

TEACHING METHODS: *THE DESCRIPTIVE TEACHING MODEL*

~description of utilizing open ended question and teaching concepts with device specific vocabulary~

Most curriculum materials identify “key” content words in the lessons. These are often specific nouns. To test student knowledge of the curriculum, teachers often ask Closed Questions with only one acceptable answer in mind. Open Questions allow for creative more extended responses. Referential style questions necessitate the team to program specific content words that will only be used for that lesson, thus putting a huge programming burden on the team. Descriptive style questions allow the user of AAC to answer using high frequency, core vocabulary. The student gets repeated practice using those common words in a variety of contexts.

“Using a descriptive style, the teacher mentions and references the context-specific words, then teaches concepts behind the words using high frequency, re-usable, common words” (Van Tatenhove 2009). These high frequency words are the core vocabulary on the speech-generating device.

Important: The teacher must have access to the available vocabulary in the AAC system(s). This can be a document listing the words and phrases available or hard copies of the pages from the system.

The following chart shows the difference in question asking between the referential and descriptive styles of teaching using two different lessons. (Van Tatenhove 2009)

Science: *The Nature of Matter*

REFERENTIAL STYLE (Closed)	DESCRIPTIVE STYLE (Open)
Q: Name 3 states of matter. A: solid, liquid, gas	Q: Describe something when it is a solid. A: Keep shape, hard, hard all the way through
Q: What is the effect of extreme cold on a liquid? A: freezes	Q: What does it mean for something to evaporate? A: change, go from 1 way to another, go away

Social Studies: *Famous Explorers*

REFERENTIAL SYTLE (Closed)	DESCRIPTIVE STYLE (Open)
Q: Who discovered Florida? A: Ponce de Leon	Q: Why did Ponce de Leon get to name Florida? A: get there first, first there, find it
Q: Where did he land? A: St. Augustine, Florida	Q: Why is St. Augustine important? A: where went, where started looking around
Q: What does the legend say he was looking for? A: gold and the fountain of youth	Q: How successful was Ponce de Leon in his search for gold and the fountain of youth? A: not find it, not there

Van Tatenhove. G. (2009). *Building Language Competence with Students Using AAC Devices: Six Challenges*. Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 18(2), 38-47.

