

The VoicePal Levels: A Terrific Tool for Teachers



Adaptivation, Inc.

Overview

- Why use the VoicePal Levels?
- General Features
- Objects and the VoicePal Levels
- Access
- Sequencing/Randomizing
- Scanning
- Ideas!

Why use VoicePal Levels?

- Easy to record and program (time saver)
- Can accommodate multiple students with different needs
- Can adapt to the growing needs of an individual
- Digitized Speech

This is how researchers describe the normal communication message:

- **55% Visual**
 - Things we see like:
 - Gestures
 - Facial Expressions
 - Body Movement
 - Objects in the Environment
- **37% Vocal**
 - Vocal Intonation
 - Rate
 - Intensity or Volume
- **7% Verbal**
 - The actual words that are spoken



Hodgdon, L. (1995). *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication: Practical Supports for School and Home*. Troy, Michigan: QuirkRoberts Publishing.

Features

- 17.5 minutes of record time
- 4 levels
- 2, 3, 5 or 10 messages
- Delayed Activation (dwell time)
- Relay jack/Toy jack
- Join levels (in order to access 20 messages)
- Durable, Portable, Flexible

Relay/Toy Jack

(Cause-and-Effect)

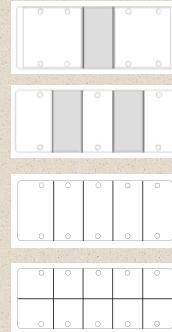


Direct Select

“A method of communication in which the individual specifically indicates the desired item in the selection set without any intermediary steps.”

AAC at the University of Washington, Seattle.
http://depts.washington.edu/augcomm/00_general/glossary.htm

Keyboard Configuration



Object to Symbol Progression

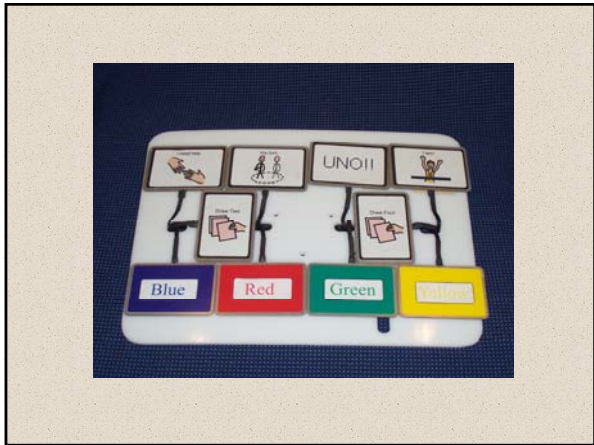
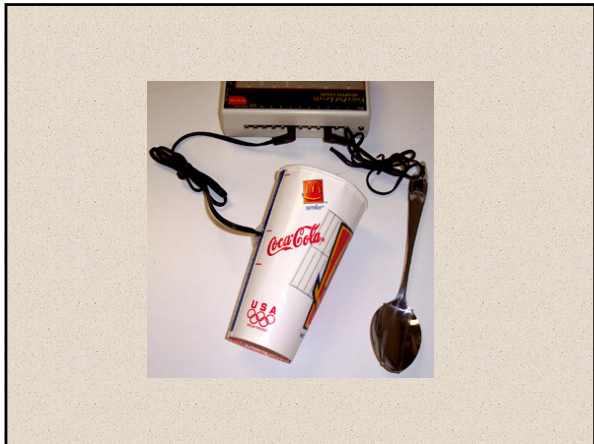
1. Real Objects
2. Miniature Objects
3. Partial Objects
4. Textured Symbols
5. Photographs
6. Line Drawings (Picture Communication Symbols)

Beukelman, D., & Mirenda, P. (1998). *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Management of Severe Communication Disorders in Children and Adults* (3rd ed.). Baltimore, Maryland: Brookes Publishing Co.

External Switch Jacks


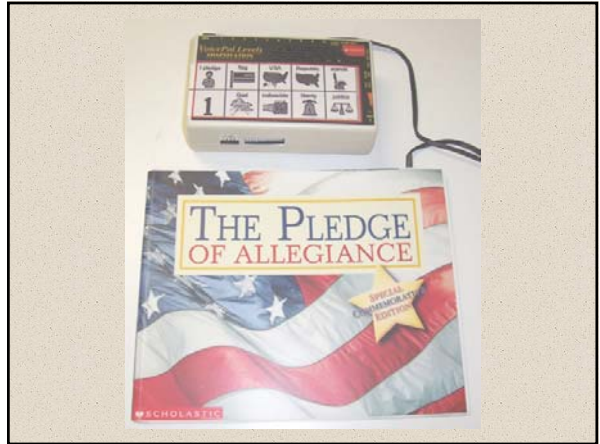
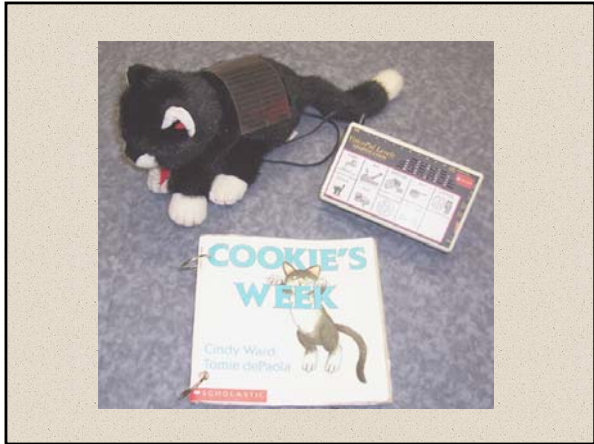
- Up to 10 external switches can be plugged into the VoicePal Levels





Sequencing

- Messages play in the order they were recorded.

A small device with a screen showing a grid of icons.



Sequencing Ideas

- Reading books
- Listening to steps or directions
- Singing songs
- Giving a book report
- Telling the class announcements
- Cheering at a game



Randomizing

- Messages play in random order.



Randomizing Ideas

- Playing Bingo or dice games
- Choosing teams
- Picking a story
- Greeting people at an event
- Assigning classroom jobs
- Hellos/Goodbyes
- Selecting sentence starters



Scanning

- The process whereby a person or device presents choices or groups of choices to the communicator.
 - The communicator then signals when the desired item is reached.

Beukelman, D., & Mirenda, P. (1998). *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Management of Severe Communication Disorders in Children and Adults* (3rd ed.). Baltimore, Maryland: Brookes Publishing Co.

Why Use Scanning?

- Lack of motor control
 - Motor control varies with positioning
 - Consider scanning during periods of non-optimal positioning (i.e. on the bed, on the floor vs. positioned in wheelchair with support)
 - Fatigue
- To access more messages than direct select alone

Scanning Features

- Visual (LEDs)
 - Full-Message Auditory
 - Cue-Word Auditory
 - Object Scanning Capability (w/ External LEDs)
-
- Positive
 - Inverse (one-button step)
 - Two-Button
 - Enhances the teaching process by making steps more clear
 - Nested (offshoot of row-column scanning)



Supplemental Device



Evaluation Tool

- Assess motor skills through a variety of switches, positioning
- Assess visual and auditory cues
- Feature matching
- Progressing from objects to single to multiple messages

Ways to get Ideas

- Photo Album of Ideas
- Recipes for Success Remixed
- Workshop Kit (\$65 includes shipping and insurance both ways)
- Trial Program (\$12)



References

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