

Caroline Lafferty

Professor Sheppard

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### PECS Assignment

This PECS board was modeled after a student I used to work with in high school. She is autistic with a limited vocabulary. She mainly uses signs to help guide her throughout the day, and usually gets sensory overload if she finds that the environment that she is in is too noisy, or if there is too much going on in the classroom. I developed this tool because while I was working with her, I would notice that the conversations between her and her aid were very limited, and that it usually took awhile for them to understand what she wanted to say or do. This PECS board was modeled after her schedule throughout the day, and noticing the classes that she would go to, along with her entry into school and her exit from school. This was also developed after noticing some of the signs that her and her aid were working on during the day, and the actions that she would have to take while in school. During the day, she would have to go to her core classes, such as science, math, english, and social studies. She would also have art and gym built into her daily schedule, so those were implemented as well. I also chose to include some topics that she could talk about with her aid to make it easier to communicate with, and some that would allow for her aid to see how she was feeling, and to see if a sensory overload could be prevented.

According to Wati's *Assistive Technology for Education*, "it is critical to keep in mind that augmentative/alternative communication systems are not meant to replace speech" (2). Because of this, I wanted to make sure that she had to use signs to enhance communication between her and her aid, and not to replace it, as the article stated. Because of this, I included big signs for them to use, and if she wanted something specific, she would have to use her signs to communicate with her aid, or the people around her. The big signs would be the different classes and activities that she goes throughout the day, and then people who she might refer to in a conversation. Because she struggles with sensory overload, I included a "too loud," "break," and "listen" symbols in the board so that the teacher will urgently understand that she is feeling overwhelmed and can either work through the situation with her, or allow her to go back to the support classroom and take a break and return when she feels ready.

This tool will be implemented in the classroom, and will be used throughout the day as she goes throughout her classes, since this PECS board mainly had things that go with her school schedule. Because this would be her first time using a PECS board, this would be implemented slowly, with the aid's assistance by pointing to the board and then allowing her to mirror the interaction so that she knows what each of the symbols mean, and what will happen when she points to one of the symbols. Once she becomes familiar with the symbols, the aid will allow for her to start conversations by pointing to the PECS board and talking about the symbol that she pointed to. Once she is completely comfortable with the one board provided, she will then learn a new board, which will be added onto the first board that has to do with interactions and conversations that she might have at home with her family members. The board will be taught to the parents, and the parents will have the opportunity to use it at home to try and enhance conversations with her.

Overall, the PECS board will begin by first helping her in the classroom, and letting the aid know what she may need, but can grow into conversations that she can use out of the classroom as well.