What is the Common Core Vocabulary?

Think of "The 20-80 rule" … "Core vocabulary" describes a small set of basic words in any language that are used frequently and across contexts. We use approximately 20% of our words 80% of the time and 80% of our words 20% of the time. Those 20% are our "Core" words.

So what is "Core Vocabulary"?

* The short answer – Core vocabulary is a statistical concept related to overall word frequency

* The most frequently occurring words account for 80% of the actual words we speak on a daily basis

* To break it down even more – 85% of the words we use daily come from a set of fewer than 350-400 words

* Core vocabulary words include a small number of flexible words from different word classes that are useful across multiple environments and topics with a high frequency of use

* Core vocabulary words demonstrate a variety of communicative functions allowing multiple communicative opportunities with potential for expanding utterance length

* The top 4 communicative functions that children demonstrate are:
requesting, making choices, rejecting, responding

* The Core board that is used in our school was developed by Oakland Schools. The 32 most common words we use make up the Core 32 board. (see attached document below).

* Fringe words are words that are used 20-25% of the time during daily communication. They are applicable to specific topics and environments and may include objects, items, feelings, or descriptions.

* Staff models the Core board across all academic settings by pointing to and saying the core words. Staff also uses fringe words to complete phrases using core words. For example, in the sentence "I like ice cream", the words "I like" are core words and the word "ice cream" is a fringe word. Fringe words may be represented visually via pictures, gestures, or pointing to the actual object/feeling/event.

* The big ideas to using the Core board is that frequent, commonly used words are represented visually in a chart format that does not change. This consistent word location helps to support visual memory. It is our job to model visually presented language.

* It's a fact: research shows that using the Core board correlates with the improvement of natural speech. It has also shown to improve behavior, attention, independence and class participation.

* Please talk with your child's teacher or Speech Pathologist if you have questions about using the Core board at home. We're here to help!!

Characteristics of a Core Vocabulary

Core Words Expanded Core	**Fringe Words**
Small # of words	Very large # of words
Used about 80% of the time in daily communication	Used about 20% of the time in daily communication
Useful across all environments	Useful across limited environments
Applicable to most topics and environments	Applicable to limited topics and environs
Contains a variety of parts of speech: pronouns, verbs, descriptors etc.	Contains mostly proper names/nouns
High frequency of use	Low frequency of use
Words with more flexibility from different word classes	Words with less flexibility/limited word classes
Can demonstrate larger variety of communicative	Can demonstrate fewer communicative functions
Allows for more communicative opportunities	Allows for fewer communicative opportunities
Potential for expanding utterance length	Less potential for expanding utterance length
Consistency of symbol location	Random/changing locations or multiple pages to search

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