

# Panel of AAC Consultants Address Implementing AAC Systems in Schools

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# Learning Objectives

- Learning Objective 1: As a result of attending & participating in this session, the participant will be able to list 3 implementation supports to use throughout the day
- Learning Objective 2: As a result of attending & participating in this session, the participant will be able to apply 2 facilitator support strategies for scaffolding communication of an AAC using student.
- Learning Objective 3: As a result of attending & participating in this session, the participant will be able to name a minimum of 1 data collection resource for measuring student communication progress.

# Speaker Disclosures

- Jennifer Schubring has no Financial or Non-Financial Relationships to disclose.
- About me:
  - Currently employed part-time by the Green Bay Area Public Schools – the 4<sup>th</sup> largest district in Wisconsin with over 21,000 students.
  - Began a private practice: Building AAC, LLC in May 2018 as there were no local therapy practices within a two-hour distance that filled this niche.
  - I've specialized in AAC since first starting college. Worked at the Communication Aids and Systems Clinic (CASC) at the Waisman Center at UW-Madison as an undergrad. Graduated from Penn State in 2005. Had a graduate assistantship to work with Dr. Janice Light.
  - Have worked in the schools focusing on AAC for over 12 school years.

# Building AAC : Our Beliefs

Things we believe to be true:

- There are no prerequisites for AAC – NJC supports this!
- Communication is multi-model
- AAC does not hinder the development of verbal speech
- We should be implementing interventions that are evidenced-based:
  - Aided language stimulation/input
  - Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
  - NOT RPM/FC
- A little bit of core goes a long way!
- Teach a variety of communicative functions –
  - There's more to life than cookies! – Janice Light
- Make learning meaningful
- Goal is always SNUG
- Use a prompting hierarchy
- There's something to be said for motor planning
- Presume competence/presume potential

# Building AAC – The MYTHS!

- We also mostly agree on the common myths of AAC:
  - Practical AAC: <https://practicalaac.org/practical/aac-myth-buster-wrap-up/>
  - Tobii Dynavox: <https://www.tobiidynavox.com/en-us/learn/what-is-aac/common-questions/>
  - Speak for Yourself: <https://www.speakforyourself.org/uncategorized/myth-augmentative-alternative-communication-aac-pre-requisite-skills/>
  - Speech Science: <http://www.speechscience.org/aac/2017/8/25/aac-101-myths-and-misconceptions-part-4>

So, if we agree on so much...

WHY do we continue to struggle to get school teams to follow through with implementation?

## DO's and DON'Ts of AAC

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Do use the AAC system to talk yourself  | ✗ Don't expect the AAC user to communicate without you modelling how    |
| ✓ Do aim high   | ✗ Don't demand prerequisite skills                                      |
| ✓ Do use a well designed, comprehensive vocabulary e.g. core vocabulary or PODD | ✗ Don't provide an AAC system with only a handful of choices            |
| ✓ Do provide enough wait time   | ✗ Don't do all the talking  |
| ✓ Do ask open ended questions   | ✗ Don't ask questions the AAC user knows you already know the answer to |
| ✓ Do focus on key words when modelling  | ✗ Don't think you need to always model grammatically complete sentences |
| ✓ Do respect multi-modal communication  | ✗ Don't say "And now say it on your talker"                             |
| ✓ Do allow exploration and access to the whole vocabulary                       | ✗ Don't create custom pages for specific activities                     |
| ✓ Do make sure AAC is available all day, every day                              | ✗ Don't limit access to the AAC system                                  |
| ✓ Do describe what you want to say using core words                             | ✗ Don't focus on adding lots of vocabulary                              |

Learn more: [www.assistiveware.com/aac-do-dont](http://www.assistiveware.com/aac-do-dont)

# Belief – a definition



Merriam-Webster SINCE 1828

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belief

DICTIONARY | THESAURUS

## belief noun

be·lief | \ bə-'lēf \

### Definition of *belief*

- 1 : a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing

// her *belief* in God

// a *belief* in democracy

// I bought the table in the *belief* that it was an antique.

// contrary to popular *belief*
- 2 : something that is accepted, considered to be true, or held as an opinion : something believed

// an individual's religious or political *beliefs*

*especially* : a tenet or body of tenets held by a group

// the *beliefs* of the Catholic Church
- 3 : conviction of the truth of some statement or the reality of some being or phenomenon especially when based on examination of evidence

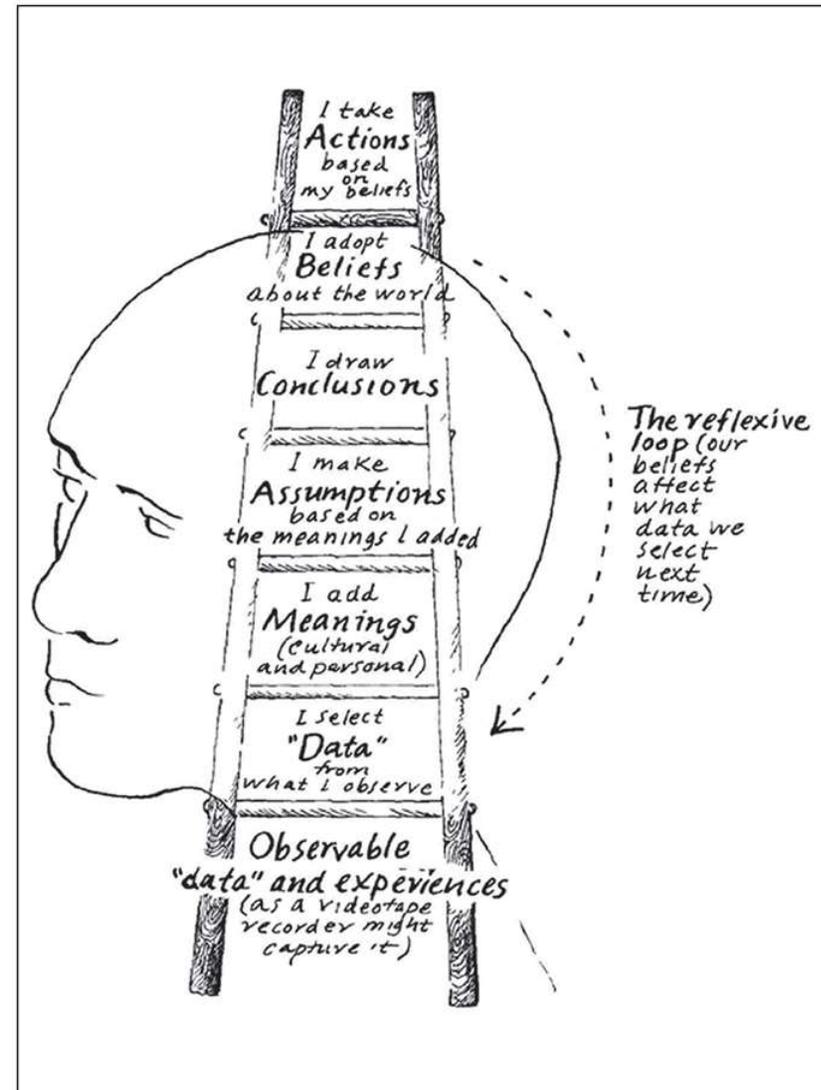
// *belief* in the validity of scientific statements

# A few quotes about beliefs...

- Have **convictions**. Be friendly. **Stick to your beliefs** as they stick to theirs. Work as hard as they do.  
-Eleanor Roosevelt
- I am a **fierce patriot**, and I try to be outspoken about my beliefs  
-Martha Plimpton
- Change will come slowly, across generations, because **old beliefs die hard** even when demonstrably false.  
-E.O. Wilson

# Where do beliefs come from?

- The Ladder of Influence
  - Actions
  - Beliefs
  - Conclusions
  - Assumptions
  - Added Meaning
  - Selected data
  - Observable data and experiences
- Chris Argyris (1990), Senge, P. (1994)



# A few more quotes about beliefs...

- Remember, we see the world **not as it is but as we are**. Most of us see through the eyes of our fears and our limiting beliefs and our false assumptions.

–Robin S. Sharma

- We tend to **accept information that confirms** our prior beliefs and **ignore or discredit information that does not**. This confirmation bias settles over our eyes like distorting spectacles for everything we look at.

–Kyle Hill

Is this why “presuming competence” is such a hard concept to get people to buy into? When we change it to “presuming potential” does that make it easier for us to fit into our belief system?

# How do you provide services in the schools?

- Are you a consultant?
- Do you come in as an “expert”?
- We all have a PowerPoint or two that talks about best practices in AAC. We’ve been energized by the presentation and then a few weeks later discouraged that nobody is out there implementing what we presented!
- How can we be more effective?

**Coaching** is an essential component of an effective professional development program. **Coaching** can build will, skill, knowledge, and capacity because it can go where no other professional development has gone before: into the **intellect, behaviors, practices, beliefs, values, and feelings** of an educator. (Aguilar, 2013, p. 8)

## Transformational Coaching – What I’m learning...

- There’s a lot of different models, it’s kind of like a robust AAC apps. They’re mostly all good, and have a lot of the same ideas. Pick one, learn it, and practice it so that you get more comfortable implementing it.
- What I’ve been reading...
  - The Art of Coaching: Effective Strategies for School Transformation by Elena Aguilar
  - Educational Coaching: A Partnership for Problem Solving by Cathy A. Toll
- Look for state resources-I’m doing an online book study right now through the Department of Public Instruction
- Regional trainings on coaching in my state through the [RTI Center](#).
- Made this my personal practice goal and I’m a part of a professional learning community in my district

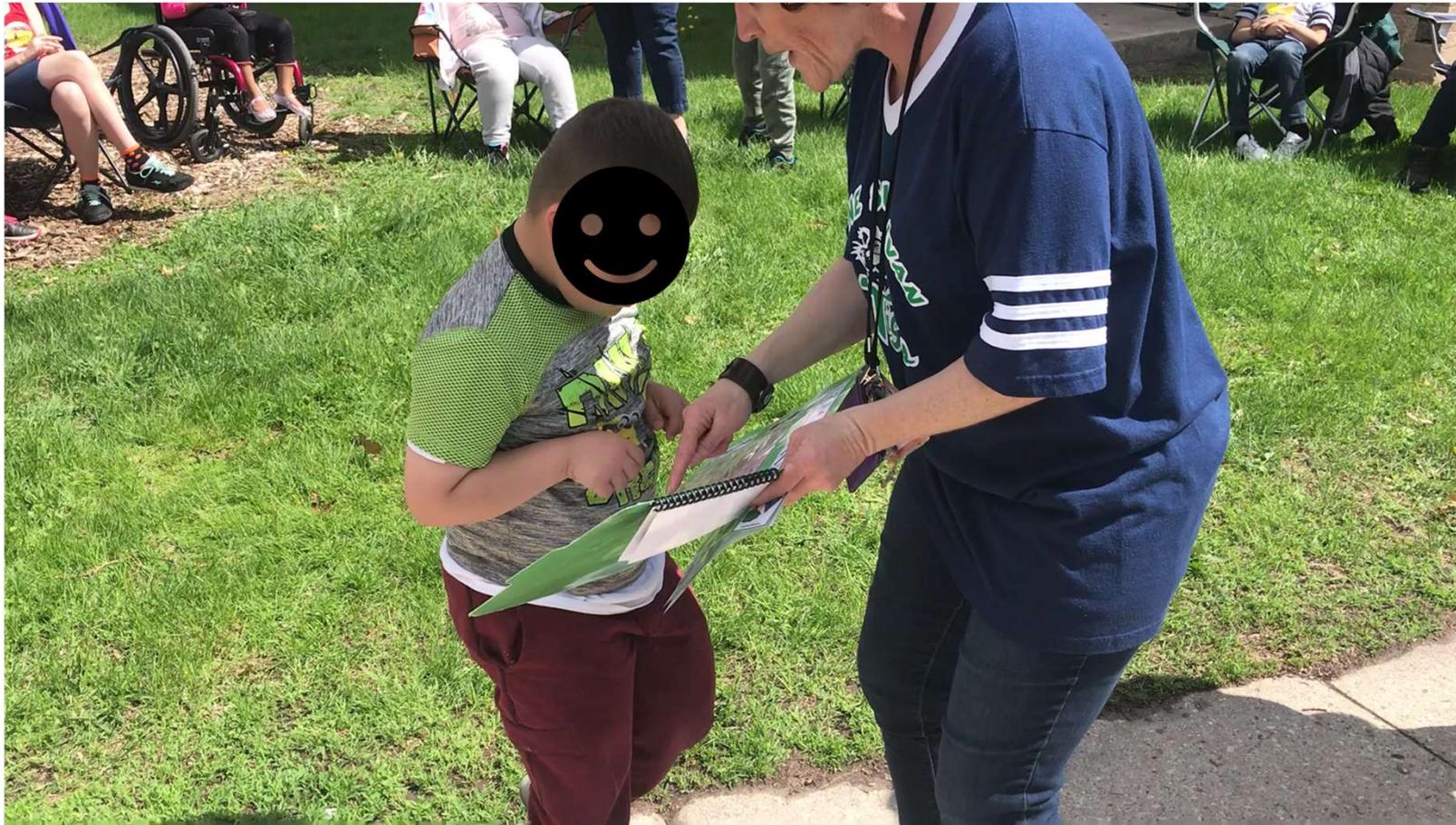
# Successful Teams-Changing beliefs:

- District-wide and at Sullivan Elementary
  - Year 1:
    - Expert model: provided in-service training to all of SLPs at monthly meetings about best practices in AAC
      - We got more referrals for consultations for specific students
        - Two referrals from Sullivan for SGDs – started both bilingual students out on P2G with a 7 x 11 grid size → moved from PECS books.
        - Students in ID rooms used low-tech PECS books, BIGMacks, GoTalks, and the teacher used her personal iPad mini with an SGD app for circle-time activities to provide voice output.

# Successful Teams-Changing beliefs:

- District-wide and at Sullivan Elementary
  - Year 2:
    - Myself and a group of SLPs developed a collaborative learning team (CLT) around core vocabulary
      - Our AT referrals were sky rocketing and we implemented a wait-list ½ way through the year.
    - SLP at Sullivan continued to share more about core vocabulary with ID teachers. SLP had already been implementing some low-tech core with the students after hearing more about core year one.
    - SLP wanted me to come in to present more information to the two teachers she worked with. The team, 2 SLPs and 2 ID teachers, decided to move forward with core vocabulary.
      - Got large core boards for their rooms
      - Developed smaller low-tech boards
        - File folder boards that added some fringe
          - The team found the Cool Tools boards and developed their own version-liked having access to some fringe words

# CAMPING – Year 2 at Sullivan



# CAMPING – Year 2 at Sullivan



# How does your s'more taste?



# Successful Teams-Changing beliefs:

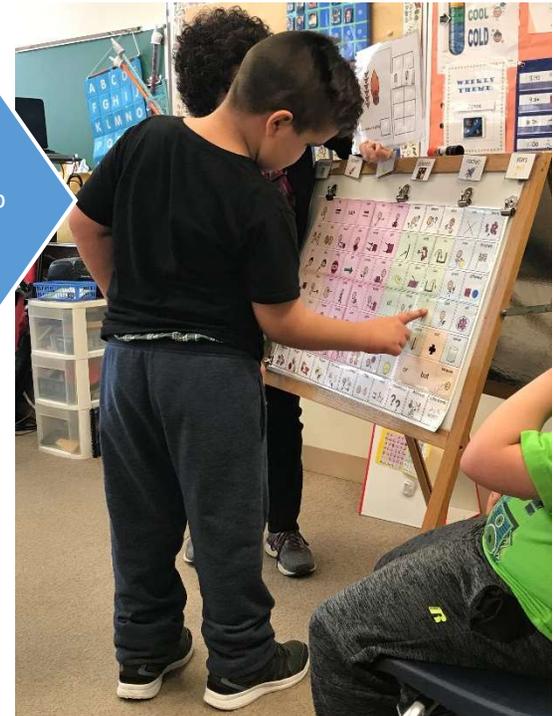
- Embedded myself in their team
- District-wide and at Sullivan Elementary
  - Year 3:
    - Joined Sullivan's Collaborative Learning Team (CLT).
      - The CLT meets weekly (I join biweekly). They use this time to plan out their core words of the week.
        - Pick out 2-4 core words and 5-6 fringe vocabulary that relates to their theme or Unique Learning Systems monthly lessons.
        - We developed a "pre test" and "post test" assessment to monitor progress.



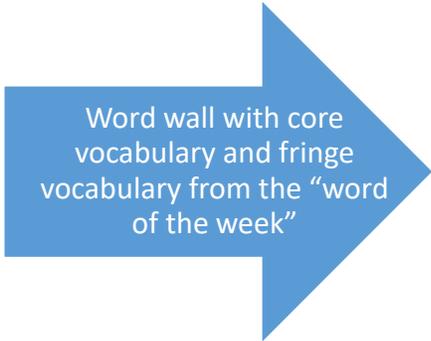
Mini Core boards at the table for small groups or individual work



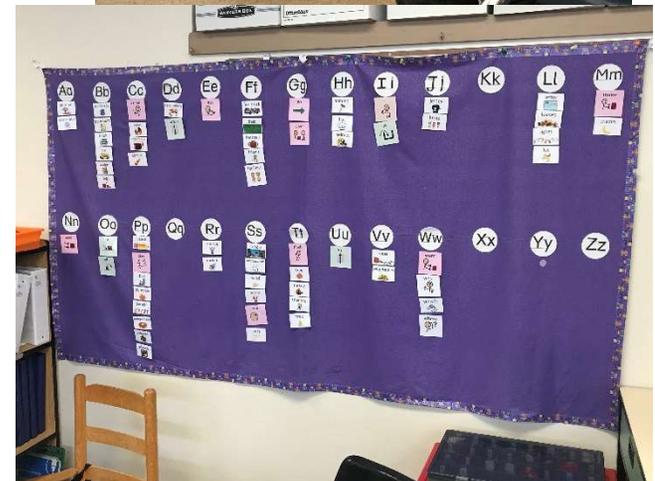
Core Posters in the classroom for group instruction

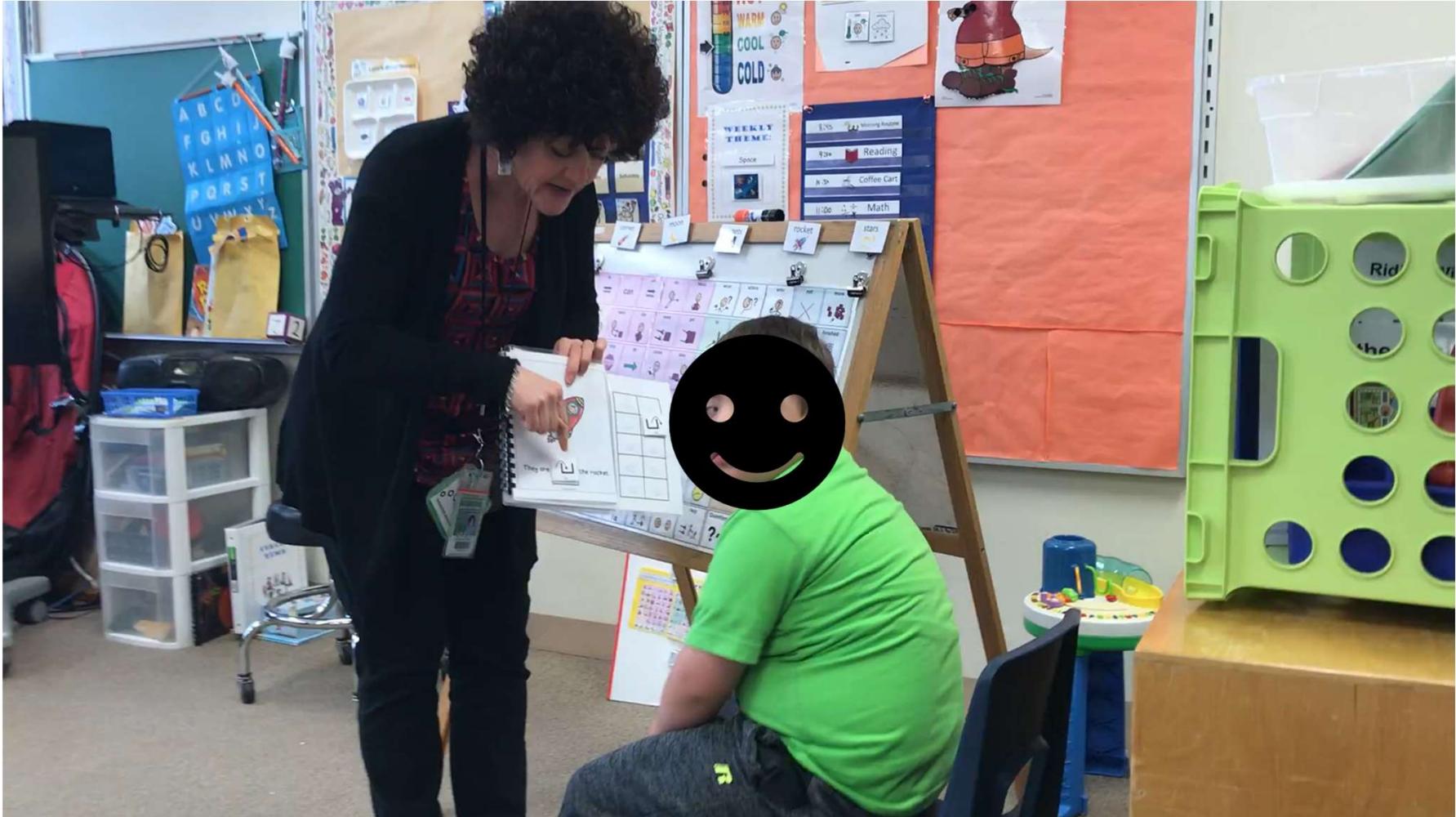


File folder "cool tools" communication systems & mini versions to take to classes

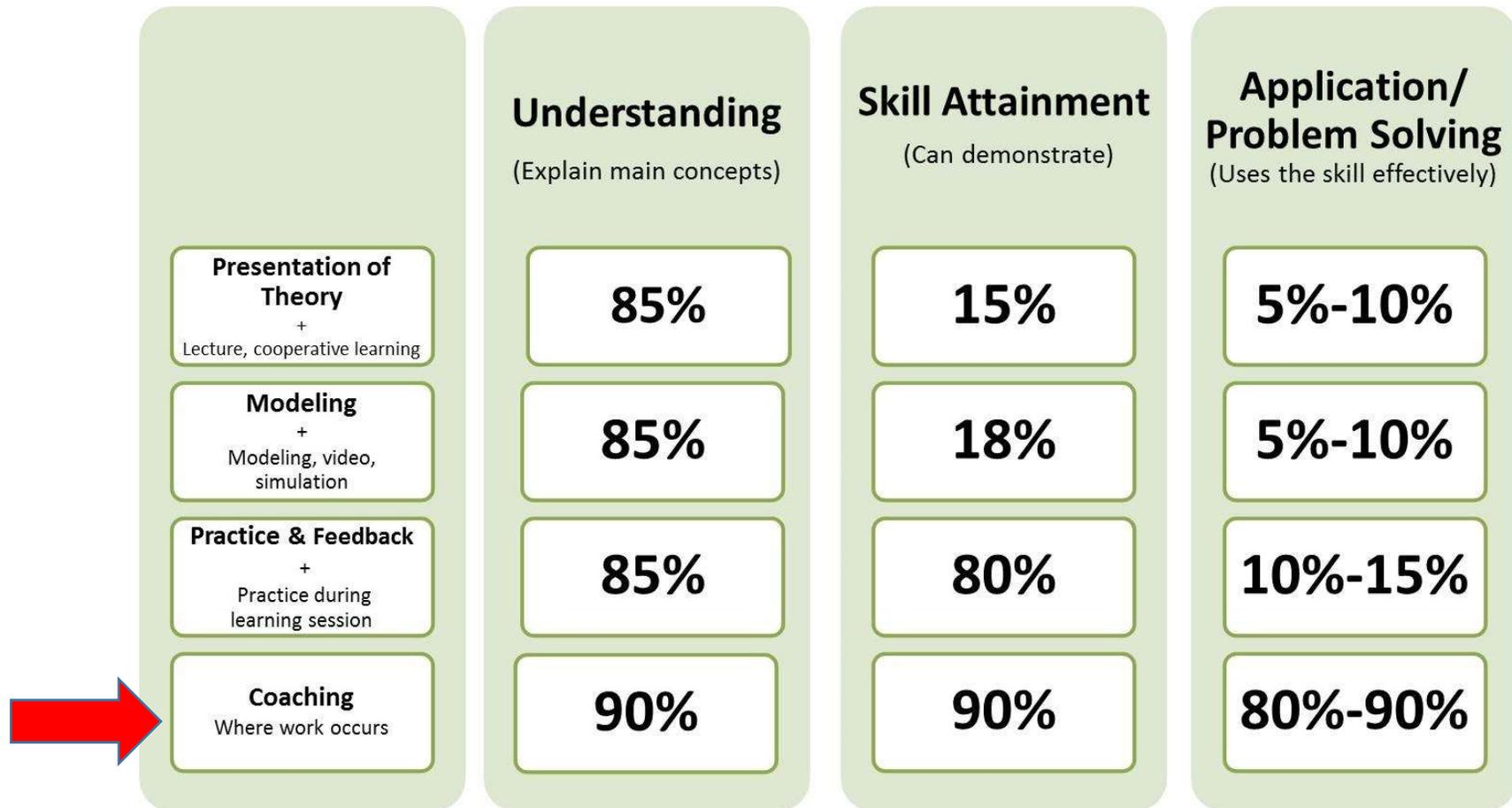


Word wall with core vocabulary and fringe vocabulary from the "word of the week"





# Coaching-Change can happen!



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- Handouts
  - Handouts shared by the speakers are available for 3 months after the conference ends. [Find handouts here](http://www.atia.org/orlandohandouts) (www.atia.org/orlandohandouts).

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