

Student Abilities and Needs (Consider immediate and future needs)				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>COGNITIVE ABILITIES</b>				
Visual Memory	Will the student be able to remember the location of the desired icons?	Do a symbol-based assessment. Consider single message devices or devices where you can limit the number of icons presented.	Look at the number of icons that can be successfully located in an array on a single page. Consider devices that match the number of icons the student can locate and leaves room for growth.	Do a symbol assessment
Sequencing	Can the student sequence at least 2 icons to produce a message? (e.g.: “want +banana”)	Consider a multiple message device that can deliver a complete message with a single hit (e.g.: “song”→”Let’s sing”). The device may contain multiple pages with situation specific vocabulary. (e.g.: lunch; circle time)	Consider devices that will allow the student independent access to all their vocabulary.	Observation; provide opportunities to combine words with low tech or trial with device or software; model-prompt-check
Categorization	Can the student find vocabulary based on categories? (e.g.: food +snacks= “popcorn”)	Consider a multiple message device that can deliver a complete message with a single hit. The device may contain multiple pages with situation specific vocabulary.	Consider a device with a dynamic display or one that accesses vocabulary through icon sequencing.	Do a trial with Minspeak software. Download available <a href="http://www.prentrom.com">www.prentrom.com</a> (Exploration Wizard); model, prompt, check
Association	Can the student form associations between icons and words? (e.g.: rainbow+apple= “red”)		Assess for the ability to use Minspeak. Download available <a href="http://www.prentrom.com">www.prentrom.com</a> (Exploration Wizard setup)	Do a trial with Minspeak software

Student Abilities and Needs				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>LINGUISTIC ABILITIES</b>				
	Does the student combine words to communicate? (e.g.: “mommy car”)	Consider a multiple message device that can deliver a complete message with a single hit. The device may contain multiple pages with situation specific vocabulary.	Consider a device allows for the development of sentence structure. Consider a device with a message display window so the student can receive visual as well as auditory message feedback.	Observation; provide opportunities to combine words with low tech or trial with device or software; model-prompt-check
	Can the student formulate linguistically correct sentences?	Consider a device that allows for the development of sentence structure. Consider a device with a message display window so the student can receive visual as well as auditory message feedback.	Consider a device that has the ability to generate grammatically correct sentences (e.g.: pre-stored verb conjugation, word suffixes and prefixes, articles and pronouns)	Observation; provide opportunities to combine words with low tech or trial with device or software; model-prompt-check
<b>LITERACY</b>				
	Is the student literate or does he/she have the potential to develop literacy?		Select a device that has a message display window and text to speech capabilities.	Probe literacy; See Symbol assessment

Student Abilities and Needs				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>LITERACY</b>				
	Can the student use letters?	Consider the potential for the development of literacy.	Consider a device that has the ability to use text-to-speech and assess the benefits of word prediction.	Probe spelling skills
	Can the student recognize and use whole words to communicate?		Consider devices with word prediction or a program like Word Power.	Probe word recognition; see Symbol assessment
<b>SYMBOL SET</b>				
	Does the student require or benefit from photos or visual scene representations?	Complete a symbol assessment.	Consider a device that includes the option for importing photos. Keep in mind that using photos requires a significant amount of storage memory.	Trial device with visual scenes and observe response
	Does the student require the use of Picture Communication Symbols (PCSs)?	Complete a symbol assessment to determine the most efficient symbol set.	Consider a device that can include PCSs.	Complete a symbol assessment
	Can the student use MinSpeak?		Consider a Prentke Romich device.	Do a trial with Minspeak software. Download available <a href="http://www.prentrom.com">www.prentrom.com</a> (Exploration Wizard); model, prompt, check
	Does the student require tangible/ tactile symbols?	Complete a symbol assessment	Continue to develop non-technical systems and work on developing increased levels of symbolization.	Complete a symbol assessment

Student Abilities and Needs				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>TASKS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE STUDENT WITH THE DEVICE</b>				
	Would the student benefit from environmental controls?		Consider device with ECU capabilities (TV controls, light controls, etc.)	Consult with an OT
	Does the student need access to a cell phone/ MP3 player?		Consider device with these built-in capabilities. (Note the MP3 will tax system memory. Consider an extra SD card for storage.	Consult with parent/ caregiver
	Does the student need a computer in addition to their communication device?		Consider an integrated device	Determine if student uses a computer or could use a computer.
	Does the student need to use the communication device to write?		Consider a device that can interface with a computer.	Determine if student would benefit from alternative written output
	Does the student need to store messages for presentations or printing?		Consider a device that has a notebook feature or a way to store saved files.	Consult with team

Student Abilities and Needs				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>ACCESS</b>				
	Does the student have a method of accessing a communication device?	Wait to select a communication device until an appropriate access method has been determined in collaboration with an OT. Seating issues need to be resolved.	Determine the most efficient access method in collaboration with an OT if necessary.	Observation; Trial with access options; OT assessment
	Will this student access the device using direct hand selection?	Have an OT involved to assist in determining the most efficient access method. Select a device that best fits the desired access method.	Trial devices for speed, accuracy and efficiency. Consider the need for keyguards, pressure sensitivity, and key activation settings. Select a device with identified requirements.	Observation; Trial with access options; OT assessment
	Does the student require visual scanning?		Have an OT determine the type of scanning (1 or 2 switch and scanning features required). Select a device with these access options.	Observation; Trial with visual scanning; OT assessment
	Does the student require auditory scanning?		Work with an OT for switch access issues and determine the scanning features required (e.g.: change in voice, speaker by ear, type of auditory prompt). Select a device with these capabilities.	Observation; Trial with auditory scanning; OT assessment

Student Abilities and Needs				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>SIZE AND PORTABILITY</b>				
	Will the device be mounted on a wheelchair?		Consult an OT to determine optimal positioning and determine an appropriate mounting system. Consider powering the device from an power wheelchair battery.	Consult with an OT
	Will the student carry the device?	Determine how the device will be transported between communication environments.	Consider size, weight, carrying case, handles, shoulder strap, durability, need for a desk mount/ stand.	Trial with devices
<b>KINDS OF DEVICE OUTPUT REQUIRED</b>				
VOICE	Does the student require digitized speech (recorded human voice)?		Select a device with this feature. Consider the time required to program this device.	Probe responsiveness to digitized vs synthesized voice
	Does the student require synthesized speech (text to speech programming)?		Consider voice matching to gender and age, voice quality, device speaker quality. You may wish to trial a variety a number of devices.	Trial with variety of devices.
	Does the student need to speak in noisy environments or in large groups?		Select a device with good quality speakers and the ability to add external speakers if necessary.	Consult with team and family/ care-givers

Student Abilities and Needs				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>KINDS OF DEVICE OUTPUT REQUIRED</b>				
DISPLAY WINDOW	Will the student benefit from a message display window with pictures? (beneficial for PECS users, sentence formulation and literacy development)		Select a device with this feature.	Consider literacy potential; trial devices with and without this feature
PRINTING	Do you want to be able to print your screens to create a non-tech backup system.		Select a device with this feature.	Consult with team to determine potential for this feature
PROGRAMMING	Do you want to be able to program the device on a computer and then transfer updates to the device?		Select a device with editing software. You may have to request this software separately.	Consult with team to determine potential for this feature
VISION	Does the student have a visual impairment?		Consult with a Vision Resource Teacher to determine appropriate device features such as backlighting, symbol size, figure-ground, visual enhancement for scanning purposes (color and size), need for auditory prompts, etc. Select a device with the needed features.	Consult with Vision Resource Teacher
	Does the student need to be able to use the device outdoors?		Select a device that manages well in these environments.	

Student Abilities and Needs				
Characteristics	Question	No	Yes	Unsure
<b>TEAM CONSIDERATIONS</b>				
	Does the team currently support the use of a non-tech system?	Carefully consider whether a technical communication system is appropriate choice at this time.		Observation; if an opportunity has not been provided, consider a trial
	Is the team comfortable with technology?	Consider devices that require minimal training and programming (pre-stored vocabulary)		Discuss comfort level with team and demonstrate options
	Is the team in transition? Are there key team members who will remain on the team for a several years?		Consider training the parents or if not feasible, wait to introduce technology. Carefully consider the choice of MinSpeak or complex systems.	Discuss team with district partner/ case manager or school administrative officer