This is Part 2 in a series of tips that consider providing authentic, interactive language intervention strategies.   All of the strategies can be considered "discourse-based strategies" that use real communication to teach language content, form, and use.

**Who?**  While these strategies can be useful for any students who need support in language learning, they are ideal for AAC users, who are learning to represent the language they know (or are learning) through the use of augmentative communication devices.

*\* Beginning Communicators*:  Interviewing is ideal for beginning communicators, because a single message can be used interactively with a number of partners.  For example, the student can ask all of the students in the class to answer a question related to their personal interests ("What kind of music do you like best?"), an opinion question ("What is your view on teenage smoking?"), or a knowledge test ("Can you name three countries on the African continent?")

*Step by Step 75*
*Able Net*

*\* Intermediate Communicators:*  For students who have advanced beyond the single-message stage, interviews offer a chance to engage in a tightly scripted communication exchange.  All major parts of a conversation are present (attention getter, topic introduction, topic maintenance, closing), and the activity can be repeated over and over with various partners.  Because of the restricted range of the topic, the communication user has conversational control, unlike typical situations!  Marcus, a 4th grader, uses his 32-location device to interview peers about their knowledge of the state of Arizona, before and after the students study their home state.

*\* Advanced Communicators*:  Interviews are also appropriate for persons who have hundreds (or perhaps thousands) of words stored in their communication devices, but who are learning to find those words.  For example, people who use dynamic screen software or Minspeak-based software may find these activities especially appropriate.  The illustration shows a "cheat sheet" of icons added for Kelly, an 8th grader who uses a Minspeak-based device who interviews friends with questions such as:  Who is your favorite singer?  What is your favorite color?  Where do you like to go on the weekend?.

cheat sheet
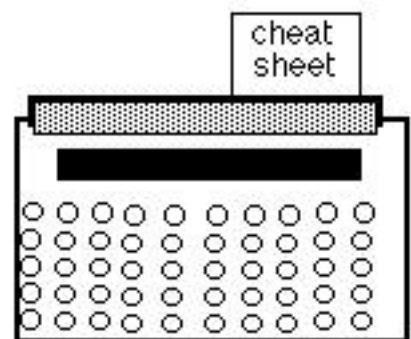
**Why?**  Interviews are useful because they "disguise a request for information by specifying a reason" (Culatta & Horn, 1982, 1984) and Hubbell (1977).  In simpler terms, interviews have these advantages:
\* they are more natural than "drill and kill"
\* they are a fun and motivating way to practice content, form, and use of language
\* they are a fast way to practice, providing multiple turns

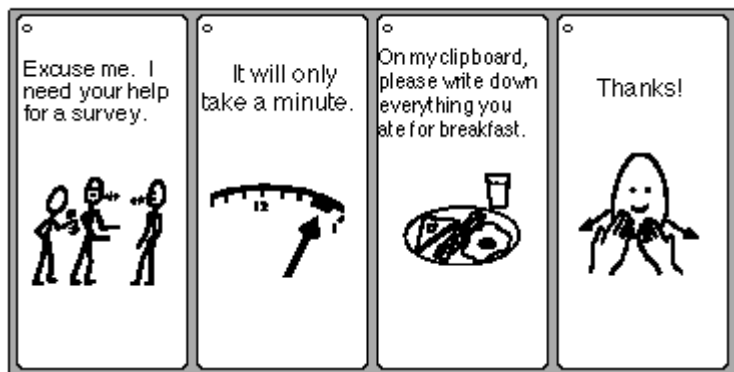**Purposes:** Interviews can be used for a wide variety of purposes, such as to:
* gather data
     *determine preferences.
           * find out what people know
               *report frequency of behavior
                    * find out what people think they know
                        *learn opinions on various topics

**What?** This strategy will describe only having the device user serve as the interviewer, with the partner serving as respondant. Ideally, the partner will be a peer. A variety of communication targets can be practiced using interviews. Following are sample interviews, illustrating using interviews to serve various purposes.

       **Gathering Data** (what types of movies teenagers attend, how many students own cats vs. dogs, how many bathrooms are in a typical home, which students have visited a specific state)

*Breakfast Survey:* Using this 4-location display, studentscan gather data for a class project charting which students eat grains, fruits, dairy products, fats, etc. for breakfast. The student simply indicates the items from left to right. A scanner could use thesingle switch listing approach described in *Emergent Literacy Success* (Musselwhite & King-DeBaun, 1997).



*Interview Breakfast (Musselwhite, 2000)*

Excuse me. I need your help for a survey.

It will only take a minute.

On my clipboard, please write down everything you ate for breakfast.

Thanks!

       **Find out what people know** (e.g., Which is the deepest ocean? Atlantic / Pacific / Indian) This is a particularly appropriate tactic before a subject is introduced, so that the teacher can learn what the students know. It may be repeated after the topic is completed, to see if general knowledge has changed.

*Which State?* Each student decides which state they want to "be," then writes summary information about that state on a card. Jamie, who uses a Macaw is the questioner, and all the students try to determine which state is on the student's card. Sample questions include: "Are you big?"; "Are you on the water?"; "Do you have potatoes?"; "Do you have big cities?", etc. The display used for the barrier game on South American countries could be used/modified for this purpose also.



*Barrier Game: South America Map Skills (Musselwhite, 2000)*
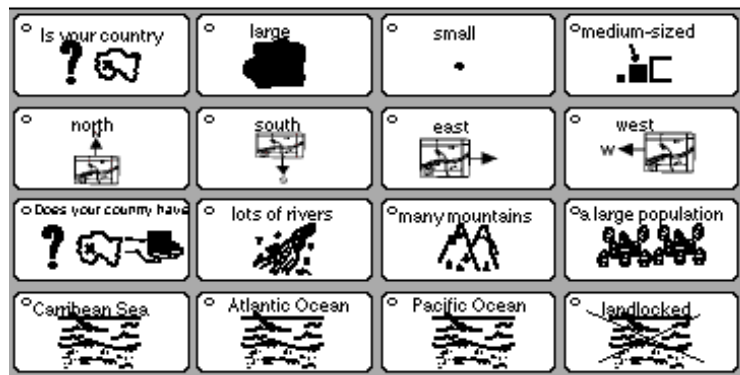
       **Find out what people think they know** (e.g., Which country do you know the most about in South America? Are you more familiar with the Zuni or the Navajo tribe?) This information can also be helpful to teachers in trying to shape the curriculum.

**Determine Preferences** (What is your favorite _____; If you had time off and lots of money, where would you go?)

*Pokemon Favorites:* This overlay is a simple one for a eight-location user. It shows an attention-getter, topic setter, question, and closing. The student also directs the partner to write down the responses, so that a record is kept. That record can be made into a chart with the help of a peer.



Pokemon Survey 8 (Musselwhite, 2000)

*Subject Favorites:* A student who uses a device with quick access to extensive vocabulary might ask questions related to subject areas which can be charted and shared with the class. Samples:
* Ancient Egypt: Who was your favorite person? What city did you like best? Where would you want to go?
* Southwest: Which animal is your favorite? What state do you like best? Where would you want to go with your family?
* Rocks & Minerals: What color rocks do you like best? Where would you look to find a good rock? What state has really neat rocks?

**Report Frequency of Behavior** (How often do you _____?) One strategy for these questions is to give a question, then offer a scale that students can use to record responses.

*Driving Safety:* This example was used as an awareness activity by a teen several weeks before prom. The partner was instructed to press one of the cells to record the response. The sample is part of an overlay, with responses sent to a talking word processor.
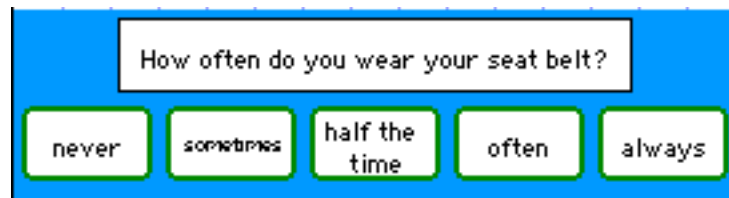


*Driving Habits Survey*
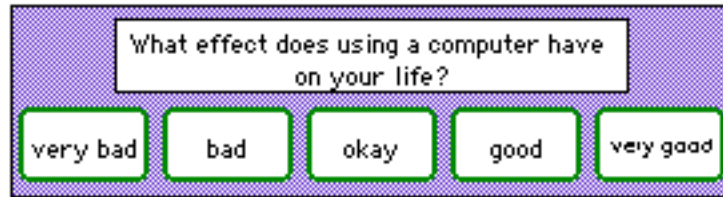*from: Write On disk (www.aacintervention.com)*
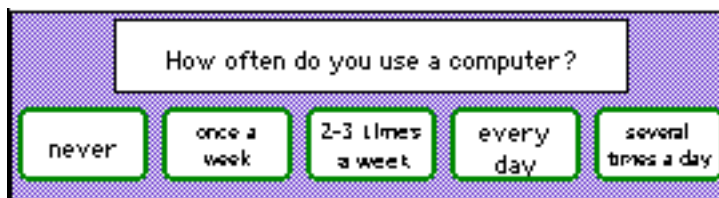


*Computer Survey*
*from: STUDY disk (www.aacintervention.com)*

*Computer Use:* This example was used as a pre-evaluation activity, in a class learning about the growth of the computer in recent history. Note that more specific options are presented, including daily and weekly numbers.

Device users without access to printers could have similar displays, with a partner recording responses. A single-switch user could easily ask these questions. For example, a step listing device could be pre-programmed to say: 1) Excuse me (attention getter); 2) I'm doing a survey (beginning topic-setter); 3) Could I ask you a question? (starter); 4) How often do you use a computer? (question); 5) Could you write the anser on my chart? (clarification); 6) Thanks! (social politeness); 7) See you later! (closing).
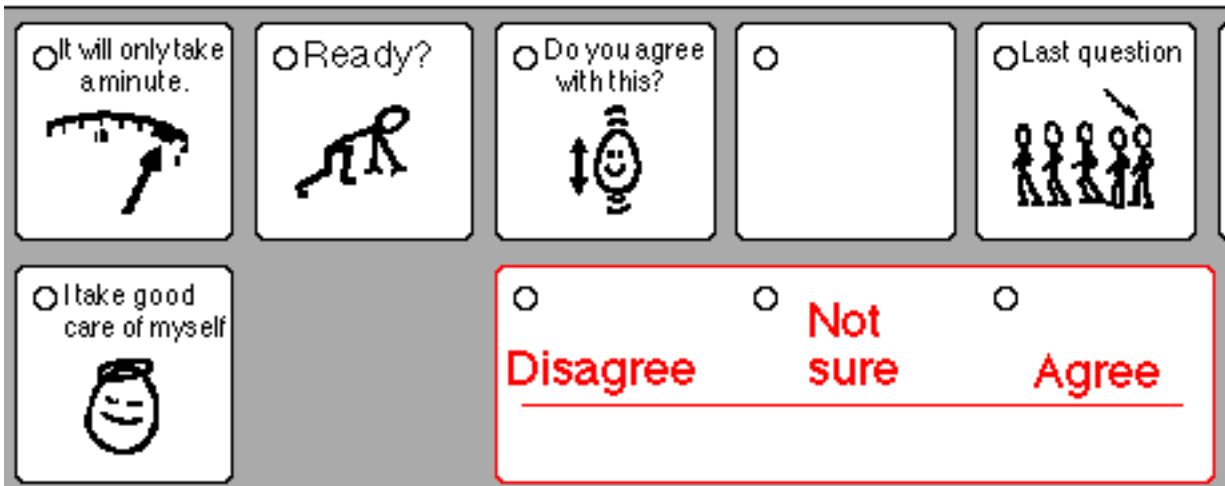
www.aacintervention.com

**Learn opinions** (e.g., What do you think about teenage smoking?  What is your opinion of the current president?)  A scale may be helpful for these questions as well.

*Computer Use:*  This survey form is intended for use on the computer.  Again, the student asks the questions, and respondants answer orally or by pressing the desired answer on the overlay.
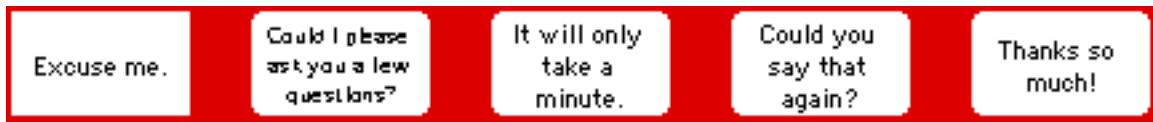
What effect does using a computer have on your life?

| very bad | bad | okay | good | very good |

*Computer Survey*
*from:  STUDY disk (www.aacintervention.com)*

It will only take a minute.

Ready?

Do you agree with this?

Last question

I take good care of myself

Disagree        Not sure        Agree

*Health Survey:*  This survey form above shows a section of a 32-location overlay, and is intended for use on a communication device.  The student asks "Do you agree with this?" then asks several questions that can be answered by using the scale "disagree / not sure / agree."  The scale is shown in red on the communication display.

**How To?**  The interviewer must be able to get and hold the attention of the interviewee, and must have a simple way for respondants to answer.  Questions should be clear and simple, with answers provided in ways that may be readily selected (on a clip board, on the device or alternate keyboard).  The illustration below shows a sample toolbar that depicts some of those strategies.

| Excuse me. | Could I please ask you a few questions? | It will only take a minute. | Could you say that again? | Thanks so much! |

**Summary.** Interviews may be created in a variety of formats, such as:  paper and pencil, communication device (single switch listing devices such as Step by Step or Step Talker; levels based devices such as Macaw, DigiVox, TechSpeak, or AlphaTalker;  Minspeak-based devices such as Liberator, DeltaTalker, or Pathfinder, or computer-generated interview form, using:  alternate keyboards (Discover, IntelliKeys), onscreen keyboards (Discover Onscreen, Clicker), dynamic displays (Talking Screen, Speaking Dynamically, Gus, DynaVox software).   For more samples, see *Write On!* or *STUDY* disks (www.aacintervention.com).