
Resource Reviews

Évaluation des ressources

Computer Software

The Mayer-Johnson Communication Board-Builder *Michael and Jana Birch*

Cost: \$149.00 (US)

Produced by: Don Johnston Developmental Equipment, Inc., P.O. Box 639, Waconda, IL 60084 (703) 526-2682

Reviewers: Orlene Martens & Leanne Sargent, Kinsmen Children's Centre, Saskatoon, SK

Equipment: A MacIntosh computer with Hypercard version 1.25 and a hard disc (2A can be connected to work with Hypercard 2.0).

Description: The Communication Board-Builder program is designed to help create communication boards utilizing Picture Communication Symbols (Mayer-Johnson). The program worked as described with several features including easy translation to Spanish and a library of 1600 PCS's. These reviewers were not familiar with a MacIntosh computer so assistance was required to install the program. Otherwise instructions were well described and easy-to-follow.

Effectiveness: We followed their example on "how to" set up a communication board. After one example, we felt confident that other communication boards could be set up easily and very efficiently. This program is not intended for client use.

User Friendliness: The program is extremely user friendly. All commands require input from the mouse. General instructions on using the mouse are included in the manual. Instructions were clear and concise and followed a logical sequence. Symbols could be rearranged or deleted from a communication board easily. The communication boards could be stored and/or printed.

Support and Documentation: The manual was well written and well organized. Instructions were located on a separate card re: conversion to Hypercard 2.0. Description of the hardware required was adequate. Instructions for installation onto hard drive are given and recommended. It is also recommended that you make a back-up disc (one

copy is permitted). The media, materials, and workmanship are warranted to be free of defects, assuming normal use, for a period of 90 days from the date of purchase. Replacement will be issued upon proof-of-purchase or if your registration card is on file.

Primary Strengths: There are 1600 Picture Communication Symbols included. They are filed under "libraries" by category (e.g., People, Food, Nouns, etc.) or you can find a particular symbol by typing the name of the symbol (e.g., "friend"). This program will do a search and then confirm if it has chosen the correct symbol. It was easy to access the symbols and place them on the communication board. It was also easy to edit the board as you proceeded. The graphics and script were excellent. An option of "text only" was included if no graphic was available.

Primary Weaknesses: None.

Overall Impression: We felt that the program was very useful and would be worthwhile for any clinician who designs communication boards. Vocabulary items were appropriate for children and adults.

Rating Scale: (4 = excellent; 3 = good; 2 = fair; 1 = poor) Program Description, 4; Program Effectiveness, 4; User Friendliness, 4; Support Documentation, 4; Overall Rating, 4.

Communication Board Skill Builder and Program

Cost: \$59.95 (US)

Produced by: Edmark Corporation, P.O. Box 3218, Redmond, WA 98073-3218

Reviewers: Orlene Martens & Leanne Sargent, Kinsmen Children's Centre, Saskatoon, SK

Equipment: Apple II Series Computer, one 5¼ inch disk drive, a color monitor, an Echo Speech Processor, a Touch Window and a Single Switch.

Description: The Communication Board Skill Builder Program includes 17 communication board formats designed to teach and evaluate communication board use for clients needing an augmentative communication program. This program can be used to determine what type of board would be most useful and appropriate for a particular client. The screen can also be used as a model to custom make communication boards.

Effectiveness: There is no documentation regarding the program's effectiveness.

User Friendliness: The program is easy to enter and instructions are displayed clearly. There is no problem with input errors. Input includes the choice of a touch window, keyboard, or single switch.

Support and Documentation: The documentation in the manual is concise and easy to understand. The company recommends the user make back up copies initially. There is a replacement policy for defective discs that are returned within one year. A replacement charge of ten dollars (\$10.00) plus tax and shipping is levied for products replaced beyond one year. Those who pay a license fee may receive updated versions of the software.

Primary Strengths: The program is easy to access and the voice quality is good. The graphics are colorful.

Primary Weaknesses: Color bars across the top of each picture box provide different choices for the student at a particular part of the phase. However, the software does not skip to the next section of the phrase once the first word is chosen. It automatically scans through each choice, which is extremely time consuming. There is a "beep" after each picture, which is annoying. The manual has very little description on the application of the program (i.e., types of clients who would benefit and how it could be used with each type of client). Some of the graphics are poorly chosen (i.e., a lunch box to represent lunch).

Overall Impression: It is difficult to tell how worthwhile this program would be and the types of clients for whom it would be useful. It could be attempted with a variety of populations, such as motorically involved individuals at different levels, dyspraxic/dysarthric individuals at different levels, and aphasic individuals at different levels.

Rating scale: (4 = excellent; 3 = good; 2 = fair; 1 = poor) Program Description, 2; Program Effectiveness, 2; User Friendliness, 4; Support/Documentation, 3; Overall Rating, 2-3.

Erratum

In the March 1992 issue of *JSLPA* (Vol. 16, No. 1), in the paper entitled, "User Performance with Inductively-coupled Amplifying Telephones" by Hanusiak, Benguerel, and Laszlo, the middle-ear analyzer was inadvertently described as a Madsen GSI33. It should have read Grason Stadler GS33. The authors apologize for the error.