

## USING A SWITCH IN MIDDLE SCHOOL and...

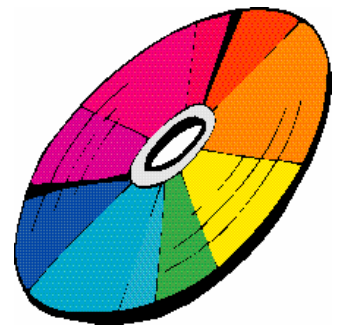


Some students cannot use their hands for functional purposes either due to their physical limitations or their cognitive abilities.

Switches can offer ways for students to partially participate and often increase their independence within parallel activities. For switch use to have the most meaning, it needs to occur within a **functional context** as part of a **routine** that the student does on a regular basis. The following are some ideas for school staff to consider with applications in the middle school and high school settings.

### Art Class

- Use an electric mixer and switch to mix cookie dough, paper mache or play dough for art projects. Peers can mold play dough and cookie dough into thematic objects (dinosaurs, letters, spacecraft).
- Spin art/twirl-o-paint can be switch operated to make abstract designs for classmates. Choose the colors. These designs are nice on their own or can be used as backgrounds for other projects. AbleNet makes twirl-o-paint.
- Play background music with a switch operated tape recorder for classmates to do impressionistic painting. Paper can be divided into six compartments. The student can play a short music segment while classmates paint what they visualize or how it makes them feel. Repeat with six different types of music. Use the Timed function on the Powerlink.
- Use a popcorn popper to make popcorn art projects.
- Make gifts using spin art or twirl-o-paint. For example, place mats, writing paper, background designs for gifts or special occasion cards, book covers, cardboard designs to cut out and shellac for brooches, earrings and refrigerator magnets.
- Illuminate a mirror for a face painting session.



### Band Class

- The student could tape a portion of the band class and at their request replay their performance for them to critique.
- The student could play pre-recorded applause upon completion of a recital.

### Computer Class

- Play interactive switch games with a partner to work on turn taking.



### Cooking Class

- Help prepare a snack by operating the blender or microwave.
- Operate a can opener, blender, electric mixer, coffee maker, food processor/chopper or a popcorn popper.

## Jobs

- Help prepare lunch by operating the blender.
- Use a communication device (BIGmack or Step-by-Step) with messages when collecting attendance sheets. The messages could be made by peers and could change frequently to maintain the novelty. The messages could be jokes, statements or questions. Conversation is enhanced if the message ends with a question.

## Home

- Play the radio or recorded music using an AbleNet control unit and switch.
- Turn on the TV and change channels using a TV/Video Control Unit from AbleNet. See the catalogue. Available through Insight Media in Surrey, B.C.
- Use a Step-by-Step to record conversations, jokes, compliments, questions or plans made with peers during break time so she can replay them at home for enjoyment and follow-up.

## Language Arts

- Classmates with written output difficulties can read short writing assignments into the tape recorder. The student can use the switch to play it back to the class for sharing time.
- Run a listening center with a switch to check comprehension. Pre-record on a tape player a short story for three to four students to listen to. Then play pre-recorded comprehension questions for them using the Step-by-Step.
- When students finish reading a selection, they could go to the student to hear pre-recorded comprehension questions. These could be played with a switch and tape player and control unit. Use the Timed function so the tape stops after each question and is ready for the next question the next time the switch is pressed.
- Play a piece of music, then classmates then write or tell a story about the music.
- Play pre-recorded news for sharing time. A friend could record news sent in by the student's family.
- Use a switch activated tape recorder with Talking Books from the public library.
- Plug a Language Master into one Powerlink outlet, and a tape player into the other. The student chooses whether to listen to a book on tape, or to help a classmate practice spelling words, then presses the switch that corresponds to the chosen activity.



## Leisure Time with Peers

- Play games using an **All-Turn-It Spinner**: This tool is available from **Insight Media in Surrey, B.C. (604) 581-2420** or **AbleNet in the U.S.** It includes a "shake the dice" overlay. Additional accessory packages can be purchased, e.g., re-usable vinyl stickers for customizing an overlay, "Bowling" and "Golf" games. At its simplest level it can be used to make random choices in games. The overlays can be used to roll "1 die" or "2 dice".

- Students can be assigned different roles. One student could be the "spinner" for all the players. Another student could be the calculator and add the numbers when 2 dice are "rolled".
- Students can work in partners.
- Voice output could be added by plugging in a Bigamy or Step-by-Step. Use the sequences to say whose turn is next, to say encouraging phrases.
- Run a battery operated card shuffler using a battery bypass device and the AbleNet control unit. (This could be borrowed from PISP for trial.)
- Operate a game spinner to make random selections with other students playing a game, for example, Twister. The disc could have the four colours of the game on it. The student could select the colours for the next player.

### Math

- Play a pre-recorded tape with math problems.
- Play a pre-recorded tape with answers to the day's math activity. Students can come to check their work.
- Switch activate a tape recorder with a pre-recorded tape with story problems
- A Litebrite can be illuminated by the student with a switch. Classmates could be responsible for making the pattern, e.g., design patterns, geometric shapes.



### Music/Band:

- Play a pre-recorded tape of an instrument for classmates to guess which instrument is playing.
- Play a recording of a bell chime along with other instruments being played.
- Use Step-by-Step to name which instrument should play next during a practice.



### Office Jobs

- Sharpen pencils for office staff with an electric sharpener.
- Shred paper for staff using switch and control unit and paper shredder.
- Operate an electric stapler to help collate materials for other teachers.

### PE

- Play a pre-recorded tape to control movement to music in a dance class.
- Play background music for warm ups or dramatic dance.
- Play a pre-recorded tape to give instructions or directions for students to follow for movement activities or games.
- Play pre-recorded cheers to cheer on classmates during team sports.
- Announce the starting line-up or the start of a team game.
- Give instructions to the team/class on the BIGmack or the Step-by-Step.

## School

- Use a WaterPic (a water pressure system used to remove plaque from teeth which may be found at garage sales or advertised in a want ad) to help water plants. Connect it to a control unit and switch. Peers could bring plants to the student. They could hold the wand while she presses the switch long enough to water the plant. The student may be able to hold the wand if the handle is enlarged.
- Operate electric stapler to help collate materials for other teachers.

## Science/Socials

- Use art ideas to create backgrounds for socials and science projects and displays for example make sponge prints or Spin Art backgrounds (See AbleNet catalogue) for a mural.
- Use a can opener to remove lids from cans for recycling.
- Operate a paper shredder to make nesting material for class pets. Supply this to elementary schools.
- Operate an electric mixer for play dough to make models for themes (planets, shadow box). The student chooses the colours as well.
- Run a slide projector to show slides related to the classroom theme. Use the slide projector control from AbleNet.
- Audio stories with read-along books may also suit science themes. The "Timed" function on the control unit may be helpful.
- Make popcorn with a popcorn popper before viewing a video.



**“Play a pre-recorded tape with interesting facts about the subject at hand.”**



## Sewing Class

- Use a switch to operate electric scissors. Scissors could be operated by a peer or assistant to prepare paper or fabric for projects.

## Woodworking Class

Connect a drill press to the PowerLink. Use the switch to run the press so classmates work together to make a project.