Partner-assisted Scanning

Importance

Partner-assisted scanning is appropriate to consider for all students who have complex bodies and limited use of their hands for pointing. Partner-assisted scanning reduces the physical demands of access to the greatest extent possible and allows students to focus more on the act of communicating.

How does it work?

A partner identifies that the student has something to say, and points to and says the name of each symbol, moving from left to right. The partner identifies and responds to a student's individualized way of indicating a selection (i.e., "that's the one I want"). Students may communicate this using a single message voice output device, a body movement, a vocalization or any other means. Students must be taught and have ample opportunity to practice. The partner starts the scan on the first page/location on the system or jumps to a specific page if a likely message is predicted.

How long do you wait after presenting each symbol?

The partner must provide sufficient time for the student to indicate a symbol selection. For some students, as few as 3-5 seconds may be sufficient, but for many others allowing 20-30 seconds will be best. This means the partner says and points to the first word, then silently counts for the appropriate number of seconds while watching closely for the student to indicate a selection.

1-step selection approach	2-step selection approach
The **partner** is in control of the pace of the scan.	The **student** is in control of the pace of the scan.
The partner recognizes that the student has something to say and then turns to an appropriate page to start scanning.	The partner recognizes that the student has something to say and then turns to an appropriate page to start scanning.
The partner previews each symbol on the page, pointing to and naming each.	The partner previews each symbol on the page, pointing to and naming each.
The partner points to and says each symbol, one at a time, pausing after each and watching carefully for the student to indicate "that's the one I want."	**The partner points to and says the first symbol and then waits for the student to indicate either "move to the next one" or "that's the one I want."**
If the student selects a symbol, the adult repeats the word and honors the expression by reacting with a meaningful comment.	If the student selects a symbol, the adult repeats the word and honors the expression by reacting with a meaningful comment.
If the student does not make a selection, the partner moves on to the next symbol.	**Partner and student repeat the above sequence to continue communicating.**
The partner repeats the cycle (typically 3Xs) and if no selections are made, the partner can model a symbol and move on.	**Note:** This approach is often easier to learn because students set the pace and get more practice using the behaviors that control the scan and selection.

Universal Core vocabulary partner-assisted scanning format

The 4 Inline Universal Core Partner-Assisted Communication Book is designed to support partner-assisted scanning. The inline format promotes consistency among communication partners as they present the symbol choices from left to right. The format supports both auditory and visual scanning and a high contrast version is available for students with visual impairments.