through environmental supports.

>> AUBREY RUBIN: As Lisa mentioned, environmental supports are those visuals that are present in the environment to help the students process information and participate in the activities. For the most part, these fall under the organization and transitions functions of communication.

The first one I want to talk about is labeling. There are pictures and words that define where items are in the classroom. So as you can see on this slide, I have examples of pictures and words that could label different areas in an art room. It's really important to have both pictures and words because you want to make sure that you give as many access points to your students as possible. We don't always know exactly where the student is going to access the information and providing as much visual information as possible can be very, very helpful.

It's also important to remember that you don't just have to label objects in your room. You can label different actions as well. You know, you can take a picture of somebody painting and label painting. You can take a picture of somebody singing and label it "Sing." It's also really helpful to label some descriptive labels in the room. So pretty. Different. Good. Bad. Give the students some ways to comment about different things that they say in the environment. Our students with complex communication needs often have a lot of nouns in their vocabulary because that's what they see and that's what they participate in, but we really want to work on expanding the

different parts of speech that they use, so having verbs and adjectives around your room as labels can be very helpful as well.

The next thing I'm going to talk about are visual sequences, and these are the steps that you need to complete a specific activity. It's a little bit different than a schedule because it's generally for a small activity that may happen within a larger activity or within the larger schedule.

So the first one is a ring. And the type that you use -- the type of visual that you use really depends on the level of your student. A picture ring is generally used for students who are just learning to use visual sequences because the picture disappears after you use it. After you flip the ring, it's gone. And so these students tend to have more emerging symbolic communication so the student would do what is depicted on the picture. So here, for example, they would get the glue. And then they would flip the picture to the back of the ring and do the sequence -- the next picture in the sequence.

This is an example of a horizontal sequence. So you can see they see all of the pictures as opposed to just one at a time, and this is what they would need to gather the materials they need to start making a card. The pictures can be removable. They can be static. It really depends on the level of the student but this tells them exactly what they need to do before they can start the expected activity.

You can also do the same sequence vertically. It really doesn't make a difference, horizontally, vertically, it depends on the student. It depends on the layout of your classroom and it sort of just depends on what you want it to look like and how you want it to function within your classroom.

The next thing I want to talk about is a schedule. It's really, really, really important to have a visual schedule in your classroom! It really adds organization and structure. Not only does it tell your students what's coming, it reminds you what's coming next so that you stay sort of in your scope for the day. And it's really helpful for these students to know what's coming. The most important thing about a visual schedule is that you use it. You have to refer to it. It's not enough to just have it up in the room. You have to use it. At the end of each activity, make sure that you move the picture that they've just finished to the finished side. Remove it to show that it's been completed. If you don't refer to the schedule, your students aren't going to refer to the schedule and it's not really going to serve the purpose that you intended it to because your students won't understand what it's there for.

Choice boards can really, really help your students be active participants in what's happening. It allows them some control

over their learning. And even our lowest-functioning students can learn to make choices. You may need to use objects. Do you want the red crayon or the blue crayon while you're holding up a red or a blue crayon. But even our lowest functioning students who are just developing intentional communication can learn to make choices between objects. These are some examples of different choice words that we've used in different situations. There's a simple color board, or a student can choose what color, paint or marker chalk that they want to use. There's also a board in the top right corner that is different materials they may need to complete whatever activity that you're doing, and the bottom right is an example of a choice board for April student who may be visually impaired, so the items 0 are raised so the student can choose the different objects.

>> LISA PIERCE-GOLDSTEIN: We're going to move on to instructional visual supports and these are supports that you would use for direct implementation of curriculum or skill instruction. The first type of instructional visual support we're going to talk about is the adapted book, and these are books where pictures are interactive pieces are used to allow all students access to the materials. So I have two adapted books to show you. I'm going to give you a little context for the first book. I'm very fortunate to participate in a collaboration between the Boston public schools and the Boston lyric opera for implementing the music words opera curriculum, which is a curriculum created by opera America. It's a year-long curriculum, and it has two portions to it. The listen and discover portion, where the students watch and study a particular opera, and the create and produce portion, where the students create and perform their own original piece. This is a curriculum that is aligned with a number of different learning standards, ELA standards, music standards, theatre standards. And last year I adapted this curriculum for my substantially separate students with autism, and that involved creating a lot of visual supports, and adaptive books was a big piece of this. So the way that these adapted books -- this adapted books work, and this is for the listen and discover portion of the curriculum, one of my classes is watching the Elixir of Love, and what we do, I do a lot of pre-teaching before they even watch any of the opera. So this is an adapted book about the characters. And I've used a combination of text, photographs and picture symbols to allow the students to learn about the characters and to have the vocabulary to talk about them. So we have a picture of the character Adina and a picture of three ways that she can be described. This is Adina, she is beautiful. She is rich. She can read. And the picture symbols are on the right as well. This is Nemorino. He is poor. He

can't read. He is love sick for Adina. These are all characteristics of these particular characters that are important to plot, and important vocabulary for the students to have.

Now, this -- the next couple pages are from an adapted book I created about Harry Belafonte. And who doesn't like to look and listen to Harry Belafonte. We study him and several other singers during February for a project on African-American singers that I like to do each year. And for this adapted book, I created it with photographs from Google images and text. I like to keep my adapted books to ten pages or less, and I keep it a sentence or two on each page, and just very simple bullet points about the individual's life or about the plot of whatever they're going to be looking at.

So it gives a little bit of information about his birth. He was born in New York City in 1927 with a picture of New York City around 1927. He spent his childhood with his grandmother in Jamaica, where he learned about Calypso music. So adapted books and what I'm going to show you next, the topic boards that are connected to the adapted books are really useful if you're going to be working on anything to do with English language arts standards, narrative skills, identifying story grammar markers, and if you want to, as an arts instructor, teach something historical about your particular discipline, history of dance, art history, music history. So topic boards are visuals that provide vocabulary that's specific to the current topic of communication. Of conversation. And here is communication board that is meant to go along with the adapted book about Harry Belafonte. It contains a lot of vocabulary that came from the book and it allows the students to follow along with the book. So I might be showing the book on the smart board or projecting it at the front of the room, and they have all the vocabulary in front of them. And here's a topic board that is meant to go along with the Elixir of Love unit. This is a topic board that would go along with a book about the first part of Act I, and has a lot of -- has the characters on top and it has a lot of vocabulary that's important to the plot.

So we're going to look at a few more topic boards. These are activity-based topic boards, and these go with specific art or music activities. As we said earlier, just because these are art music, all of these visual supports are very flexible and be used really for any topic so if you want to use these structures for dance or theatre, they are absolutely usable for all of those.

So this is a board that I use with an iPad app called "Musyc," M-u-s-y-c, and the app itself is a series of different pictures that you can use that make different sounds. And the

app allows you to change the volume, change the speed, pause it, make it go again, so this is a board that allows students not only to interact with the app but to work on a nice collection of paired concepts that show up both in language and in music. Stop and go, fast and slow, loud and quiet, high and low.

Here's a topic board for art, and you might see that this is color coded. A lot of our boards that we've shown you so far are color-coded. And let me explain a little bit why we use that and how it works. This particular color coding system is by Emily Rubin, and there are a couple of different color coding systems. I think Carol Gussen is the other very famous one and the color coding is used to delineate different parts of speech. So as you can see the subjects are in red, the actions are in green, the describing words and adjectives are in blue. The objects are in yellow, and all those other words and phrases that you don't quite know what to do with get done in pink or purple. And the reason that we do this is to help students develop longer utterances. So you may have students who are really adept with the nouns, as Aubrey mentioned earlier, and you want them to start putting a couple of words together. So this is a good way to model -- you know, you would start by modeling, pointing to the different pictures. I, I draw with a red marker. It's just a nice way to organize it. And you don't have to use the color coding system. If you do use a color coding system, I would suggest that you make sure that the color coding system you're using is consistent across the school, because it can be confusing for students to have different color coding systems when they go to different places.

So this board here has several symbols. So I would suggest using a board like this with a student who has pretty well developed symbolic skills, and is able to select pictures with a single finger point. So, for students who don't fit that description, I'm going to show you another art board that I made for a six-year-old child in a deaf and hard-of-hearing program, who has vision and mobility challenges. He does have some emerging symbolic skills, so he can identify and access pictures of very familiar objects in his environment, but he needs much bigger pictures, and pictures that are spaced much more -- much further apart because while he can select individual pictures, he does so with a full hand select, and he needs bigger pictures because he needs to be able to see them. And a smaller picture, he would have much more difficulty seeing.

So I'm going to show you three views of this same board, and I keep a whole bunch of different vocabulary in a baggie to go along with this. This is set up for basic choice making. I want markers or crayons. It has some core vocabulary words that he might use depicted in manual signs, which he's also learning

at the bottom. Here's another view of the same communication support. This one can be used for choice making, choosing which color you want and it can also be used for answering basic who questions or color identification. Is this red, yes or no. And it can also be used for protesting and refusal. Do you want yellow? No, I don't. And here's a third view of this particular topic board set up to describe an attribute of an object. I want the yellow crayon.

We're going to talk about core vocabulary for a minute or two. Core vocabulary is something that has really gained a lot of steam on which there's a large body of research that's really become very big in the last five to ten years in the world of speech pathology and communication. And core vocabulary refers to those words in our vocabulary that are usable across multiple environments. As opposed to fringe vocabulary or topic-specific vocabulary, which is vocabulary that you would use only in one particular subject area. So, for example, if I was to say I would like to do that, that is an example of a sentence made with all core vocabulary. You could use that to express a wish in multiple environments. However, if I said I would like to dance the cha cha, that would be an example of some core vocabulary, but dance and cha cha are very topic-specific vocabulary. You wouldn't use that vocabulary at the bank necessarily. But you would in a dance class. Research shows that 80% of what we communicate is done so only with the 200 most basic words in our vocabulary. So here is a core vocabulary board. As you see up on top, it has those five vocabulary words that Dr. Shane suggests for use for protest and refusal, and all of the other words here are core vocabulary words. Something fun to do in your spare time is to take a core vocabulary board and see how many sentences you can create just using core vocabulary.

Another instructional visual support that I love to use are quizzes, or comprehension exercises that you can make with pictures. And this is something that also is part of the music words opera curriculum. I spent a lot of time at the early part of the curriculum working on comedy and tragedy and introducing them to opera and what is opera, and as part of that, we watched the rabbit of Seville, and the whale that wanted to sing at the met, which are all great opera cartoons. And one of them is a comedy and two are tragedies. And this is an example of a closed exercise or, you know, quiz. The Rabbit of Sevilla, and they get to choose between comedy or tragedy. The whale that wanted to sing at the met is a comedy or tragedy.

Here's another visual comprehension exercise and instrument sort. I have three classes of instruments and the students would simply demonstrate their understanding of different music

families, different instrument families by sorting the instruments into the different categories. Song sheets. This is great for lyrics or for dialogue, for all of you theater people, as well as people who work with vocal music, and this is when pictures are -- accompany the text for clearer understanding by individuals with literacy challenges or just by individuals that find pictures a meaningful way of connecting with the text.

So here is part of a song sheet that I created for "Let It Snow," and we know that that's coming up very soon as the snow will descend on us.

Scene and element cues. These are really useful for motor, for anything with motor and movement. So a scene cue is a digital picture that depicts action expected. This would be really useful not just for dance, but for instrument fingerings, for staging, and that goes along with an element cue, which is pictures that represent each word in the direction. So here you see our occupational therapist friend doing the downward facing dog, and each picture has the vocabulary that describes the movement in the picture.

Here's another scene cue that I put together after talking to our art teacher, and she expressed a wish that that students that she would really like to work on actual technique with materials with students and one of the things that she really wanted to work on was proper glue use because a lot of the students in her classes really don't know how much glue to use.

So using digital photographs, I created a scene cue that shows what is too much glue and what is just the right amount of glue.

So now we're going to talk about behavioral supports. I'm going to hand it over to Aubrey.

>>AUBREY RUBIN: Behavioral supports are designed to support students in using prosocial and appropriate behavior in different situations. And a lot of our students may use behavior that's appropriate in one situation but not appropriate in another. And so we use visual supports to help them understand what they're supposed to do.

The first thing that we use often are scripts, and these are visuals that tell the student what they're supposed to do in a specific situation. Even if a student has verbal language, sometimes anxiety or word-finding difficulties may prevent them from using that language in a specific situation, and having a visual associated with that language can be very helpful. For students who don't speak, scripts can provide them with a way to participate in a situation. So this is a script that was designed for a student who was doing an audition. So the first

picture tells them that they're supposed to come in and introduce themselves. Hello, my name is.

And then they need to tell the people what they're going to do. So there were two choices. Either they were going to sing or they were going to play an instrument. And then the options of what instruments they were going to play. You know, students may know very well what instrument they were going to play and then they get up there to do it and they get nervous or they forget and they would do something that we would deem as inappropriate, so having this visual support there to remind them exactly what they're supposed to do, even though they've practiced it over and over again can be very, very helpful. And then after their audition, they're supposed to say thank you. So the important thing about scripts is that you have to practice them. You can't just give the student the script in the moment. You have to have practice using the script and practice using it in the situation they're going to need it.

Sometimes that goes along with scripts but is slightly different are social stories, and these we use often when a student has done something inappropriate. So after a student has reacted inappropriately in a specific situation, we will write a social story. We also often write social stories in advance so that that doesn't happen. And they are designed to provide information to a student about what they're expected to do in this situation. Okay?

So there are three parts to a social story that you need to have. Social stories were developed by Carol Gray and she has a lot of great examples on her Web site. The first piece of it is that you have to describe the situation so it's clear to the student. They need to know when they're going to use the specific behavior in this action. It's also really, really important to acknowledge what the student is already doing. Our students don't do inappropriate things for no reason. It's either the result of a misunderstanding or a certain need that they're trying to fill. They don't just do things to do things. So it's really important to acknowledge what they are trying to do. And after you've done that, you need to provide them with the information about what they're supposed to do. And this is really important. You need to provide them not only what they're supposed to do, but why. If we don't provide them with the why, they're probably going to make a similar mistake in a different situation. It's really good to use actual pictures of the student in this situation if possible, but it's not necessary. The example that I'm going to show you does not use any of our students, but it gets the point across very clearly. So here is a social story about a student who had band and who was reacting inappropriately to some of the things that were

happening in band. I have band every day at 11:00. I love to play my oboe. I practice at home a lot. We're acknowledging what the student does.

It can be a challenge to play with other people, though. Sometimes I get upset when people play the wrong notes. Or when it's too loud. So we're acknowledging now sometimes the student has a hard time when other people make mistakes or when things get too loud. Now we're going to tell the student what they should do.

When this happens, I have a lot of choices. I can put on my headphones. I can take a break. I can go for a walk. I just need to let my aide or teacher know. And now we're going to get to the why. That way, I can get ready to play again and rehearsal doesn't have to stop. Everyone is happy. We want to make sure that the student understands that when they do things that we deem appropriate, people are going to want to be with them and they're going to be happy about what's happening.

We also can use social stories to help a student develop a new schema for an unfamiliar activity. For example if you're going on a field trip to an art museum, that may be different than, say, the children's museum, where they've gone before. So at the children's museum, you can touch everything but at the art museum you can't touch anything so writing a social story about what is expected at the art museum and what is going to happen to help them understand their day.

We talked a little bit about classroom schedules and having classroom-wide schedules, and that they can help organize your day. Some of our students may need individualized schedules to help get them through certain activities. It really depends on the level of the student, what that schedule will look like. But basically what it is is it's a visual. It can be written. It can be pictures that tells them what they're expected to do during a specific time period. So this is an example for a student who was expected to play three different instruments during music class. He would come in. He was expected to play the keyboard. That symbol was removed. Then he would play the drums. That symbol was removed. And then the guitar.

For our higher functioning students to have more language ability, oftentimes we will use checklists.

It's a little bit more what you would see a typical adult use. I write down everything that I need to do because I won't remember otherwise. So it's sort of like a daily to do list although we tend to make it a little bit smaller. So this is an example of an activity to make a sparkle bottle and these were the materials that the student needed in order to do that. So I gave the student the checklist. They got what they thought they needed. They checked it off. If they were missing something,

they went back to get it. It's really important when you're deciding between a visual schedule or a checklist to keep the student's motor ability in mind. If a student can't hold a pen or a pencil to check off the item, a checklist is going to be more difficult for them and you may want to do more of a visual schedule type support.

Countdown boards. These are really important when you're transitioning between activities. They provide very concrete information to a student about what is expected. I'm going to tell you about two different kinds of countdown boards that we use. The first is as a student completes each step of an activity or a part of an activity, one of these flaps folds down, telling them how many more things they need to do before they get to do what they really want to do.

So eight more tries and you can play the music app. Seven more tries and you can play the music app. As they do each one, I fold down the flap. How much time between each fold-down really depends on the level of the student and their focus and attention.

The dot timer is one of my favorite visual supports. I have one with me everywhere I go because I always need it. So basically what it is is it allows you to tell a student that something is going to change. So when the dots are gone, it's time to switch to percussion. I like the dot timer as opposed to an actual timer because you can control the amount of time. You can make it as long or as short as you need it to be. We always keep it in the positive instead of saying, when the five dots are gone, keyboard time is over. We tell them what's coming next. So when the five dots are gone, we are going to switch to percussion. Now there are four more dots and then we're going to switch to percussion. As I say it, I remove one of each of the dots.

First then boards are a very basic visual to discuss what's expected of the student. First you can do your scales, and then you can listen to "Let it go." First you do what I want and then you can do what you want.

>> LISA PIERCE-GOLDSTEIN: Now, you may have noticed that many of the visual supports we've used use a popular picture symbol program, and you may be saying, oh, but I don't have access to Boardmaker at my school, or at my facility. What can I do to create visual supports if I don't have this? There are a number of different things that you can do. You don't have to have Boardmaker. You can draw. If you're an artist, this should be right up your ally, but you do have to be a good artist to make a visual support drawing if it's meaningful. Stick figures work really well in a pinch, and if you draw

something that worked well, you can actually go look for a photograph or get somebody to download a picture symbol for you.

You can cut it. Cut pictures out of old books and magazines. Cut the picture off of a box that -- a toy or an instrument or an art supply came in. This is a good tactic to use with our students who have not developed solid symbolic skills, like I said, using actual objects as opposed to pictures is really the way to go with our less symbolic students. You can click it. Google images is such a great resource. There's so many pictures. I use Google images all the time.

Snap it. In the day and age of smartphones, this is something I also do often. I take photographs of the objects I want, and I E-mail them to myself, upload them, load them into documents, print them out, laminate them and you can ask for it. If you have a friendly neighborhood speech pathologist at your school or a teacher who has access to Boardmaker or another program, ask for them to help you make materials. Personally, I can tell you that if a teacher of the arts came to me and said I would really like to make some visual supports to make my class function with more communication, I would be thrilled. So hopefully that's a resource that you can also take advantage of.

Here are some helpful Web sites. I won't go over each one of them right now, but at your leisure, please explore them. They're filled with lots of interesting, useful things. I'll call your attention to the one at the bottom, news to you and symbol sticks. Symbol sticks is the competitor. So check them out. Here are our E-mail addresses. If you think of questions after we've all signed off, please feel free to E-mail us. And before we go to questions, I just like to take a moment to give a big thanks to the Kennedy Center for having us on this webinar this afternoon. I am a Washington, D.C. native, so having anything to do with the Kennedy Center is very exciting. And we would also like to give a big thank you to all of our friends and colleagues who are teachers of the arts who are kind enough to share with us pictures of their spaces, to allow us to interview them, to answer our questions, to allow us access to their rooms. We really, really appreciate all of the contributions that you made to this presentation.

And so without further ado, I will hand this over to Lisa and we can take questions.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Well, thank you, Lisa and Aubrey. We are so excited to have you as presenters.

So I'm going to ask all of you, the webinar attendees, to type in your questions and I will read them out to Lisa and Aubrey.

Terry says thank you so much for all of the wonderful information.

>> LISA PIERCE-GOLDSTEIN: You're welcome.

>> LISA DAMICO: And also thank you to your colleagues. We've had several people tweeting using the hashtag, so that's always exciting to have a little action over there on twitter.

>> LISA PIERCE-GOLDSTEIN: Yeah, I follow VSA on twitter myself. But, of course, I'll have to check out the tweets later.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. So we have a question from Sara. When creating a visual support for a script, how would you show the difference between the student's lines versus the lines of all other actors?

>> AUBREY RUBIN: That's a good question. Yeah, you can color code them. You can actually create -- well, you could size code them as well, giving two different scripts to, you know, if you have two different individuals, you can have the script that you give to the person doing Part A, have the Part A lines in a bigger size, and the Part B lines, smaller, just to, you know, give them a cue, but to help them know that that's not theirs. You could put their picture -- you could put the picture of the speaker next to their line that they're supposed to say.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Scott would like to know what's a good baseline list of core vocabulary?

>> There's lots of different lists that you can go to online. It really depends on the level of communicator, which core vocabulary that you're going to use. The slide that you saw had 20. That's one that I tend to start with, with my students, but Gayl van Tatenhove is sort of the vocabulary guru and she has lists upon lists upon lists on her Web site that show you the sort of order that words typically develop.

>> LISA DAMICO: And I see that Lourdis has her hand raised. I'm going to unmute you so you can ask your question now.

>> Yeah, I just wanted to say hello to Lisa and Aubrey. Thank you so much for presenting this. Very interesting. Thank you. That's all I wanted to say.

>> LISA DAMICO: All right. Well, thank you. Now the questions are pouring in. Barbara says I work with children with autism, ages two and a half to five, all with very cognitive skills. So when I create a social story, I usually use many lines on one page. Do you feel it is more effective to use just one message or point per page rather than a few?

>> LISA PIERCE-GOLDSTEIN: I think that really, really depends on the student. Like I said with my adapted books, I do like to keep it, you know, down to fairly simple, one major point per page, but again, it's really going to be an individual thing to your students, and of course you guys are all the experts on your particular students and what's going on in your

particular rooms. So yes, I do like to keep it simple and to a page, but there are some students who can certainly handle more than one bullet point per page.

>> LISA DAMICO: Okay. Our next question is from Mia. With your countdown boards, is there a reason that you count down instead of up? In other words, why wouldn't you add dots as time went on instead of taking them away?

>> AUBREY RUBIN: Because you never know how many dots are going to come. If you start at ten, you know that it's always going to end at one, but if you're counting up, the student doesn't necessarily know that it's going to end at ten. The same with the dots. It's very clear that there are only going to be five dots and when the five dots are gone, that's it. If you're counting up, you don't always know how many are going to show up. The other reason is a lot of our students use token boards so when they're working for a specific item or action, they have to earn five stars or check marks before they get that item, and we want it to be different than that. We don't want them to have to feel like they're earning their dots. This is just something to let them know that something is ending, and it's sort of like using a kitchen timer. The kitchen timer counts down, not up. So those are sort of the reasons behind that.

>> LISA DAMICO: Any other questions?

Does anyone have questions they are unable to answer on the worksheet?

We are getting silence so I think I'm going to take that as a no and I think you all have answered everyone's questions, Lisa and Aubrey, so I am going to take control back to my screen.

And with that I would like to thank everyone for attending today. I hope that you will join us again next week on Tuesday after you have lots of turkey at Thanksgiving, and have been back in the office. I'm going to ask you once I sign off to complete -- there's a quick seven-question survey that's going to pop up. I read through all the answers, I used them to help improve the webinar series, so please take a moment to answer that. And thank you for joining us.

If you have any other questions or comments, please feel free to contact me, Lisa Damico. You've got my contact information, and I hope to see you next week! Thanks, Lisa and Aubrey!

>> Thank you.

>> LISA DAMICO: Bye-bye, everyone!

[Webinar concluded]