

Masking “On-The-Fly” for Targeted Vocabulary Teaching

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When a person is using a speech generating device (SGD) or a manual communication board (MCB), vocabulary teaching may occur through lessons that target expressive use of the word, including the development of motor patterns for saying the word. In order to facilitate success, a teacher/therapist may use “visual masking” in order to provide access to only those targeted word(s).

Visual Masking is possible with a device from Prentke Romich Company by using the Vocabulary Builder tool in the device.

Masking with a manual communication board, such as a Pixon manual communication board, is possible by making paper masks lay



over the Pixon board. Making a mask, especially a paper mask for a manual board, takes time and preplanning. Often, while engaged in an activity, a communication partner wishes he/she had made a visual mask. With a SGD from PRC, you could use masking “On-The-Fly” to quickly mask all words except the target words. When using a paper mask, you can mask “On-The-Fly” using self-made perforated paper masks.

1. Visual Masks work best using card stock paper or file folders. The heavier paper is sturdy enough for use without requiring special finished (e.g., lamination). Card stock paper can generally be purchased at any office supply store, although card stock for any size beyond 8 ½ x 11” paper usually needs to be special ordered. You may need to fit together multiple pieces of paper or use file folders cut to match the size of your Pixon board and/or printer. If using file folders, cut apart the folders along the center seam and trim into appropriate size pieces to match your board and fit into your printer.

NOTE: The 50 Location Pixon Board (that comes in the box with the Pixon Project Kit) has been reformatted to fit on legal size paper. This board is available on the Minspeak website along with a blank template/grid to use to make a visual mask for this re-formatted 50 location Pixon Board. Custom order legal sized paper or use legal sized file folders to make your masks.

2. Print out blank versions of the student’s board (you can see the outline of the cells, but none of the pictures or words) on card stock. Print out one, then test it out (including doing step #3) before printing out too many additional masks. Print out enough masks so you have them stockpiled for use later on.
3. After the mask is printed, use a TRACING WHEEL (usually found in sewing supply stores) and trace along all of the cell grid lines, (using a straight edge to guide you) creating perforations in the paper. You may need to trace each line twice to ensure you have cut through the paper. Make sure you are using a cutting board to protect your work surface.
4. When it is time to mask “on-the-fly,” pop-up the cells for the words you want to target. You may need to bend along the perforated lines a little to help tear along the perforations and pop out the cell.
5. Label and store your masks so you can identify and use them again in related activities.

