

COMMUNICATION BOARDS

LEARN OVER LUNCH (LOL) 2012 SERIES – TIP #8

What Do You Do If You Don't Have Boardmaker?

Boardmaker by [Mayer Johnson](#) and Overboard by [Gus Communication Devices Inc.](#) are two of several software programs specifically for making custom communication boards. Most software programs now allow you to print the boards or a student may use them onscreen. However, it is also possible to create boards using mainstream software such as Microsoft Word.

Using Mainstream Programs

The basic principle of creating boards is to create a grid and then type in words and/or add pictures. This can easily be accomplished using mainstream programs, for example:

- You can create a table in a word processor such as Microsoft Word to whatever grid size you like. It's then possible to click in each cell to add text and then paste or insert pictures from the Internet (be aware of copyright restrictions,) MS Word's Clip Art library, or any graphics file on your computer. To copy pictures in Windows OS, right click on the picture and choose "Copy Image"; on a Macintosh OS, hold down the Control key, click the mouse and drag the image where you want it saved.
- Since Microsoft Excel already uses a grid structure, it's a natural for creating communication boards. Cells can be made any size the user wishes. Unfortunately, Excel doesn't allow pictures to be inserted into individual cells, but you can paste a graphic over several cells and then add an optional text label in a cell underneath the picture.

Free Communication Board Making Software

- [Picto Selector/PECS for All](#)
 - windows based software
 - includes several free symbols sets (Sclera, Arasaac, Mulberry)
 - makes grid style communication boards
- [Tico](#)
 - make printable and/or dynamic display boards
 - uses the Arasaac symbols in addition to their full photo library which must be downloaded and imported separately
 - simple software is easy to use
- [EdWord with Grid Maker](#) (this site is inactive)
- [Softpedia](#) (I don't know how long this alternate download site will be available)
- [Gridmaker](#) (I don't know how long this alternate download site will be available)
- [Symbol Set Maker](#) (I don't know how long this alternate download site will be available)
 - allows import of entire files of photos or symbols (using a second application called Symbol Maker)
 - has a "symbolate" like program
 - Windows based
- [PHOTOsyms](#)
 - use photographs or import images from other symbols sets
 - very easy to use
 - makes grid based communication boards

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- flash based application
- [QuickPics](#)
 - graphics included are searchable
 - must download graphics separately
 - use photographs or other symbols
- [Matrix Maker](#) (not working as of 05/03/12)
 - online program to create grids for a variety of uses
 - template-based

Free Symbols Sets for Communication

- [Axelia](#) - freely available French symbol set
- [Arasaac](#) - full set of color or black and white line drawing communication symbols available in multiple languages, it is also possible to add this symbol set to [Writing with Symbols](#) if you still own that software.
- [Imagine](#) - focusing on core and topic vocabulary this is a full set of colored line drawing symbols (based on personal experience Imagine symbols sometimes do not import well into other programs)
- [Mulberry](#) - full set of line drawing communication symbols, register and download one at a time or the entire set
- [Sclera](#) - black and white, high contrast images which are excellent for low vision and available in multiple languages
- [Learning Magic](#) - free photos for download to use with students who are still at this more concrete level.
- [Airtight Interactive](#) – Search engine for Flickr photo images that morphs into multiple tags for additional searching
- [Kizclub](#) – clip art for teaching in both color and black / white
- [Tech4Learning](#) – incredible resource for a multitude of photos for content-based materials
- [WPclipart](#) – public domain clipart in 48 categories including American History and space

Custom Programs (in addition to the two in the introduction)

- [Board-Builder](#) (also uses the PCS graphics)
- [Communicate: In Print 2](#)
- [Mind Express](#) (has a voice output option)
- [Communicate: SymWriter](#) allows grids to be created and then used to select vocabulary words while writing.

Resources

<http://talksense.weebly.com/com-board-books.html> - Great information on making communication boards and books.