Measuring Teacher Communication with Children with IDD during Shared Story Reading

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Introduction

- 1 in 6 children in the U.S. have an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD; CDC, 2022).
- Children with IDD vary in the amount of support they need, including language and literacy development
- Children who use augmentative alternative communication (AAC) specifically struggle in literacy acquisition despite the breadth of literacy interventions designed for children with IDD who have limited speech ability (Yorke et al., 2021).
- One barrier to successful implementation of literacy instruction is the resources and training afforded to teachers, particularly in preschool classrooms where children with a range of abilities are actively developing early literacy skills alongside one another (Barton & Smith, 2015).
- It is not directly known how preschool teachers of young children with limited speech are creating an environment for communication during literacy instruction - particularly shared storybook reading.
- To better understand how teachers communicate during shared book reading activities with children with IDD and a range of speech, language and literacy abilities, data can be collected using the original Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (Pentimonti et al., 2012) that captures how teachers are engaging students in whole-group reading activities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the communication forms, functions, and strategies that are used by teachers when communicating with children with intellectual and or developmental disabilities in whole group settings.

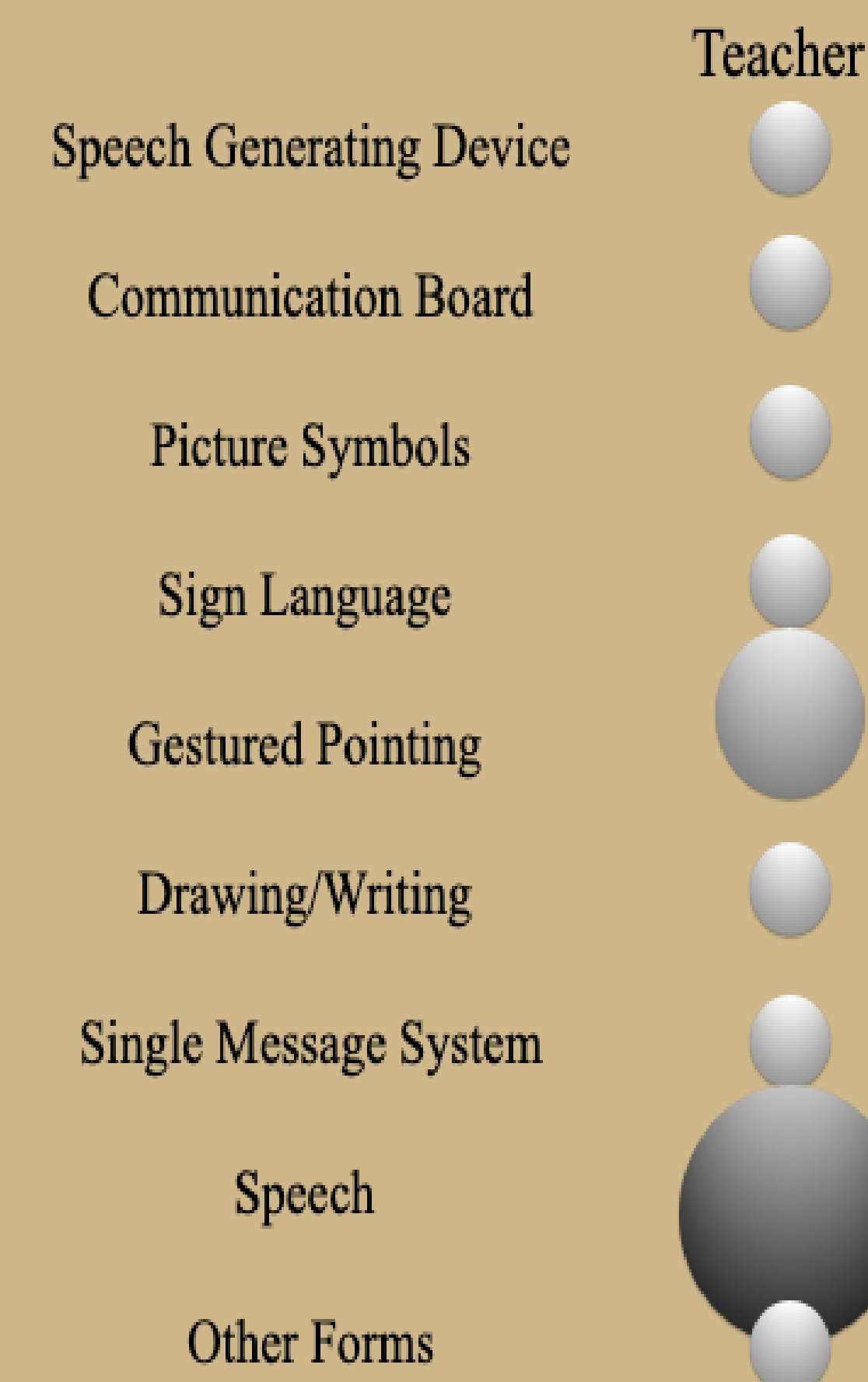| Communication	Definition	Example
Form	The *modality* of transmitting the function of communication	Speech, AAC, ASL
Function	*How* teachers communicate with their students	Yes/no questions, reading verbatim, behavior management
Strategy	Evidence-based methods that *support the communication* of children with IDD	Pointing, gesturing, wait time

Methods

This is an observational and survey study
- Participants: 15 childcare providers/teachers of preschool age children, and 15 children with developmental disabilities who use limited speech between ages of 3-5
- Teacher communication during whole-group shared reading activities that included children with limited speech ability were video recorded.
- Teacher communication was transcribed and coded using the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) by adapting an existing validated measure of shared storybook reading, the Systematic Assessment of Book Reading (SABR)

Preliminary Results

Communication Form — Teacher: Speech Generating Device, Communication Board, Picture Symbols, Sign Language, Gestured Pointing, Drawing/Writing, Single Message System, Speech, Other Forms

Communication Function — Teacher: Reading Verbatim, Repeat/Recast/Extend, Yes/No Questions, Basic WH-Question, Why-Question, How-Question, Turn-Talking Question, Redirection/Reminders, Book and Print Conventions, Letters/Words/Writing, Character References, Feelings/Emotions, Define/Elaborate Vocabulary, Act Out/Pretend

Strategies that Support Communication — Teacher: Use of Visuals, Gestures/Pointing, Navigation to Relevant Vocabulary, Modeling Vocabulary, Vocabulary Easily Accessible and Available, Extensive Wait Time, No Demand for Child Output, Prompting Vocabulary Use, Proximity Adjustments

Most of Activity 75 – 100%
Some of Activity 25 – 74%
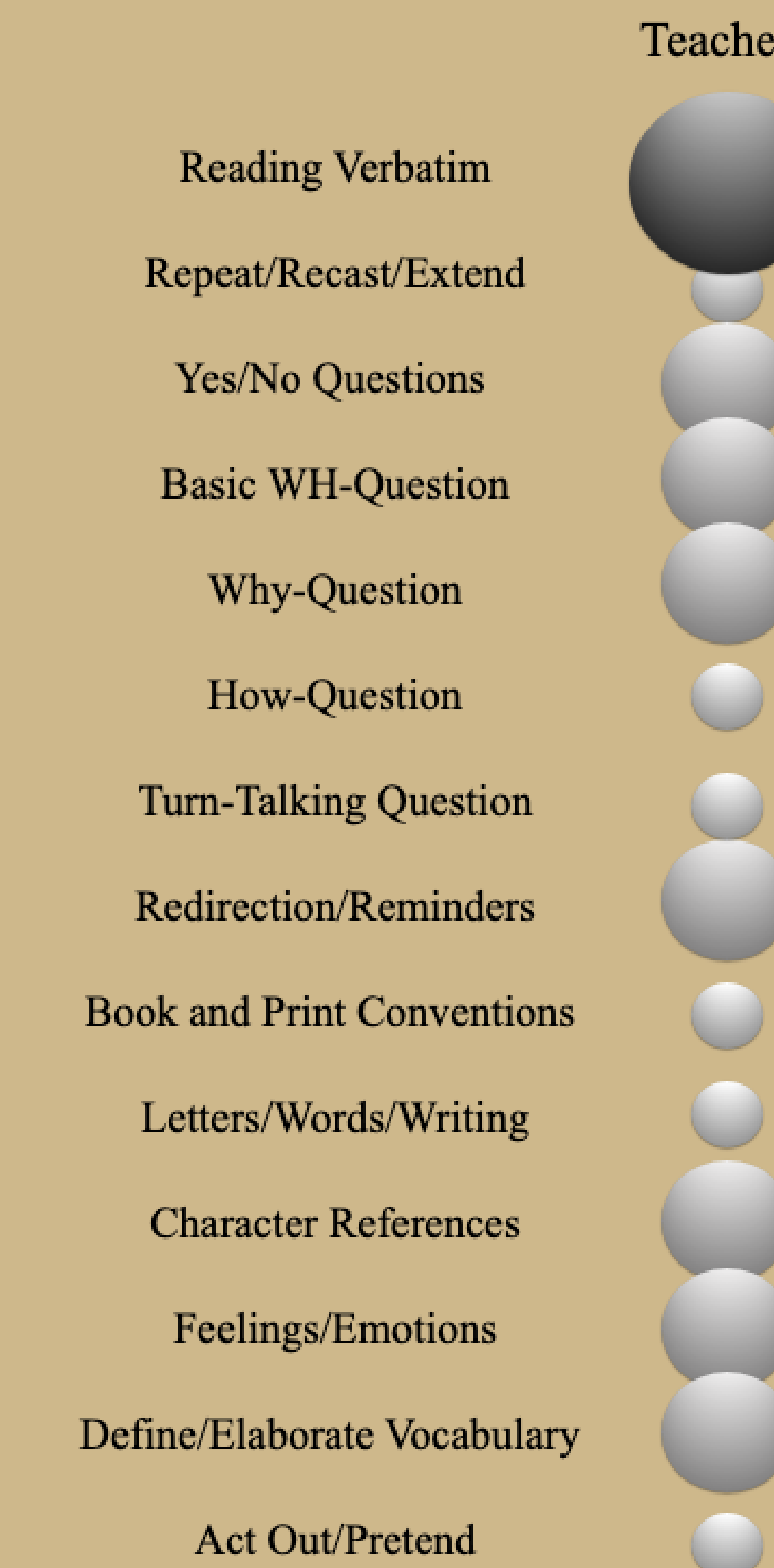Least documented 0 – 24%

Discussion

- Many people see inclusion as giving everyone a seat at the table, or in this case, a seat in front of the story. However, inclusion is not truly seen unless everyone is given the ability to participate in the given activity.
- Results show that children have very limited opportunity to participate in shared reading if they are not using speech. To give children with IDD opportunities to communicate, children may benefit from access to AAC devices.
- Many teachers primarily use speech to communicate with their students. This might create challenges for students who do not communicate primarily via speech.
- There may be a need for more training for teachers with children with IDD in their classrooms in order to learn how to best support these children to maximize participation and create a truly inclusive classroom.
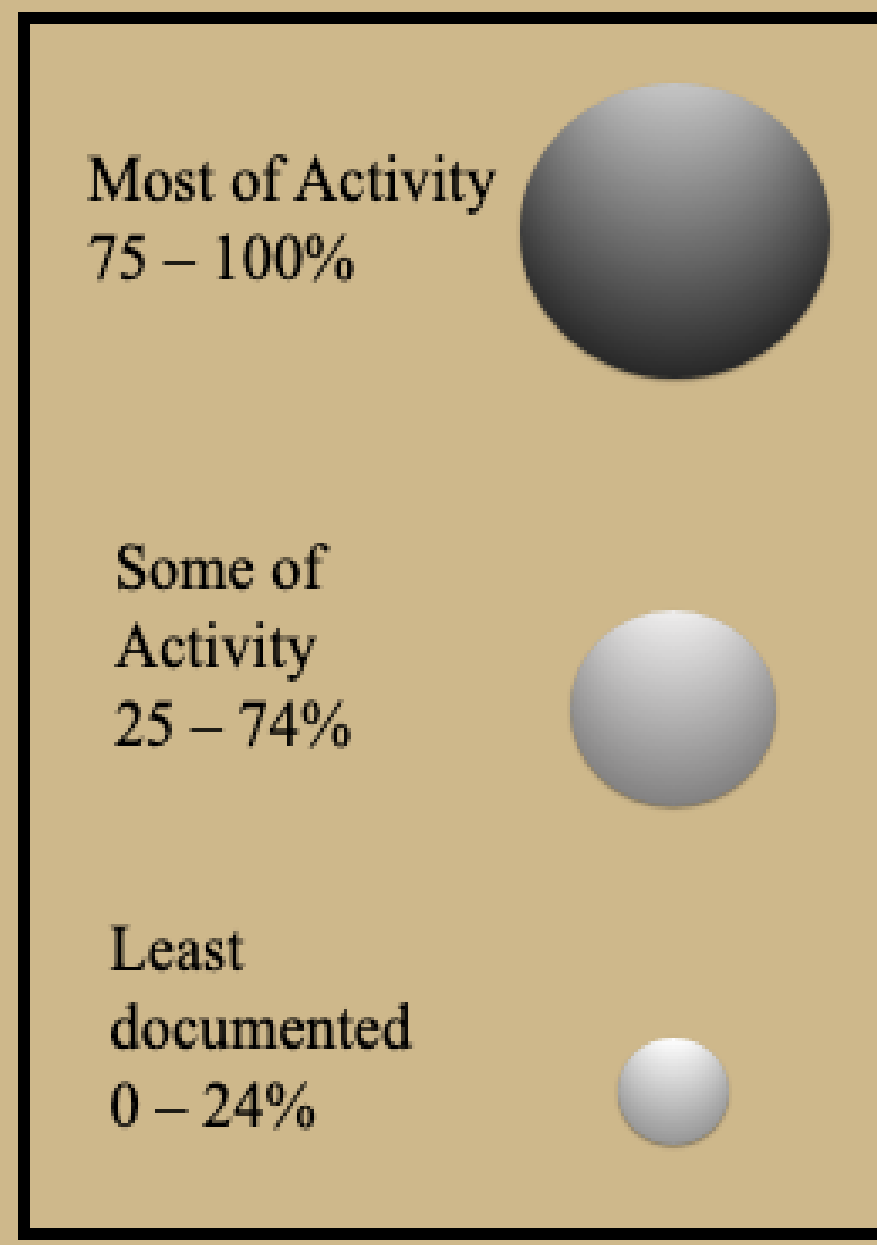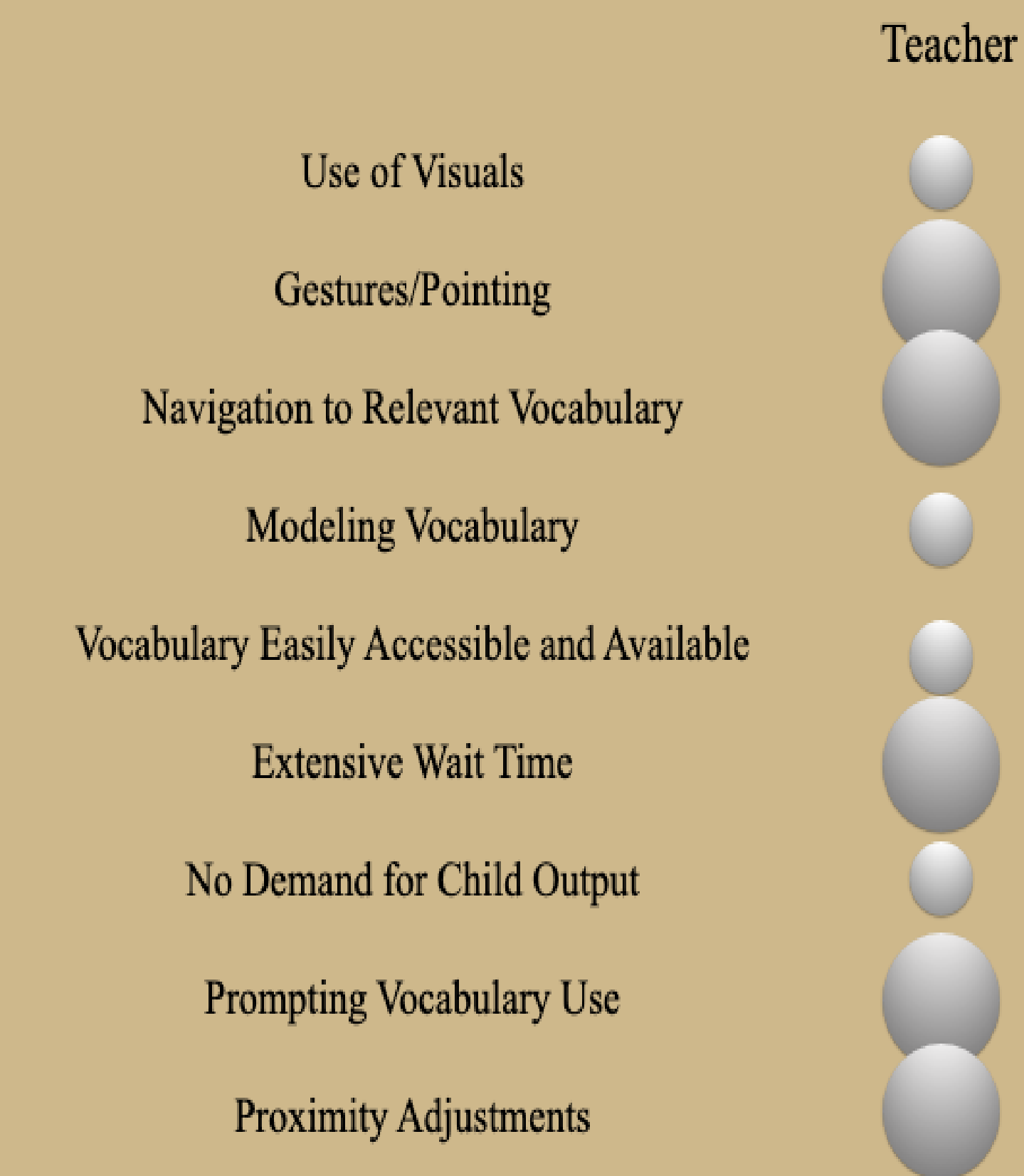
Acknowledgements

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References

Please scan the QR code to access the references. If you have any questions about this presentation, you can email me at ess21@fsu.edu.