

THE BASICS

This machine lets you record in your voice to store words and messages. The person who cannot speak can use the machine to help him communicate what he wants to say. He hits a switch at the right moment, and the machine says the message out loud.

You can choose the most suitable messages for him, and you can change the messages as often as you need to.

You need to put a paper overlay on top of the machines, with pictures on each square, so that the user can see from the picture clue which message is stored in which square.

It is quite easy to learn how to set it up and use it, but you need to take time to practise and to help the user to practise.

Power

It runs on AA batteries. If the machine stops working it probably means that the batteries need replacing. Use a screwdriver to undo the panel on the bottom and replace the batteries.

There are 2 ways to play back messages.

1. Staff and family can just press the squares with a finger (useful when you are setting it up, testing it etc.)
2. If the switch is connected, the user can hit a switch when the red light is above the message he wants to say.

Skills Needed:

1. The user needs to see and understand the pictures/symbols on the overlay, so he knows which picture represents which message. If he doesn't know at first, others have to teach him each one, and practise, 'til he learns them.
2. The user needs to understand that the moving (and beeping) red light matches the square underneath it - ie. if he hits his switch at a certain point, the message currently under the light will speak out.
3. The user needs to know to wait and watch until the light gets to the square he wants, and has to be able to time his switch press.
4. The user needs to be able to hit the switch.



GETTING MESSAGES TO SPEAK OUT

Pressing

Turn the machine ON (turn the **OFF/Volume** knob on the back clockwise, it clicks).

Turn Volume knob to halfway position, for reasonable volume level.

Press any square to test it, and to hear the messages.

Scanning - for the user

Connect the switch to the **CONTROL SWITCH** socket at the back. (Adjust the black scan buttons if necessary.)

Watch as the red light moves, and hit the switch when the light is on the square you want. Once that message has spoken out, the light goes back to the beginning and starts the scan all over again.

LEVELS

This machine has 6 levels, so you can have 6 different sets of messages. (6 x 32 = a possible total of 192 messages). Each message has to be quite short - about 1-2 seconds. Change and select the level you want to use, by turning the Level knob on the back of the machine.

RECORDING MESSAGES

You don't need to erase, just record over old messages.

For best quality: turn Volume down low, record with a strong voice, then playback with Volume up higher.

Select the Level on which you want to change or add (a) message(s).

Tip the machine up towards you. Press the red Record button on the back and at the same time hold down the square whose message you are changing. Speak 'at' the surface of the machine, about 6 - 10 inches away. (The actual microphone is on the back on older machines (little black disk) and on the front underside on newer machines (tiny hole).

Release both buttons the minute you have finished speaking (so you don't record 'dead sound').

Test your new message has recorded right, by pressing the message square.

OVERLAYS

Each Level of messages needs to have a picture overlay to match it.

Slide the old overlay out and the current overlay in, as required.

Make your own

The best way to get suitable messages and pictures is to make your own overlays. You can do this by hand (draw or stick on pictures) or using BoardMaker or another computer program if possible. The main thing is that the user knows what picture goes with what message.

Supplied Overlays

Check to see if any of the overlays that come with the TechScan are any use and record suitable messages to go with each, as required.

All Purpose Overlay

Make a blank overlay and laminate it so that it is 'wipe-off'

Use a felt tip pen to quickly draw/write on word/letter/symbol/number as appropriate to allow the user to chat, answer questions independently, and to participate and show he has been following, in school.

Think about the type of questions you ask (and does he have messages to answer them?)

- a) Yes/no questions (is an X made of stone? is an X made of cloth?)
- b) Open questions (what is a X made of?)
- b) Forced alternative questions (is an X made of stone or cloth?)

Making new overlays

- There is a template that can be used with *BoardMaker*. It should be on a floppy disk in the box with the machine.
- If not, you can download it from the Internet: go to www.mayerjohnson.com > Enter Here > Downloads > BoardMaker Files (choose Mac or Win) > Pre-Made Grids > T > TechSpeak & TechTalk
- Once in BoardMaker, go to File Menu > Page/Print SetUp, set the paper size to US Legal, with Landscape orientation.
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To print out the new overlay you need to use A3 paper, with the width cut to A4 size, but keeping the A3 length (Inclusive Technology also now sell the right size of paper - US foolscap size - that works for TechTalk overlays, £13 a ream.)

KEEPING TRACK

It is very important to be organised and to keep track of which messages you store in which square on which level, and which overlay goes with which level.

To do this, use blank overlays (or black and white photocopies, if possible) in a ring binder (or similar system) to write in the messages. Or keep a 1-32 Record Sheet for each Level.