

Facilitating a Two-Switch Step Scan

In order to move on to a more complex communication system, your student must develop the ability to use a two-switch step scan. To do this she must learn to step through her choices with one switch and indicate her selection with the other switch. Use the following methods to develop this skill:

- **Partner assisted step scan:** Using a single voice output button positioned slightly to the left (or right, pick her best side and stay consistent with it) your student will indicate “that’s the one I want” when a choice of three objects is being presented to her one at a time.
- **Partner assisted two switch step scan:** This method is similar to the method above, however a second button is added to the right side of the first button. As each object is presented, your student will indicate “No, not that one” with the right button and “Yes, that’s the one I want”, with the left button. When two buttons are introduced it is important to maintain consistency of the button locations. To help your student visually discriminate between the buttons, the “yes” button should be covered with a green “YES” label and the “no” button should be covered with a red “NO” label.
- **Auditory step scan:** This method will require your student to step through the choices herself using a sequenced message button such as the “Step-by-Step”. Using this button on her right side, your student will hit the button repeatedly to hear each choice. When she hears the object or activity that she desires she will need to move to the left side button to indicate “That’s the one I want.” Be sure to include both motivating and neutral objects and activities.
- **Auditory/Visual Step Scan:** Use a simple step scan activity on the computer that highlights each picture as it steps through the choices. Encourage your student to look at the picture being highlighted as she is given the auditory prompt. Interface with the computer will require a switch interface such as Intellikeys or the Interface Pro by Don Johnston. Both are available at the regional center if you want to borrow one for a trial.

Keep in mind that this could be a very slow process. Do not rush through these steps. Once your student begins to show some consistent response using objects, you can begin presenting her with photographs and then drawings. You can also present her with a choice of activities that are not object based such as a hug, a tickle, a ride in her wheel chair or stroller, singing a song, or interaction with a favorite person.

Thanks to Carol Dittoe, Miami Valley Regional Center, for providing these suggestions for facilitating a 2-switch step scan.