



## Visual Scene Displays (VSD): New AAC Interfaces for Persons with Aphasia (Review)

Articles at a Glance · Pathways for Aphasia

Dietz, A., McKelvey, M., and Beukelman, D. (2006). Visual Scene Displays (VSD): New AAC Interfaces for Persons with Aphasia. *Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 15, 13–17.

### Background Information

Individuals with chronic aphasia often need to supplement natural speech and language capabilities with a form of augmentative or alternative communication (AAC). AAC may range from low technology forms (e.g., communication books, pen/paper, etc.) to high technology solutions like speech generating devices. A review of the literature suggests that many individuals with severe or chronic aphasia may be limited in using AAC strategies secondary to the symbolic representation or navigational process within a system. Specifically, the language impairment limits the ability to understand a printed message or icon, combine words into messages, or locate specific information in a book. Visuo-spatial capability is typically preserved in individuals with severe aphasia.

### Key Findings

- A visual scene is a picture, photograph, or virtual environment that represents a situation such as grocery shopping, a place like the library, or an experience such as a grandson's baseball game.
- The VSD provides visual-contextual support to facilitate the navigation of a dynamic display AAC system in order to successfully communicate messages.
- The scene provides both the person with aphasia (PWA) and their communication partner with:

- 1) A framework or context for conversation. The visual scene provides an illustration of an entire situation, place, or experience in its entirety (e.g., a trip to the aquarium) rather than an isolated image (e.g., a fish).
- 2) A way to co-construct meaning from a picture whose elements and semantic associations are tied together, rather than guessing with yes/no questions.
- 3) Opportunities for multiple communication exchanges (e.g., comments, asking questions, etc.) rather than one turn and the ability to pair the interaction with multiple modes of communication (e.g., voice, facial expression, gesture, etc.).

### Applying the Findings with Tobii Dynavox Aphasia Pages

- **Toolbar:** The Toolbar is always visible so the PWA can access additional communication tools with ease.
- **Visual Scenes/Topics/Topic Words:** Clear, contextualized visual scenes are used to support successful communication. The Topic Words are provided in scripted or individual messages that can be produced at will. Any of these can trigger speech, clarify speech, or access related messages to speak.
- **PCS Symbols:** The symbols in the Aphasia Pages are simple and adult oriented. They visually support communication messages during interaction.
- **Personalization:** Individuals can easily edit the Topic images in the Aphasia Pages or replace them with personal photographs or images.

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