



## Evidence -Based consulting

From the desk of  
the Tumbleweed consultant

Hello Everyone,

In my travels, I frequent many fast food restaurants. It does not matter which side of Kansas I am on, the drive through script remains the same for each particular restaurant. “Welcome to Mc Burger’s.” “May I take your order please?” “Please pay at the first window.” I recently read an article about the impact of scripted speech on business economics. Scripting is an integral part of training for fast food, as well as many other industries. As annoying as it may seem, scripting in the business world has proven to be a successful tool in time management and customer relations. Employees who have been taught scripts are more likely to greet and respond to customers in a predictable and polite manner.

Special educators have long used scripting to facilitate social language in students with autism. Although not appropriate for every social situation, written scripts may be used to pre-teach language needed for targeted scenarios. Scripting may be a valuable strategy to encourage interaction and independence in community outings. Students can be taught phrases to initiate conversation or learn appropriate responses to difficult situations. Written scripts can be carried in a pocket, added to a social story or power card, placed strategically in the environment, or even written on plastic bracelets. Like our friends in the drive thru, scripting may help a student with autism learn conversational language that is appropriate and on topic. Unlike our friends in the drive thru, we do not want our students to rely on the same script with each interaction.

Written scripts are a prompt. As with any prompt, there is a risk that the student will become too dependent. **It is vital that a procedure for fading the prompt is planned from the very beginning.**

*Remember: A visual prompt such as a written or picture script is easier to fade than a verbal prompt from a person.*

This month’s featured article reviews a small study on one group’s experience with script fading: *TEACHING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM TO ENGAGE IN CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGES: SCRIPT FADING WITH EMBEDDED TEXTUAL STIMULI* by SAROKOFF, TAYLOR and POULSON  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1284302/pdf/11317993.pdf>

I am interested to learn more about what you have tried! Email and let me know some of the positive and negative experiences you have had with teaching students scripts.

Happy reading and safe travels,

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