Assistive Technology Resources for Children and Adults with Disabilities

Closing The Gap

August / September, 2009
VOLUME 28 - NUMBER 3

ADAPTING ACTIVITIES FOR MAXIMUM STUDENT PARTICIPATION

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Volume 28 – Number 3

Featured Stories

6 **Adapting Activities for Maximum Student Participation: Ideas for YOUR Classroom that Work in OURS!**
Part One (of a three-part series)
By Heather Kruger and Beth Kapp

10 **Who's Been Switching at My House?**
Hansel and Gretel: An Adapted Play
By Angela Mezzomo, Melissa Alfano and Susan Anderson

14 **Summer Fun at Courage Center Camps**
By Mary Jellison and Maria Schugel

Product Features

16 **Transforming Non-Writers into Writers with Word Prediction**
By Valerie Chernek, Murphy McBride and Joe Dan Mills

21 **Lets Switch!**
By RJ Cooper

Readers' Exchange

19 **Pixels and Megapixels: Using Digital Photos In Activities**
By Ann Brundige

Product Spotlights

23 **New AT Products and Announcements**

- Anne Carlsen Center Searching for Artists with Disabilities Utilizing Adaptive Equipment, Assistive Devices
- NTID Develops Test for ADHD in Adults who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
- HumanWare's SmartView Versa Expands Boundaries of Handheld Electronic Magnifiers
- Introducing Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones
- Conover Company Announces Functional Skills System for the iPod Touch
- Kessler Foundation Research Center Study Provides Insight into One of the Most Challenging Symptoms Following a Traumatic Brain Injury
- EasyStand Bantam's Infinite Possibilities Increase Compliance
- MacSpeech, Inc. Launches MacSpeech Dictate Medical
- Software Enables Students to Study Smarter
- Historical Novelist with Visual Impairment Finds Freedom with her BookReader

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Adapting Activities for Maximum Student Participation: Ideas for YOUR Classroom that Work in OURS!

Part One
(of a three-part series)

Ideas for Early Childhood and Elementary Education

BY HEATHER KRUGER AND BETH KAPP

Access and participation have long been a struggle to those working with students with special needs. The always burning questions of how to get the students involved in the activity and how to help them use the materials, surround those of us that work in unique educational settings. River Hills School in Cedar Falls, Iowa, is a school for students with mental disabilities. Functional living skills are the main focus of our curriculum. At the early childhood and elementary level, there is a strong focus on play and interaction skills. However, many of our students also have severe and profound physical disabilities requiring intense physical therapy throughout the day. So we had find a solution to the problem: "How can I help my students learn to play and interact when they are in their physical therapy equipment?" The solution: Sensory Walls.

A sensory wall is an activity area that provides fun and educational activities that stimulate the senses and can be accessed by all students from a variety of positions. This activity area provides a variety of sensory experiences by providing access to toys and activities from multiple positions. The use of these walls can increase motivation, attention span, and visual tracking. It can help teach play skills, cause and effect, and how to use a switch. The hanging toys provide access for those students who throw toys, as well as those who have difficulty grasping items.

The following items are needed to make your own sensory wall:

- Plywood or bulletin board (your choice of size)
- Berber carpet with a tight weave
- Carpet glue
- Pegboard/Shelf
- Shelf brackets
- Elastic
- Rope lights (2-3 lengths)
- Cable clamps
- Ablenet PowerLink
- Drill and screws
- Sensory and cause/effect toys
- Switches (1-2 activation, 1-2 voice output)
- Velcro
- Scissors
- Extension Cord
- Edging (metal/wood)

Before you begin making your sensory wall, there are a few things to consider. After compiling a list of the things that are needed, do some research to see what items can be donated. When building one of the school's sensory walls, I went to a flooring store and explained what I was looking for and what I was making. When they realized that I needed the carpet for educational purposes, they were willing to donate enough carpeting for me to make two walls! I showed the school custodian my list and he was able to provide the board, carpet glue, pegboard, shelf brackets, drill and screws, edging and extension cord. The school

Example of a typical sensory wall at River Hills School.

has provided the elastic, PowerLink, Velcro and switches. I bought the lights, cable clamps and toys. So before you go out and purchase anything, contact stores about making donations, talk to your custodian, put up a wish list in your teachers lounge, and check out garage sales for the items you are using. You will be amazed at how little it can cost you to make this amazing educational tool!

To begin making your sensory wall, start with measuring what size of board you want or have room for. Cut your plywood or bulletin board to the desired size. Take the piece of Berber carpet and cut it to fit the board, leaving room to wrap it around the sides. Glue the carpet to the wall using carpet glue, being sure to pull it tight. Next, screw the carpet to the board around the outside on all four sides and a few throughout the middle. Be sure not to use too many in the middle as you will be using screws for the lights as well. When finished drilling, add the metal or wood edging to the perimeter.

A shelf will be placed at the top of the wall for the hanging toys. If you are using a solid shelf, drill the holes in the pattern that you would like the toys to hang (i.e. straight across or staggered). When your shelf is ready, attach it to the wall using the shelf brackets. Cut the elastic to different lengths and secure to the shelf by tying it through the holes.

Adding lights can be done in any pattern or shape you desire. Experiment with the lights to decide what will best fit your needs. We generally use a snake-like pattern and place the toys in the space that is left. The ropes lights are be attached to the wall using the cable clamps. Slide the cable clamps around the lights and secure to the wall using a screw. Make sure to leave spaces for toys and that the plug to the lights ends up wherever your PowerLink box is placed. Add Velcro to the backs of the sensory and cause/effect toys and affix to the carpet wall. Tie the toys you have chosen for hanging onto the elastic bands.

This seven year old student is reaching out to activate a switch to turn the sensory wall lights off and on while in his stander.

The physical structure to your sensory wall should be complete and you can ask your custodian to attach it to the wall. You are now ready to add the Ablenet PowerLink and switches. Place the PowerLink on top of the shelf and plug it into the wall or connect to an extension cord and run it behind the wall to a nearby outlet. Plug in the items (lights, toy, fan, etc.) to be operated by a switch into the outlet on the PowerLink box. Plug the activation switches into the appropriate corresponding plug jack. Add Velcro to the back of the switches and place them in accessible locations on the board at different heights. Program the PowerLink to the desired effect (Direct, Latch, Timed (seconds), Timed (minutes)). Program a Step-By-Step or Big Mack switch with a short story or song. Put Velcro on the bottom and attach to the wall or screw a base plate to the wall and attach the switch on the base plate.

Congratulations!!! You now have your very own sensory wall! Now your students will be able to turn the lights on and off, activate toys, and listen to stories or songs. The sensory wall will enable all children to access and participate in play and social interaction regardless of their position! A sensory wall may take a couple hours of planning and assembling, but the outcomes are well worth the work.

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Themes

BY CYNTHIA GITTA

At River Hills School, we incorporate a class called Theme at the elementary level to address a multitude of topics, adapted for our students with special needs. Theme is defined as a mini-thematic unit focused on a particular topic (winter, colors, numbers, etc.) with multiple activities that take approximately 45 to 60 minutes to complete. These Themes are presented in a co-teaching style, with one teacher leading and the other assisting. The teachers reverse roles the following week. These Themes not only address unique ways to teach new skills, but also provide unique ways of assessing student knowledge.

Why do we choose to do Themes? Many of our students are unable to practice skills independently, such as completing worksheets, and need much repeated practice. These activities give the students a hands-on learning format to practice skills, deal with change (often difficult for our young students), and have fun while learning. Theme also provides the teachers an opportunity to incorporate our state's Alternate Assessment Standards.

Our ideas for these thematic lessons come from academic areas, storybooks, calendar dates or holidays, and student IEP goals. Most of these lessons are presented in a large group setting, though a rotation of smaller stations can also be incorporated. The objectives of Theme include academics such as counting, speaking, identifying colors and other skills as outlined in the general education standards and benchmarks. Social skills such as dealing with others, sitting in a group, waiting for a turn, and adjusting to a new adult are also addressed.

Organization of thematic lessons is often presented visually, particularly for our students on the autism spectrum. We may use a numbered system, completing up to 8 activities, while pulling each number off the visual schedule as it is completed. Colored schedules are also useful for the stations. Each station is labeled with a large circle of an assigned color. Small groups of students are then given a smaller set of colored circles in a specific order, which they match to the correct station as they complete the rotation. A third option would be to use a symbol-based schedule using Mayer-Johnson's Boardmaker.

Examples of mini thematic units that include general topics are colors, weather, seasons, or shapes. More specific topics could include ice cream, penguins, turkeys, or Halloween. Within each of the units, a variety of activities are planned to meet the strengths and abilities of all students. We draw on Howard Gardner's theory of *Multiple Intelligences* to create a varied activity pool to best meet the needs of all of our students. His theory establishes eight categories of learning from which each student's strength can arise. The planning web can help teachers organize a balanced unit, providing a variety of activities to address all types of student abilities. In this article, a simple list of options for each of the intelligences is outlined as a starting point for unit

Teacher Cynthia Gitta uses an adapted book with manipulatives to tie a story into her Theme unit.

planning. Some of the activities may cross-over into more than one of the intelligence categories.

Some examples of activities in the *Verbal/Linguistic* intelligence might include reading adapted literacy texts supported by visuals, props, or symbols, singing songs with visual song boards, or listening to and repeating a finger play with puppets. *Interpersonal* activities could include taking turns, recognizing names of peers (for example, in the song "Who Took the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?"), tolerating sitting next to other students, or working in a group.

Activities within the *Intrapersonal Intelligence* include showing self-determination, sitting quietly, working independently, and expressing choices. *Body/Kinistetic* lessons might include a bowling game, using a physical cue to skip count by two's such as silently touching your head for the odd numbers and speaking as you touch your mouth for even numbers, dancing to the "Hokey Pokey" with colored items, or gross motor stations related to the theme of the unit.

Many of our students with special needs enjoy music, so the *Musical/Rhythmic* intelligence is one that is addressed often. We sing songs with visual song boards, follow along with movement to songs like "Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes", or play a variation of musical chairs with a student in a wheelchair acting as the DJ for the music. The *Logical/Mathematical* intelligence can be addressed by creating a graph of student preferences or the color of apple they brought to school. You could also have the students follow a color pattern to complete the stripes on a very large bumblebee, or to sequence numbered ice cream scoops.

Visual/Spatial strengths can be addressed by making chocolate pudding and finger painting on a pig outline, dressing a stuffed animal in colored shirts, or creating a collage from articles found during a "fall walk". For the *Naturalists* in a classroom, a noisy walk in the fall leaves, a nature scavenger hunt with visually supported materials, or a flower sort by color or size using artificial flowers may be appropriate.

During a mini-thematic unit, the pins of a bowling game are transformed to relate the main theme of penguins to Gardner's Body/Kinesthetic intelligence category.

The ideas for theme are truly limitless, given a little creative thinking and some visual supports. The lessons that you teach each day can be fun and engaging while addressing many areas of need for your students. The students, no matter their ability level, will be active participants in lessons with hands-on experiences, and varying activity focus, making progress as they have fun.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

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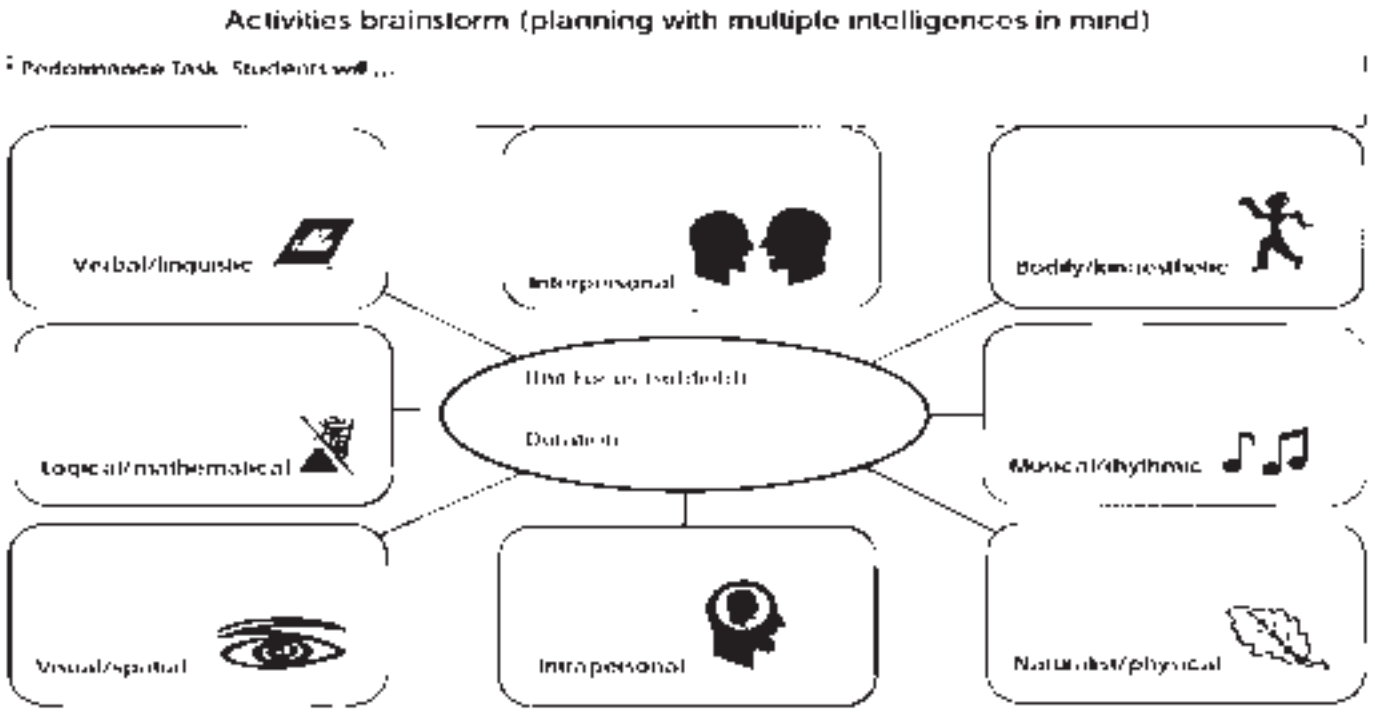


A graphic organizer to help plan activities in each of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence areas for each Theme unit.

Who's Been Switching at My House?

Hansel and Gretel: An Adapted Play

INTRODUCTION

Children with severe and profound disabilities are often excluded from participation in dramatic arts programs. Therefore, we established a dramatic arts program for students diagnosed with complex physical, intellectual, communicative, social, emotional or fragile medical conditions. Many of the students relied on multimodal communication techniques for their receptive and expressive communication needs. The speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist worked together within the classrooms to develop the program. The IEP goals and Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) were incorporated into the program with the help of the special education teachers. All of the service providers took an active role in the production of the play and in supporting the students' performance.

This program incorporated the use of sign language, no-tech, low-tech and mid-tech systems for conveyance of music and script. The children were given the opportunity to use systems learned in their classrooms in a novel way: perform a play. All students, regardless of ability or disability were offered roles in the play, including speaking roles, musician, dancers and behind the scenes creations. One play performed was an adaptation of the Brothers Grimm fairy tale, Hansel and Gretel. This article will describe how the play was organized and performed.

ADAPTING THE PLAY

The traditional version of the story was considered to be too harsh for our students. However, we liked the idea of learning to return home. We removed the negative aspects of the story (i.e., no pushing adults into fires, no cooking children, no jailing children, no one is evil), and replaced them with functional skills the children could use in their daily lives. These skills included responding to the questions "Who are you?" and "What are your names?" by showing someone an identification card. Aspects of problem solving were introduced and demonstrated by:

- how to prevent a problem - "Don't get lost" and "Don't worry, we'll drop bread crumbs";
- recognizing a problem – Hansel and Gretel realize they went to far once they found a landmark (the river instead of the well);
- resolving the problem – when lost in the woods, kept walking until they found an adult.

The language used in the play was adapted to approximately a pre-k to kindergarten level; this matched our students' cognitive ability. The simplified text was paired to PCS and basic ASL nouns and verbs.

All occupational and speech therapy (OST) lessons included use of technology, joint attention, socialization and turn taking. The occupational therapist (OT) incorporated handedness, grasps, coordinated arm movements, coordinated hand movements, finger dexterity, bilateral arm/hand movements and object manipulation into each lesson. Speech therapy focused on vocabulary development, commenting, requesting, following directions and functional communication. The chart provided shows the lessons *(see Figure 1, page 10)*. The left hand column lists IEP or curriculum goals; the top row names the lessons, with associated/follow-up lessons in the row below it.

Zechary is selecting art supplies he wants for making decorations.

LESSON FORMAT

Lessons were presented in a consistent manner.

- Greetings: Take attendance, say hello to clinicians and shake hands.

Scenery: This is how the stage looked at the end of the play. Hansel and Gretel's house is in the top left corner, the gingerbread house is top right and animals are arranged around the stage.

• Introduce lesson topic: Using a PCS-based title and materials page, students were told the main idea of the lesson (the title) and four to six materials they would use in the lesson. Students were given time to handle the materials and match them to the PCS. The purpose of the lesson was explained (ie. We are making animals for our school play.)

• Steps: Each lesson was depicted in three steps in a First, Next, Last format. Each step was numbered, and a PCS and label were provided next to the number.

• Conduct the lesson: Students took turns using the materials and completing tasks.

• End lesson: Once the tasks were complete, the lesson was reviewed. Any items made were shown as the final piece to the lesson. Students were told "Now speech and OT are finished. What do you say? Bye."

DETERMINING CAST MEMBERS AND TECHNOLOGY

All students were involved in the play. Cast members were selected by asking the students "Do you want to be in the play?", then "What do you want to do? Dance or be in the orchestra?"

Technology used was based on what was available in our school, as well as the equipment students had been using for their daily and academic needs. The technology selected for the leads needed to contain their "lines" and be appropriate to their physical skills. An eight-button VOCA was used by Hansel; he had the most lines. Two one-button VOCAs were used by Gretel; she had two lines. A two-button VOCA was used by the Father; he had two lines. A two-button VOCA and two one-button VOCAs were used by the "Lady"; she had four lines.

The orchestra was comprised of five students. Music selected by students during lessons was played via technology options. Music saved onto one-button VOCAs allowed for short dances and adapted tape players provided music to allow for longer dances. Dancers filled in the story. This provided additional opportunities for on-stage performances. A total of 14 students performed as dancers.

SCENERY AND MUSIC

The scenery consisted of woodland animals, the gingerbread house, Hansel and Gretel's house and a well. A backdrop of

LESSONS AND IEP/CURRICULUM GOALS

Lesson	The students all colored PCS of candy and other treats to decorate the house.	Woodland Animals were made by the students.	Determining cast members	Selecting the music	Read the PCS version of the play
Associated Lessons **IEP/Curriculum Extention**	Sorting: Healthy foods from snacks	1. Worksheet: What lives in the forest 2. Following PCS directions: steps for constructing animals were provided	N/A	N/A	Social Story: How to Watch a Play
Symbol recognition and early literacy	Use PCS to select color and item to be colored	PCS of animals	Select role: orchestra or dancer	"I like it" or "I don't like it"	Making predictions
Math	Color recognition	Votes were tallied and graphed.	N/A	Votes were tallied and graphed.	N/A
Categorization	Healthy versus special treats	"What animals do you find in the forest?"	N/A	N/A	Making predictions
Health & Safety	Healthy versus special treats	Concept of "friendly" animals	N/A	N/A	Identifying self using ID card
Science	Healthy versus special	Family members	N/A	N/A	N/A
Occupational therapy	Coloring, cutting, pincer grasp	Cutting, gluing, cooperative work	Raise hand in response to question	Some votes were cast by body movements, raising hand or fingers	Pick up and show ID card
Communication in a group	Requesting and choice making	Vote for animal to make as a group. Turn taking	Select from choice of two	Some votes were cast by facial expressions, vocalizations and use of PCS.	Identify self using ID card, comprehension of "Who are you?" and "What's your name?"

Figure 1.

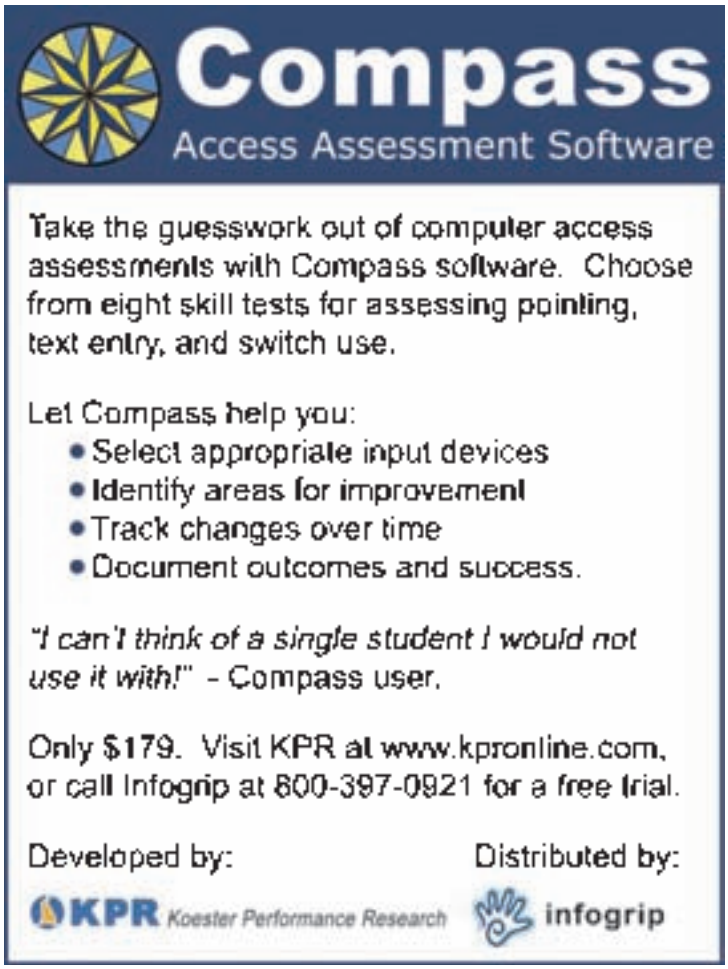
trees on a white background was also used. Some of the scenery was positioned as markers for the students; this also assisted staff in keeping the students safe on the stage. Staff made the well, Hansel and Gretel's house, and the base of the gingerbread house. The gingerbread house was decorated by the students, using materials made in joint occupational and speech therapy sessions. (See photos of scenery, bird, porcupine and goat.)

PRACTICE

The adapted story was read in each classroom several times over several weeks. Students practiced dancing in the classrooms, incorporating sensory motor opportunities. AT practice was ongoing. These skills had been incorporated into IEPs, as well as daily classroom activities.

DRESS REHEARSAL

Three different rehearsals were scheduled. All students were encouraged to come and watch. At the first rehearsal, all students involved with the actual performance came to the multipurpose room and participated in a walk through of the performance. The second rehearsal was for students with orthopedic impairments only. This allowed for focusing on their specific mobility needs during the performance. They practiced on stage, playing the music and transitioning from the audience to the stage. The third, and final, rehearsal was for students from the autism rooms. This allowed for time to practice dancing to their selected music and transitioning with fewer distractions. For later plays, we changed the order of the rehearsals, placing the complete cast rehearsal last.



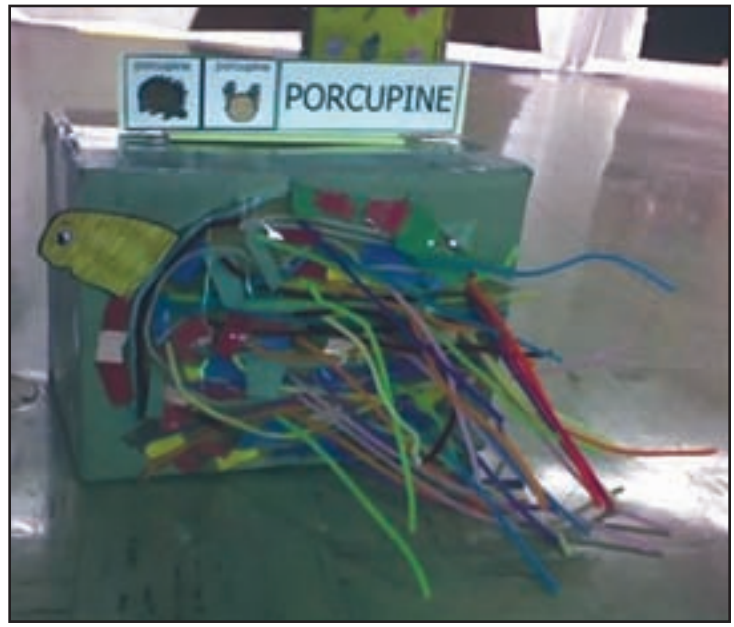
LOGISTICS

The occupational therapist, physical therapist, motor teacher and professional school counselor assisted students on the stage. This helped keep the students focused, provided any necessary prompting to use AT and reminded students when their turn was finished. Off stage, the classroom staff directed their students from the audience to the stage. One staff member monitored the steps to the stage. Another set of steps was blocked by the narrator (one of the speech-language pathologists). The orchestra was "led" by the second speech-language pathologist. Vocational classroom staff assisted students in passing out programs.

THE BIG DAY

Two PowerPoint stories were set up. The first was the adapted story with PCS for illustrations. This was also used as the program,

We used a sentence strip with the name of the animal in upper case and the PCS and ASL symbols for each animal. This helped clarify some of our more abstract animals.



This unusual looking porcupine was created by poking holes into a box. The students then inserted pipe cleaners. The ends inside the bow were folded over and taped down. Overall, the students were very proud of their work… so were we.

and was sent home with the students. The second PowerPoint used the same story, but the PCS were replaced with animated sign language (V-Com 3-D). This PowerPoint was run during the play, behind the narrator. This provided on stage ASL support.

All students were instructed to bring their ID card to the play. Students also brought in enlarged PCS of animals. During the play, they listened for cues and questions, to which they responded using PCS, ID cards, verbalizations or ASL. This interaction helped keep the students focused. Specifically, when Hansel and Gretel dropped the bread crumbs, the narrator asked "What lives in the forest?" The students responded by showing PCS of animals, signing animal names or verbally stating names of animals. Also, the IDs were presented to staff and peers when "the Lady" (our replacement for the witch), asked "Who are you? What are your names?" Students were encouraged to watch for their friends.

CLOSURE

Once the play was over, the students watched the video tape of the play. Most were excited to see themselves on the screen. Some children were able to identify not only themselves, but also their peers. They attempted to respond to the narrator questions when watching the video.

TIME LINE

- Six weeks before: select and adapt play
- Weeks 5-6 read play with students
- Weeks 4-5 select cast members
- Weeks 3-5 make animals with students
- Weeks 3-4 select music
- Weeks 2-3 practice in classroom
- Weeks 1-2 We had too much time
- Week 1 Where did the time go?!

Observation: our first play was done over three weeks; we used six weeks for this one. We think that students benefited the most from six to eight sessions with the OT and SLP leading up to the play.

SUMMARY

By focusing on student abilities and accommodating limitations, the students were able to perform a 20-minute play. This has become an annual event in our school. The students performed an adapted version of The Wizard of Oz; 27 of our students performed either on stage or in the orchestra. Many of the procedures used to develop the play have been incorporated into other school wide activities, including Winter Fashion Show of Holidays and Challenge Day. Parents reported that for many of the children, this was the first time they either performed in front of a group of people or sat for 20 minutes to watch a performance. We anticipate continued improvement in social skills, allowing for increased opportunities for community inclusion, attending sibling performances, watching sporting events and enjoying a variety of performing arts.

The goat and the bird were made the same way. An outline of the animal was drawn on cardboard. The students tore paper and used paper maché techniques to fill in the outline. We re-drew the same and then painted the remaining cardboard gray.

RESOURCES

V-Com 3D: www.vcom3d.com For ASL Animations, $300 for volumes 1-5.

Mayer Johnson: www.mayer-johnson.com For Boardmaker volume 6 (PCS), $329

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SUMMER FUN AT COURAGE CENTER CAMPS

BY MARY JELLISON AND MARIA SCHUGEL

In 1999, one grocery shopper got to talking with another and gave a business card to her new acquaintance. "That was my lucky day," smiles 16-year-old Blake Peterson. "That shopper was the director of the Courage Center Day Camp in Mankato, and she gave her card to my mom. That's how we first learned about Courage Center Camps. I've been going to camp ever since, and it's been fun times!"

Blake attended his first day camp when he was seven years old, then followed it with successive visits over the next three years. "I did my first overnight camp when I was 11," he says. "It was sort of scary because I didn't know exactly what to expect. But I got over the fear. I liked the independence and constant activity. You're having so much fun, you really don't have time to think about being scared."

His mom, Kay Peterson, laughs. "We even visited Blake a couple of times during his first week-long camp to help dispel his homesickness, but now he tells us to stay home. He's fine!"

Blake, who now thinks of himself as a camp veteran, has attended Youth Camp, Teen Camp, College Preview Camp, Technology Camp and AAC Camp (which stands for augmentative alternative communication). And, while he may be learning all about computers that help him communicate – he has athetoid cerebral palsy and is non-verbal – and gadgets that help increase his independence, he readily admits his favorite activity is swimming. "It's refreshing!" he beams.

It's also a great way to make friends. "I have met new friends at every camp," he says, "and always reconnect with old friends, too. Outside of camp, I've written to some friends and traded e-mails with others, including a couple of counselors. I just started doing Facebook – a fun way to communicate, especially for me."

This illustrates just one way Courage Center Camps help campers like Blake learn independence through fun activities and friendships.

A camper and staff pose for a picture after tubing on the lake at Camp Courage.

"Camp means a lot to me," he says with enthusiasm. "I've learned to be more independent of my family. The counselors make it feel like home. They're hilarious! They're friendly and like to kid around, just like I do. But it's different, too. Kids get to swim and meet new friends, go boating, do the huge 'slip and slide,' go horseback riding and many more things not as easy to do at home. And the most totally cool thing about camp is the closing campfire. It's a good talking time."

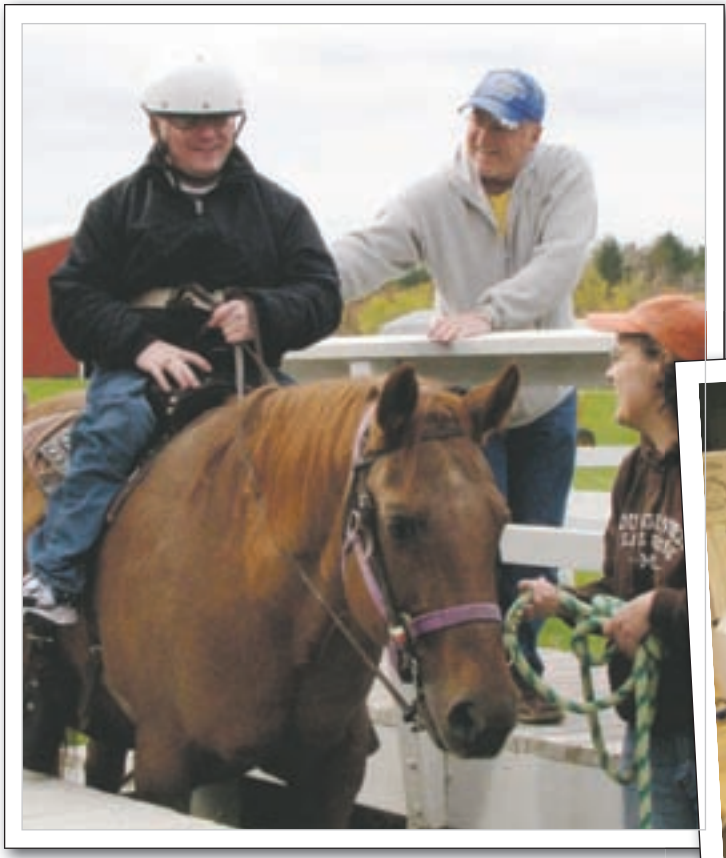
"The whole camp experience is something Blake looks forward to," says his mom. "He takes pride in being away from home, on his own, encountering new experiences and meeting new challenges. And he loves that camp is his own thing."

"That's true," Blake says. "If a kid was undecided about going, I'd tell that kid to go and just be yourself. Think of it just like home. In no time at all, you're making friends with kids just like yourself."

"I agree," Kay laughs. "Give your child and camp a chance. It will do wonders for your child's confidence and outlook. And to Courage Center, we say thank you for having such a great camping program in Minnesota. We're lucky to have you so near."

Since 1955, Courage Center Camps have provided camping programs for youth and adults with disabilities. Campers learn new skills and life long friendships are formed in safe and accessible settings. They are accredited by the American Camping Association, meeting and exceeding industry standards for excellence in programming, staff and facilities.

Courage Center operates two residential camps. Courage North is set amid 105 acres of towering pine trees in northern Minnesota, just minutes from Itasca State Park. Camp Courage is nestled on the shores of Cedar Lake in Maple Lake, Minnesota (about 50 miles west of Minneapolis). Both camps feature modern and accessible facilities.



Above: A camper is assisted onto a horse at Camp Courage.

Spending time at Courage Camps is the high point of the summer for more than 1500 children and adults each year. Even more children could experience the recreational, educational and therapeutic benefits of camp, but many don't know that the opportunities exist. If you know of someone who could benefit from some of the sessions, please encourage them to give the camp office a call at 866-520-0504 or visit their Web site at www.couragecenter.org/camps. ■

Below: Two campers enjoy working on a computer during Camp Courage's College, Careers and Technology session.

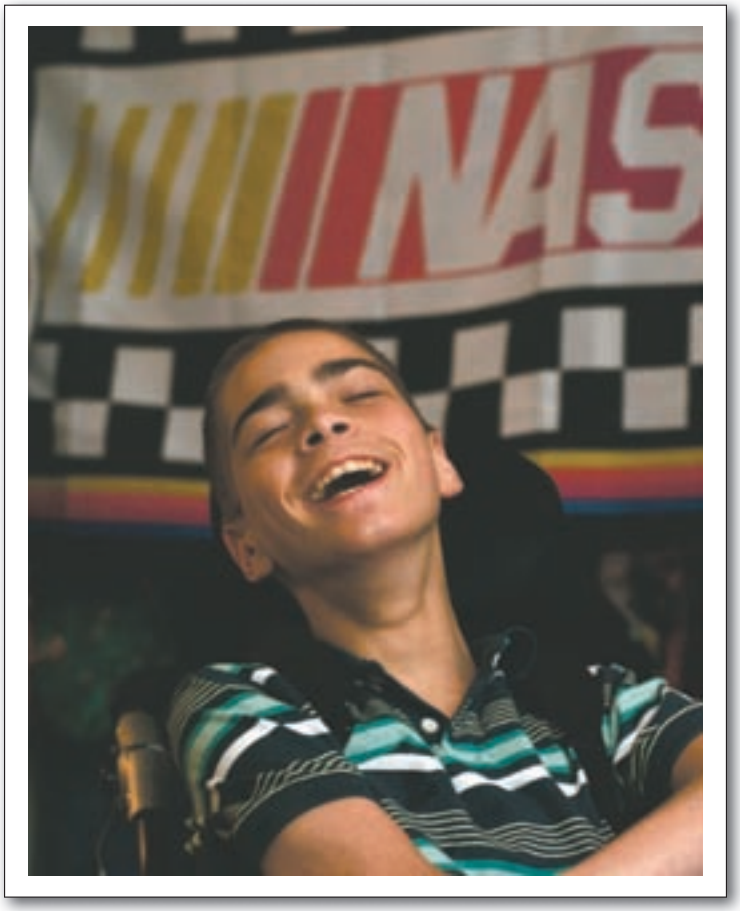


Photo of Blake Peterson.

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Creative Communicating Booth (285) at Closing the Gap Conference

Transforming Non-Writers into Writers with Word Prediction

By Valerie Chernek with Ms. Murphy McBride, SCORES Teacher, Joe Dan Mills Elementary School, Austin, TX (SCORES - Social Communication Resources and Services)

Students of all ages with developmental delays, physical disabilities and learning challenges walk into Murphy McBride's classroom seeking assistance with reading and writing. Some students cannot speak or write words; some speak non-stop and have difficulty staying on track. Others cannot organize their thoughts and are poor spellers. Many are paralyzed by a fear of looking stupid. Others can barely lift their arms due to a physical disability. These are students labeled as slow; incapable of learning and certainly not able to learn in a traditional classroom.

Sadly, some teachers and parents still believe that students like these will never learn to write or communicate their thoughts, but not Murphy McBride. For students with varying challenges and disabilities, it takes an extraordinary educator to help them experience real writing success and Ms. McBride is one of those educators. Murphy is known in her Texas community for breaking through the learning barriers of students with disabilities. How does she do this time and time again? With the help of a proven assistive technology (AT) intelligent word prediction tool, called Co:Writer developed by a long-standing AT company, Don Johnston Incorporated. Co:Writer can help students connect their thoughts with the words they want to write. Ultimately, Ms. McBride says this writing tool enables students to become independent writers.

In this article we will discuss linguistic word prediction and how Ms. McBride used this assistive technology to support different learners; from students diagnosed with ASD (autism spectrum disorders) to struggling students falling below grade level, to students with special needs such as mental retardation, autism, traumatic brain injuries, cerebral palsy or dysgraphia. Some of these students are also challenged with a combination of learning difficulties such as a print disability, and learning English as a second language (ESL). She will tell you what you need to know about word prediction and how to use the tool to help your students find their voice and jumpstart their writing skills to achieve a goal every teacher dreams of, i.e. to put their students on the road to learning independence.

Ms. McBride says, "Assistive technology can open a world of learning opportunities never thought possible for students with learning challenges. I've used Co:Writer for years with students from kindergarten to high school and credit the software for helping lots of students write and communicate for the first time."

ANN'S STORY – WORD PREDICTION GIVES SECOND CHANCES

Ann was a bright student (16 years old) who suffered from traumatic brain injuries. She had wonderful language skills before a car accident changed the course of her life. Due to limited mobility and damaged vocal chords, Ann was restricted to write and communicate. Ann was put on the computer using Co:Writer and she quickly was able to express her thoughts again.

Now, Ann could envision herself with more opportunities to learn and be understood. For the first time, she could put into words what she felt. This assistive technology tool became the voice Ann used to communicate with teachers, friends and parents. It gave her back thoughts and vocabulary she thought were lost and sped up her ability to type. As she typed, she wrote. Nothing is better for a student with disabilities than to see their learning progress take flight. Ann eventually regained her voice with the continued use of Co:Writer; her written work assignments continued to grow and became more age appropriate.

Student uses Co:Writer to communicate thoughts.

Mrs. Murphy McBride, special education teacher SCORES Texas.

THREE COMMON TYPES OF WORD PREDICTION PROGRAMS

Ann needed a significant amount of assistance from word prediction to write. She had a physical disability and also struggled with grammar and spelling. In the AT education world, there are three common word prediction programs: 1) word completion, 2) predictable word patterns, and 3) linguistic word prediction.

1. Word Completion – Simplest Form

This type of word prediction is when you type the date in applications like MS Word and Excel and the application predicts today's date. Or when Word learns your school's name and after a few times, it will fill in the whole school name after you type a few letters. For Ann, simple word completion is not effective since she often struggles with the first few letters of the word.

2. Bigram/Trigram Prediction (Based on Patterns and Frequency)

This type of prediction is a step up from word completion. It utilizes word patterns and the frequency in which two or three words commonly appear together in newspapers. Pattern prediction is the most common word prediction. This prediction is effective when students need a little writing support, but they generally don't need grammar assistance. Pattern prediction is not effective when new words or topic words are entered because it is dependent on the word patterns established by analyzing other writing examples. Since Ann has significant grammar and spelling and word recall issues, this type of prediction isn't sufficient to make her an independent writer.

3. Linguistic Word Prediction

Linguistic word prediction uses the grammar from each word to predict the words a student is trying to write and the words that will come next. This type of work prediction program will help students with the most significant writing needs to write successfully.

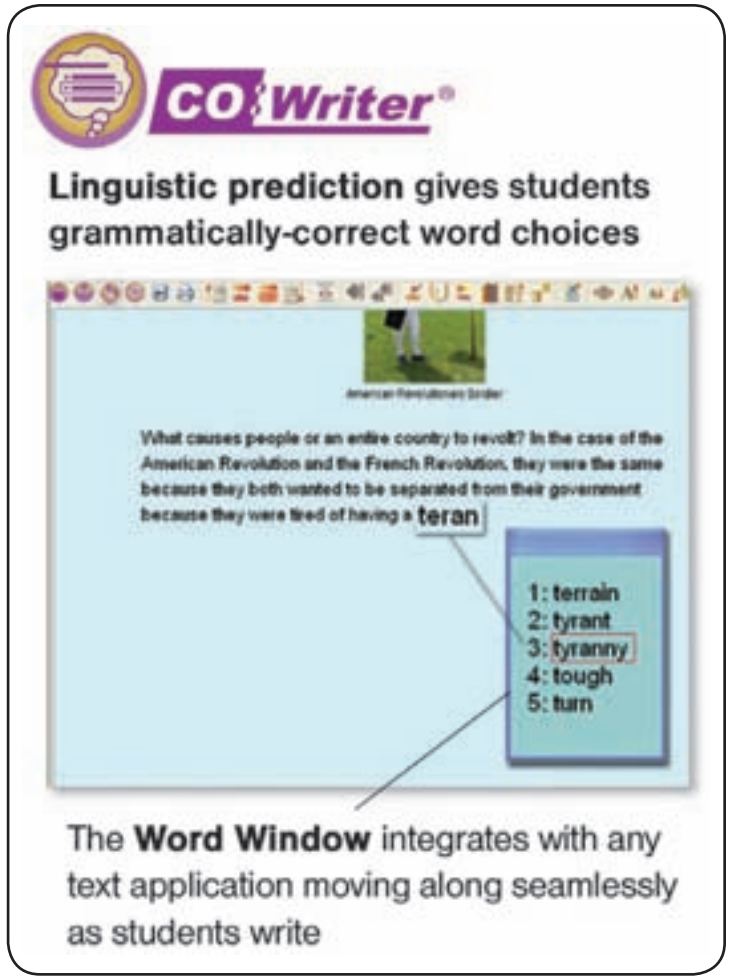
Co:Writer falls into this category, offering students and teachers a "thinking dictionary of words" and the ability to create custom dictionaries on the fly. As students write in a word processor, email program, or on the Internet, Co:Writer uses context clues and other information to predict the words they want to write, even when they spell them phonetically or inventively like writing the word 'elephant' as 'lfont'. These predictions are offered in a list that Co:Writer reads aloud. When students hear the word they want, they choose it from the list and the word is placed in their document. The program also gives flexibility to the words it learns by automatically predicting the word in multiple tenses and usages. You might assume that a dictionary that contains 100,000 words has more prediction choices. This is not always the case. The Co:Writer dictionary utilizes root words and understands that words can be used in different capacities, as a noun, as a verb and as an adjective. This intelligence eliminates the necessity of carrying separate entries of the word in the dictionary.

Co:Writer helped Ann find her voice. It helped relieve her anxiety about writing, and physically opened up her ability to communicate through writing. Linguistic word prediction is best for students who need the maximum amount of support with grammar and spelling and gives these types of students the best shot for becoming independent writers.

PRACTICAL TEACHING TIPS FROM MS. MCBRIDE

Structure and Organization for Students with Autism

I don't often use worksheets for my students. I like to provide them with real-life writing experiences that facilitate their communication in socially interactive ways. This helps them connect school with home life and brings about more teachable moments. For students with autism, they often need more structure and organization to manage their daily routine. To get them started with



Co:Writer intelligent linguistic word prediction.

Co:Writer, they type their daily schedule into Microsoft Outlook calendar. This helps them stay on track, learn a common workforce tool and feel successful doing their first assignment.

Using assistive technology to write in real-time is the key to keeping these students from shutting down. Even though they are reluctant to write, they respond to the computer and to keyboarding. This can be especially important for high school students. My older students used a combination of intelligent word prediction and word processing to write letters to local businesses about school events, leave notes for the UPS man with package descriptions and type emails to teachers and parents. One student, whose father traveled, used Co:Writer to stay in touch. What a communication breakthrough! This tool can build confidence by helping students actively participate in their written assignments.

Flexible Spelling and Audio Support for Poor Spellers

Students who have difficulty spelling do not like to write. Misspelling is embarrassing to them, and they get frustrated when they can't spell the word they want to use. Co:Writer helps these poor spellers break through this barrier. I observed students attempt to write words they would never have tried without the use of word prediction. They saw their dictionaries grow to include their frequently-used terms. As a teacher, I love the topic dictionaries. They are easy to use and you can add custom words to complement your assignments. Some students respond well to hearing a word spoken through a synthetic computer voice. In this software, you can set a default preference that adapts to a student's needs. Tailoring preferences gave my students ownership of the program, making it even more attractive to use.

Frontloading Your Technology – The Learning Curve

Over the years, my refrain has been "Use your technology!" Just like teaching any subject, educators and students both need time to learn how to feel comfortable integrating technology into a daily part of the instruction. I would much rather take the extra time to learn to use a new technology and to create a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) environment than to continually hear students say "how do you spell this word," again and again. Using Co:Writer, students will write more, produce longer sentences and have less spelling errors.

Some students are just as reluctant to try new technologies as we are. Don't give up and don't let your students give up! They won't admit they need help; especially older students with autism who have set ways of doing things. With one older student, it took me a year of repeatedly introducing word prediction to get him to use it. The reward came for him when he competently completed an assignment independently using Co:Writer.

This is the true goal for any educator. Independence is a key reason for using assistive technology. Each of my students now keeps an online portfolio of their writing assignments in a folder they access from our school network. This helps them to see real progress and provides a great way for me to impress upon their new writing abilities to show other teachers and parents.

If your students can't speak, spell or write or has trouble with organization or fine motor skills, intelligent word prediction tools, like Co:Writer, will help them succeed. For students who need extra coaching or writing practice, this tool can do the trick. It has improved the writing process for hundreds of my students who were deemed 'unteachable' and opened up a whole new learning channel. I saw a renewed sense of accomplishment and as students wrote more, they built better vocabularies, improved their spelling and become more confident to share ideas.

The bottom line is that intelligent linguistic word prediction sharpens word usage, provides superior prediction as students begin to increase writing productivity and helps students write more descriptive sentences. The sooner you expose students to a tool, like Co:Writer, the faster they will catch on to using technology in real ways and for independent learning.

RESOURCES

About Texas SCORES Program – www.1809group.spaceship.com/SCORES/index.html.

Co:Writer – Intelligent Word Prediction – 5 Minute Demo – www.donjohnston.com/media/flash/product_demo/cowriter/index.html.

WATCH Video Interview with Chauncy Rucker, Editor CONNSense Bulletin ATIA 2009 Conference, Orlando, Florida at www.donjohnston.com/case_studies_alive/murphy_mcbride. ■

Pixels and Megapixels:

Using Digital Photos In Activities

By Ann Brundige

In my previous article, I talked about creating simulated real life experiences using multimedia applications. One of the best and easiest ways to do this is by using digital photos. With so many choices for graphics formats, resolutions, display size and print out size, it can be very confusing! Knowing a little about what works best in building activities gives you an advantage when you go to shoot the photos with your digital camera

I've created a PDF file you can download from my Web site, Annie's Resource Attic www.annbrundigestudio.com, to demystify getting the graphics out of the camera, editing, and using them to build activities. There are also some hands-on examples to download. You'll find most topics covered in the PDF, but to get you started, here are a few quick tips!

WHICH RESOLUTION SHOULD I USE?

Most digital cameras take photos in JPEG format, and you have a choice of several resolutions. Higher resolutions mean more information in the photo, so you can enlarge it more, while smaller resolutions let you take more photos before your memory card fills up. Knowing the pixel dimensions of a full screen, or maybe the part of a page excluding text, in the application you plan to use lets you know which resolution to choose. Pixel dimensions (example, 1024 X 768) translate directly to resolution. There's no benefit to importing a huge photo, in terms of pixel dimensions, if it must be condensed to a much smaller size within the activity.

DO I REALLY NEED A GRAPHICS EDITING PROGRAM?

The editing software that came with your camera will have most of the tools you need to do basic editing, such as adjusting the brightness and contrast. You may also want to invest in some graphics software that lets you work in layers, to do more ambitious image manipulation. PhotoShop Elements is a good choice, and you can get an older version, such as v. 4 or 5, for around $30. I've also seen a review of a free graphics program that runs on Windows, but have not tried it. It's called Paint Net, and you can download it free at www.getpaint.net .

Another option is to do the editing online at www.picnik.com . You can subscribe in order to use all the features, or just use the free demo version. I tried the free demo by uploading a photo, trying various effects, and then downloading the edited image, and it seemed to work very well! One important tip, whatever editing application you use: Do any editing on a copy, and keep your original image of each photo.

WHAT EDITING WILL I NEED TO DO?

One thing you will often find useful is cropping a photo, using only part of it. If you have a 4 or 5 megapixel camera, you can often crop out the middle of a shot to make the important part of the image fill an activity screen, and still have a good clear image. You might also need to crop out a single element of the image to create a piece of photo clip art. In other cases, you may want the entire image, but you can resize it and save a smaller version that does not need to be reduced on the page.

Look for a sharpening tool. In PhotoShop Elements, there is a filter called Unsharp Mask that makes the image look crisper. It won't correct a really blurry shot, but it's often worth trying. There's always Undo if you don't like the effect!

You will often need to adjust the lighting and contrast to some extent. There may be a one-button tool that adjusts everything at once. For example, there is an Enhance button in iPhoto, and a Smart Fix option under Enhance in PhotoShop Elements. Sometimes that works very well, but it is also handy to be able to adjust the contrast, light levels and color independently.

Raising the contrast makes the colors richer and look sharper, but you will lose some subtle gradations of color. If the color is washed out, as can happen in low light and also very intense sunlight, you might find that increasing the saturation a little improves the image. So experiment until it looks good to you. For activities, I feel that sharpness is more important than the most aesthetic image.

CLIP ART FROM A PHOTO?

By erasing carefully around one element of a photo, such as a motorcycle, you can make a clip art image. This is best done in a graphics editing program, although the drawing tools in some multimedia applications could be used. Be sure to try selecting the background when you are done erasing, if you have a Magic Wand tool. If you see any twinkles, it means there are some pixels you missed. It's best to select blocks of background and delete them, and only erase very close to the part of the image you want to save. Better yet, use a lasso to select the part you want, copy, choose New, and paste into the blank document.

Is it worth all that labor? For a motorcycle, maybe not. You may be better off finding a copyright-free image online. There are inexpensive clip art collections using photos, too. But what about using this method to create clip art from a field trip, items in the classroom or neighborhood, or for figures of the students themselves? You can add your photo clip art to photo backgrounds to create new images.

To see a good example of this, download Mountain Bike Race from my Web site. In this story, you see the trail from the viewpoint of a bike rider, with the handlebars at the bottom of the image. Guess what? I never rode a bicycle down that trail! I went to a bike shop, sat on a bike, took a photo, and erased everything except the handlebars. I added the handlebars as photo clip art and merged them with the backgrounds

for each page. The tire pump in one of the images was also added in this way.

Having clip art images of the students is especially powerful. By merging these with various backgrounds, you could send them to the zoo, to another country or even to another planet in some activity. Keep this technique in mind for hard-to-find clip art.

WHY WOULD I WANT LAYERS?

A graphics program that lets you have multiple layers enables you to make all sorts of changes, all without messing up the original. You can paste in parts of other images as separate layers that you can turn on and off. I find this extremely helpful in creating frame animations, since I can get the different poses lined up and then save one layer at a time to make frames. That's how I did the Green Frisbee and the Boomerang animations you can download from the Attic to use with Classroom Suite.

EMPHASIZING PART OF A PHOTO

Here's another way to use layers. You can duplicate an image and then do different editing to each layer. Erase part of the upper layer, and save a combined image. This is a good way to make the focus of an image stand out, making it easier to see. For example, I had a good photo of a sea anemone, but the background was very busy. I was concerned that students might have a difficult time seeing the anemone.

I duplicated the entire image, so that I had two layers. On the lower layer, I used every editing trick to make the anemone stand out. I sharpened the image, raised the contrast, raised the saturation and made it a little lighter. Of course, the background also was sharpened. Then I went to the upper layer and did just the opposite. I blurred the image, made it a lower contrast and darkened it. At that point, the upper layer was very fuzzy.

Now for the sneaky part – on the fuzzy upper layer, I erased the area of the sea anemone, letting the lower, sharp layer show through the hole. The result, when I saved the combined image, is a nice sharp sea anemone in a blurred background.

THERE IS SO MUCH MORE YOU CAN DO!

The more you know about using digital photos efficiently and creatively, the easier and quicker it is to build vivid and engaging activities. And remember that you can recycle images into many different activities, so your labor will result in an ever-expanding library of resources. There isn't room here to talk about all the topics I covered in the PDF file, which include:

- Pixels and Bit Depth
- Pixel Dimensions
- What's a Megapixel?
- Displayed Pixels vs. Pixels in the File
- Monitor Resolution Compared to Pixel Dimensions
- Using Your Megapixels Wisely: Editing and Resizing
- Print Resolution
- Using Part of a Photo
- Graphic Formats and Their File Extensions
- Trade Off: Image Appearance vs. File Size
- Recycle Your Images
- What's This About JPEG Being "Lossy"?
- Why Do Some Downloaded Web Images Look Lousy?
- What About Copyright?

So download the PDF file right now! To get to it, look under "How-Tos" for a post entitled Pixels and Megapixels, Oh My! You can also try out a tutorial and examples that demonstrate four of the most important points. Then you'll be on your way to creating some fabulous activities with your digital photos. ■

Original photo of the sea anemone.

Anemone emphasized using layers.

*****EDITOR'S NOTE*****

Here's your chance to share your quick tips and tricks – whether they're high tech, low tech or no tech – that are making a difference.

Your ideas can make a difference too. Submit your contributions to mturek@closingthegap.com or visit www.closingthegap.com/submit_article.lasso to learn more.

LETS SWITCH!

By RJ Cooper

Being both a developer/vendor of special needs technology and a practitioner, I have a foot in each world. That gives me a unique perspective; I can ask people what is needed, research a solution, then offer it. I'm lucky that most people in our field of AT view me as a resource much more than as a vendor.

Here is the story of my Dual Button Box: Why it was necessary, and what it eventually led to.

About two years ago, a mom asked me to adapt an iPod for her son with autism. I did so, but as the cost was a bit high (the cost of the iPod and about $100 for my Button Box), I also found a great MP3 Player/USB drive that I could switch-adapt for two switches (one for power/play/pause, the other for 'next song'), which came in under $50.

About six months later, I was asked to do this for the popular Flip digital camcorder. I did.

Then, about a year ago, 'you' came to me and alerted me that the company that had been producing switch-adapted digital cameras was no longer doing so. And they couldn't find anyone else doing it either. They asked if I would. I did.

So this left me with three devices that required two switches to operate.

On top of these three, was the desire to, at least, have the ability within my software, and others out there, to step-scan.

If you're reading this, there is a high probability you know the name Linda Burkhart. She's been around the field of Assistive Technology (AT) about as long as I have (20+ years) and is well known for her great workshops, software, and most relevent here, advocating step-scanning (using one switch to 'step' or move through choices and the other to 'select' or pick).

Together with my three devices, Linda's on-going belief in step-scanning gave me the motivation to find an easier, and more economical possibility for offering two switches (which would cost about $100 for the two). But it was the memory of a specific event at a Closing The Gap Conference that gave me final motivation for the creation of these two-in-one switches.

The Dual Button Box shown with Switch-Adapted MP3 Player/Drive on left, and associated labels in the buttons.

Being well known at conferences and road trips for working with learners and users, parents often bring their kids, even grown-up ones, to me at my booth/room. This particular Saturday at the 2007 Closing The Gap Conference, a mom had brought her older teen to me to ask for my suggestions about switch choice and position. I experimented a bit and eventually set her up to use her left hand, out to her side, using my Magic-Arm to position my cordless Super-

Dual Button box shown plugged into my cordless Super-Switch, operating my AAC software, PTP-PC, on my Super-Auggie AAC device, with step-scan labels in buttons

Switch, and operating some simple AAC training software (Point To Pictures) for one-switch auto-scanning through some simple choices.

Linda came in to say hello to me before the conference ended in a few hours. She took one look at the situation and suggested two-switch step-scanning. I said, "Go for it, Linda!" She investigated a bit with this great teen, and within a few moments, had me hook a second switch by her right elbow, which she activated with a backward elbow movement. I set my software into step-scan mode and Bam! It all worked great. The teen understood what was going on (with a bit of coaching by Linda, but very little, which surprised both mom and me!), and the two switch positions seemed very nice, fairly easy for her to get 'on' and 'off' (most people forget that 'off' necessity for effective switch operation).

Linda made me a believer then and there. So with these four factors, I was on to creating something easier, less money and applicable. As most parents/professionals will go after hand-use first, I made the Dual Button Box.

Now, I realize the Dual Button Box wouldn't apply to the teen that Linda and I worked with, but the method is the same, and for some that "can", it's a winner.

Before I started work on this project, I looked at what else existed for two-switch control, and your only choice 'out there' was to purchase two, two-inch round switches (like the Gumball or Jelly Bean), and maybe a switch holder like the one that AbleNet used to sell (I couldn't find it anymore at their Web site) or that you make yourself. But I wanted something inexpensive and convenient for you. What I came up with is shown below, positioned on my Mini-Arm; (the picture on the camera is my dog, Baily), with camera labels in buttons.

The buttons I use allow me to change labels relatively easily to match the purpose of that particular Dual Button Box.

But this only covered use by a hand. I run across many situations where I find someone's head to be their most voluntary and consistent form of movement. Most times, I position a two-and-a-half inch round switch by their head, using my Mini-Arm coming over the shoulder. But in two-switch situations, you would normally see two arms, thereby adding significantly to cost. So I invented my ChinCheek switch. Two-in-one again. Designed to be mounted on the Mini-Arm, when it reaches, or the Articulating Arm, which has a reach of 24 inches (compared to 13 inches for the Mini). I used this for the first time with a young man, Blaine, at a great summer camp (Camp TNT) in Birmingham, AL in June. He was awesome with it. Stepping with his cheek and selecting with his chin, he was spot-on, and fast. And he loved it.

In conclusion, having the benefit of being both developer and practitioner allows me to ask pointed questions about learners' needs, and adapt or create unique technology that addresses those exact needs. In many cases, I'm simply adapting existing technology. Other times, I'm inventing it. I love my work, and any that have seen me at it, truly understand my motives.

I hope this article has allowed you a peek at my thought processes during adaptation and creation of unique and appropriate AT. In doing this for as long as I have, I'm flattered that most people in the field respect both aspects.

For more information on any of the products mentioned above, visit my Web site at www.rjcooper.com. ■

Image of Blaine .

Dual Button box shown plugged into my Switch-Adapted Digital Camera.

Anne Carlsen Center Searching for Artists with Disabilities Utilizing Adaptive Equipment, Assistive Devices

Accessing the Artist Within

The Anne Carlsen Center (ACC) is opening a contest for artists using adaptive equipment across the world.

The Center has created a link through its Web site, www.annecenter.org, that will show electronic versions of paintings, drawings, photography, digital art, video, film and musical compositions made via assistive technology. The project has been named "Accessing the Artist Within."

"One of the main reasons we have created this gallery is to showcase the art that students are creating," explains ACC Adaptive Equipment Director Mark Coppin. "We also showcase the pieces of assistive technology that allow the students to create the art."

Each artist will also have a biographical section explaining how he or she created their art and what tools were utilized.

Ten pieces of art will also be selected to be shown at Closing The Gap, an international adaptive equipment conference held in Minneapolis each October. More information is available about this multi-day conference at www.closingthegap.com.

"Students are able to make beautiful pieces of art with simple adaptations," says Coppin. "We want to be able to provide access to materials and give them a venue to showcase what they are doing."

Submissions are currently being accepted by ACC and they will be posted as they are received.

For more information about the contest, visit the Center online at www.annecenter.org or contact the ACC Jamestown campus at 1-800-568-5175.

The Anne Carlsen Center offers a rich tradition of empowering individuals with disabilities and their families. Our experienced staff provides compassion, training, services and supports in homes and communities across North Dakota. On our Jamestown campus, we meet the educational, residential, community-based, and therapeutic needs of children and young adults with autism, behavior disorders, medical fragility, and other developmental disabilities. ■

NTID Develops Test for ADHD in Adults who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

DVD allows clinicians to screen clients in their preferred language

A DVD that uses American Sign Language and English-based sign language to test for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in adults who are deaf and hard-of-hearing is now available.

Researchers at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology developed the test in response to the estimated incidence of ADHD in the deaf and hard-of-hearing population being as high as 38 percent.

Accurate diagnosis of ADHD is important so that appropriate treatment or accommodation can be provided. But existing tests printed in English are not valid for many individuals who typically depend on sign language for accurate communication and whose first language is often not English.

The Attention Deficit Scales for Adults: Sign Language Version is the first linguistically accessible ADHD assessment instrument designed for deaf and hard-of-hearing adults. It is a computerized sign language version of the original Attention Deficit Scales for Adults published by Santo J. Triolo and Kevin R. Murphy in 1996. The test uses an interactive interface to present instructions and items in ASL or in English-based sign language, with optional voicing, along with English captions. Clients view and respond to 54 statements, such as, "I get restless easily," indicating the frequency with which each statement accurately describes them.

"We are trying to be sensitive to accessibility issues and meet the needs of the community," said Ila Parasnis, a professor in NTID's Department of Research and Teacher Education. "They have complete control over how they see the test items." Parasnis carried out this project with Gerald P. Berent and Vincent J. Samar, also NTID researchers.

The DVD is the result of intensive collaboration at NTID among experts in deaf education, sign language translation, media production and programming. Clinical psychologists and several members of Rochester's deaf community also were consulted about the usability of this test.

The DVD, which works on both PC and Macintosh computers, includes the interactive test software and two manuals for test administration and interpretation of automatically generated test results.

The DVD is $149.95 plus shipping and handling and can be purchased by calling NTID at (585) 475-6906 V/TTY.

• What is ADHD?: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder produces distractibility, impulsivity and hyperactivity, which create an enormous challenge to learning in a traditional classroom and multimedia learning environments and functioning in the workplace and other settings. It has recently been recognized that ADHD is a biological disorder that persists throughout the lifespan. The incidence of ADHD in the hearing population is estimated at approximately five percent and in the deaf population at between five and 38 percent. ■

HumanWare's SmartView Versa Expands Boundaries of Handheld Electronic Magnifiers

HumanWare is now shipping the new SmartView Versa and Versa+ handheld electronic magnifiers. These two new additions to HumanWare's low vision product line have large 4.3" wide screens, 5x to 15x magnification and multiple enhanced contrast modes to make reading easier.

The SmartView Versa and Versa + were instant hits when they were unveiled at the CSUN conference last March. In fact, several clients had already placed their orders and were waiting for them to become available.

People suffering from low vision due to macular degeneration, glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy or another eye condition can use the SmartView Versa to magnify words and images. The portable device can be carried anywhere to enlarge text in newspapers and magazines, on pill bottles and food packaging, or anywhere things are too small to read.

Highly portable, the Versa and Versa+ provide access to a wide array of content, thereby limiting the need for cumbersome large print documents. There are also numerous features that can be applied in a school setting: facilitate access to audio learning, learning through video in class and at home, increase in-class attention and act as a study aid, provide library of study materials and notes.

Two models are available. The Versa is lightweight with a flip out handle and provides clear, undistorted magnification. The Versa+ has all the basic magnification functions, as well as the ability to save pictures, make voice recordings, listen to music and watch videos. The SmartView Versa+ transcends the definition of a handheld electronic magnifier with the addition of these unique multimedia features.

The SmartView Versa+ uses a standard SD memory card to save images captured with the magnifier or store music and video files transferred from a computer. Saved images can be viewed on the Versa+ in full color. You can easily zoom in the image or pan around the image to find the details that interest you.

For more information about these or other HumanWare products, please vist www.humanware.com. ■

Introducing Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones

New screen reader software application provides blind and visually impaired customers with a solution to access BlackBerry smartphones

HumanWare is pleased to introduce its newest software solution called Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones to the blind community. Access to information through mobile devices is key in today's business world and the use of smartphones has become the predominant way of communication for business professionals and management. With over 21 million subscribers in 150 countries, the BlackBerry Smartphones have grown in popularity to become the smartphone of choice to stay in touch with work, family, friends and important information while on the go. Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones is an innovative screen reader application that enables visually impaired users to access and operate BlackBerry Smartphones

Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones is the product of the joint collaborative efforts of HumanWare, the global leader in assistive technologies for the print disabled, Code Factory, the leading provider of screen reader technology and maker of Mobile Speak, and Research In Motion (RIM), the maker of the award winning portfolio of BlackBerry products and solutions. Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones is design to convert visual information displayed on the device screen into a voice output, enabling people who are visually impaired to use BlackBerry smartphones to increase independence and productivity, which are essential in today's competitive world.

Available for the new QWERTY BlackBerry smartphones, including the new BlackBerry Tour 9630 smartphone, Orator for BlackBerry Smartphones will provide you with greater freedom to manage your daily activities in the way that is most convenient for you. With it, you will have the ability to stay connected anytime, anywhere.

Discover why Orator for BlackBerry Smartphone is the solution for you to stay connected with what is important in your life.

Visit our Web site at www.orator4bb.com to find out more about this unique mobile solution. ■

Conover Company Announces Functional Skills System for the iPod Touch

A new generation of tools for independence

Now you can use the popular iPod Touch loaded with all of the videos from Conover's innovative Functional Skills System to teach and reinforce critical functional life, social, math, literacy and work skills necessary for independence. Use this mobile technology to take your classroom into the community!

The Conover Company offers the iPod Touch preloaded with all 3200+ videos from their popular Functional Skills System. They also offer an Author's package, which gives users the ability to create, edit and download their own custom instructional videos, making the content relevant to each learner's needs and abilities. This package includes a professional-quality digital video camera and tripod, Adobe Premier Elements, a firewire cable, a 32GB iPod Touch, USB video transfer cable and step-by-step directions.

"Response to our programs being available on the iPod Touch is overwhelming," says Terry Schmitz, President and founder of The Conover Company. "We are finding the iPod is a tool that everyone wants, and with over 3,200 videos, we have the content to make it useful."

You can sign up for a free online webinar to learn more about the system and how it works. To set up a webinar, call 800-933-1933 or visit www.conovercompany.com. ■

Kessler Foundation Research Center Study Provides Insight into One of the Most Challenging Symptoms Following a Traumatic Brain Injury

Advancements could improve the quality of life of injured veterans

A recent study by Kessler Foundation Research Center published in Brain Injury, the official journal of the International Brain Injury Association, uncovered the possible cause of cognitive fatigue in patients suffering from traumatic brain injury (TBI). Cognitive fatigue has been shown to be one of the most challenging symptoms following TBI, greatly affecting everyday life activities, such as work and school. The study also addressed the difficult task of measuring cognitive fatigue through the use of functional MRI (fMRI), an advanced imaging technology. In addition to civilians with TBI, methodology from the study could potentially be used in VA Hospitals to improve the lives of the estimated 300,000 U.S. Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who suffer from brain injury. Cognitive fatigue is a highly prevalent condition, with 73 percent of TBI patients reporting significant levels of fatigue even five years post-injury.

"Cognitive fatigue has been shown to be one of the most debilitating symptoms after a traumatic brain injury. It can hinder every aspect of a person's life," stated John DeLuca, Ph.D., Vice President of Research at Kessler Foundation Research Center. "The study could potentially improve the quality of life for civilians and veterans with TBI, as well as stroke survivors and individuals with multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and AIDs."

A roadblock in the progress for treating patients for cognitive fatigue is the lack of proven assessment tools. Researchers have been struggling for nearly a century to find ways to measure and diagnose cognitive fatigue. Common methods include self-reporting and objective assessments; however, the many limitations associated with both methods have hindered advancements in research and ultimately patient rehabilitation. This study offers a new and innovative paradigm to investigate brain activation during a cognitive task.

Dr. DeLuca was senior author of "The Neural Correlates of Cognitive Fatigue in Traumatic Brain Injury Using Functional MRI" (Kohl et al, Brain Injury 2009;23(5):420-32), which details how fMRI was utilized to assess cognitive fatigue in people with TBI while they were performing behavioral tasks. Researchers compared the readings of eleven healthy controls with those of eleven participants with moderate to severe TBI. The fMRI images illustrated increased brain activity in the patients with TBI, which indicates greater cerebral effort indicative of cognitive fatigue.

"This unique study expands our understanding of how TBI alters brain function and introduces a new approach for future studies," said Rodger DeRose, president and CEO of Kessler Foundation. "This is just one example of the advances in rehabilitation research being achieved at Kessler Foundation Research Center," DeRose added, "where our clinical scientists are making discoveries that improve quality of life for people with disabilities caused by TBI, spinal cord injury, stroke, multiple sclerosis and other chronic neurological and musculoskeletal disorders."

Kessler Foundation Research Center is a leader in the area of traumatic brain injury research. Funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Kessler Foundation Research Center is one of 14 federally funded TBI model systems in the nation. Model systems are comprehensive networks that promote independent and collaborative research that will improve the national standard of care for individuals with this devastating injury. ■

EasyStand Bantam's Infinite Possibilities Increase Compliance

Altimate Medical designed the new EasyStand Bantam to offer an infinite number of positioning possibilities into one pediatric stander. These position possibilities are especially beneficial for children with flexible or fixed contractures because they can start standing supine with hip/knee flexion or an anterior tilt sitting position, then move to their upright ability.

By combining sit-to-stand and supine standing, the Bantam stander can position a child in six main positions. Standing positions in the Bantam include upright standing, supine standing and supine standing with knee/hip flexion. Other positions include 90/90 sitting, anterior tilt sitting and lying supine. By offering a variety of positions, the Bantam reduces fatigue while maximizing comfort and standing compliance.

For nearly twenty years, Altimate Medical has been providing EasyStand standing technology that improves the quality of life for kids and adults who use wheelchairs worldwide. For more information about the EasyStand standing frames, please visit www.easystand.com or contact Altimate Medical at 800-342-8968.

Watch Bantam Positiong Video at www.easystand.com/videos/bantam_infinite.html. ■

MacSpeech, Inc. Launches MacSpeech Dictate Medical

MacSpeech, Inc. has announced the release and immediate availability of MacSpeech Dictate Medical, the medical professional's speech recognition solution for the Macintosh.

Designed specifically for the medical and dental professional and their support staff, MacSpeech Dictate Medical empowers dictating text directly into applications and practice management systems, and issuing numerous commands by voice, on the Macintosh. MacSpeech Dictate Medical includes a digitally enhanced, USB headset microphone. MacSpeech Dictate Medical requires Mac OS X 10.5.6 (Leopard) or higher and is available today for US$595 as a new purchase, or $345 for current owners of MacSpeech Dictate 1.5, or $395 for current owners of MacSpeech Dictate 1.3.

MacSpeech Dictate Medical fully understands and supports vocabularies for more than 54 medical and dental disciplines and specialties, including General Medicine, Cardiology, Dentistry, OB/GYN, Pediatrics, Pediatric Dentistry, Radiology, Neurology, Oncology, Psychiatry, Urology, Internal Medicine, Ophthalmology and many more.

"MacSpeech Dictate Medical is the most accurate voice recognition for medical professionals extant, after only five minutes of training," Joe Borelli, MD, president and medical director, MRI at Belfair, LLC. "Accuracy is 99+ percent even with complex radiology-based medical terminology. This is the new benchmark for medical speech recognition."

"MacSpeech Dictate Medical provides medical professionals who use Macs with unprecedented accuracy in very little training time," explained Andrew Taylor, founder and CEO of MacSpeech, Inc. "Medical professionals use dictation to keep patient records and manage their practices. Now with MacSpeech Dictate Medical, professionals can dictate directly into their Mac-based applications for even more productivity. We're excited to provide a competitively priced and exceptionally accurate professional medical dictation solution for the Macintosh."

MacSpeech Dictate Medical was demonstrated live for the first time on Friday, June 19, 2009, in the MacPractice Booth, at the Florida National Dental Convention (FNDC) held at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center, in Orlando, Florida.

"We're thrilled that MacSpeech Dictate Medical is now available to empower medical and dental professionals to dictate directly into MacPractice software, including MacPractice EMR," explained Mark Hollis, founder and president of MacPractice, Inc. "With MacSpeech Dictate Medical and MacPractice's leading practice management and clinical applications for Mac OS X, health care providers will be more productive and more cost-effective than ever."

MacSpeech Dictate Medical is the premier desktop speech recognition solution for the medical and dental professional on the Macintosh. MacSpeech Dictate Medical provides unprecedented speech recognition accuracy with minimal training and works with existing Mac applications and practice management systems. MacSpeech Dictate Medical delivers a truly Mac user experience, and conforms to behaviors already familiar to Macintosh fans worldwide. Beyond dictation, MacSpeech Dictate Medical lets people perform basic navigation of their Mac and control it with their voice to launch applications, open new windows, execute menu commands, etc.

COMPATIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY

MacSpeech Dictate Medical requires Intel-based Macintosh hardware and requires Mac OS X 10.5.6 (Leopard) and higher.

New MacSpeech Dictate Medical solutions, with an enhanced, USB headset microphone, are available today starting at $595. Registered customers of MacSpeech Dictate 1.5 are eligible to purchase MacSpeech Dictate Medical at special crossgrade price of $345. Registered customers of MacSpeech Dictate1.3 are eligible to purchase MacSpeech Dictate Medical at special crossgrade price of $395.

MacSpeech Dictate Medical is currently available in English at www.macspeech.com in the U.S., and will be available in the coming weeks at www.macspeech.co.uk in the U.K., and in other English-speaking countries through International resellers and distributors listed at www.macspeech.com/resellers. ■

Software Enables Students to Study Smarter

StudyX makes learning fun; students, teachers can customize options

Teachers looking for a tool to help their students master subjects can find some needed support with StudyX. The software can be customized to tackle a range of subjects, such as foreign languages, vocabulary words, science, history, medical and more. The program has been used by students of all ages – from elementary to graduate levels.

Compatible with nearly any Windows format, the study software generates digital files similar to flash cards, and allows users to quickly add questions and answers. The study materials then work in a question-and-answer format. Once the needed materials are entered, users can learn in a fun fashion through games. While playing, questions pop up to challenge students to master the information entered. After successfully answering all of the answers, the student is congratulated.

If they prefer, students can print the information in five options: flash cards, quick study sheets and three different practice tests (fill in the blank, multiple choice or matching).

Students also can share files with friends and create virtual study groups while browsing the Web or playing games. The software works directly in Internet Explorer.

John F. Kennedy High School in suburban St. Louis has installed StudyX on all laptops used by its more than 400 students. The school's technology coordinator says, "StudyX is a good study tool for the digital generation. Our teachers report that students are totally engaged when they use StudyX. It provides students with a fun, interactive method for learning."

The powerful tool benefits teachers in another way as well. Teachers can develop tests using StudyX. They can even develop multiple versions of the test. Tests can be stored and password-protected. Students can receive printed versions, or teachers can set time limits and allow students to take the tests on their computers.

Developed by Jeff Computers, the software is available as a downloadable file for $39.99, or a CD version can be purchased for $44.99, including shipping and handling, or it can be shipped express for $59.99 (taxes applied in Missouri).

Students and teachers can learn more about StudyX and download a 30-day trial version by visiting www.StudyX.com.

Photos are available on the Web site or we can send upon request. Please contact Tim Sitek at sitek01@earthlink.net or 636-861-0509. ■

Historical Novelist with Visual Impairment Finds Freedom with her BookReader

The Plustek BookReader V100 reads scanned text to create independence for individuals who are visually impaired

Nan Hawthorne, a successful historical novelist, was born with Stargardt's Disease, a form of macular degeneration that causes the deterioration of a person's vision over time. Nan has been partially blind her entire life; now with 20/1200 vision, she has learned to live with the disease but has had to constantly rely on others for help when reading and researching. In fact, to accomplish this, she had to go through the laborious effort of mailing every research book she needed to a third party service that converts the lengthy tomes into spoken word in order for her to complete her research – a frustrating and time consuming endeavor.

"I had to get creative and depend on other people, which I don't like to be forced to do," explained Nan. "Having to impose upon others to help me was very uncomfortable and left me feeling like I couldn't take care of myself. Also, sending books away to be converted and read was very time consuming, as it could often take up to three months to get results."

Nan not only reads for pleasure but also reads in order to make a living. Being partially blind was not going to hold her back. While trying to find a solution that would empower her with the gift of independence, Nan discovered the Plustek BookReader V100, a reading device that has both Text-to-Speech (TTS) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) features that allow it to transform printed words into audio output, which can then be saved in MP3 or WAV formats compatible with most portable audio players. Nan says she was impressed with the dramatic results she achieved even from her very first attempt.

"It has been like night and day since I started using the BookReader," said Nan. "Not being able to read on my own was hindering my research and my quality of life. Now I am able to buy the books I need and read them whenever I want. It has dramatically changed my life."

Prior to purchasing the BookReader V100, Nan couldn't afford to be a member of a large library database where they only let members do research in-house and do not allow any books to be checked-out. "Now I can save or take print outs home of the articles I need for my research, scan them into the BookReader and have them read instantly! The BookReader makes my life so much easier."

Designed for the vision impaired, those challenged with learning disabilities and those looking to learn a new language, the BookReader is competitively priced at $699. The BookReader is bundled with software that provides high-quality lifelike voices. In addition to OCR software, this reading peripheral comes with Plustek's patented SEE Technology, which uses a curved lamp to provide a clear copy of the book without distortion at the spine on big, bulky books. The latest edition to the Plustek product line is available at select retailers and e-tailers nationwide. For more information, please visit www.plustek.com/usa.

Nan Hawthorne is the author of An Involuntary King: A Tale of Anglo Saxon England. She is currently working on the first of a series of historical paranormal mysteries. You can purchase her books on Amazon.com or through Shield-wall Books at www.shield-wall.com and visit her widely popular blog at www.nanhawthorne.blogspot.com. ■

27th Annual CONFERENCE

Assistive Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation

Closing The Gap

OCTOBER 15-17, 2009

Preconference Workshops
October 13-14, 2009

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

COME, NETWORK, LEARN – AND RETURN HOME WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT ALL THAT IS GAINED

Over the years, the annual Closing The Gap Conference has become known as the best educational AT conference in North America. Through shared best practices and research, networking, training, hands-on opportunities and an expansive exhibit hall, participants have found information, strategies and products that have proven beneficial and, oftentimes, unsurpassed for use in their work and in their lives.

The 27th Annual Conference runs Tuesday, October 13th through Saturday, October 17th and is held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Preconference workshops are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, October 13th and 14th, and the Conference officially begins with a preview of the exhibits on Wednesday evening, followed by three days of presentations, hands-on labs and exhibitions. Varied levels of participation are available, with registration options listed on page 36.

Inside the next few pages, you'll find detailed listings of the 25 all-day preconference workshops, over 200 presentations, exhibitors contracted to date and academic credit/CEU, air travel, hotel and registration information.

We have tried to keep conference costs down and have been sensitive to any and all price increases. The group discounts, presenter and exhibitor discounts, parent and student discounts and early registration (June 30th) all apply; and NEW for 2009 are bundled pricing for two preconference workshops, a one-day registration rate and an exhibit hall only registration rate. Graduate-level academic credit and CEUs will again be offered.

We invite you to participate and encourage you to bring your team.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

ANYONE interested in finding practical and readily available AT solutions for ALL disabilities, mild to significant, infant through adult.

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- AT Consultants
- Technology Specialists
- Consumers
- Parents
- Students

WHY ATTEND?

Participants will have numerous and unique opportunities to learn, first-hand, from experts in the field, network, ask questions, and see and try the latest AT products and strategies available today.

Participants will have opportunities to search for answers to their specific needs. Presenters are approachable; participants are interactive; exhibitors are knowledgeable.

Participants can earn academic credit and CEUs.

In the end, participants will return home with creative ideas, renewed enthusiasm and a greatly enhanced skill set that will help them easily, effectively and, oftentimes, immediately implement that which was gained through their conference experience.

CLOSING THE GAP

P.O. Box 68, 526 Main Street, Henderson, MN 56044
Phone: 507-248-3294 • Fax: 507-248-3810
E-mail: info@closingthegap.com • Web site: www.closingthegap.com

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Closing The Gap preconference workshops are all-day, in-depth workshops presented by experts in the field in very practical and effective ways. The content and delivery are unsurpassed and the resulting outcomes for persons with disabilities are overwhelmingly positive and bright.

Many of this year's workshops are new, some advanced, with state-of-the-art technologies being addressed and best practices demonstrated and taught.

OVER 200 PRESENTATIONS

Practical and expert-lead presentations during the Closing The Gap Conference will include over 200 one- and two-hour sessions that describe and/or demonstrate successful applications of assistive technology for persons with disabilities. Handouts will be available onsite and online following the conference.

STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS

Companies exhibiting at Closing The Gap represent an impressive and varied scope of AT products and strategies from around the world, including knowledgeable reps and professionals with substantial experience in the field to best explain and demonstrate their solutions.

Products on display will range from low tech to high tech and represent solutions for all disabilities and ages. Daily regular AND exclusive hours are scheduled to give participants quality time to explore, try, learn and ask questions, first-hand and face-to-face.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Monday, October 12
5:00 pm - 8:00 pm .....Registration Desk Open

Tuesday, October 13
7:00 am - 8:00 pm .....Registration Desk Open
8:00 am - 4:30 pm ..... Preconference Workshops

Wednesday, October 14
7:00 am - 9:00 pm .....Registration Desk Open
8:00 am - 4:30 pm ..... Preconference Workshops
5:30 pm - 8:00 pm ..... Preview of Exhibits

Thursday, October 15
7:00 am - 5:30 pm .....Registration Desk Open
8:00 am - 10:30 am .....Presentations
10:00 am - 12:00 pm .....Commercial Exhibits
10:30 am - 12:00 pm ..... Exclusive Exhibit Hours and Lab Presentations
12:30 pm - 4:30 pm .....Presentations
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm .....Commercial Exhibits

Friday, October 16
7:30 am - 5:30 pm .....Registration Desk Open
8:00 am - 10:30 am .....Presentations
10:00 am - 12:00 pm .....Commercial Exhibits
10:30 am - 12:00 pm ..... Exclusive Exhibit Hours and Lab Presentations
12:30 pm - 4:30 pm .....Presentations
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm .....Commercial Exhibits

Saturday, October 17
7:30 am - 2:00 pm .....Registration Desk Open
8:00 am - 1:30 pm .....Presentations
9:00 am - 2:00 pm .....Commercial Exhibits

STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS

Wednesday evening through Saturday, October 14-17, 2009

DON'T MISS THE PREVIEW OF EXHIBITS

Wednesday, October 14 • 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Great Hall, Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

Open to preconference and/or conference registrants only.

EXCLUSIVE EXHIBIT HOURS

Wednesday, October 14	5:30 pm - 8:00 pm *(Preview of Exhibits)*
Thursday, October 15	10:30 am - 12:00 pm I 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Friday, October 16	10:30 am - 12:00 pm I 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

(A limited number of lab presentations run concurrently from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm.)

REGULAR EXHIBIT HOURS

Thursday, October 15	10:00 am - 12:00 pm I 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Friday, October 16	10:00 am - 12:00 pm I 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Saturday, October 17	9:00 am - 2:00 pm (Open to the public at no charge)

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Graduate-level academic credit from Hamline University is available for a variety of levels of conference attendance. Participants will have the option of one, two or three full semester credits.

Attend all five days and earn up to three graduate-level academic credits and up to 3.4 IACET CEUs!

One full semester credit — Cost: $119

Requirements:
- 12 contact hours
- An outside assignment

(12 Contact hours require one preconference workshop and conference participation; two preconference workshops; OR conference participation only.)

Two full semester credits — Cost: $238

Requirements:
- 24 contact hours
- An outside assignment

(24 contact hours require at least one preconference workshop (minimum) AND conference participation.)

Three full semester credits — Cost: $357

Requirements:
- 36 contact hours
- An outside assignment

(36 contact hours require two preconference workshops AND conference participation Thursday - Saturday.)

Outside Assignments

Outside assignments will need to be turned in to Closing The Gap by November 15th, 2009. Within a few weeks, grades will be issued and then maintained by Hamline University.

To register for academic credit, please indicate your preference as to one, two or three semester credits on the registration form, pay the appropriate fee, and complete and return the Hamline academic credit form that will accompany your confirmation letter in the mail.

Any questions regarding academic credit and the procedure involved should be directed to Closing The Gap's registration department.

IACET CEUS

AAC Institute is an Authorized Provider of IACET (International Association for Continuing Education and Training) CEUs. CEUs are being offered for all conference learning sessions without charge. IACET CEUs that relate to the practice of speech-language pathology and audiology can be used for ASHA certification maintenance. RESNA accepts IACET CEUs for ATP/ATS credential maintenance. Most state licensure systems accept IACET CEUs or other forms of self-reporting. Preconference workshops are offered for up to 1.4 CEUs. The conference is offered for up to 2.0 CEUs. For additional information visit www.aacinstitute.org/CEUs.

CEU details and documentation will be available at the Closing The Gap registration desk located on the second floor of the Sheraton.

CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE

Closing The Gap-issued Certificates of Attendance for conference participation will be available upon request at no additional fee.

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Tuesday and Wednesday, October 13-14, 2009 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

PC-1 Students with Significant Disabilities as Writers, Readers and Communicators: Yes They Can!

Gretchen Hanser, Ph.D., is the Associate Director of School-Aged Services, Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC and Toy Dills Booth, M.Ed., NBCT, is a Special Educator, The North Shelby School, Shelby, NC.

PC-2 Wiggle Your Way Through Web 2.0

Paula Walser, M.S., CCC-SLP, is the Director of E-Learning, CESA 6, Oshkosh, WI.

PC-3 Every Move Counts, Clicks and Chats Assessment Strategies: Getting the Information You Need for Individuals with Significant Sensory-Motor Differences

Jane Korsten, M.A., is a Speech Language Pathologist, EMC, Inc., Leawood, KS; Terry Foss, M.Ed., is an AT Resource Facilitator, Lee's Summit, MO; and Lisa Berry, OTR/L, is a Pediatric Occupational Therapist, Blue Valley School District, Lenexa, KS.

PC-4 Developing Communication Skills for Children Who Face Severe Multiple Challenges: Partner-Assisted Scanning with Pragmatically Organized Dynamic Displays (PODD)

Linda J. Burkhart, B.S., is a Special Educator/Augmentative Communication Specialist/Technology Integration Specialist in private practice, Eldersburg, MD and Dale Gardner Fox, M.S., RPT, is an Assistive Technology Consultant, Hampshire Educational Collaborative, CCATT, Northampton, MA.

PC-5 Putting the Pieces Together: Positioning, Access and Speech Generating Devices

Michelle L. Lange, OTR, ABDA, ATP, is the President, Access to Independence, Arvada, CO and Jill Tullman, M.S., is a Speech Language Pathologist/AAC Specialist in private practice, Denver, CO.

PC-6 Setting Up and Working with Switch Interfaces

Patti Rea, M.S., is a Technology Consultant, Adaptive Technology, Celina, TX and Kathleen Post, M.S., CCC-SLP, is the Manager, Assistive Technology Dept., Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley Region, Villa Park, IL.

PC-7 Got Grants(manship)? ... Upgrading Your Grant Seeking Toolbox to Support Tech Initiatives

Kathleen Gradel, Ed.D., is an Associate Professor, Language, Learning and Leadership Dept., College of Education, SUNY-Fredonia, Fredonia, NY.

PC-8 Gathering Evidence About the Effectiveness of Technology for Enhancing Academic Performance

Dave L. Edyburn, Ph.D., is a Professor, Dept. of Exceptional Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

PC-9 Teaching AAC

Pati King DeBaun, M.S., is a Speech Language Pathologist/Consultant specializing in assistive technology, Creative Communicating, Park City, UT; Karen Biggerstaff, M.S., is a Speech Language Pathologist/Consultant, San Antonio, TX; and Sue Alderfer, B.S., is a Speech Language Pathologist, Montgomery County, Perkiomenville, PA.

PC-10 Next Steps and New Frontiers with Classroom Suite 4!

Dan Herlihy is an Assistive Technology/Technology Resource Specialist, Connective Technology Solutions, Inc., Hoosick, NY.

PC-11 Adding to Your Bag of Tricks ... and Treats!

Mo Buti, M.A., is the Chicago Public Schools Autism Coordinator, Chicago, IL.

PC-12 Switch Access to Writing

Kelly Fonner, M.S., is an Assistive/Educational Technology Consultant, Lake Geneva, WI and Scott Marfilius, M.S., is an Assistive/Educational Technology Consultant, Bayside, WI

PC-13 Using the iPhone and iPod touch as Assistive Technology: From AAC to Planning Tool and Beyond

David Niemeijer, Ph.D., is the CEO, AssistiveWare, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Samuel Sennott, M.S. Ed. in Assistive Special Education Technology, is a Ph.D. Candidate, The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA; and Eric Sailers, M.A., CCC-SLP, is a Speech Language Pathologist and Assistive Technology Specialist, La Mesa-Spring Valley School District and Crimson Center, San Diego, CA

PC-14 Talking in Class: Helping Students Using AAC Devices

Gail M. Van Tatenhove, M.A., is an AAC-focused Speech Language Pathologist in private practice, AACell, Inc., Orlando, FL

PC-15 Every Move Counts, Clicks and Chats Implementation Strategies: Where Do You Go After Assessment?

Jane Korsten, M.A., is a Speech Language Pathologist, EMC, Inc., Leawood, KS; Terry Foss, M.Ed., is an AT Resource Facilitator, Lee's Summit, MO; and Lisa Berry, OTR/L, is a Pediatric Occupational Therapist, Blue Valley School District, Lenexa, KS

PC-16 Designing Two-Switch Early Literacy Activities for Computer Access: Hands-On Computer Lab - Classroom Suite

Linda J. Burkhart, B.S., is a Special Educator/Augmentative Communication Specialist/Technology Integration Specialist in private practice, Eldersburg, MD; Susan Garber is the Executive Director, AT:LAST, Inc.: The MD AT Cooperative, Columbia, MD; Jeanne Noorisa is a Special Educator, AT Team, Baltimore County Public Schools, Monkton, MD; and Jan Kurtz, M.S., is an Occupational Therapist, AT Team, Baltimore County Public Schools, Hampstead, MD

PC-17 Make It Age Appropriate: Structuring Environments and Routines to Engage Your Adolescent and Adult AAC Users in Age Appropriate Communication

Elizabeth (Libby) S. Rush, M.A., CCC-SLP, CPM, is an AAC Consultant in private practice, Durham, NC and Celeste Helling, M.A., CCC-SLP, ATP, is a Speech Language Pathologist, North Carolina Assistive Technology Program, Charlotte, NC

PC-18 Reaching More Staff: Digital Tools for 21st Century Technology Training

Denise C. DeCoste, Ed.D., is an Assistive Technology Specialist and a High Incidence Accessible Technology Team Leader; William McGrath, M.S., is an Occupational Therapist and Assistive Technology Specialist; and Beth Poss, M.A., M.S., is a Speech Language Pathologist and Assistive Technology Consultant, all, Montgomery County Public Schools, Bethesda, MD

PC-19 The Power of PowerPoint in Special Education

Judith P. Sweeney, M.A. Special Education, is an AT Consultant and the President, Onion Mountain Technology, Inc., Canton, CT

PC-20 Scanning and AAC Systems: Sharing Strategies that Can Help End the Struggling (for both the adult therapist/teacher and the child/AAC user)

Michele Bishop, B.A., ATP, is a Teacher/Assistive Technology Specialist in private practice, San Francisco, CA and Karen M. Kangas, B.S., ATP, is an Occupational Therapist in private practice, Shamokin, PA

PC-21 The Balanced Literacy Club: Supporting Literacy in Classrooms and Districts

Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite, Ed.D., CCC-SLP, is an Assistive Technology Consultant and Author, AAC Intervention, Litchfield Park, AZ; Patty Ashby, M.N.S. in Speech Language Pathology, is an Assistive Technology Consultant, Washington Elementary School District, Sweetwater School, Glendale, AZ; Laurel Richardson, M.A. Ed., OTR, is an AT Specialist, Buckeye School District, Goodyear, AZ; and Deanna K. Wagner, M.S., CCC-CLP, is an Assistive Technology Specialist, Madison Elementary School District, Phoenix, AZ

PC-22 Assessment Defining Instruction: Autism and Literacy

Susan Norwell, M.A., is an Educational Specialist in private practice/Focused Learning Solutions and Instructor, Northeastern Illinois University, Buffalo Grove, IL

PC-23 Teaching the Three Rs for Students with Significant Disabilities in the Inclusive Classroom

Pati King DeBaun, M.S., is a Speech Language Pathologist/Consultant specializing in assistive technology, Creative Communicating, Park City, UT and Dan Herlihy is an Assistive Technology/Technology Resource Specialist, Connective Technology Solutions, Inc., Hoosick, NY

PC-24 "But What If the Teachers Won't Do It?" Making a Difference with Your Consultative Services

Keri Huddleston, M.A., CCC-SLP, is an Assistive Technology Consultant, Teru Langsdale, M.S., CCC-SLP, is a Special Education Consultant, and Moira Soulia, M.S., CCC-SLP, is an Assistive Technology Specialist, all, Washoe County School District, Reno, NV

PC-25 It's All About Independent Functioning! Using Technology to Develop Critical Life Skills for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Susan L. Stokes, M.A., CCC-SLP, is an Educational Autism Consultant and Trainer in private practice, Fond du Lac, WI.

Full workshop details, including descriptions, available at www.closingthegap.com

CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

FOR OVER 25 YEARS – Closing The Gap has been bringing together distinguished leaders in the field to share their knowledge and expertise with others.

ALLEN, JEROLYN - Litchfield Elementary School District, Litchfield, AZ

BABU, VASU - Western PA School for Blind Children, Pittsburgh, PA

BAHR, PATRICIA - Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, Gillette Technology Center, St. Paul, MN

BAKKEN, TARA - PACER Center, Bloomington, MN

BARRY, MARY JO - Don Johnston Incorporated, Volo, IL

BASTIANI WEISMER, PATTI - Wellesley Public Schools, Wellesley, MA

BASTIANI WILSON, LINDA - Montgomery County Public Schools, Bethesda, MD

BECKER, TRINA - Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL

BEHRMANN, MICHAEL - George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

BELLMAN, SCOTT - DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology), University of Washington, Seattle, WA

BENAMATI, JOSEPH - Wicomico County Board of Education, Salisbury, MD

BENETEAU, ERIN - Tobii ATI, Seattle, WA

BERGSTROM, BETH - Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Il

BRAUN, BOB - Southwest/West Central Service Cooperatives, Marshall, MN

BRESLIN LARSON, JOAN - Minnesota Dept. of Education, Roseville, MN

BURGSTAHLER, SHERYL - DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology), University of Washington, Seattle, WA

BURKHART, LINDA - Eldersburg, MD

BURNETT, DOYLE - Sacramento County Office of Education, Davis, CA

BUTLER, MARCI - Don Johnston, Inc., Volo, IL

BUTTERFIELD, ROXANNE - Slater Software, Inc., Hot Springs, AR

CARRILLO, DEBBIE - Beaverton School District, Beaverton, OR

CARSON, ERIC - Institute for Learning Technologies, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, NY

CASEY, KAREN - Durham CDSA, Durham, NC

CAUFIELD, FREDA - Beaverton School District, Beaverton, OR

CERRETA, ANNETTE - PACER Center, Bloomington, MN

CHEONG, AMANDA - AT:LAST, Inc., The MD AT Cooperative, Savage, MD

COLETTA, BETH - North East ISD, Department of Special Education, San Antonio, TX

COPPIN, MARK - Anne Carlsen Center for Children, Jamestown, ND

CORLEY, PAMELA - Corpus Christi, TX

CRANE, JASON - Duluth Public School, Duluth, MN

CRICK, ANN - Crick Software, Westport, CT

CRICK, JOHN - Crick Software, Inc., Westport, CT

DAGEY, RYAN - TheArcLink, Inc., Bloomington, IN

DAHLQUIST, LORI - Adaptivation, Inc., Sioux Falls, SD

DASHNER, MEL - Origin Instruments Corp., Grand Prairie, TX

DASWICK, KIM - Scottsdale, AZ

DECOSTE, DENISE - Montgomery County Public Schools, Bethesda, MD

DUFF, KATIE - Gillette Lifetime Specialty Healthcare, St Paul, MN

EDGE SAVAGE, JENNIFER - Cambium Learning Technologies, Bedford, MA

EDYBURN, DAVE - Dept. of Exceptional Education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI

ELLENBERG, JENIFER - Western PA School for Blind Children, Pittsburgh, PA

ESTRADA HERNANDEZ, NOEL - University of Iowa, Counseling Rehabilitation and Student Development, Iowa City, IA

FEIT, SUZANNE - Cambium Learning Technologies, Petaluma, CA

FOLEY, COLLEEN - InfoCor, Milwaukee, WI

FONNER, KELLY - Lake Geneva, WI

FORE, MERRY - Corpus Christi, TX

FRAILEY, CHERIS - Mayer-Johnson, LLC, Highlands Ranch, CO

FRAKE, ERIKA - Brain Injury Association of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

FRANK, REBA - Pitt County School, Greenville, NC

GALLAGHER, BJ - The Gallagher Group LLC, Oakland, MD

GARBER, SUSAN - AT:LAST, Inc., Columbia, MD

GEORGE, CINDY - George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

GIBSON, JASON - University of Kentucky, Stanford, KY

GILORMINI, BRIDGET - PACER Center, Minneapolis, MN

GITTA, CYNTHIA - River Hills School, Cedar Falls, IA

GOLD, BRYAN - DynaVox Mayer-Johnson, Pittsburgh, PA

GOMORY, ANDREW - Lingraphicare, Princeton, NJ

GRANT, KENDRA - Strategic Transitions, Inc., QuillSoft, Mississauga, ON Canada

GRIMSTEAD, SHARON - Norfolk Public Schools, Norfolk, VA

HAMIL, ANDRINA - Corpus Christi ISD, Lozano Instructional Service Center, Corpus Christi, TX

HELLING, CELESTE - North Carolina Assistive Technology Program, Charlotte, NC

HERLIHY, DAN - Connective Technology Solutions, Inc., Hoosick, NY

HODAPP, JOAN - Area Education Agency 267, Mason City, IA

HOFFMAN, JERI - Tobii ATI, Solon, OH

HOLLAND, RUSS - Alliance for Technology Access, Cold Brook, NY

HOWARD, KRISTA - Estrella Mountain Community College, Avondale, AZ

HUDDLESTON, KERI - Washoe County School District, Reno, NV

HURD, ROBIN - AAC Institute, Fairview, PA

IRVING, AMANDA - Biomedical Engineering Dept., New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, NJ

ISSACSON, RABIDRAN - Spastics Society of Karnataka, Bangalore, Bangalore, Karnataka India

JEFFS, TARA - East Carolina University, Greenville, NC

JENSEN DUBOIS, BONNIE - North East ISD, Department of Special Education, San Antonio, TX

JOHNSON, KENJA - Corpus Christi ISD, Lozano Instructional Service Center, Corpus Christi, TX

JOHNSTON, BEN - Don Johnston Incorporated, Volo, IL

JOHNSTON, TANIA - Crick Software, Westport, OR

JONES, ALAN - LPS A Division of Fidelity, Woodbury, MN

JONES, JONATHAN - Northeast Metro 916, St. Paul, MN

KANGAS, KAREN - Shamokin, PA

KEATING, TOM - Cognitopia Software, Eugene, OR

KEHOE, LISA - Mayer-Johnson, LLC, Pittsburgh, PA

KEMPKA WAGNER, DEANNA - Madison Elementary School District, Phoenix, AZ

KINAS JEROME, MARCI - George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

KING, RENE - Texarkana, TX

KING COHEN, KRISTINA - Benetech/Bookshare.org, Palo Alto, CA

KING DEBAUN, PATI - Creative Communicating, Park City, UT

KINGETER, CATHY - Origin Instruments, Grand Prairie, TX

KJENDALEN, JIM - LaZee Tek, Ashley, IN

KLENK, KRISTEN - Glendale Elementary School District, Glendale, AZ

KOCH, AMY - Adaptivation, Inc., Sioux Falls, SD

KORSTEN, JANE - EMC, Inc., Leawood, KS

KRUGER, HEATHER - River Hills School, Cedar Falls, IA

KRUSE, MIRIAM - University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

LANGE, MICHELLE L. - Access to Independence, Inc., Arvada, CO

LANGSDALE, TERU - Washoe County School District, Reno, NV

LARSON, LISA - Savage, MN

LARSON, MARK - Marblesoft, LLC, Blaine, MN

LAWRENCE, DAVID - Cove School, Glenview, IL

LEACH, ANDY - Dolphin Computer Access, Inc., Princeton Junction, NJ

LEGGITT, BETH - South Eastern Special Education, Ste. Marie, IL

MACOMBER, PHYL T. - PracticalATSolutions.com, West Windsor, VT

MANTILLA, DR. BRUNO - New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, NJ

MARFILIUS, SCOTT - Bayside, WI

MARSDEN, RANDY - Madentec Limited, Edmonton, AB Canada

MAYORGA, SANDRA - Corpus Christi ISD, Corpus Christi, TX

MCBRIDE, BRENDA - HumanWare, Regina, SK Canada

MCBRIDE, DEBBY - AAC TechConnect, Inc., Evergreen, CO

MCDONALD, TENLEY - Simon Technology Center, Minneapolis, MN

MCGOVERN, RJ - Corpus Christi, TX

MCGRATH, WILLIAM - HIAT, Bethesda, MD

MCKAY, MARTIN - Texthelp Systems, Inc., Woburn, MA

MCKAY, MAUREEN - Optimistic Outcomes, Inc., Minnetonka, MN

MCKEOUGH FALLING, EMILY - George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

MEYER, ANN - AbleNet, Inc., Roseville, MN

MONIZ, MICHAEL - Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA

MOORE, CHRISTIAN - The WhyTry Organization, Provo, UT

MULLOY, AUSTIN - University of Texas, Austin, Austin, TX

NEIDLINGER, LAURA - AT:LAST, Inc., Columbia, MD

NIEMEIJER, DAVID - AssistiveWare, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

NORWELL, SUSAN - Buffalo Grove, IL

ODOM, JANE - Prentke Romich Company, Surprise, AZ

PARKINS, SHERRI - Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, ON Canada

PERRAN-SHOEMAKE, LAURA - Duluth Public Schools, Duluth, MN

PETERS, AMANDA - Atomic Learning, Little Falls, MN

PETERSON, LISA - St. Paul Public Schools, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, St. Paul, MN

PETERSON, YNEZ - Reach Program/SECEP, Norfolk, VA

POTTS, RHYS - Pitt County Schools, Greenville, NC

PUGLIESE, MADALAINE - Simmons College, Boston, MA, Marblehead, MA

RACHOW, CINDA - Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13, Council Bluffs, IA

RAINEY, DAWN - HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy, Philadelphia, PA

RAMDOSS, SATHIYA - University of Texas, Austin, Austin, TX

RAMSEY MUSSELWHITE, CAROLINE - AAC Intervention, Litchfield Park, AZ

RAY, JENNIFER - Texthelp Systems, Inc., Woburn, MA

REA, PATTI - Adaptive Technology, Celina, TX

REINHARDT, KEVIN - Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, ON Canada

RIFE, DAWN - Rocky View Schools, Airdrie, AB Canada

RIGGS, MOLLY - Carroll County Public Schools, Sykesville, MD

ROBERTS, JESSICA - Weber School District, Ogden, UT

ROMICH, BARRY - AAC Institute and Prentke Romich, Wooster, OH

ROTELLI, LISA - Adaptive Switch Labs, Inc., Spicewood, TX

RUSH, ELIZABETH (LIBBY) - Durham, NC

SAGSTETTER, MARY - AbleNet, Inc., Roseville, MN

SAILERS, ERIC - La Mesa-Spring Valley School District, La Mesa, CA

SAROSI, ELISA - Saltillo Corporation, Millersburg, OH

SCHLADER, JENNIFER - River Hills School, Cedar Falls, IA

SCHROEDER, KATHY - Atomic Learning, Little Falls, MN

SCOTT, DIANA - River Hills School, Cedar Falls, IA

SENNOTT, SAMUEL - Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA

SHANMUGAM, RAJA - MindTree Foundation, Bangalore, India

SHEEHAN, KAREN - Alliance for Technology Access, Petaluma, CA

SHOOK, JENNIFER - Cumberland, MD

SLATER, JEAN - Slater Software, Guffey, CO

SLOTZNICK, BEN - Point-and-Read, Inc., Mt Gretna, PA

SNELL, CORTNEE - Don Johnston Incorporated, Volo, IL

STACHOWIAK, JAMES - University of Iowa, ICATER, Iowa City, IA

STANGER, DONNA - Bellevue, WA

STANLEY, DEBRA - Corpus Christi ISD, Lozano Instructional Service Center, Corpus Christi, TX

STEFANINI, GINA - Brookline Public Schools, Brookline, MA

STOKES, SUSAN - Fond du Lac, WI

STORES, DAN - EquipALife (formerly Assistive Technology of Minnesota), Clinton, MN

STRICKLAND, DOROTHY - Do2Learn, Raleigh, NC

SWEENEY, JUDITH - Onion Mountain Technology, Inc., Canton, CT

TAMANO, YUICHI - Mayer-Johnson LLC, Brooklyn, NY

TAMOR, LYNNE - TheArcLink,Inc., West Bloomfield, MI

TERWILLIGER, ELIZABETH - Terwilliger Speech Pathology and Technology, Waverly, NY

TURNER, JACQUELENE - Corpus Christi ISD, Corpus Christi, TX

WALSER, PAULA - CESA 6, Oshkosh, WI

WEISNER, BEN - Read Naturally, St. Paul, MN

WOLLAK, BARBARA - St. Paul Public Schools, Camp Courage, Golden Valley, MN

WOODBURY, KEITH - Tobii ATI, Marstons Mills, MA

ACCESSING THE ARTIST WITHIN

Art Contest and Adapted Art Show

Anne Carlsen Center of North Dakota is opening a contest for artists using adaptive equipment

SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED:

- **Paintings**
- **Drawings**
- **Photography**
- **Digital Art**
- **Video**
- **Film**
- **Musical Composition**

Submissions are currently being accepted by the Anne Carlsen Center and they will be posted as they are received.

Requirements: Age 5 - 21. Each artist must use some type of assistive technology to create his/her work of art.

A minimum of ten pieces of art will be selected to be shown at

Closing The Gap

Conference: October 15-17, 2009

Friday, October 16

ATTENDEE RECEPTION

Honoring Adapted Art Contest Winners

For more information
www.annecenter.org
1-800-568-5175

OVER 200 PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, October 15-17, 2009

ASSESSMENT

Building Independent Work Skills in Students with ASD

Computer Accessibility for Those with Physical Impairments

Eye Control Technology: A Direct Access Alternative

How Stages and Classroom Suite 4 Support Your Curriculum Standards

Introducing Picture It V5.0 Visual Supports for Reading and Learning

Introduction to Stages Competency-Based Assessment Software

Jump Start Your AAC Evaluation Process

Multi-Modal Communication Strategies for Girls Who Have Rett Syndrome (Two Block Session)

AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

200 a Day the Easy Way

A Comparison of Board Making Tools: 7 Fee or Free and Counting (Two Block Session)

AAC in Medical Settings: Keeping it Simple ... Meeting the Needs

AAC in Your Pocket: Meet Proloquo2Go for iPhone and iPod

Advanced Proloquo2Go Lab (Beginners Welcome) (Two Block Session)

Advocating AAC Assessment in Aphasia

Aided Language Stimulation: Research to Practice

Amazing Free Stuff: Software for Students with Disabilities

Augmentative Communication Evaluations Simplified (ACES)

Becoming a Reader: Strategies for Students with Complex Communication Needs

Demonstration of Communication Performance Measurement of Individuals Who Use AAC

Designing for Efficiency: AAC and Alternate Access Methods

Developing AAC Competence in Children with Complex Communication Needs

Exploring Lite Tech Solutions for Individuals with Complex Communication Needs

From Our Eyes: Pragmatics, Communication and Transitioning

Getting Started: Communication Strategies for Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities

Going Gateway

Holidays, Events and Lite Tech: Ways to Create Fun and Functional Activities

Improving Functional Communication Through Family Routines (Two Block Session)

Introduction to the Lingraphica Hand-Held Speech Generating Device

Navigating the AAC Device Selection Maze

Out and About Turns Ten! 10 Top Tips for YOUR Community AAC Group

Partner-Assisted Communication: Moving from Receptive Use to Expression

Point-and-Chat: Integrated E-mail and IM for AAC Users

Pragmatic Organization of Vocabulary: What is That?

Promoting Communication Success for Individuals with Autism: Tools to Succeed

Real Words for the Real World

Real World Applications of Tangible Symbol Systems

Saltillo Communication Pages for News-2-You

Scanning Made Simple with Saltillo

Seeing Results with Aided Language Modeling

Shape Up: Structure Those Settings, Environments and Routines to Support Adolescents and Adults with Complex Communication Needs

Sono Suite: New Page Sets for Helping People Meet Their Modern Communication Needs (Two Block Session)

The ECT Way: AAC in the Classroom Case Studies (Two Block Session)

The History of Electronic Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices

Tobii Communicator: Creating Page Sets for School Aged Children (Two Block Session)

Trouble-Free Training

Young Children with Multiple Disabilities Take Charge

AUTISM

FACELAND: Recognizing Facial Expressions of Emotion

It's All About Independent Functioning! Using Technology to Develop Critical Life Skills for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Sorting Through Portable Behavior and Task Supports

Update on Asperger's Syndrome and School: What Does it Take, REALLY?

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

All About Digital Books! (Two Block Session)

Award-Winning Special Education Solutions!

Building Skills of Switch Users Through Curricular Software

Clicker 5 and WriteOnline: Extending Classroom Supports to the Home Environment

Creating Accessible Curriculum Activities for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (Two Block Session)

GOT BOOKS? Resources for Locating Accessible Print Materials for Students with Disabilities

Increasing Outcomes for All Learners: A Practical Implementation Guide for Universal Design for Learning

IntelliTools Extreme! New Frontiers with Classroom Suite 4

Let's Get Interactive! Creating On-screen Activities with Boardmaker Plus! (Two Block Session)

Make and Take: Hands-on Science Class (Two Block Session)

Materials in Minutes with Boardmaker Plus! Building Easy-to-Use Activities with Quick Actions

Success Stories: Using Video Stories to Connect, Communicate and Create Success

T.H.E. P.A.C.T.: Technology Helps Easy and Practical Adapted Curriculum Training

Tips and Tricks for Reading with Your iPod

Universal Design of Instruction

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Cause and Effect with a Goal

FUNCTIONAL LIVING SKILLS

Cognitively Accessible Personal Organization and Access to Web 2.0 Through Picture Planner

Cool AT: Using the Wii to Encourage Movement, Socialization and Learning

Serious Games and Teacher Resources for Social, Behavior and Life Skills

GERIATRICS

Easier Living Through Technology for an Aging Population

IEP / IPP

Extreme Makeover: IEP Edition

INCLUSION / COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Breaking Down the Barriers: Assistive Technology in a 1:1 Computing Environment

Developing Switch Accessible Online Games ... for Free

No Mouse, No Keyboard, No Problem!

Rediscovering DAISY with Dolphin EasyReader

Sharing Internet Resources and Freeware: Open Forum

Soundbeam: Music Through Movement

The Price is Right: Low Cost or Free Solutions to Support Struggling Students

KEYBOARD ALTERNATIVES

Accessing iLife and iWork for Mac Users with Physical, Reading or Vision Impairments (Two Block Session)

Creative Strategies for Stepping Stone 4: Learning to Step Scan

Glimpse of the Future of AT: Swype, Morse Code and More

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Communication Circles: With a Little Help from My Friends

Students with Visual Impairments and Multiple Challenges Use Computers to Develop Communication, Cognitive, Literacy and Social Skills

LEARNING STYLES

Accessible Textbooks for K-12 Students: Bookshare and the NIMAC

Budget Boosters: Inexpensive Software for Reading, Writing and Studying

Challenge Your Students to Become Writers with Kurzweil 3000 (Two Block Session)

Groovy Gadgets: Nifty, Low Tech Tools and Tips to Make School Work Less Work and More Fun

Text Reader Accommodations: Help or Hindrance?

Why Try? Effective Dropout Prevention (Two Block Session)

LITERACY

AIM: What You Need to Know in Under an Hour

Creating Accessible Interactive Books and Writing Activities with Boardmaker Plus V. 6

Draft:Builder for Students with Asperger's

Ebooks for Switch Users at the Accessible Book Collection

Encouraging a District to Embrace UDL Tools: A Story of Success

Free to Read, Write and Communicate

GhostReader: Unobtrusive Support for Struggling Readers and Writers on the Mac

If They Can Think It, They Can Write It: Co:Writer 6!

New Reading Fluency Development and Assessment Solution from Texthelp Systems

New to English: Using Technology to Support Early Language Learners

Putting an Idea Into Action: How to Create an Adapted Books Library

Read Naturally: Motivating Struggling Readers to Succeed

Read&Write GOLD for Mac: Discover the Newest Solution for Success (Two Block Session)

Read&Write GOLD: Meeting Student Needs at School and at Home

Reading, Writing and Creativity: A Recipe for Literacy Success

Social Scripts and Literacy: A Win-Win Combo!

Songboards for Literacy: Lite Tech and High Tech (Two Block Session)

Switch-On Literacy: Resources to Make Literacy Interactive for Your Students (Two Block Session)

Teaching Reading Using the ALL Curriculum

The Kindle 2 as Assistive Technology

Why Bookshare Should be a Part of Your School

WriteOnline a Great Idea!

professional development

A Model for Monitoring Implementation of Assistive Technology: The Missing Piece

An AT Training Solution for All

Developing Your Personal Learning Network

Getting Staff on Board with Bookshare

Moving from Training to Implementation: Emerging Professional Development Solutions

Parents' Guide to the Closing The Gap Conference

QIAT Conversations 2009

Speech Language Pathology Sharing 2.0

SURVIVOR: AT Center Edition OR How to Keep Your Center Alive in Tough Times

The Assistive Technology Lab at the University of Texas at Austin

Wiggle Your Way Through Web 2.0

RESEARCH

Evaluating the Special Education Technology Evidence Base: Understanding the Quality of the Science Supporting Our Work

The Iowa AT Needs Assessment Results and What They Mean for Others

SCREEN ALTERNATIVES

Dolphin Pen II: Improving the Mobility of Access Technology with Dolphin 5, Version 11 Software on an Incorruptible USB Thumb-Drive

SEATING / POSITIONING / MOBILITY

How to Assess Young Children and/or Children Previously Not Considered Candidates for Powered Mobility (Two Block Session)

Sensory Processing, Sensory Integration and Seating and Access (Two Block Session)

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Assistive Technology 101 (Two Block Session)

Beyond Graphic Organizers: Inspiration as the Quintessential Universal Design Tool

Brain Injury: Transitioning Students into Post-Secondary Academic Success! (Two Block Session)

Creating Cause and Effect Activities and Simple Books with PowerPoint (Two Block Session)

Dan & Sam: Cool, Free, or ... You've Gotta Have It Applications!

Developing Communication in Young Adults via Multimedia Technology and Assistive Technology

Engage and Support Student Learning in the Upper Elementary and Secondary Classroom with Promethean Interactive White Boards

Equipment Options and Teaching Strategies Needed When Supporting Independence in the Use of Access for Powered Mobility and AAC and Computer Access

Hands Up! An Adaptable Novel Video Game Platform for Children with Orthopedic Disabilities

Home/School Communication Books in the Web 2.0 Generation

I Don't Have All of the Ingredients! Finding the Right Recipe for the Successful Paraprofessional

SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES

- **Single-day conference registration options**
- **Exhibit hall only registration**
- **Exhibit hall open to the public Saturday, October 17 9:00 am - 2:00 pm**

See page 36 for details.

Integrating AT with Curriculum Standards: A Step-by-Step Approach for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Two Block Session)

Kurzweil: Getting All You Can Out of a Product

Making Therapy FUN with Body Sensors!

Mounting: Attaching AT to a Wheelchair or Other Locations

On the Go: Boardmaker Software Family for Itinerant Professionals

Producing Graphic Excel Worksheets as a Teaching Tool for Special Education Students

Simple Tech for the Classroom: Big Difference!

Supporting Students with Cognitive Disabilities Using Promethean White Boards

Technology: The Second Step (Two Block Session)

The Minnesota-India AT Connection: Possibilities and Dreams

The satalight Interactive Learning Station

Using WordQ, SpeakQ and Inspiration to Support, Strengthen and Enhance Writing (Two Block Session)

Web Access for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: The Medicaid Reference Desk

Wiimote Interactive Board: An Inexpensive Alternative to SMART Board

TRANSITION

Improving the Transition Planning Process: The Top Ten Things Everyone Should Know About Transition and Fostering Independence (Two Block Session)

Research to Practice: Electronic Mentoring for Students with Disabilities

Transitioning to Universal Computer Access for the Work Place and Higher Education (Two Block Session)

Full presentation details, including descriptions, date and time available at www.closingthegap.com

STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS

Wednesday evening through Saturday, October 14-17, 2009

ASK QUESTIONS, GET ANSWERS – Companies exhibiting at Closing The Gap represent an impressive and varied scope of AT products and strategies from around the world, including knowledgeable reps and professionals with substantial experience in the field to best explain and demonstrate their solutions. Below are the 2009 contracted companies to date.

Don't Miss the
PREVIEW OF EXHIBITS
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Great Hall, Sheraton Bloomington Hotel
Open to preconference and/or conference registrants only.

SCAVENGER HUNT WORTH OVER $2500 IN PRIZES

COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS
Open to the Public Saturday!

REGULAR EXHIBIT HOURS

Thursday, October 15	10:00 am - 12:00 pm | 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Friday, October 16	10:00 am - 12:00 pm | 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Saturday, October 17	9:00 am - 2:00 pm

EXCLUSIVE EXHIBIT HOURS

Wednesday, October 14	5:30 pm - 8:00 pm *(Preview of Exhibits)*
Thursday, October 15	10:30 am - 12:00 pm | 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
Friday, October 16	10:30 am - 12:00 pm | 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

(A limited number of lab presentations run concurrently from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm.)

CONTRACTED EXHIBITORS TO DATE INCLUDE:

(❖ Denotes scavenger hunt prize)

AAC Institue
AAC TechConnect, Inc.
AbleNet
Accelerations Educational Software
Adaptivation
Adaptive Switch Laboratories
Alliance for Technology Access
❖ Atomic Learning
Attainment Company
❖ Augmentative Resources
Beacon-Ridge
Benetech/Bookshare.org
C.J.T. Enterprises
❖ Cadan Computers dba Technology For Education
Cambium Learning Technologies
❖ Chester Creek
Closing The Gap
Cognitopia
❖ Creative Communicating
Crick Software
DO-IT, University of Washington
Dolphin Computer Access
❖ Don Johnston
DynaVox Mayer-Johnson
Exceptional Parent (EP Global Communications)
Eye Response Technologies
Freedom Concepts
HumanWare
InfoCor
Judy Lynn Software
Laureate Learning Systems, Inc.
LiftVest
Lightspeed Technologies
❖ Marblesoft-Simtech
ModularHose.com
Monarch Teaching Technologies
Nasco
Origin Instruments
PointScribe
Prentke Romich Company
ProxTalker.com
Quillsoft, Ltd.
❖ Read Naturally
Renaissance Learning
RJ Cooper & Assoc.
Saltillo
Silver Lining Multimedia
❖ Slater Software
Switch In Time
Talking With Baby
Texthelp Systems, Inc.
❖ TFH USA Ltd.
The Conover Company
The Writer Learning Systems
Tobii ATI
Words+

Full exhibitor details, including descriptions and contact info, available at www.closingthegap.com

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION - OCTOBER 15-17, 2009

(Includes Preview of Exhibits – Wednesday, October 14, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm)

Registration Received On or Before	June 30	September 10	October 1	October 15
Standard Rate **Group Discount 5+** **NEW! Group Discount 10+** *All group registrations must be received at the same time.*	$395 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30	$435 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30	$465 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30	$495 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30
Parent Rate (A letter describing your child's disability must accompany registration)				$305
Full-time Student Rate (Proof of full-time status must accompany registration)				$305
Presenter Rate				$305
Exhibitor Rate				$305

NEW! SINGLE-DAY REGISTRATION

One-day Conference Registration Friday, October 16 – $250
One-day Conference Registration Saturday, October 17 – $125

NEW! EXHIBIT HALL ONLY REGISTRATION

Exhibit Hall Only, Wednesday evening through Saturday, October 14-17 – $150

A Certificate of Attendance is available upon request at no additional fee. Graduate-level academic credit and CEUs are available. All who register by October 1, 2009 will receive confirmation by mail.

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS - OCTOBER 13-14, 2009

(Includes Preview of Exhibits – Wednesday, October 14, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm)

Tuesday, October 13 – $270
Wednesday, October 14 – $270
NEW! Tuesday and Wednesday Bundle – $480 ($60 savings)

Some preconference workshops carry an additional fee for materials.There is no additional fee for the Closing The Gap-issued, presenter-signed Certificate of Preconference Workshop Attendance.

CONFIRMATION

All who register by October 1, 2009 will receive confirmation by mail.

CONFERENCE DIRECTORY

The official Closing The Gap Conference Directory will be given to registrants at the conference site; many of the conference details will be posted on Closing The Gap's Web site.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations must be received in writing by Closing The Gap on or before October 1, 2009. There will be a $75 cancellation fee for each one-day preconference workshop, each one-day conference registration, or each exhibit hall only registration; a $125 cancellation fee for each three-day conference registration. Replacements are welcome and must be submitted in writing.
No refunds after October 1, 2009. Unpaid balances are due in full.

Complete details (including descriptions) of the 25 preconference qorkshops, over 200 presentations and the commercial exhibits are available at

www.closingthegap.com

SCHOLARSHIPS

A limited number of scholarships are available for persons with disabilities or parents/guardians of children with disabilities. These scholarships cover registration fees for the conference only (Thursday - Saturday), and do not cover preconference workshops, food, lodging or travel. Scholarships are awarded on a first come, first served basis and one time only per person. Persons that have previously received a scholarship from Closing The Gap are not eligible.

To apply, complete a conference registration form, indicating your scholarship request. Submit the form and attach a letter describing your/your child's disability and telling us why you would like to attend the conference. Applicants will receive written notification of acceptance or denial.

CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS

Sheraton Bloomington Hotel and the adjacent Hotel Sofitel are the official hotels of the conference. All conference activities are held at these two hotels located just 10 minutes west of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Limo, taxi, and mobility assistance services are available. Hotel-airport shuttles are available for Sheraton Bloomington Hotel.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Hotel reservations can be made by contacting the conference-site hotels directly. Please refer to the "Closing The Gap Conference" when making your reservations to receive conference room discounts when and where applicable. Both hotels have a limited number of handicapped accessible rooms. If required, state your needs when making your reservations and reserve your room early to better insure a room that will best accommodate you.

Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

7800 Normandale Blvd.
Bloomington, MN 55439

Phone: 952-835-7800; **Fax**: 952-893-8419

$149 - single occupancy
$159 - double occupancy

(Both are in South Tower.)

Hotel Sofitel

5601 W. 78th St.
Bloomington, MN 55439

Phone: 952-835-1900
Fax: 952-835-0545

$159 - single, double, triple or quad occupancy

Cancellation policy for both hotels: A deposit of one night's room rate plus tax is required to reserve a guest room for the Closing The Gap Conference. Guest rooms may be cancelled up to September 10, 2009, with no cancellation penalty and your total deposit refunded to you. Any guest room cancelled after September 10, 2009, will be subject to forfeiture of the entire deposit.

TRAVEL

Closing The Gap has arranged for Northwest Airlines to handle air travel needs for the conference.

For the lowest possible air fares, in the United States and Canada, call Northwest at 800-328-1111 and ask about special Closing The Gap fares (I.D. code NM336). Northwest hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 am - 7:30 pm Central Daylight Time.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

To arrange for accessible transportation while visiting the Minneapolis area, have your ADA certifying agency fax your certification information along with the address where you will be staying and dates you plan on being in Minneapolis to 651-602-1660 four weeks prior to your arrival date. Riders must be ADA certified in the state in which they live. For questions regarding certification, call Jim Nieman at 651-602-1665. If you are not ADA certified, call Airport Taxi at 612-331-8294 (special assistance provided if requested).

2009 CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

First Name_____ Last Name_____

Mailing Address (home/work - please circle one) _____

City _____ State / Country_____ Zip Code / Postal Code_____

Daytime Phone_____ Fax_____ E-mail _____

Employer_____ Occupation_____

Is this your first time attending the confernece? ❑ Yes ❑ No How did you hear about the conference? _____

SPECIAL SERVICES (for persons with disabilities only – must be requested by September 1, 2009)
❑ MS DOS text file ❑ Macintosh text file (Text file will be e-mailed.) ❑ Sign interpreter

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION - OCTOBER 15-17, 2009 (Includes Preview of Exhibits – Wednesday, October 14, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm)

Registration Received On or Before	June 30	September 10	October 1	October 15
Standard Rate Group Discount (Groups of five or more) Group Discount (Groups of ten or more) *All group registrations must be received by Closing The Gap at the same time.*	$395 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30	$435 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30	$465 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30	$495 Groups 5+ Deduct $20 Groups 10+ Deduct $30
❑ Parent (A letter describing your child's disability must accompany registration form.)				$305
❑ Full-time Student (Proof of full-time student status must accompany registration form.)				$305
❑ Presenter (Presentation title:)				$305
$_____ ❑ Exhibitor (Company name and booth number:)				$305

SINGLE-DAY REGISTRATION

❑ One-day Conference Registration Friday, October 16 – **$250**
$_____ ❑ One-day Conference Registration Saturday, October 17 – **$125**

EXHIBIT HALL ONLY REGISTRATION

$_____ Exhibit Hall Only, Wednesday evening through Saturday, October 14-17 – **$150**

CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP (See page 36 for complete information.)

$ $0.00 ❑ I am applying for a conference scholarship. A letter describing your/your child's disability and telling us why you would like to attend the conference must be included.

PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS - OCTOBER 13-14, 2009 (Includes Preview of Exhibits – Wednesday, October 14, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm)

❑ Tuesday, October 13 – **$270** 1st Choice PC-_____ 2nd Choice PC-_____
❑ Wednesday, October 14 – **$270** 1st Choice PC-_____ 2nd Choice PC-_____
$_____ ❑ Tuesday and Wednesday Bundle – **$480 ($60 Savings)**
Participants in PC-8 *MUST* bring their own computer.
I will bring my own computer for: ❑ PC-2 ❑ PC-7 ❑ PC-16 ❑ PC-18 ❑ I will use Closing The Gap's comptuer.

MATERIAL FEE(S), IF APPLICABLE (The materials fee equals the cost of the materials provided.)

$_____

PC-3 - **$50** materials fee	PC-11 - **$35** materials fee	PC-17 - **$30** materials fee	PC-22 - **$25** materials fee
PC-9 - **$30** materials fee	PC-16 - **$35** materials fee	PC-21 - **$15** materials fee	PC-23 - **$20** materials fee

ACADEMIC CREDIT (See page 29 for complete information and requirements.)

$_____ ❑ One Semester Credit **$119** ❑ Two Semester Credits **$238** ❑ Three Semester Credits **$357**

SUBSCRIPTION - AN ADDITIONAL NON-CONFERENCE OPTION (See page 38 or Web site for more information.)

❑ One-year ONLINE subscription – **$50** ❑ One-year PRINT subscription – **$36** (In the US); **$52** (To Canada) ❑ Combination Subscription
$_____ ❑ One-year ONLINE student subscription – **$40** ❑ Two-year PRINT subscription – **$64** (In the US); **$92** (To Canada) One-year PRINT and ONLINE subscription – **$75** (US and Canada only)

$_____ TOTAL AMOUNT (Payment or purchase order must accompany registration.)

My check # _____ for $ _____ is enclosed.
Please Charge to my ❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard Card Number _____-_____-_____-_____
Exp Date: _____ Cardholder Address:_____
Please bill my agency or school district PO # _____(Purchase order must accompany registration.)

Mail or fax form with payment or purchase order to: Closing The Gap, P.O. Box 68, Henderson, MN 56044; Fax 507-248-3810. **Or register on-line at:** <www.closingthegap.com>. All who register by October 1, 2009 will receive confirmation by mail. The official Closing The Gap Conference Directory will be given to registrants at the conference site; many of the conference details will be posted on Closing The Gap's Web site. For additional information call 507-248-3294 or e-mail <info@closingthegap.com>.

Cancellations must be received in writing by Closing The Gap on or before October 1, 2009. $75 cancellation fee for each one-day preconference workshop, each one-day conference registration, or each exhibit hall only registration; $125 cancellation fee for each three-day conference registration. No refunds after October 1, 2009. Unpaid balances are due in full. Replacements are welcome and must be submitted in writing.

A/S

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www.closingthegap.com/trial

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College and university instructors across the country have been choosing Closing The Gap Online Solutions as their textbook of choice!

Students qualify for a special $40 one-year subscription rate. Inquire for more details.

Assistive Technology Resources for Children and Adults with Special Needs

PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS:

In the United States
❑ One year (six issues) $36
❑ Two years (12 issues) $64

Canada – Airmail
❑ One year (six issues) $52 (U.S. Funds)
❑ Two years (12 issues) $92 (U.S. Funds)

❑ Combination, One-year Print and Online Subscription $75 (U.S. and Canada)

Receive a **Free** Resource Directory with a NEW 2-year subscription to *Closing The Gap*

Resource Directory
$16.95 plus postage and handling
($5 in the United States; $5 to Canada)

Quantity Discounts:
1-9 ..... $16.95
10-24 ..... $14.50
25-49 ..... $12.25
50-99 ..... $10.50
100-999 ..... $9.50
1,000 or more $8.00

Free *shipping and handling*
If check in full payment accompanies an order for 10 or more directories (shipped within the United States only) Closing The Gap will pay shipping charges. Shipping and handling charges will be added to all invoices and credit card payments. Purchase orders will be accepted.

ONLINE SUSBSCRIPTIONS:

Single subscription:

❑ One-year Subscription $50

❑ One-year Student Subscription $40
(Proof of current enrollment must accompany order. E-mail or mail statement to Closing The Gap.)

❑ Combination, One-year Print and Online Subscription $75 (U.S. and Canada)

Site license:
Site License – number of users: _____
(Purchase orders accepted.)

Number of Users	Discount	Unit Price
10-49	25%	$37.50
50-99	50%	$25.00
100-299	60%	$20.00
300+	70%	$15.00

Please complete the following:

Name _____
Organization _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State / Country _____ Zip / Postal code _____
* Phone _____ Fax _____
* E-mail _____
* Required for Online Subscription and/or credit card orders
Where did you hear about Closing The Gap? _____

❑ **Check is enclosed $** _____

❑ **Please charge $** _____ to ❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard
Credit card account number _____
Expiration date _____
Cardholder signature _____
Cardholder address _____

❑ Purchase order attached # _____
(Allow 8 - 10 weeks for delivery of your first issue.)

Orders accepted on-line at www.closingthegap.com
Secure Sockets Layer Encryption (SSL) ensures the safety of your credit card transactions.

28/3

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Read&Write GOLD - Comprehensive and flexible **literacy support** for all students, especially those with reading and writing difficulties, learning disabilities, or who are English Language Learners.

- Key features, such as text to speech, graphic organizer, phonetic spell checker, word prediction, MP3 creation, and study skills tools, are combined into **one cost-effective solution**.
- Customizable toolbar **integrates with other applications** including Microsoft Word, Internet Explorer, and Adobe Reader, allowing students to access the support tools they need from within familiar software programs.
- Teachers can even **create talking Flash eBooks** for students with PCs or Macs who have no assistive technology available!
- Meets the needs of students **at school and at home**.

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Over $75B in federal funding is available for schools to purchase technology products such as Read&Write GOLD. There is no better time than now to give your students the support tools they need.

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Email - u.s.info@texthelp.com
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- Features all five NRP components.
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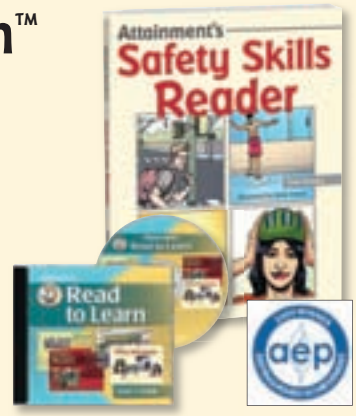
- Six books with corresponding software.
- Covers essential life skills.
- Read-aloud software includes comprehension assessments.



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- Validated by two years of classroom research.
- Aligned to NCTM standards.
- Age appropriate for grades 7–12.
- Covers algebra, geometry, data analysis, and measurement.
- Includes instructor's guide, student books, posters, DVD.

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- Validated by two years of classroom research.
- Age appropriate for grades 7–12.
- Scripted lessons, hands-on experiments.
- Covers earth science, biology, and chemistry.
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