

Assistive Technology Resources for Children and Adults with Disabilities

Closing The Gap

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER, 2012
VOLUME 31 - NUMBER 4

Solutions

**Jumpstart AAC
For Students
with Severe
and Multiple
Disabilities**

**The RTI Model
and Ramifications
for eLearning
Using the iPad**

**Literacy Lab:
Comprehensive
Literacy
Instruction for
Beginners of All
Ages**

**iPad Apps and
Integrative
Workflows to
Support Learners
with Literacy
Difficulties and
Dyslexia**

**Writing Support
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Student Response Apps for iPads, iPods and the Web

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2012

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Central Standard Time

From set up to ideas for classroom use, free, easy-to-use web-based student response apps and programs accessible from iPads, Android tablets, computers and other devices for teaching and assessment will be demonstrated. Learn how to utilize programs (from apps allowing you to run video, sound and drawing tools in a quiz on iPads, to programs that can be run from any and all devices at the same time from the Web) to keep students from falling behind, give them a voice in the classroom discussion, generate reports and monitor progress, even during the classroom lesson.

PRESENTER: DAN HERLIHY

Is Your Head in the Clouds?

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2012

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Central Standard Time

Is Your Head in the Clouds? This can be a Good Thing! Cloud technologies have been a wonderful added option for educating students with autism and other disabilities. Many of us do not have the budgets to buy new resources. What the Cloud has to offer is amazing. There are many free or low cost options in the Cloud! We will explore resources for enhancing core academics, social skills training, communication, organization and more. Additionally, with everyone's busy schedules, there needs to be an easier or better way to access professional growth opportunities. We will explore multiple resources to improve these opportunities as well. So put your head in the clouds and see what it has to offer!

PRESENTER: MO BUTI

Creating ePub Documents on the iPad

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2012

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Central Standard Time
AND

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Central Standard Time
This session covers creating books and documents for the iPad. Participants will be guided through the step-by-step process for authoring their own ePub documents and discuss strategies and practices for making materials accessible. In addition participants will explore apps available for the iPod touch and iPad used to create accessible eBooks. Accessible eBooks can increase independence for non-readers, and provide personalized, portable literacy experiences. Attendees will also learn about features

to consider when purchasing these apps. We will cover key components to consider when selecting an app for eBook creation. A range of apps will be presented and assessed during this workshop. We will cover the viewing and distribution features of eBooks within the apps.

PRESENTER: MARK COPPIN

Switch Access on the iPad - Updated!

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2012

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Central Standard Time

There are thousands of apps at the iTunes App store, but when it comes to switch access, where do you start? Find out which apps are switch accessible, learn how and where in the iPad Settings and the app itself to configure switch settings, as well as what switch arrays and switches can be used with each app. New Bluetooth switches can provide access to the entire iPad screen, from opening folders, launching apps, closing windows and switching screens. Learn what's new and what's possible in this updated session.

PRESENTER: DAN HERLIHY

Video and Videography in the Special Needs Classroom

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2012

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM Central Standard Time
AND

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Central Standard Time
Video can be an excellent method to support learning for students with diverse learning needs. It can be a powerful tool for the teacher as well as the student. Videos captured on the iPad and iPhone can be used for documentation, video modeling, training, motivation and creativity. Participants in this session will learn how to shoot, edit, and share video on an iPad or iPhone. We will also discuss and explore various examples of videos created on an iPad/iPhone and how they are used in the classroom. We will demonstrate different apps for capturing video, editing video, and sharing videos. This session will also cover techniques to improve your videos as well as optional equipment that is available for your device.

PRESENTER: MARK COPPIN

Projection and Reflection: Projecting iPad Screens to Interactive White Boards and More!

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2012

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Central Standard Time

Learn how to utilize and integrate the mix of interactive whiteboards (IWBs), iPads and Web 2.0 programs in the classroom for teaching and

student learning. Presenter will demonstrate strategies for using hardware, software and apps to broadcast information, such as student work, data and ongoing experiments, wirelessly, from multiple iDevices to projectors and IWBs for capturing, discussion, annotating, adding to and repackaging for review and reflection as eBooks, webcasts, posting for use in a Flipped Classroom model and more. Demonstrated will be a variety of applications from Promethean, Smart and Mimio, as well as free applications, with a focus on sharing, collaborating and integrating broadcast from a variety of sources.

PRESENTER: DAN HERLIHY

Working with the Cloud: Saving, Moving and Accessing Files with Your iPad

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2012

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Central Standard Time

Using a variety of devices in the classroom (and home!), such as iPads and Android devices, learn how you can move files from one device to another, from a computer to all the iPads in your class, from an iPad to your computer, and everything in between. This session will cover a variety of solutions and examples on how to manage files, images, data, video, etc. within the classroom environment or for student access later from other portable devices or computers.

PRESENTER: DAN HERLIHY

Apps to Support Literacy for Struggling Readers

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2012

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Central Standard Time
AND

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Central Standard Time
The iPad is a powerful tool that can support and promote literacy amongst struggling readers. There are literally thousands of apps on the app store that can support literacy. This session will help sort out the key features to look for when selecting apps for students. We will also look at various apps that support phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. Motivation to read can also be a huge issue especially amongst older students. We will discuss various ways and methods to help motivate and engage the struggling reader. There are also many apps that allow you to create your own support materials. This session will also explore accessibility features built into the iOS devices that can support the

struggling reader as well as other resources that are available for use on the device.

PRESENTER: MARK COPPIN

Creating Content for the Diverse Learner

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2012

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM Central Standard Time
AND

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM Central Standard Time

The iPad is an excellent tool for creating content for the diverse learner. Content can be created to meet the unique learning needs and styles of the diverse learners in our classrooms. The iPad can be used to modify and differentiate classroom materials for each student in order to maximize learning. There are many apps that can be used to easily create content for students. In this workshop, participants will learn how to use various apps for creating content. We will cover several categories including eBooks, videos, audio, and communication. Participants will be given ideas on how to create their own eBooks, shoot and edit videos, create their own music, create visual schedule, adapt tests and classroom materials, and create communication support for the classroom. Participants will learn how to identify what key features to look for when selecting apps for content creation. We will also discuss implementation strategies as well as best practices.

PRESENTER: MARK COPPIN

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WEBINAR PRESENTERS:



MARK COPPIN, B.S., is an Apple Distinguished Educator and the Director of Assistive Technology, Anne Carlsen Center for Children, Jamestown, ND.



DAN HERLIHY is an Assistive Technology/Technology Resource Specialist, Connective Technology Solutions, Inc., Hoosick, NY.



MO BUTI, M.Ed., is a Special Education Administrator: Placement, Reintegration and Special Project for Children with Autism and Low Incidence, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL.

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ARCHIVED WEBINAR TITLES (to date):

- Beyond Angry Birds - Fun Educational Apps, by Mark Coppin
- Creating Your Own eBooks for the iPad, iPod or Nook Color, by Dan Herlihy
- Creative Teaching Ideas + Free and Low-Cost POWER Tools = Efficient Structured Teaching: The POWER of T.H.E. P.A.C.T., by Phyl T. Macomber
- iDevices the Next Level, by Mark Coppin
- Jumpstart your iPad Experience with Free Apps! by Dan Herlihy
- Switch Access on the iPad, by Dan Herlihy
- The iPod and iPad as Assistive Technology, by Mark Coppin
- Using iPad Apps in Special Education, by Mark Coppin

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“They are easy to use, family-friendly, and yet still so life-changing,” says its Chief Engineer.

The TalkRocket apps provide lifelike verbal communication for people with speech disabilities such as Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Stroke, Traumatic Brain Injury, Motor Neuron Diseases, and others.

Made by MyVoice Inc., the award-winning technologies in TalkRocket are already helping ten thousand users in 30 countries. For many, they are life-changing aids for overcoming adversity and discrimination.

Most of all, TalkRocket makes the simple joy of speaking accessible to everyone, even those with physical impairments.

You can choose from several editions, so there’s a perfect option for every age, ability, and budget.

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As a family member, teacher, or care professional, the TalkRocket apps are easy to learn, quick to customize, and a snap to support.

In a recent survey, 80% of families and SLPs who tried the apps said they would recommend them to a friend or colleague.

That is because only TalkRocket apps give you so many amazing features, including an online customization studio, location-based vocabularies, the most expressive sentence prediction system, and the best scanning and switch support.

There’s nothing else quite like TalkRocket.

So go ahead. Change someone’s life.



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SALES MANAGER

Jan Latzke SUBSCRIPTIONS

Sarah Anderson
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CONTACT INFORMATION

Please address all correspondence to Closing The Gap, P.O. Box 68, Henderson, MN 56044. Telephone 507-248-3294; Fax 507-248-3810. E-mail <info@closingthegap.com>; Web site <www.closingthegap.com>.

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2013 SAVE THE DATE

PLEASE JOIN US FOR CLOSING THE GAP'S

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Assistive Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation

► **Conference:**
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,
October 9-11, 2013

► **Preconference Workshops:**
Monday and Tuesday, October 7-8, 2013

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Closing The Gap

OCTOBER 17-19, 2012

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The best educational assistive technology conference in North America

Assistive Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE Over the years, the annual Closing The Gap Conference has become known as the best educational assistive technology 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 30th Annual Conference runs Monday, October 15th through Friday, October 19th and is held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Preconference workshops are scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, October 15th and 16th, and the Conference officially begins with a preview of the exhibits on Tuesday evening,

followed by three days of presentations, hands-on labs and exhibitions.

With multiple registration options available, numerous and diverse discounts, group savings and preconference workshop bundling, we invite you to participate and encourage you to bring your team!

Closing The Gap promises to work hard to insure that the content and learning opportunities are many, varied and exceptional throughout the conference week.

★ 20 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 PRESENTATION AND HANDS-ON LAB HOURS

Practical and expert-lead presentations during the Closing The Gap Conference will include over 200 one- and two-hour sessions and hands-on labs, including PC, Mac and iPad labs, that describe and/or demonstrate successful applications of assistive technology for persons with disabilities. Select handouts will be available onsite and online following the conference.

★ COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS

An impressive and varied scope of AT products will be on display and 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.

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

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.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 14

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm Registration Desk Open

Monday, October 15

7:00 am - 8:00 pm Registration Desk Open

8:00 am - 4:30 pm Preconference Workshops

Tuesday, October 16

7:00 am - 9:00 pm Registration Desk Open

8:00 am - 4:30 pm Preconference Workshops

5:00 pm Complimentary Hors d'oeuvres

5:30 pm - 8:00 pm Preview of Exhibits

Wednesday, October 17

7:00 am - 5:30 pm Registration Desk Open

8:00 am - 4:30 pm Presentations

*10:00 am - 5:30 pm Commercial Exhibits

3:00 pm Apple and Candy Break

Thursday, October 18

7:30 am - 5:30 pm Registration Desk Open

8:00 am - 4:30 pm Presentations

*10:00 am - 5:30 pm Commercial Exhibits

3:00 pm Apple and Candy Break

Friday, October 19

7:30 am - 2:00 pm Registration Desk Open

8:00 am - 1:30 pm Presentations

9:00 am - 1:30 pm Commercial Exhibits

**The exhibit floor will close for an exhibitor break from 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm.*

AAC INSTITUTE CEUs

AAC Institute will again provide CEUs for both the conference and pre-conference workshops. CEUs will be offered for all sessions without charge. AAC Institute CEUs that relate to the practice of speech-language pathology and audiology can be used for ASHA certification maintenance. RESNA accepts AAC Institute CEUs for ATP/ATS credential maintenance. Most state licensure systems accept AAC Institute CEUs or other forms of self-reporting. Pre-conference 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 DoubleTree.

CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE

Closing The Gap-issued Certificates of Attendance for conference participation will be available upon request at no additional fee. All preconference workshop participants will receive a Closing The Gap-issued, presenter-signed Certificate of Preconference Workshop Attendance upon completion of the workshop.



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.

ONE FULL SEMESTER CREDIT

Cost: \$150

Requirements:

- 12 contact hours
- An outside assignment

(12 contact hours require conference participation or two preconference workshops.)

TWO FULL SEMESTER CREDITS

Cost: \$300

Requirements:

- 24 contact hours
- An outside assignment

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

THREE FULL SEMESTER CREDITS

Cost: \$450

Requirements:

- 36 contact hours
- An outside assignment

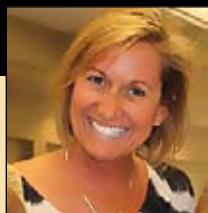
(36 contact hours require conference participation Wednesday - Friday AND two preconference workshops.)



Jumpstart

AAC FOR STUDENTS

with Severe and Multiple Disabilities



PATI KING-DEBAUN, M.S. CCC-SLP, is a Speech Language Pathologist/Consultant specializing in assistive technology, Creative Communicating, Park City, UT. She is also the Consulting Director of Communication and Literacy for Standing Tall.



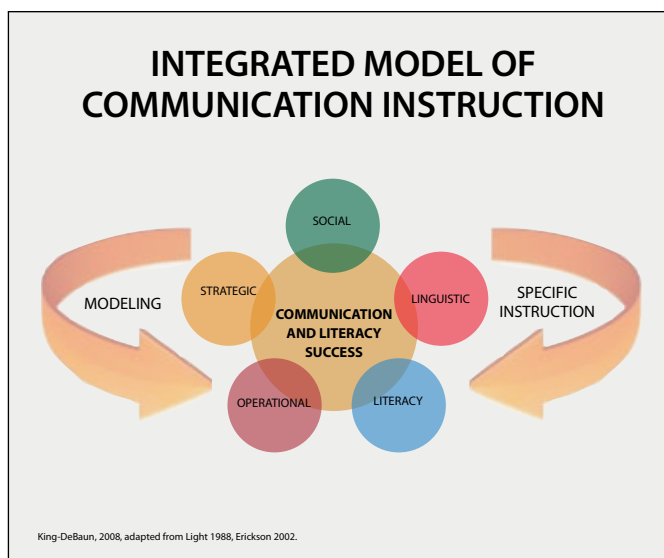
RACHAEL SKINNER holds a Bachelor's Degree in Conductive Education from the University of Wolverhampton and a Bachelor's Degree in Biological Science and Teaching from the University of Lancaster. She has worked as a conductor in a variety of locations in the USA and was responsible for establishing a Conductive Education program for March of Dimes Canada in Nova Scotia, Canada. She is currently Director of Programs at Standing Tall Inc., a private Conductive Education and Communication school in Manhattan, NY.

A transformation is going on at the Standing Tall Program, a private school in New York City. **Students, parents, teachers, therapists and administrators** are all very excited about the new opportunities and learning that are happening. Imagine five students with severe physical impairments, nonspeaking, who have had cognitive skills questioned over and over and have never had the opportunity to use any communication system (high tech or light tech) having conversations, participating in curriculum activities, independently generating 4- to 5-word sentences, publishing a newsletter, writing scripts for plays, emailing, skypeing and talking on the phone to parents. Two years ago that was not the case.

This brainstorm project came from Elizabeth Dellureficio, a Board Member of Standing Tall and parent. At the time, it was primarily a conductive education program that focused on the motor development of their students. Frustrated and worried about the lack of communication, lack of success in acquiring high-tech systems and the increasing age of their students (9-14), the Board decided to create a supplemental program, called the Communican Program, that would focus on developing communication and literacy skills for the students. Pati King-DeBaun, M.S. CCC-SLP, was hired as a consulting Director of the Communican Program and worked closely with Rachael Skinner, the Director of Standing Tall. Pati's vision was simple – everyone can communicate and will communicate. Giving students who had never had a communication system a complete comprehensive communication system seemed like a “leap of faith” says Rachael Skinner, Director and key instructor of the Communican Program. The Light Tech Communication Book (from Creative Communicating), which consists of approximately 75 pages that address conversation (social skills), spelling, core phrases (literacy skills) and core word lists (language skills), was used. Pati's approach was a little unconventional and daunting. “Everyone is going to learn how to use the system at the same time – teachers, students, paraprofessionals and therapists. You just have to believe.” said Pati.

The belief that all children do communicate and will if they are given an opportunity is critical for students who have severe and multiple disabilities.

The approach we used is called the **Integrated Model of Communication**. If AAC instruction is taught with a language-first approach, then skills are taught in isolation, teaching comprehension (“show me” and “touch the” type of activities) and moving on to communicating with single words, putting words together, etc. In some situations, the concept of communication or teaching the skill of communicating is not taught and literacy comes last, as language skills are proven. Learning in isolation fragments communication and, often, one or more component of communication is underserved. Many students who fall into this learning situation never



receive the opportunities to show their skills or communicate their skills and thus continue to be mislabeled and underserved. An integrated communication model that focuses on balancing the three major areas of instruction – literacy, social (conversation) and linguistic (language) skills for successful communication – is the foundation of this program.

WHO ARE THE STUDENTS?

All of the students in the Communican Program have severe physical disabilities and are nonspeaking. The target classroom had students ages 9 through 14. Cognition for all students has always been questioned because of the students' access issues. At the start of the program, none of the students had a communication system (that they were using). No students in the program had ever been approved for an AAC system. Time and time again, students were not approved by the District AAC team because they were unable to prove their skills. Students had access to Picture Communication Symbols for learning activities, however, the symbols would be randomly presented and used at the discretion of the teachers. Students primarily used Yes and No responses for communication. However, in the initial observations, many of the students did not have a clear yes and no, and interpretation of the yes and no was left up to the facilitator. Access was also an issue; reliance on the use of hands was overemphasized so almost all of the children had no independent access to computers and technology. The most consistent form of communication



The class participating using the CLAP book with their teacher.

that was used regularly was a Step-by-Step Communicator that was used primarily for messages from home to school and students still needed assistance in using the Step-by-Steps. The students were initially given the Augmentative and Alternative Communication Profile (Tracy Kovach, 2009). In the majority of the sections on the test, students scored a 0, with the exception of cognitive understanding. It should be noted, however, that students were unable to show skills in many of the areas because they had no reliable access.

BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHIES

Research data presented by Kearns, et.al in 2001, involving over 13,000 students nationwide who participated in alternate assessments (students with the most significant disabilities) indicate that up to 40 percent of such students are not using symbolic communication. There is no statistically significant movement toward symbolic communication across the grade band, from elementary to high school, in most states surveyed, and 50 percent or less of students who should have AAC in place actually have AAC in place. (The term AAC in this article refers to symbol-supported learning, not just high-end devices.) This is a critical concern for many students who need support with communication. Systematic instruction must be present in order for students to learn how to communicate, regardless of what the perceived cognitive abilities are. Language is often presented at a micro level rather than at a macro level. There is a misunderstanding about what communication is and what language is. Children communicate very early through cries, turn taking and babbling. Even within in the first few months, infants learn the power of communication through their behavior. Communication is the exchange of thoughts, messages or information by speech, visuals, signals, writing or behavior that is not standard and is interpreted by the listener. Language is a standardized set of rules that both the listener and speaker understand. You have to know Spanish to speak Spanish, French to speak French, English to speak English, etc.



A BEST YES

First, all of the students in the classroom needed a “best yes” to navigate the communication system. Assisted scanning was used with all students as their primary method of communicating with the books.

When using assisted scanning, the communication partner says each choice out loud for the student and the student is asked to look and listen to their choices. Initially, students were first presented with all their choices on a page and then asked to make a choice, so they knew their choices before selecting. The student’s best yes was used to communicate “That’s the one I want.” The partner would speak for the student, in class, as if it were the child speaking. Through guidance, students were taught how to navigate the communication system. This was critical as the books themselves were considered a stepping stone to a higher tech communication system. All elements in the book could be reached from the start page. It was important that the student’s “best yes” came directly from them. It could not be something that was given to them by a teacher or communication partner. It had to be the most natural and simple response for them to produce. In the past, the students capable of producing a movement or sound to indicate YES did so, but were also required to have a NO. Those students who did not automatically come up with their own movement or sound were assigned one by facilitators.

We wanted the “best yes” to be the easiest movement that the student could produce. We did not want the physical effort of producing a “best yes” to interfere with the cognitive skill of responding. More importantly, we wanted the choice to come from the student. We wanted the students to take responsibility for their response and to feel

ownership of it. Giving the students control over their own expressive output made a huge difference in the level of participation and the amount of communication we began to see.

The other crucial aspect that was introduced, or rather removed from the original program, was the need for a negative response. Non-response became the NO and the students only needed to be able to produce a YES. This simplification meant that the students could think less about the physical or vocal complications of responding and focus more on what their response was.

Through guidance, students were taught how to navigate the communication system. This was critical as the books themselves were considered a stepping stone to a higher tech communication system. All elements in the book could be reached from the start or home page and could navigate to other areas of the book.

FACILITATION

Rather than having extensive workshops, in a typical trainer session, the lead teacher, Rachael, received scripted lessons on how to introduce the book and use it and specifics on how to communicate with the students. The scripted lessons for communication and later literacy and language lessons came from Teach Me AAC (Creative Communicating). The program is an online interactive course for children using AAC and their instructors. Additionally, one time per month for a week, Pati visited the class and did hands-on coaching and mentor teaching. Collaborative effort was essential to the project’s success. A continuous cycle of planning, implementation, reflection and planning again helped all staff, paraprofessionals and teachers modify and make adjustments.

SCRIPTING

Scripting and instructional lessons centered around the The Light Tech Communication Book, now called the CLAP Book (Conversation, Literacy, Access and Participation). The best method for providing instruction to staff was through scripted lessons and activities that were used in the Teach Me AAC class.) The classroom teacher had no experience teaching AAC and the paraprofessional staff had no experience using a system as extensive as The CLAP Book. Using a scripting and coaching method streamlined the visits so focus could be on the students and time in the classroom



Student communicating with the CLAP book

could be used to coach staff, as necessary, within real learning activities.

In the first eight weeks, a conversation-first approach was taken where the students/lessons were primarily focused on the “conversation” or social portion of the communication book. Aided Language Stimulation techniques (Sevcik & Ronski, 1986; Goossens, Crain, & Elder, 1992; Namy (2001); Namy, Campbell & Tomasello, 2004; Barton, Sevcik & Ronski, 2006) were infused into the scripts and used to model communication. The purpose of the lessons was to teach the power of communication to the students, teach the teaching and paraprofessional staff how to use the books from presentation to navigation and teach the students how to navigate the books. During this period of time, it was critical that teachers followed the script. After that, teachers seemed to learn the teaching language and could veer from the scripts. Scripts were used again when new academic lessons, such as language, literacy and curriculum activities were introduced.

The scripts demonstrate to teachers how to respond to the students’ output in the same way they would respond to any student who was communicating with them. They also show teachers how to stop cuing their students and leading them in specific directions. This can be hard to do at first, and there’s always the worry that there will be failure. However, due to the structured nature of the scripts and the lessons, there is no failure. Using the “best yes” meant that the students were able to communicate with much more ease and so they did. As their confidence grows and as they learn that people are responding to them, they begin to think even more about what they are communicating and by the time the curriculum is well underway, we are seeing more independent interaction and

more successful and accurate interactions than ever before.

ACCESS

In this classroom, none of the students could use their hands functionally, and alternative access methods were being pursued, such as switch access and eye pointing, when we started. Judy Lariviere, M.Ed., OTR/L, was brought into to work with Pati to assess access for each student. In what they called the "Switch Makeover," Pati and Judy spent two intensive days looking at the best access, positioning, etc. so that students could begin to functionally use a switch to access the computer for language- and literacy-based activities and begin to develop some consistent switch skills. Once the access site was discovered, the students used their switch to say "yes" when participating in activities.

OUTCOMES

As students' access skills improved, we began using the Light Tech Communication within Speaking Dynamically Pro (Dynavox/Mayer Johnson) on classroom laptops. As trials with systems began, we simply imported the pages into the system of the devices – Communicator Software (Tobi), ECHO (PRC software) and Dynavox. We found that the transition from the light-tech book to the electronic book was incredible. Students knew how to navigate and were familiar with the communication pages within the system. Almost immediately, students were able to communicate unique thoughts, participate in conversations and use core sentence starters to communicate unique ideas. Three out of four of the students in the initial classroom were approved for AAC devices and one student was pending due to an illness. These approvals were based on the success they had with their trials and using the electronic portion of the books with devices. It should be mentioned however, that although students all had an electronic version of the light-

tech book on either a dedicated AAC device or a laptop, we still continued to use the light-tech book, CLAP.

The results of post-testing using The Augmentative Communication Profile (Kovack, 2009) were impressive; all students scored at a level 3, being able to generate two- to five-word sentences, independently navigate through the system, initiate conversations, express unique thoughts and ideas, consistently have three- to four-part conversations, communicate emotions and feelings and participate in beginning literacy activities, such as spelling simple words, developing a sight word vocabulary, partner reading books and participate in generative writing activities.

One student began using eye pointing midway through the first year. Her progress was staggering when she trialed an eye pointing device. On the second day into the use of a trial eye pointing system, she was able to carry on phone conversations with her teacher and mother, having timely interactions, initiating conversation, conversational turns, asking questions, responding appropriately to the questions and expressing emotion, all within in a three-minute time period. Another student, using single switch scanning on her first trial with the electronic version of the book, was able to tell us that she was frustrated and mad because she did not get to go swimming and all the other kids got to go. Nobody had explained to her what was going on. She was persistent in telling us how she felt and demanding an explanation, even though we tried to guide her in a different direction. Numerous accounts of these little moments began to happen on a regular basis and trickle in from parent and para-professional testimonials.

Students progressed in all areas and, as the program has grown, so have both their literacy and language skills. Students are successfully emailing to families, writing scripts for class plays,



Student using the CLAP book on her new AAC device

Key:

underlined text – generative language independent
(in parenthesis) – Modeled
Italic – using system phrases independent

On Feb 27, 2012 at 11:35AM, Nika D wrote:

Hi Mom,
I had (on) black pants
I want talk Aunt Phyllis.
I want Aunt Phyllis read.
I am fast, slow, quiet loud.
My nose hurts. Stomach OK.
I love you.

Mom responding

>Hi Nika
I love you too!!!!
I hope your nose feels less stuffy soon.
I am glad your tummy is feeling OK today.
Should we call Aunt Phyllis later?
I know she misses you so much.
I really love getting emails from you. It makes me happy to read them.
Love,
Mommy

Nika responding

< Mom
I want a hug. Talk to you later.
Nika

publishing a monthly newsletter and writing in journals. Students continue to progress in the area of generative language. Below is a sample email conversation between a mom and a student. This email exchange was 18 months into the program.

THE COMMUNICAN PROGRAM TODAY AT STANDING TALL

The students of the original target classroom continue to grow and learn, participating in more academic-based work and literacy work. Students are now showing their individual strengths and weakness so the teachers can better individualize their instruction. Another Communican class has formed at Standing Tall using the model and continues to show equal progress as the first class. This coming year, younger students, kindergarten age, have entered the program and we are very excited to again be able to contribute to their communication growth and watch their communication blossom.

DISCUSSION

The idea of focusing on the macro aspects of communication first, "conversation/social" rather than language instruction

(words/grammar), proved to benefit the students within the Communican program at Standing Tall. The ability to participate in social conversation affected not only the students' perception of themselves as effective communicators, it affected the willingness of communication partners (paraprofessionals, teachers, family) to engage AAC communicators in conversation. Once the partners believed that the students were truly communicating, it became the tipping point for an explosion of communication interactions and opportunities. The students were empowered to learn and communicate more because of their new-found success. Students were more likely to participate in more challenging tasks, such as developing literacy and language skills. As the researchers Ritcher, Ball, Buekelman, Laser & Ullman (2003) have found, successful social interactions hinge largely upon the attitudes and perceptions that communication partners hold of one another. Similar studies (Beck, Bock, Thompson, & Kosuwan, 2002; Beck, Fritz, Keller, & Dennis, 2000) have focused on peer interaction with AAC partners with similar results. If AAC is to be implemented successfully, the techniques

and devices must be accepted by both the individual requiring the supports and those who will serve as communication partners. We have found that creating an environment where individuals who use AAC are able to succeed, especially in social situations, enhances their overall learning. Once students began communicating unique ideas and thoughts, the staff became excited and more motivated to communicate with the students. Parents become more interested and more willing to come to school and observe and then wanting to communicate with students at home. As students began to view themselves as successful communicators, their willingness to communicate more and learn more starts to grow at an exponential rate. More cognitively challenging tasks, such as literacy and curriculum activities, become more exciting and fun for the students. Having the right tools in place (light- or high-tech), having the instructional strategies to support those tools, focusing on the conversational interactions first and then balancing the instruction to specifically teach literacy and language skills have proved critical in this situation. As a result of implementing these elements, everyone begins to believe that the students can and will communicate and then it becomes a reality.

RESOURCES

Teach Me AAC : Online Interactive Instruction for Students and Teachers.
www.creativecommunicating.com

CLAP Book Conversation , Literacy, Access and Participation www.creativecommunicating.com

Augmentative & Alternative Communication Profile (Tracy Kovach, 2009) Linguisticsystems. Step by Step Communicator, AbleNet

To view videos and learn more about the Communican classroom visit the <http://teachmeaac.blogspot.com/> Teaching AAC: Reports from the Classroom

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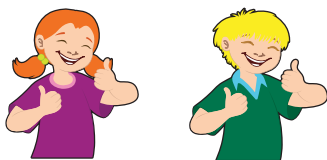
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New Conversational Images!
(boy and girl)

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The RTI Model and Ramifications for eLearning Using the iPad



PENINA PEARL

RYBAK, MA/CCC-SLP,

TSHH earned her degree from New York University in speech-language pathology. She has provided services to young children with special needs in a variety of settings: home-based early intervention, center-based therapeutic preschool classrooms, self-contained school-age classrooms and private practice. Penina participated in the 1995-2000 New York State TRAIID Project, which worked to improve communication options in special education by integrating assistive technology in the classroom. She recently spearheaded "The Boardmaker Initiative" for Mayer-Johnson™ at a charter school in NY. Penina specializes in social skills development for young children with special needs, particularly those with Autism. She is also Founder/CEO Socially Speaking LLC and can be reached at <Penina.SociallySpeaking@gmail.com>

WHAT IS RTI?

The Response to Intervention (RTI) Model was officially recognized in 2004, upon the reauthorization of the IDEA, and the prominent implementation of the "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001. It is an educational strategy that has slowly gained momentum in schools across the country. Professional development and methodical accountability are becoming more widespread with the advent of recent technological advances. We are also seeing an increase in integration of assistive technology (AT) into classrooms for a variety of students. It is becoming more routine for teachers to use lessons involving Smart Boards and computer tablets, such as the iPad from Apple. It is hoped that the future synthesis of AT use and RTI will help students progress.

RTI is a proactive, collaborative approach between parents, teachers, related service providers and administrators to foster learning and target students who are "falling through the cracks" academically. The RTI framework has been adopted by many educators. It emphasizes the importance of early detection/intervention, monitoring progress and structured teaching that caters to the child's interests and specific needs. This three-tiered instructional model is geared towards identifying students at risk for learning difficulties, addressing the evaluated student's specific learning style, strengths and learning differences, and implementing a collaborative approach to treatment.

FAQ: WHAT ARE THE BASIC PRINCIPALS OF RTI?

- All children can learn and "tap into" their potential
- Quality assessment drives instruction
- Quality teaching drives differentiated instruction
- Positive behavioral support enhances learning and peer relationships in class
- Team collaboration is crucial for the student's academic success

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PRINCIPALS OF LEARNING TO REMEMBER FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RTI:

- Personalized student assessment and management plans/lessons help cater to the child's interests, determine specific goals and methods for intervention and build camaraderie and optimism in class
- Learning styles in children tend to fall into three main categories: visual/auditory/tactile
- Learning in children tends to stem from either analytic or global (gestalt) thinking using multiple intelligence
- Multiple intelligence has eight categories where student abilities can be tapped: verbal/linguistic; logical/mathematical; visual/spatial; tactile/kinesthetic (body awareness); musical/rhythmic; interpersonal (pragmatics, social skills); intrapersonal (executive functioning, metacognition, introspection) and naturalist (diverse environments, outdoors preferred).

FAQ: WHY HAVE MANY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IMPLEMENTED RTI?

A: Five Outcomes of the Use of RTI:

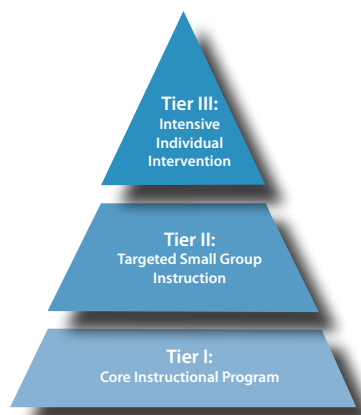
1. It promotes early detection through screenings at least three times a year
2. It promotes teacher designed differentiated instruction (lessons) targeting the specific student's strengths and weaknesses
3. It promotes "assessment driven instruction," i.e., collaborative teamwork provides a "checks and balances" approach where techniques that aren't working are analyzed, discussed and dropped from that particular student's Management Plan
4. It promotes ongoing staff professional development for the entire team so that curriculum trends and teaching methods stay current and of high quality
5. It promotes positive student interactions based upon personal learning styles, preferences, interests and strengths, i.e., lessons are geared to the student's unique "inner landscape" to enhance motivation, self-esteem and mutual respect

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THE RTI PYRAMID AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATORS

The RTI framework hinges on the idea that when providing lessons in school, purposeful grouping yields results; academically, socially and emotionally. At tier one, purposeful grouping is done in the “least restrictive environment,” i.e., the teacher uses information gleaned through screenings and informal assessments to plan lessons for all around the children’s learning style, interests, strengths and weaknesses. A buddy system, or peer pairing, and other positive behavioral supports are put in place to help the students develop their own self-reliance, self-monitoring and executive functioning skills. Grouping students according to deficit/need/ability in a tier one setting has been shown to be less effective because it negatively impacts the student’s self-esteem; it causes parental concern about the social stigma their child may experience; and it doesn’t always allow the student to vary his/her interests and learning style, leading to a lack of diversity within the lesson and the group. At tier one, the two most important team members are the teacher and parent(s).

The RTI framework mandates that smaller, more intensive grouping be conducted for tier two students as a “pullout service” within the school day. That is usually because tier two students have been found to

have deficits in specific academic areas, such as reading or math. They, therefore, need to be provided with group instruction that caters to the specific deficit while appealing to the child’s multiple intelligence, learning style, interests and behavioral/pragmatic (social) needs. At tier two, the team expands to include the reading specialist, possibly the school psychologist, speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist, just to name a few.

The RTI Model intersects with the standard special education model, and the implementation of the individualized education program (IEP) at tier three. Students in tier three are usually given intensive one-on-one learning opportunities to “fill in the gaps,” such as individual speech therapy on a weekly basis. They may attend smaller classes, with a smaller teacher-student ratio. They may still be given group instruction over the course of the school day, but the group dynamics and goals may differ than tier one and two. For example, the concepts of circle time and centers have been cherished times of the day in special education, self-contained classrooms for decades. These are two sacred times of the day when the child with special needs is introduced to purposeful grouping, given the opportunity to start to develop specific academic and social skills that will enable the gradual transition from a “me” to a “we.”

THE RISE OF ELEARNING AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RTI

Assistive technology integration into educational curriculums has become much standard practice in schools across the country. Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) in special education has been recommended since the ‘90s, when special educators began

integrating assistive technology (AT) into therapy sessions and special education classrooms across the country. CAI has gained momentum since the 2004 IDEA revisions federally mandated a behavior plan as part of an IEP. eLearning is widespread today, thanks to the nature of technology as both an intrinsic reinforcer and a gateway of information via the Internet. The subsequent spurring of the digital age and recent ease of technology integration using portable computers, such as the iPad by Apple, have made eLearning a viable, even preferable option for many special educators and service providers in schools today.

Research shows that children with special needs, particularly autism, appear to be “visual learners.” They can greatly benefit from CAI-based lesson plans to facilitate self-regulation and language devel-

opment, involving “whole body” learning, emphasizing the visual modality. Word of mouth and popularity of eLearning, using the iPad in particular, is growing rapidly. The iTunes app industry is the fastest growing form of commerce in the world today. Parents, children and special educators are all increasingly lauding and using the iPad as a creative, customized, intuitive and fun educational tool. It is being collaboratively used more frequently to implement lesson plans, address IEP goals and utilize behavioral strategies to foster self-regulation.

The clinical implications for using RTI within eLearning, such as integrating iPad use into lesson plans, include collaborative goal setting, with student input, if applicable, and “activating prior knowledge.” The latter is also known as accessing episodic memory using the following:

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Cues appealing to a child's learning style (auditory/visual/tactile), such as visual supports;

"Wh" questions that facilitate the development of problem-solving and executive functioning; and

Advanced organizers, such as outlines containing target vocabulary, to facilitate the access of semantic memory, development of time management skills and overall reading comprehension skills.

eLearning involves active student participation, is usually self-motivating and immerses the student in multi-sensory learning experiences engaging one or more of the five senses. It is no wonder that advocates of the RTI model have embraced integration of AT into group instruction and classroom learning! Also, the flexibility that RTI promotes is inherent in the very use of AT, which, by nature, is individualized and flexible when dovetailed with the student's curriculum. Furthermore, the very nature of the iPad's user interface, the way the home screen operates, allows the RTI team to seamlessly transition between lesson plan apps for the student and note-taking and

assessment apps to document progress etc. This is all done while simultaneously empowering the tier one and two student to have a say in his/her goals, have students from all three tiers access episodic memory to use the AT and have students from all three tiers problem-solve how to successfully navigate the "user interface" of the iPad, etc. Aren't these the very outcomes we advocate through the RTI approach?

Finally, the very repetitive nature of AT devices, such as the iPad, provide intrinsic reinforcement and practice trials so that students in every tier of RTI instruction develop better attention spans, retention of learned material over time and self-esteem. These are all byproducts of RTI implementation, which we educators strive for on a daily basis with our students, no matter what their challenges!

I feel that the integration of AT, such as the iPad, in those settings already using RTI begins with the service provider first becoming more comfortable about using technology, and then implementing it while thinking "outside the box" and what the Big Picture is, namely, the student's behav-

ioral, academic and AT needs. To that end, I designed my Socially Speaking app for iPad to be an interactive app that gives AT a "human touch" by tailoring it to both the user and the child being documented. My app was designed with the principals of RTI in mind, including best practices concerning AT. It caters to the service provider's varied caseload, need for "assessment driven instruction" and need for positive interactions based upon the child's interests and individual learning style. The Socially Speaking app thus gives the user opportunities to use the iPad's multi-app interface, to customize lesson plans with goals and personal photos/graphics, giving the child's team common ground/language, better perspective and an easier time documenting future IEP goals. My Socially Speaking app is both an assessment protocol/screening tool for social skills development and a lesson plan template to help track the young child with autism and other special needs. This is the very essence of RTI: updating baseline data, determining starting points for remediation and succinctly documenting the team's approach to materials and techniques.

The long-term ramifications of RTI implementation in special education need to be further studied and documented. The benefits of AT integration into IEP lesson plans, particularly in special education, have already been documented extensively. It is only a matter of time before we see journal articles on the efficacy of treatment and overall learning outcomes of the most famous, yet recent, "new kid on the block" AT device, the iPad from Apple. Dave Edyburn wrote about the value of using AT to enhance learning in his famous 2007 article for Closing The Gap, before the iPad was even a household name. He wrote, "When a task is too hard to be completed successfully, students get frustrated and disengage. When a task is too easy, students get bored. Learning occurs when the challenge level of a task is 'just right.' I refer to this phenomena as the 'Goldilocks Effect.' A critical function of teaching is to find the level of challenge that is 'just right' for each student."

I agree with Dr. Edyburn's insights. I maintain that integrating the iPad into lesson plans does just that. I maintain that our use of AT, such as my Socially Speaking app for iPad, to design lessons where students will then use other AT and apps to learn is what RTI is all about. Implementation of the RTI model into special education strategies

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many of us already use, such as visual supports and positive behavioral support, allows for an even more seamless integration of AT and eLearning. This, in turn, facilitates a child's self-concept and overall academic performance in today's rapidly changing world.

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- National Center on RTI (www.rti4success.org)
- National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (www.nrcld.org)
- Council for Exceptional Children's RTI Blog (www.cec.sped.org)
- Council for Exceptional Children-Learning Disabilities (<http://teachingld.org>)
- Intervention Central (strategies by subject) (www.interventioncentral.org)
- National Center on Student Progress Monitoring (www.studentprogress.org/)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (www.pbis.org)
- Learning Styles & Multiple Intelligence (www.ldpride.net)
- Learning Styles Assessment (www.learning-styles-online.com)
- Personal Thinking Styles (www.thelearningweb.net/personalthink.html)
- Literacy Works Tools for Assessment (www.literacyworks.org/mi/home.html)
- Reading A-Z Resources (www.readinga-z.com)
- Research Institute on Progress Monitoring (www.progressmonitoring.org)
- Teachers & Technology (rubrics, lessons) (www.4teachers.org)
- Teachnology (rubrics, lessons) (www.teach-nology.com)
- Promising Practices Network (www.promisingpractices.net)
- What Works Clearinghouse (www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/)
- Scholastic Teachers (www.teacher.scholastic.com)

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

- "A Parent's Guide to Response to Intervention," by Susan Bruce (www.wrightslaw.com)
- "Response to Intervention-A Primer for Parents," by Mary Klotz (www.nasponline.org)
- "A Parents' Guide to RTI," by Candace Cortiella (www.ncld.org) ■



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YUICHI TAMANO,

M.S., is an assistive technology specialist and Senior Content Developer at DynaVox Mayer-Johnson. He can be reached at yuichi.tamano@dynavoxtech.com.



MAUREEN DONNELLY, M.Ed,

is an early childhood educator and currently a Content and Curriculum Developer for DynaVox Mayer-Johnson. She can be reached at maureen.donnelly@dynavoxtech.com.

THE LITERACY CHALLENGE

Over the last 50 years, the prognosis for literacy development of students with developmental disabilities has been grim. This is largely due to the fact that literacy learning is a complex process and one that has been poorly understood. Often, as educators, we have struggled to figure out what these students need and provide it in ways that are age-appropriate, instructionally sound and engaging. For any child, the inability to read and write can have a profound impact on lifelong success and quality of life; for a child with complex communication needs, even more so.

Historically, literacy programs for individuals with disabilities have focused on only one or two constructs at a time. For many years, the prevailing belief was that individuals with developmental disabilities could learn to read sight words, but could not learn to decode words using phonics-based strategies. Instruction focused on whole-word recognition with limited attention placed on the internal make-up of words or comprehending words in connected text. Consequently, these students had limited knowledge of phoneme-grapheme relationships and were unable to figure out unfamiliar words when reading. Various researchers (e.g., Fallon, Light, McNaughton, Drager, & Hammer, 2004; Hanser & Erickson, 2007) have now demonstrated that this belief was unfounded and individuals with developmental

disabilities can respond positively to analytic reading instruction.

COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION IS THE KEY

Successfully implementing decoding or phonics intervention is only one component of the comprehensive instruction beginning readers require. Intervention must also address comprehension, fluency and many other skills and understandings. Isolated word reading deficits only account for a small portion of the difficulties identified across all poor readers (Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 1999; Nation, Clark, Wright, & Williams, 2006).

Successful approaches to building literacy are comprehensive and integrated. Cunningham's (1993) Whole-to-Part Model of Silent Reading Comprehension presents the constructs that underlie successful silent reading comprehension and comprise comprehensive, integrated instruction. The primary constructs represented in the model are word identification, language comprehension and print processing (see Cunningham, 1993 or Erickson, Koppenhaver, & Cunningham, 2006 for a detailed description). This model is consistent with findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) and the National Early Literacy Panel (2009), and offers an important framework for organizing and understanding the critical components of comprehensive beginning literacy instruction.

Comprehensive literacy intervention addresses all three components of the Whole-to-Part model: word identification (including phonemic awareness, phonics and word identification); language comprehension (including vocabulary and text comprehension); and print processing (including fluency, the development of inner speech and prosody). At the same time, comprehensive instruction supports learners in applying or generalizing the knowledge and skills they are acquiring to novel and self-selected contexts. The ability to generalize or apply knowledge and skills is often particularly difficult for students with disabilities, and yet it is the thing that helps readers and writers develop and experience increasing success across reading and writing contexts.

Comprehensive approaches also provide a balance of directed skill-building instruction, guidance in applying those skills in meaningful contexts and opportunities to independently apply newly acquired knowledge and skills through practice with self-directed reading and writing. While opportunities to explore new content are critical to reading and writing development, so too is the opportunity to practice and refine knowledge that may have been previously gained.

DEVELOPING LITERACY LAB

In 2010, a team of experienced educators, speech-language pathologists and AT developers at DynaVox

Mayer-Johnson came together to define a comprehensive literacy program that would address the literacy learning needs of a broad range of students, including those with the most significant physical and intellectual challenges. This team enlisted the expert guidance of Karen Erickson, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Through a review of the literature and thousands of hours of iteration on design, this collaborative team created Literacy Lab v1.0. The following key design principles drove our design and development process:

The program must drive towards learner outcomes in reading silently with comprehension and writing meaningful texts independently.

Deep understanding and application of skills require thousands of opportunities to practice and be an active participant in constructing one's own knowledge.

Instruction must be comprehensive and address all of the constructs involved in reading, including writing.

LITERACY LAB OVERVIEW

Literacy Lab is a software program designed for beginning readers and writers of all ages, with nearly 1,000 unique, fully-accessible instructional activities focused on reading comprehension, guided and independent readings, vocabulary, phonological awareness, word identification and writing. It is organized into eight thematic units (see Image 1) aligned to popular science and social studies topics. These topics provide a meaningful context in which to ground literacy instruction and can be used in any order. Teachers can either follow a preset instructional sequence or they can customize instruction based on student need, offering the teacher the flexibility to use Literacy Lab as their primary literacy instruction or as a supplement to a separate literacy curriculum.

Teachers following the preset instructional sequences can choose from three activity plans that will guide the student through the activities from session to session:

Activity Plan Level 1: for students just learning important concepts about print, developing alphabetic and phonological knowledge and beginning to make connections between written and oral language.

Activity Plan Level 2: for students who have acquired these skills but are not yet using written language in a meaningful way.

Activity Plan Level 3: for students having some success with written language, but

require continued support in decoding words, reading with comprehension and fluency and writing to communicate effectively with others.

Each activity plan steps the student through roughly 20 sessions. In each session, the student completes two new activities and then selects familiar activities for additional, self-directed practice. This "practice time" is critical as it offers students an opportunity to build confidence and mastery over the skills they are learning.

Alternately, the teacher can bypass the Activity Plans and browse the entire library of activities. This is ideal for a teacher who wants to select activities to supplement other literacy

Literacy Lab grounds literacy instruction within eight thematic units, aligned to popular science and social studies topics.



Each of the eight Literacy Lab units includes a library of 15 high-quality, engaging books.



Guided reading purposes activate the student's prior knowledge and provide strategies for thinking about books.



Introducing LITERACY LAB

From the makers of Boardmaker®
Opening the Door to Literacy

Literacy Lab is a comprehensive literacy instruction program designed to help all students realize the goal of independent and meaningful reading and writing.

- Designed for students with special needs, but inclusive of all learners, regardless of disability or age.
- Provides diverse instruction that addresses reading, writing, comprehension, and foundational skills for the entire school year.
- Addresses Common Core Language Arts Standards and State-specific Science and Social Studies Standards.

Visit us at Booth #113 to learn how Literacy Lab can open the door to Literacy.

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www.mayer-johnson.com



A script for an adult provides support for shared readings.



Stamp and Write activity. Writing activities are incorporated at all levels of Literacy Lab.



Visual Scene activity targets onset letters. Students search for words that begin with the target letter.



Word Blending activity. Students learn how changing onset letters changes the word.



Chart Writing activity. Students fill in a sentence frame made of high frequency words.

instruction or to address the needs to students who have splinter skills and do not fit neatly into one Activity Plan level. The teacher can also construct a custom activity plan by assigning their own sequence of activities.

Next we'll take a look at a few the different kinds of activities that are included in Literacy Lab.

READING ACTIVITIES

One of the unique aspects of Literacy Lab is its strong reading comprehension strand. Each of the eight units contains a library of 15 books, for a total library of 120 books (see Image 2). A wide variety of text formats and language structures are represented – informational texts, fiction, rhyming books, repeated line stories, etc. – each with high quality recordings and photos or illustrations. This library of books provides the kind of highly predictable, decodable and engaging reading experiences that allow beginners to grow and develop as readers.

Providing many opportunities to read varied texts is essential, but we also need to provide instruction to students on how to approach and think about texts. To this end, students are asked to read each book three times for three different guided purposes (see Image 3). First, students are prompted to find a personal, world or text connection with the topic or with a feature of the book by responding to a question. Then the student reads the text with a stated purpose in mind. Afterwards, students are asked to apply the knowledge gained during reading by answering questions or completing a simple activity. Guided reading activities provide students with a methodology to begin to think deeply about books in general.

Also included in Literacy Lab are supports for adults to have shared book readings with students. Each book has a "Read with an adult" option, which displays a script on each page (see Image 4) that guides the adult on what they can say to support the student's comprehension, make further connections to personal experiences and observe various details about the forms, features and function of print.

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Writing is an often neglected aspect of literacy instruction, especially for emergent readers and writers who might be considered "not ready" to begin writing. But what we know about typical literacy development is that many children learn to read through writing. Just as a typically developing child spends thousands of hours scribbling in order to develop their own understanding of print and text, we need to give students with developmental disabilities the same opportunities.

Writing activities are included in all three activity plan levels of Literacy Lab. This is one area where the technology can really support the emergent writer in ways that traditional pen and paper cannot. For example, in the Stamp and Write activity (see Image 5), students select stamps as a way of visually brainstorming ideas for their writing. Then, when they begin writing, they are provided with a bank of words related to the stamps they've chosen, as well as an onscreen keyboard with word prediction (or they can type on a regular keyboard). The stamps they've selected are also shown alongside the writing supports, so that they always have a visual support as they write.

This activity works well for students at various levels. The most emergent writer might only be experimenting with letters from the keyboard to construct their understanding of letters and letter sounds. A slightly more advanced student might be labeling stamps with individual words using the word banks or the keyboard. And a beginning conventional writer might be putting together sentences, using creative spelling and word prediction.

In the higher level activity plans, we introduce real contexts for writing, like the Write a Book and Make a List activities, but we keep the same framework of writing supports (word/phrase banks, word prediction, onscreen keyboard, visual support), so that the student can become comfortable and proficient in using them. This consistent framework allows students to focus on the real work of writing, which is to compose their thoughts and ideas in meaningful ways, rather than on the tools and mechanisms of producing text.

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES

Alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, analytic phonics and sight words are important components of Literacy Lab instruction. Each Literacy Lab unit focuses on four target letters and four word families. This ensures that across the eight units, we are teaching all 26 letters and the 37 most commonly-taught word families.

In foundational skills activities, the differentiation between the different levels is most pronounced. At Level 1, activities primarily target alphabetic knowledge and phonological awareness. For example, in the Visual Scene activity (see Image 6), students explore a scene to discover words that begin with a target letter. In the Word Blending activity (see Image 7), students are introduced to a word family and experiment with the impact that changing onset letters has on the word.

At Level 2, greater emphasis is placed on word families and word recognition. In Onset-Rime Exploration, students combine onsets and word endings to make a set of words. They then sort those words into real/nonsense words and then sort by word-ending. In the Chart Writing activity (see Image 8), students are presented with a simple sentence frame made up of high-frequency sight words. Students complete the sentence by selecting topic words to fill in the blank. After they repeat this for eight sentences, their sentences are turned into a book, which they then read. This shared language structure presented as a reading and a writing activity gives students the critical opportunity to be successful on both fronts. Other activities take familiar formats from Level 1, but shift the focus to word endings and whole words.

In Level 3 students develop greater phonemic awareness and ability to decode independently. For example, in the Making Words activity (see Image 9), students are guided through manipulating a set of letters into simple words to learn how, by changing, adding, or deleting a single letter, the word and its meaning are changed. Once a set of words has been created, students sort the words by number of letters, onset letter and by rime. Then, in the last stage of the activity, students have the opportunity to transfer knowledge of these letters, sounds and words to newly presented letters and words.

This is just a sample of various activities included in Literacy Lab.

CONCLUSION

All students have the potential to become literate. But in order to achieve this goal,

students must have access to instruction that is balanced, integrated and contextual. The breadth of the activities in Literacy Lab ensure that a student will receive balanced instruction in all areas of early literacy, while the eight different thematic units provide a range of meaningful contexts that give a student many opportunities to build their understanding. Taken as a whole, Literacy Lab can provide the rich literacy environment that students with developmental disabilities need to become readers and writers.

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Literacy Lab - \$349, 7-day trial available for download.

DynaVox Mayer-Johnson, 2100 Wharton Street, Suite 400, Pittsburgh, PA 15203; Phone: (800) 588-4548; Fax: (866) 585-6260; www.mayer-johnson.com

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iPad Apps and Integrative Workflows to Support Learners with Literacy Difficulties and Dyslexia

CRAIG MILL is the Assisive Technology Advisor at CALL Scotland, based in Edinburgh University. Craig is probably better known for developing the suite of free portable tools that run from a USB drive: EduApps including AccessApps and MyStudyBar.

The current iOS 5 (the iPad's operating system) features a range of built-in accessibility options, such as VoiceOver (text-to-speech, which reads aloud information and content on the iPad), Zoom (magnifies icons and text) and White on Black (high contrast color). While these are useful tools, they are primarily designed to support users with a visual impairment, rather than those with dyslexia related difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the area of literacy support apps and how they might be best used to support learners with literacy difficulties, such as dyslexia. Over the past year, the growth in apps to support learners with additional needs has risen significantly. Websites, such as Spectronics, have led the way in providing lists of apps and their relevant descriptive features to support augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), apps to support literacy and apps for magnification and vision support. The British Dyslexia Association also provides a descriptive list of apps for both the iPhone and other tablet devices.

While descriptive lists provide a useful starting point, particularly to those who are new to the iPad and may be overwhelmed with the amount of apps on offer from the App Store, the aim of this article is to highlight the integrative nature of apps and how built-in sharing options between and within apps can be used to develop a series of integrative workflows.

GLOBAL CUSTOMIZATION ISSUES

Other features of the iOS that could benefit dyslexic users include Speak Selection (reads aloud selected or highlighted text) and Speak Auto-Text, which speaks suggested corrections generated from the Auto-Correction option, found in Settings and Keyboard. Auto-Correction is designed to correct spelling mistakes when texting or completing writing tasks by guessing the word it thinks you want to write. Unfortunately, Auto-Correct isn't always accurate and can guess the wrong word. Using Speak Auto-Text in tandem with Auto-Correct could help users to type more quickly and accurately, as suggested words are spoken when typed, but some users may find this process more confusing than helpful. Moreover, there is only one English default male voice available on the

iPad, which may not be suitable to all learners.

Unlike the Windows computer, which offers significantly more individual and personal global customization, such as font style and font and background color options, which are crucial for many dyslexic users, these options are currently unavailable on the iPad. Instead, personal customization options are increasingly appearing within a number of apps. While this is a move in the right direction, it can be problematic for some users. Customization options are often hidden in the Settings area of the iPad and are not immediately obvious. An integrative workflow attempts to overcome these issues and while some learners may find the workflow initially challenging, the integrative nature of the sharing feature in selected apps helps to simplify the process.

TRADITIONAL ICT LITERACY SOFTWARE SUPPORT

The workflow is influenced by a Windows-based paradigm based on existing literacy support programs, such as TextHelp's Read&Write, Don Johnston's Co:Writer and Penfriend, which to a great extent provide an all-in-one learning toolkit solution and are popular with dyslexic learners.

A main feature of these applications is that they all offer individual customization options to meet the needs of different learners, as well as a range of support tools, such as word prediction (including customized lexicons/word lists), spell checking, homophone support, text-to-speech and a host of other useful study tools.

Despite the number of apps available to support literacy, they tend to focus or specialize in one area of support, e.g., spelling, text-to-speech, word prediction, save text to audio etc. While some, such as Abilipad and Type-O-HD, combine word prediction and audio support, they fall short on color and font customization.

At the time of this writing, the "all-in-one" app, offering the range of tools and functionality dyslexic users require, is still to be developed. Until such an app is available, the only alternative is to explore those apps that offer increased sharing options and construct integrative workflows from within and between appropriate apps.

THE WINDOWS/PC APPROACH

One method that many dyslexic students find helpful for essay/project writing is based on the following approach (assuming the PC has been set up with individual preferences – font style, size, spacing, colours etc):

1. Getting initial ideas/research down on "paper" - planning (using a visual mind map to create headings, subheading, adding notes/initial research, hyperlinks etc).
2. Exporting a mind map to a word processing application, such as Word. Mind mapping programs, such as Inspiration and Mind Manager, have "export to Word, PowerPoint etc." options built in, making it a one-click solution.
3. Using the mind map structure in Word (or PowerPoint for presentations) to format and extend ideas, add more content.
4. Use literacy support software in combination with word processing to help input text – word prediction (although not always appropriate for all learners).
5. Proof read essay for spelling using text-to-speech spell checking, identify wrongly used homophones, etc. using Claro/Read&Write and print/submit completed work.

THE IPAD/APP APPROACH

The following example uses three apps that include sharing and integrative options within and between apps: Inspiration, ClaroSpeak UK and Pages – these are tried and tested examples. Other mind mapping apps, such as the free Mindjet (MindManager) and HD iThoughts, are equally good mind mapping apps but have limited export options. Mindjet only exports a PDF via email and while HD iThoughts includes Send to App and Send Email options, they are restricted to other mind mapping formats, such as MindManger, XMind etc.

The process may initially appear to be difficult, but it is, in fact, straight forward and only involves a four-stage process.

1. Similar to the PC approach – using the Inspiration app (appropriate for a range of ages and abilities and offers a number of individual preferences) to generate initial ideas, headings, subheadings, notes.
2. When the mind map is complete, switch from Visual view to Linear note view. Select “Send to App” using “Text” option. When the “Open In” panel appears, select (ClaroSpeak UK) – the mind mapping text is sent directly to Claro-

Speak UK. (Another option could be AppWriter, which offers word prediction). Personalize ClaroSpeak UK preferences – color/font/voice in Settings.

3. Add additional content, information and use text-to-speech and text highlighting to proof read. Inspiration’s formatting is still retained. Select the Share button and choose Copy.
4. Open Pages (or Google Docs) and paste copied text – complete formatting, and Save for submission. Alternatively, “Speak Selection” can be used, but this does not offer choice of voice or text highlighting.

FOUR-STAGE PROCESS TO CREATE AND WRITE AN ESSAY USING IPAD AND SELECTED APPS

This is one example of how an integrative workflow can be used to support learners with literacy difficulties. As apps become increasingly sophisticated with more shared features and integral options, hopefully the single “killer” app that encompasses an all-in-one toolkit will provide users with literacy difficulties a more user-friendly approach.

STAGE 1 - Brainstorm, create a visual mind map.

STAGE 2 - When the visual mind map is complete, switch to the text/linear mode.

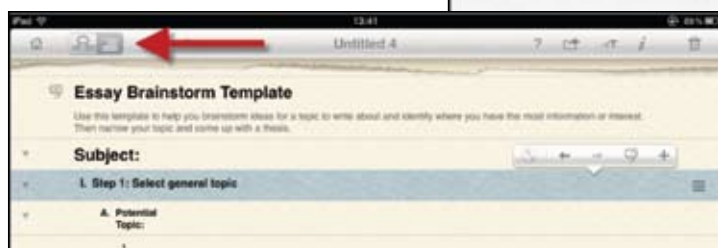
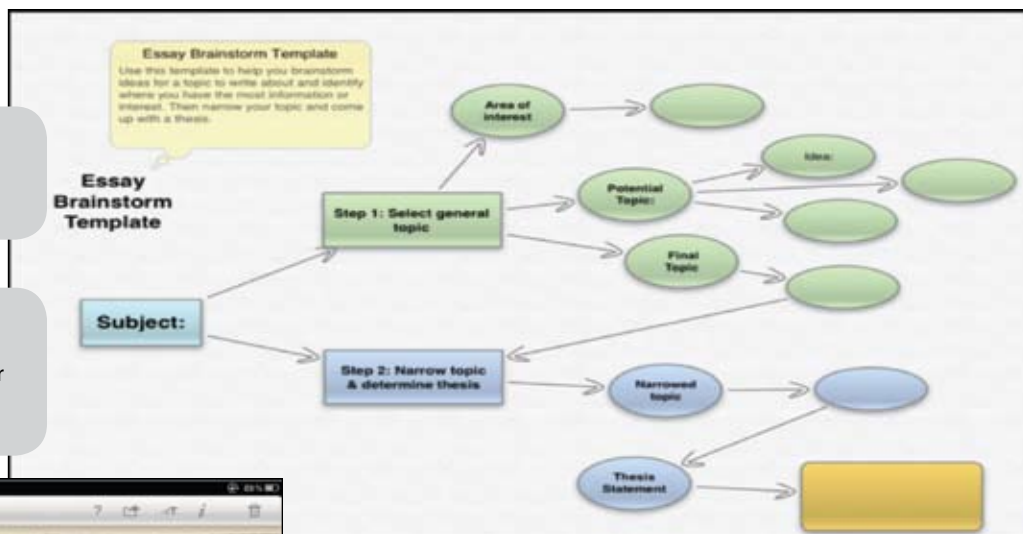


Figure 2: Switch to linear/text view.

Figure 1: Create visual mind map using Inspiration App (this is a Template example)

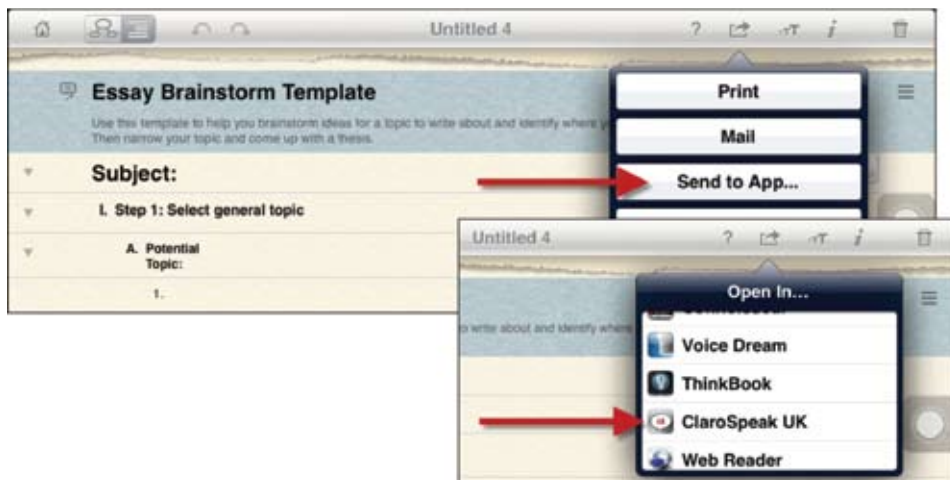


Figure 3: Tap the Share button to Send to App and select an appropriate app, e.g., ClaroSpeak UK, for text-to-speech and proofreading support.

STAGE 3 - (Figures 4-5) Text from the mind map is sent directly to ClaroSpeak UK, which features text-to-speech and other customization options. Additional content can also be included. A disadvantage of ClaroSpeak UK is that formatting tools are limited. The Export tools are also restricted to Copy, Email and SMS. Additional tools similar to word processing, e.g., heading styles, text formatting, print, spell checking etc., would eliminate the need for additional steps, such as copying text to Pages or to other applications. ClaroSpeak UK also includes Save as Text File" and Save as Audio file, which some users may find helpful.

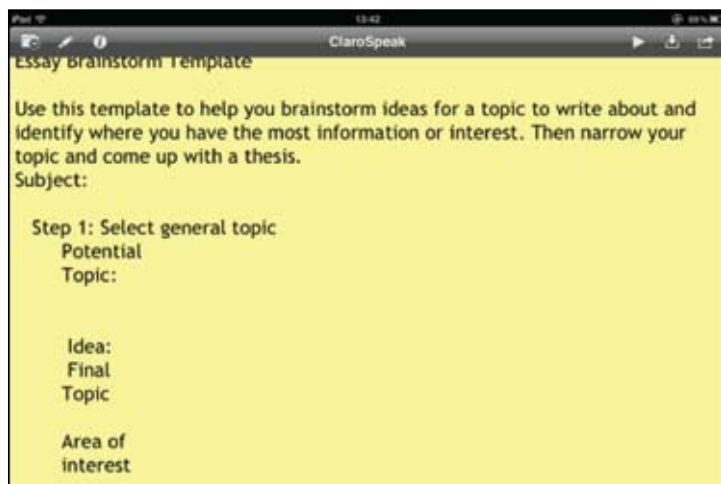


Figure 4 ClaroSpeak UK.

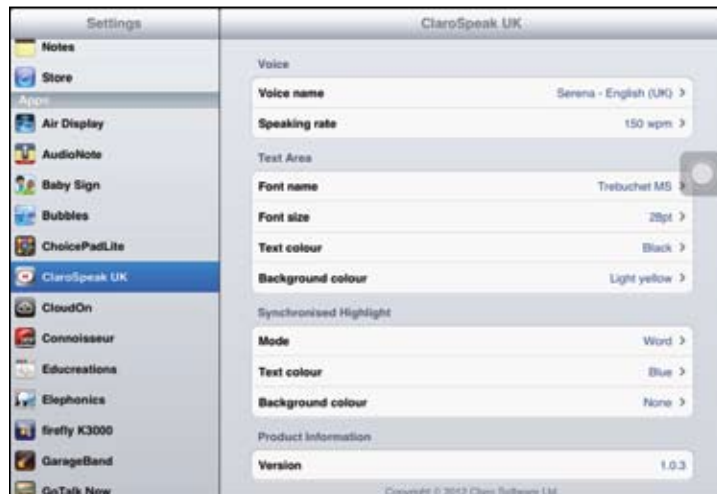


Figure 5: ClaroSpeak UK offers a range of individual preferences. Other options in ClaroSpeak UK include choice of font style, color, background colour and highlighting options – found in Settings on the iPad.

STAGE 4 - (Figures 6-9) Text is copied (no need to select text) by tapping the Copy button in ClaroSpeak UK. Copied text is then pasted into an appropriate word processor App, e.g., Pages, for formatting, printing and submission. Speak Selection can also be used to check spelling and for additional proofing.



Figure 6: Pages is a fully featured word processor.



Figure 7: The Pages App offers numerous features including "Check Spelling".



Figure 8: Formatting features allow the learner to format imported text with heading, paragraph and font styles.

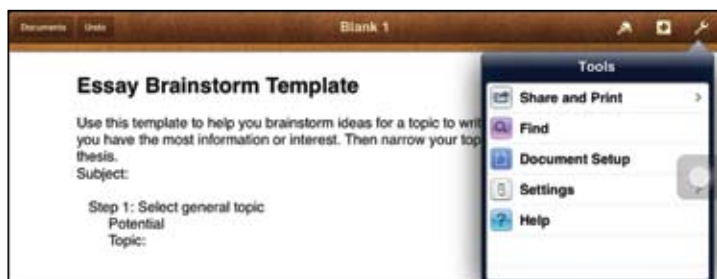


Figure 9: As part of the final stage, the learner can choose to Print to a wireless printer, email the document, send to iTunes or send to iCloud.

For more information on making the most of the iPad and Apps to support learners with literacy difficulties contact: craig.mill@ed.ac.uk or visit www.callscotland.org.uk

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Writing Support for Every Learner

Becky Tyler, 9 years old.



DEB YERGEAU has eight years of experience in the Education field. She has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Stonehill College in Massachusetts. Before joining Crick Software in 2008, Deb worked as a one-to-one assistant for a student with autism, and then became a fourth grade teacher. Currently, she is a Sales & Marketing Executive at Crick Software.

One of the biggest challenges for teachers today is how to effectively address the wide variety of learning needs they will be faced with in their classrooms. How do you provide the individual support that students with special needs require, help any learners new to English develop their language skills, engage your reluctant readers and writers, AND stretch your gifted students, all within one lesson?

Clicker, Crick Software's award-winning literacy support tool, is currently helping thousands of educators around the world to address this very issue. This software can be tailored to support students of all ages and abilities, helping all learners to significantly improve their reading and writing skills, access the curriculum and achieve academic success.

New for 2012, Crick Software has launched a new version of this popular tool, Clicker 6. Clicker 6 is a complete re-design of Clicker, which harnesses the latest technology to help students work more independently and teachers to download or create engaging, differentiated activities in seconds!

Crick Software's product range is based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Using the methods of UDL, teachers can present the same information in a variety of ways to enable every student in the class to access the material in a way that suits their particular learning needs. Clicker 6 makes it incredibly easy to create these differentiated activities. For example, many students with Down Syndrome are thought to be visual learners. They can learn the names of animals using pictures in a Clicker 6 matching activity and can even listen to the name of an animal with a click of the mouse or by using a switch. A general education student can then do the same matching activity, but with words instead of pictures. Every element of Clicker can be modified to suit the needs of individual students.

Some of the Beneficial Features in Clicker...

SWITCH ACCESSIBLE

Clicker 6 enables students with physical disabilities to use a switch for writing sentences, reading talking books, and engaging in labeling, simple cause and effect and matching activities. These activities give students using switches the opportunity to illustrate their level

of understanding, something they may not have been able to do in the past.

SYMBOLS

Students with special literacy or communication needs can benefit from using Clicker with symbols. It's easy to add graphics to Clicker cells when creating a communication grid or a simple writing activity. Whether students are using a mouse, touch screen, eye gaze device, trackball or switches, students will start to make the connection between the words and images by seeing them together and by listening to the recorded speech as their work is read back to them.

WORD PREDICTION

Clicker's integrated word predictor, with optional picture and symbol support, suggests words that fit the context of the student's writing. This will help students with their spelling and grammar and encourage them to use more adventurous vocabulary. What's even better is that this intelligent predictor will prioritize any key words you have provided the student with for a certain activity. For example, if you have a student writing about earthquakes, you can open a word bank with words such as epicenter, crust, and



Bradley Warwick and Jonathan Westrup.



Benjamin Ashton, 13 years old, using Clicker on a laptop.

mantle. Then, either keep this word bank open for the student to use, or hide it and the words will still be predicted as the student starts typing the first few letters. This means that words you might not typically expect to appear at the top of the predictor, but are needed for a certain topic, will be accessible whenever they are needed.

Some Great Examples of How Clicker is Making a Real Difference...

CEREBRAL PALSY

"My daughter Becky is 9 years old and has severe athetoid cerebral palsy affecting her whole body. She cannot sit unsupported, stand or walk, so is in a wheelchair. She cannot coordinate her arm or hand movements so she is generally unable to use them. However she is extremely bright and she learned how to use a head switch for computer access from an early age.

Becky has been accessing Clicker using a Tobii eye tracker (she used the head switch before that). This equipment has transformed her life and given her some independence for the first time ever.

Becky has always been creative and shown a strong interest in making pictures and doing arts and crafts, but had never been able to do any of it independently. Once she started using

her Tobii C12 device with Clicker, we were in for a lovely surprise! With eye-gaze access using her Tobii CEye eye tracking device, she was no longer constrained by the scanning grids in the software and she could choose the tools, styles and colors for her picture simply by staring at them with her eyes to select what she wanted, and placing them exactly where she wanted on the page – she was off!" Fiona Tyler, Becky's mom

CEREBRAL PALSY

"Like many teenagers his age, Bradley Warwick is passionate about music. In 2010, he piloted Drake Music's Introduction to Music course and was extremely successful. Bradley's success is especially significant because he has cerebral palsy and uses an electronic VOCA (Voice Output Communication Aid) to speak. Historically, very few students who face such disabling barriers to music have had access to a formal music education.

The key to success with the Introduction to Music course is that it comes with a comprehensive set of accessible learning and assessment resources, created by Drake Music for Clicker. Bradley has no significant learning difficulties, so by using the Clicker resources to learn, as well as Assistive Music Technology to perform and compose, he was able to access every aspect of the course.

Bradley used two switches to control Clicker on his computer; independently learning about key musical concepts, watching films and listening to audio clips. He also completed a range of assessment tasks in Clicker without adult intervention.

Bradley's achievement involved challenges that will undoubtedly be familiar to other disabled students and their teachers. Getting the most out of one session a week in a busy timetable that included therapies and numerous unforeseen events was not easy. Despite the access afforded by the Clicker resources, it still took a fair amount of time to make the performing and composing tasks suitably accessible to Bradley. However, his success opens up new opportunities for other disabled music students." Jonathan Westrup, Education Associate and Associate Musician at Drake Music UK www.drakemusic.org

DOWN SYNDROME

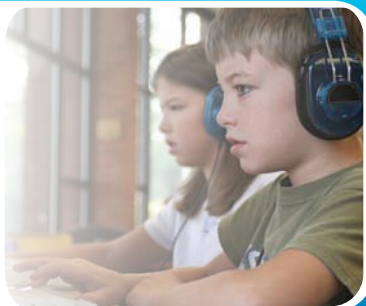
"Benjamin has Down Syndrome, he is a visual learner and has a lot to say verbally, but his ability to compose grammatical sentences and physically write words has been holding him back in developing his potential in both literacy and the spoken word.

Clicker has enabled us to provide Benjamin with a tool that is allowing him to start to easily produce meaningful sentences. He can now print

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out his sentences and use them in other work. We expect Clicker's word level support to make all the difference to Benjamin's literacy levels as he will be able to concentrate on constructing sentences with words instead of spending a lot of valuable patience forming the words himself using pen and paper.

Although his condition generally affects his learning ability, some specific abilities are more affected than others. For example, his alternating divergent squint was an early problem that prevented him from reading fluently. We found that retyping his books in a larger font and on a light blue background and working alongside the optometrist to adjust his glasses' prescription produced a significant and noticeable improvement in his reading ability. Repeating this process using Clicker would have been much easier and quicker.

The key to getting Benjamin going on Clicker was using a mouse pad. Benjamin has to work very hard with an ordinary mouse, as the cursor moves while he is trying to left or right click. With a mouse pad, the cursor stays in the same position while he moves his hand to left or right click an object on the screen, and this means that he has been able to develop good proficiency now in using a computer.

We find that the supplied examples demonstrating the different ways that Clicker can be used are really useful in providing ideas to support Benjamin's requirements for vocabulary and sentence building. We have made a lot of use of these resources to become familiar with what Clicker can do and to see which ones benefit Benjamin. By using our own pictures, we can produce grids that are relevant to his life and experience that engage and keep his attention.

With Clicker, we are starting to use forced order grids to help Benjamin develop his understanding of sentence structure and meaning by allowing Clicker to steer his sentence composition. We are currently using Clicker books and sentence building to enable

Benjamin to complete his project work at the horse riding school he attends on Saturdays. We also plan to use Clicker books to help Benjamin create his own picture schedule for weekend news that he can take to school on Mondays to share the news that he has produced instead of producing it for him" Bernard Ashton – Benjamin's dad.

REVIEW

Clicker 6 has also recently been reviewed by Brian Friedlander in his AssistiveTek Blog. Dr. Friedlander is a school psychologist in New Jersey with expertise in the area of assistive technology.

"Truth be told I have been a big fan of Clicker for a long time now and with the current release, I am even more excited with the potential of this program with students with a wide range of abilities. Having worked with a lot of assistive technology over the years, one of the key criteria for me is that it has got to be easy to use. If it takes me awhile to learn how to use a software program, then I know that it is doomed in the classroom. The latest release of Clicker 6 now includes Activity Wizards, which make using the program a real dream. Just this morning I had the chance to use Clicker 6 with a student I was working with who had underlying cognitive and language disabilities, and within seconds of selecting a Talk About Wizard, I had developed a picture-based activity that he could use to tell a story about the pictures on the screen (see Photo 5). It was incredible just how engaged the student was and how exciting it was to see the expression on his teacher's face as he told his story. Using the Activity Wizard, the activity was created within 15 seconds. In today's, fast paced classroom, having tools at your disposal that can create rich curriculum-based materials is more important than ever.

After I created this Talk About activity, I decided to create a picture-to-word matching activity to see if the student could match the pictures to the word (see Photo 6). To create this activity, I selected

the Matching Wizard, followed the on-screen prompts and selected the pictures that I had downloaded to a folder on my desktop. Again, within 10 seconds, my matching activity was up and running and the student could give it a try. The teachers were very impressed and were able to see just how easy it was to create the activity. Clicker 6 provides students with high quality text-to-speech supports and with the integration of the webcam, audio and multimedia, it is my go to program for students that have a wide range of learning challenges." <http://assistivetek.blogspot.com/2012/07/clicker-6-whole-new-game.html>

CONCLUSION

With its easy-to-navigate tools and recent updates, Clicker 6 will support every student in a school, whether they have physical or learning disabilities, struggle with reading and writing or take part in a gifted program. The possibilities Clicker has to offer are endless,

and both teachers and students will benefit from the time-saving features and learning independence that the program has to offer.

REFERENCES

Crick Software, Deb Yergeau, 191 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06880
Phone: 866-332-7425; Fax: 203-221-2698; Email: Usinfo@cricksoft.com
www.cricksoft.com
Clicker 6 Single Computer License: \$300
Upgrade from Clicker 5 to Clicker 6 Single Computer License: \$200
Volume license pricing available.

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Enhancing Literacy Through Technology

By Joan Tanenhaus

Learning Resources Reading Rods and Reading Mentor

(Learning Resources; www.learningresources.com) Reading Rods are interlocking color-coded manipulatives designed to supplement phonics and reading programs. They are available for Phonemic Awareness, Word Families, Word Building and Sentence Building, turning reading instruction into a color-coded, visual, tactile and auditory experience. Kits include activity trays, activity cards and instruction and activity books with demonstration cards. Each activity card set includes 48 double-sided, cards with simple icons that help students find the Rods needed, build specific Rod sequences, say or read their work out loud and follow-up with an extension activity.

Some additional Reading Rod kits include:

Reading Rods Phonics Activity Set: Letters and Sounds - This kit helps children recognize uppercase and lowercase letters, identify letter sounds, match letter sounds with pictures, learn alphabetical order, build simple words and practice writing letters and words with 108 color-coded rods, 20 double-sided activity cards, an activity tray, dry-erase board and marker, an activities booklet and carrying case.

Reading Rods Word Building Reading Kit helps children recognize spelling patterns, learn consonant blends and digraphs, identify advanced vowel sounds and use the silent 'e' with 109 color-coded rods, 24 double-sided activity cards, instruction and activity booklets, four trays and a storage tub.

Learning Resources Reading Mentor (Learning Resources; www.learningresources.com) The Reading Mentor is a stand-alone electronic device that provides visual and auditory output. Students place Reading



Reading Rods: (www.learningresources.com)

Rods on a track and they are read aloud ñ the letter name, phonemes, word or sentence. The kits reviewed above, and others, can then be used to reinforce, independently or with assistance, basic reading skills. With over 23,000 words in memory, four headphone jacks, volume and contrast controls, it is an impressive learning tool for regular classes, English language learners, students with special needs or students in speech/language pathology programs.

Word Building Library: Blends & Digraphs contains 12 readers, two activity books and a teaching guide that work along with the **Reading Rods Word Building Kit**.

Each book focuses on a particular phonic skill (e.g., initial s blends), and within the book, the focus letters are color coded to match the Reading Rods. The goal of this set is to develop letter recognition, letter-sound associations and the connection between words and sounds. The 12 readers let the students read whole words with targeted blends and digraphs. With the activity books, they follow color-coded diagrams to build words that match the pictures. All activities are reinforced when placing the Reading Rods into the Reading Mentor unit to hear the words

and sounds they have created. This library provides excellent opportunities for learning sound segmenting and sound blending and for reinforcing vowel patterns. The activities teach initial blends, final blends, digraphs and voiced and unvoiced 'th'.

Sentence Building Library, for grades two and up, is the most advanced library in the program and works along with the **Reading Rods Sentence Building Kit** (156 rods, including nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, pronouns, conjunctions, articles, interjections and punctuation). It helps students see the connection between words and sentences and lets them then hear words and sentences that they have built. It features activities for nouns, pronouns, verbs, subject-verb agreement, adjectives, prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions, articles, synonyms and antonyms. Other activities are focused on possessive nouns, action verbs, irregular verbs, adjectives, prepositions, antonyms, synonyms, adverbs, articles, conjunctions and compound subject and predicates. Reading Rods are excellent also for children who may not have adequate grapho-motor skills to write ñ this will still allow them the opportunity to manipulate words to create sentences and hear them read aloud.

Sight Word Sentence Frames Series: (K&B Interactive: www.kandbinteractive.com) This is a new and outstanding series of five interactive whiteboard software programs. Each contains five units that teach and reinforce 24-32 sight words and 40-80 photo-supported vocabulary words. It has an excellent format that supports not only the learning of sight words but the structure of written language, additional vocabulary and concepts such as go-togethers, rhyming, word relationships and so many more. There are five units, each containing three activities. Activity 1 is a memory-matching game to

learn the sight words and picture vocabulary words. Activity 2 introduces the structure of the Sentence Frame. A sentence is presented and the students have to copy it by moving each word and final punctuation into a sentence frame that contains a small box for each word. Then, the activity shows the sentence frame with all the sight words in place but with two blank spaces. Two picture words can be selected and placed into the frame to complete the sentence. Sentences, such as "Give me that ___ to put on my ___," are used (e.g., ring/finger, hat/head, shoe/foot). Each program contains five different sentence frames, each developing a different language concept and relationship. The final activity shows different combinations of those sentences, and students determine if the sentence is silly (e.g., shoe on my head) or makes sense. The five programs in this series are **Parachute Drop**, **Road Racer**, **Party Pop**, **Blast Off** and **Super Splash**. For Mac and Windows, whiteboard or the computer, they are good for home and school and are a must for your beginning readers!

Other whiteboard software from K&B Interactive include **Addition Flash Cards**: Choose a flash card from 0 to 12 and drag the correct answer to the problem. **Learning Money**: Click and drag the bills and coins into the rectangle on screen. You can create your own money problems by moving any of the coins and bills and using the money signs, math signs and numbers to write the total amount of money you have selected. The program can show fronts and backs of coins and bills. **Learning Shapes**: Drag the shape names to match the shapes (English or Spanish), match shapes, complete patterns and play some memory games. **Telling Time**: This is an interactive clock; drag the hands to set the time and drag the numbers

to the time box showing hours, minutes and am/pm. All programs come with their own set of whiteboard tools.

Sound Out Chapter Books and Software (www.Attainmentcompany.com) This is an outstanding software and book combination! Designed for ages 7-12 and age appropriate for adults with learning and developmental delays, it contains six phonics-based difficulty levels (one syllable words with short vowels, with short and long vowels, with consonant blends/digraphs, with diphthongs and silent letters, compound words and two syllable words, prefixes and suffixes) with three books on each level. All 18 books, with first grade readability, have six chapters each. The Sound Out Chapter Books Software, for Windows and Mac, reads the books aloud as text is highlighted word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence, line-by-line or turned off. Any word can be clicked to hear it spoken aloud. The narration audio can be conversational tempo or placed at a slower, word-by-word speed. There are six multiple-choice questions at the end of each book. Access can be with mouse, touch window, single or double switch with scanning. Interactive questions at the end of each story help students understand what they read. An easy-to-use management system lets you select books for each student and stores student performance results. The books and software can also be purchased separately. Visit the website to see sample books from each level. See Attainment's new app, Read to Learn, reviewed below for another excellent literacy application for older students.


Interactive Learning: Daily Sentence Editing (Teacher Created Resources: www.teachercr.com) This is an excellent series of six whiteboard programs, one designed for each grade, Grades 1-6. They can be

used to teach students important skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as editing skills. Each program has 180 sentences to be edited, and the items to be edited are based on standards and grade appropriate language learning. For example, in Grade 1, students edit sentences that reinforce the use of capitals and final punc-

tuation. Editing can be done on the whiteboard, using the pen tools or dragging and dropping the editing marks or the punctuation marks. In addition, there is the option to switch modes and use an on-screen keyboard to move the cursor around the screen and the letter and other keys to make the corrections. You can also re-type the sentences



Sight Word Sentence Frames Series: (www.kandbinteractive.com)




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correctly on the screen or write the sentence with the pens. The programs are also self-correcting. Just one click of a button and you can see the correct answers. The program will also show students the location of the sentence's errors but without revealing the actual answers. Since the programs can also be used on the computer, they are excellent for teaching technology skills, such as backspacing, moving the cursor with the arrow keys, using Shift + a letter to make a capital, etc. You can also create your own sentences or paragraphs and save them. This is a great way to have student-generated sentences and peer-editing exercises or to just target particular skills you are working on, even correct linguistic forms. Each CD-ROM also comes with a workbook that contains the 30 units worth of sentences. These are very powerful learning tools, easy to use and very motivating

ñ visit the website and view the demo video.

Chooselt! Ready Mades (InclusiveTLC, www.inclusiveTLC.com) These are collections of multiple choice activities that work with the Chooselt!2 free player. They are easy to use and allow users extra practice at their own speed. All are designed for early elementary level and are age appropriate for older users with special needs. Ready Mades can be used with mouse, touch screen, whiteboard or with single- or two-switch scanning. **Chooselt! Ready Mades Literacy Series** has seven Activity Sets with 40 activities each on Listening Skills, Initial Sounds, Initial Letters, Initial Blends: Sounds, Initial Blends: Letters, Alphabet and Everyday Words; **Chooselt! Ready Mades Science Series** contains five Activity Sets with 30 activities each on Living Things, Materials, Forces and Electricity, Light,

Sound & Space; and **Chooselt! Ready Mades Numeracy Series** has seven Activity Sets with 20-40 activities each on Shape, Space & Measures, Early Number, Number 0-5, Number 5-10, number 0-100 and Time. Additional resources, such as worksheets and images to print, are available on each CD. If you want to edit these or create your own programs, you can purchase Chooselt! Maker 2.

LiteracyLab (Mayer-Johnson: www.mayer-johnson.com) Literacy Lab is a new computer literacy curriculum with three levels of learning for those just beginning to identify letters to those who are at the earliest stage of reading and writing. It stresses the concept of repetition with variety to assist learning. With over 1,000 books and activities, Literacy Lab provides 30-50 weeks of instruction at each of three instructional levels. Within each level, there are units based on science and social studies derived for kindergarten through second grade state standards, with each placing particular emphasis on a select set of consonant onsets and word families. Each level has a specific focus on letter names and sound identification, phoneme blending and sight words. Access to the program can be with touch, mouse or scanning (automatic or two-switch). Other options allow click and drag without the need to hold down the mouse button and a dwell feature (placing cursor over object and pausing ñ no click needed). You can also have auditory cuing, choose voice and speech rate and zoom to enlarge each object as it is scanned. An on-screen (Qwerty and Alphabetical Order) keyboard is available. Visit www.mayer-johnson.com to see examples of activities and to download a free seven-day trial of this exciting new program.

Leap Frog DVDs (www.leapfrog.com) Two more excellent

DVDs from LeapFrog to help young children master early literacy skills. In **Leap Frog The Amazing Alphabet Amusement Park**, Lily and Tad must learn to recognize lower and upper case letters and do some rhyming in order to power up the amusement park and return the missing letters. Three songs from the DVD are presented in a sing-along format with some clips from other LeapFrog releases. In **Leap Frog Numbers Ahoy**, children learn number recognition, counting and estimation as they watch Tad and Lily rescue their dog Scout. Other concepts introduced include the concept of 0, relative size and small/medium/large. There are also four sing-alongs and short vowel and rhyming songs.

PixWriter, Picture It, Simple Science and Read and Tell, formerly from Slater Software, will now be manufactured and distributed by SunCastle Technology, LLC, owned by Molly Schuyler, the daughter of Jean and Jim Slater, who will be retiring. Thanks, Molly, for continuing these very valuable literacy software programs and good luck to Jean and Jim. Contact www.suncastletech.com.

WHAT'S NEW FOR SPECIAL NEEDS?

Judy Lynn Turn Taking: (www.JudyLynn.com) Designed to teach the concept of waiting for a turn, this new program can be used with a single student or with two students working together. When it's a student's turn, their prompt appears on screen and they can then press their switch, press a key on the keyboard, touch the touch screen or click the mouse to reveal a section of a picture. When the picture is completed, a related reward video clip with animation and sound is shown. In the two-player, turn-taking mode, the prompt alternates between the left and right side of

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the screen. The prompts can be customized to be a picture of the student, along with their name spoken aloud. The program contains 60 pictures and video clips and you can add your own pictures and video clips, as well. The use of the video clips is an extremely motivating feature and keeps the users focused. Other options include the ability to set the number of sections for the picture, the order of pieces appearing, custom layout of turn audio and visual feedback, the delay before the prompt and data collection. Another excellent program from Judy Lynn! Try it on the SmartBoard too.

Marvel & His Friends (Mazzarella Media: (www.mazz.com/education/) This series of three DVDs is designed for children with special needs. It uses video modeling techniques combined with animation and live-action real scenarios. **Handling Transitions and Change** shows children how to function with other children to accomplish healthy social interactions. It emphasizes "Look, Listen and Remain Calm." It deals with situations such as changing clothes, choosing a different snack, adjusting to schedule changes, dealing with surprises, etc. **Sharing and Taking Turns** contains chapters on sharing, taking turns, saying "not now," asking for a turn and waiting for your turn. **Staying Clean and Healthy** takes children step by step through taking a shower, washing hair, brushing teeth and clipping nails. In addition, it explains about germs, the importance of clean clothes, as well as when and how to wash hands properly. If you visit www.mazz.com, you can download a Teacher's Guide in PDF for each DVD and see a short video from each of the DVDs.

MeMoves and LifeMoves (www.thinkingmoves.com) The MeMoves program is designed to help individuals focus on calming, rhythmic body movements they imitate with their

own bodies. It uses a combination of music, images and movements. The DVD, with its inter-generational cast, can be used as a transition tool. Each sequence is a combination of music, movement and images, utilizing simple, geometric shapes. Users select one of the 13 sequences on the DVD and imitate the actions they see on the screen. LifeMoves, similar in design, was developed for adults and can be done in a standing or seated position and used individually or in a group. The LifeMoves Pattern Book has ways to practice some of the shapes with fingers. It encourages users who are having trouble with bilateral movements to move one hand at a time before combining and coordinating both hands together. There is also a MeMoves app, which makes the activities more portable. If you go to the website, you will see examples of the movements and cards.

Mountain Mover (BlueSky Designs: www.mountainmover.com) This is a new mounting system that locks securely but also allows the user to easily and independently move devices (speech devices, laptops, reading stands, cameras, etc.) to different positions. I haven't seen it but have heard some good things about it. It locks securely but moves easily, adjusts tilt angle without tools and adjusts as an individual grows or their needs change. Visit the website to see videos and learn more.

PRESCHOOL SOFTWARE, GAMES AND DVDS

Some fun preschool software from Nova Development (www.novadevelopment.com): **Sesame Street Let's Go to Preschool** has five activities that are guided by Sesame Street characters. There are activities for comprehension, listening skills, letter and sounds, word families, counting and more. **Sesame Street Elmo's World** has activi-



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ties for music, drawing, email, videos and games. **Diego's Ultimate Rescue League** has several missions to help animals in need, and, along the way, Diego helps users with counting shapes, colors, matching, vocabulary, science concepts and simple computer skills. **Dora's Big Birthday Adventure** and **Dora Saves the Crystal Kingdom** both have games to match letters, words and sounds, rhyme, gather crystals, practice language skills, letters, word families and learn some simple Spanish words.

Twisterz Clifford Category Matcher (SmartTangoes.com) This categorization game consists of a long tube with six rings that turn and lock together. The green ring shows different categories (park, food, beach, etc). The blue rings have pictures of objects that belong in these categories. Twist the blue rings, search for the things

that belong in the selected category and line up objects that belong together. You can also have children search for other groups, e.g., round things, pairs of things, etc. **Twisterz Word Builder** is designed like the Category Matcher, it contains six rings with letters. Children can use consonants and vowels to build words between two and six letters long.

SmartMax (www.smartTangoes.com) Named 2010 Toy of the Year, SmartMax is a magnetic discovery toy that lets even very young children manipulate the extra-large pieces and attach them via the magnets, which are giant-sized, non-swallowable 1.8-inch diameter metal balls. The magnets have the right strength to make it easy to build and to take apart the pieces after construction. For older children, there are colorfully-illustrated guides that show the steps in building towers and bridges

and much more. Different sets are available with different number of pieces: **SmartMax Set Basic 42** has 12 long bars, 18 medium bars and 12 metal balls (1.8-inch diameter). **SmartMax Blue Barrel** has 42 pieces that fit into a blue barrel for storage. These include eight balls, six extra-long bars, 12 short bars, four transparent containers, four cockpits, clip-on wheel units and tires to build cars and buildings. **SmartMax Basic Stunt** has 18 medium bars, four long bars, 10 metal balls, two cockpits, four pairs of wheels, two containers, two ramps and four panels. This toy will grow as the child does.

Tangoes Jr. (www.smartTangoes.com) Based on Tangrams, this preschool toy includes seven large magnetic puzzle pieces and 12 double-sided puzzle cards, with two levels of play. The object is to form the image on the card using all seven puzzle pieces. The first level allows the user to match the geometric shapes; Level 2 has the same image but just shows the silhouette, offering a greater challenge for older children. All pieces and puzzles store in a plastic carrying case.

Some newest pre-school DVDs include:

My First Storybook Collection Vol. 3 Chicken Little Read-Along DVDs (www.newkideo.com): This collection contains 13 award-winning stories in a three-DVD Collection for toddlers and preschoolers. One DVD includes stories that support humor, problem solving and friendship. The second DVD includes stories about curiosity, safety and growth. The third DVD contains stories with concepts of confidence, consideration and feelings. **Scholastic Storybook Treasures: Mo Willems' Pigeon and Pals Read Along DVDs** feature six stories on two DVDs that support cooperation, early reading and problem solving.

Barney All About Opposites (www.lionsgateshop.

com) For Barney fans, this DVD will help language learning of concepts such as up/down, in/out, high/low, big/little, stop/go and more.

Babar The Complete First Season (www.entertainmentgroup.com) Based on the classic books by Laurent de Brunhoff, this two-DVD collection has 13 episodes of Babar, a young elephant who becomes king of the jungle. Along the way, Babar and his friends learn many life lessons from their adventures.

The Magic School Bus: The Complete Series (Scholastic and New Video www.newvideo.com) The 52 educational and fun episodes of the classic Magic School Bus with Ms. Frizzle is on eight DVDs, with a Kids' Guide with teasers, trivia and experiments and a Parents' Guide with lessons and learning options. For children 4-10 and in English and Spanish, this is an excellent way to get children excited about science, with episodes related to the human body, stars, coral reefs, tidal zones, weather, flying and much more.

IPAD ACCESSORIES AND IPAD APPS

Nero Leather Slimline Smart Case (www.Boxwave.com) This custom-fitted iPad case features a shell case that protects the back and a fold-away cover on the front that puts your iPad into sleep mode when closed and wakes it up when the cover is opened. The front cover also converts into a viewing stand with two different viewing positions. This is a great cover and a great value.

Encompass Urban Bag (www.boxwave.com) This is a heavy-duty carrying case, with padded protection all around and exterior and interior pockets. The bag can be carried by the integrated handles or by the padded shoulder strap.

Mini Bullet Capacitive Stylus (Boxwave.com) This new stylus is shorter in length and

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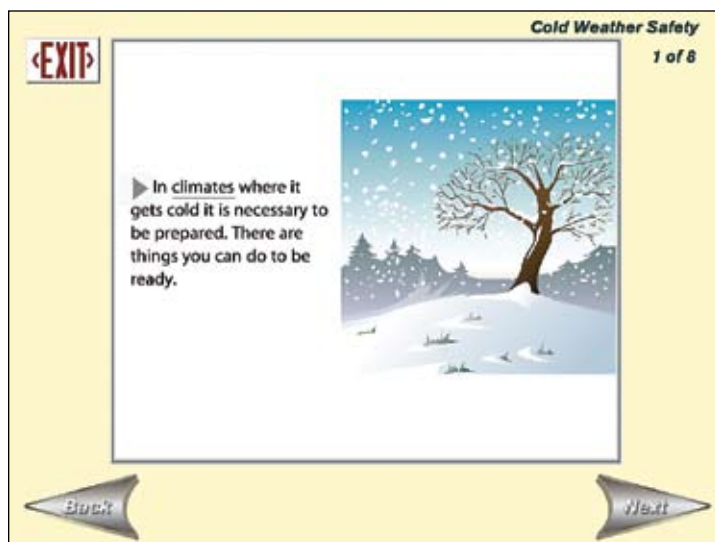
Attainment's Read to Learn (www.attainmentcompany.com) A great iPad app for language, literacy and life skills, containing three excellent Attainment computer software programs: Life Skill Readers, Safety Skills Reader and Social Skills Reader. Designed for adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities and autism, this app contains 85 illustrated and interactive stories, each with graded comprehension exercises. All text is narrated and highlighted as it is spoken, and readers can touch any word to hear it spoken. Highlighting can be by word, sentence or line. Life Skill Readers include 40 social stories about activities, such as shopping, getting a haircut, going to the doctor, etc. Safety Skills Reader has 26 stories that explore home, community, personal and recreational safety issues. Focus on Feeling has 19 stories to help readers recognize how people feel during common life experiences. The app, with one- or two-switch access, also stores and prints the results of the comprehension tests.

Super Duper Apps: (www.superduperinc.com) Two new apps from Super Duper, based on their fun deck series. **What Does Not Belong** has 54 illustrated picture cards that help students practice categorizing, classifying and organizing. Cards have three or four items and users can read or listen to the prompt that names all the pictures and asks "What doesn't belong?" **Listening for Absurdities** also has 54 illustrated picture cards. Prompts include statements that are spoken aloud, such as "My umbrella helps me stay wet when it rains." As in all Super Duper apps, you can use all pictures or just select the ones you want to use.

Smarty Ears Apps (www.smartyearsapps.com) Some

excellent new speech and language apps from SmartyEars: **Adjective Remix:** This app targets concepts related to adjectives by presenting two pictures and asking questions, such as "Which basket has a few apples?" and "Which hand is clean?" Adjectives included are related to touch and taste, size, appearance, shape, time, feelings, colors and quantity. Data is collected for individual users. **Language Adventures:** This is a game-board type game that presents questions about synonyms, antonyms and multiple-meaning words. There are three difficulty levels, three game boards (playground, cafeteria and classroom) and can be used by multiple players with different language goals. **Articulation Scenes:** This app comes with 72 picture scenes and over 1,200 practice words. Each scene contains four activities (find the hidden item, tap and say, listening to a story using the target words and create/record stories to practice sound), and all 22 consonants in the English language (one scene per sound per position). There are data tracking capabilities and homework sheets for further practice.

Go Together: This app, to help categorization, association and naming skills, has a receptive activity in which students identify items that go together and an expressive activity in which students verbally generate associated items and association rationales. **The Profile of Phonological Awareness** is designed to evaluate and describe phonological awareness skills in children. It assesses rhyming, blending syllables and sounds, isolating first, last and middle sounds in words, segmenting words, syllables and sounds, deleting syllables and sounds, and substituting first and last sounds in words. **Common Core Early Language Screener:** Designed for Pre-K and kindergarten students, the



Attainment's Read to Learn (www.attainmentcompany.com)



Language Adventures (www.smartyearsapps.com)

test contains personal questions, action words, labeling pictures, color identification, shape identification, counting, number identification, alphabet, alphabet labeling, prepositions, repeating and following directions. A report is generated and you can share by email or print, as text file or PDF. Smarty Ears also has a large number of apps that are in Spanish and Portuguese.

Virtual Speech Center (www.virtualspeechcenter.com) Some excellent apps for speech and language pathologists that are also useful in the classroom. **Multiple Meanings**

Library, for ages 5-15, contains 122 multiple-meaning words with five different types of activities: Auditory Bombardment, Picture Identification, Definition, Fill-in-the-blank and Sentence Creation, with an audio recording feature. You can use it with multiple students, setting individual settings, and it has record keeping options. **Auditory Workout:** For students 4-10 years, with auditory processing and receptive language disorders, this app lets children follow increasingly longer and more complex directions with 13 levels of difficulty, (from following one-step directions

with object to following conditional directions with size, color, object, action, preposition and object), in five categories (spatial, temporal, quantity, quality and social/emotional). You can also enable or disable background noise feature, rewards and feedback sounds. Works with multiple students and has data tracking. **Magical Concepts:** This app includes over 2,000 photos accompanied by audio instructions of 60 concepts (e.g. above/below, big/small, half/whole). A picture appears with three choices and the directions are spoken (e.g., 'show me the hands that are clean'). **Expedition with Plurals:** Designed for PK-3rd grade students, this app helps practice regular and irregular plurals. It includes an audio recording feature and a memory game that can be customized. There are five activity types (auditory bombardment, picture identification, fill-in, make up sentences and a bonus memory game). Each displayed picture shows one object and multiples of the object. **Verbs News:** This app lets students practice verbs in 109 regular and 81 irregular verbs through three different activity types in auditory bombardment, fill-ins and making sentences, with a recording feature.

Hamaguchi Apps (www.hamaguchiapps.com): Some more excellent language apps from this company. **First Words International** helps children learn the names of basic objects in their native language(s). It also gives professionals a way to interact with children on their caseload who may be more proficient in a language that is not familiar to the professional. There are three levels: Learn the Word, Find the Word and Say the Word. You can select the language used (American English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French, Hindi, Russian and Japanese), the style of pictures (photos, color drawings

or both), reward animations/games and targeted words. A total of 50 words are included. Each word is shown in 10 or more ways so that meaning can more readily be generalized. There are two versions: the Home version is for one child user and the Pro version can save data for up to 30 children and track and email results. **Talk About It: Objects** was designed to facilitate narrative language, but can also be used to practice articulation and syntax/morphological skills in children ages 6-12. There are 50 objects to choose from. When the picture appears, there is a Guess Box with four sentences that pertain to the object. Touch anywhere on the sentence to hear it read. The child selects the one sentence that gives the most specific and important information about the picture and this sentence is moved behind the 'Talk About It' curtain. You can select three, five or seven Guess Boxes, depending on how many pieces of information you want them to recall. Child is then encouraged to tell everything they can about the object. Responses can be practiced or they can use hint buttons that give them cues and then they can record their answers. Results can be saved or emailed. It is excellent for working memory and word retrieval, as well as understanding relevance and organization/sequencing. Pro and Home Versions available. **You're The Storyteller: The Surprise** encourages narrative language skills, can be used to strengthen social-cognitive/pragmatic inference development and perspective-taking. It encourages children to notice facial expressions relative to the story context and to also work on syntax/morphology, articulation and fluency. A delightful story, with no narration, is presented with eight separate video chapters. After each video clip (chapter), the

child can narrate, record or write the story. If help is needed, there are questions about the scene. Challenge Words are also available in they are words that can be incorporated into the story. Individual chapter narrations or the entire story narration can be played back. Great app for both speaking and writing skills in hope it the first in a series of many.

PocketSLP (www.pocketSLP.com) **Category Carousel** is a fun way to practice categories and vocabulary. Choose between two and six categories (transportation, animals, clothing, food, occupations, household, summer, winter, instruments) and sort 12 different objects that belong in the categories. Tap the category to further subdivide - for example, the Food category can be sub-divided into breakfast, desserts, drinks, fruit, meat and vegetables. **Opposite Day** lets children practice and learn 150 opposites grouped by nouns, verbs, prepositions and adjectives in both English or Spanish. **Speech Pairs** is a variation of Minimal Pairs, designed specifically for parents and home practice. The tips section will help them select the correct speech error. There is a Listen and a Say mode in parents sit with their child and score their responses. **Language Forest** comes with over 50 decks of flash cards within categories, such as food groups, transportation, emotions, functions, synonyms, wh questions, irregular past tense, etc. There are also text-only decks for adjectives, definitions, irregular past tense, opposites and much more. You can create links to other cards and create new decks. You can study multiple decks at a time, track responses, add comments about each session, email/print results and send and receive decks to and from other Language Tree users.

Binary Labs (www.binary-labs.com) From the maker of

Dexteria (previously reviewed in DISKoveries) come two new apps. **P.O.V. Spatial Reasoning Skills Development** helps develop spatial reasoning skills, such as knowing left from right, understanding shape and space, map reading, visual reasoning, etc. P.O.V. is a set of three activities: Intro & Explore (learn about the game mechanics and four different points of view); Vantage Point (see a top view and side view of objects and choose the matching side view) and Make a Scene (move the top view objects to match the side view). Players must think their way through the activities, which get increasingly difficult. **Letter Reflex** in Overcoming Letter Reversals is designed to help overcome common letter reversals. The first activity, Tilt It, uses kinesthetic learning to teach left from right. The second activity, Flip It, allows users to practice what they have learned, using arcade game action.

Tactus Therapy (www.tactus-therapy.com) **Reading Therapy** is designed for people with impaired reading comprehension due to stroke, brain injury or language disorder. There are four activities. In Phrase Matching and Sentence Matching, a picture appears with four phrases or four sentences. Touch the phrase or sentence that best matches the picture. In Phrase Completion and Sentence Completion, an incomplete phrase or sentence appears along with four words. Touch the word that best completes the phrase or sentence. There are 14 different categories of sentences with 10 to 107 items in each category. Individual categories, groups of categories or all categories can be selected. **Spaced Retrieval Therapy** is designed to track intervals and record results while conducting spaced retrieval training, which is a technique to help people remember facts, procedures and other information. You pick a target for a

person to remember and enter the question, select the type of interval (standard or graduated) and the start and end interval. The app has additional information on selecting these options, as well as references about the procedure of spaced retrieval training.

Oceanhouse Media (Oceanhousemedia.com) **Ice is Nice: All About the North and South Poles** lets young readers explore the animals and geography of the North and South Poles. **A Whale of A Tale!: All About Porpoises, Dolphins and Whales** is all about the mammals of the deep blue sea and includes a matching quiz at the end. Both of these apps are part of The Cat in the Hat's Learning Library, which is a nonfiction series that introduces young children, ages 5-10, to basic science concepts. Individual words highlight and are read aloud when tapped. Tap bold words to learn their definition, interact with the animated objects on each page, tap objects to see and hear their names. There is professional audio narration and custom background audio for each scene. **Ladybug at Orchard Avenue** is part of the Smithsonian's Backyard series that features entertaining stories that answer many questions about habits and habitats of animals in their own backyards. These books are all reviewed by the Smithsonian Institute for accuracy. Also part of that collection is **Alligator at Saw Grass Road**, the story of the dangerous life of an alligator and her young. **Otter on His Own** is part of the Smithsonian Oceanic Collection and is a story about how a sea otter's mother teaches him to dive, hunt and survive on his own. Exciting adventure as they go into the open sea. Recommended for ages 3-8, it features all the interactivity, modes and narration that Oceanhouse

books are known for: Read to Me, Read It Myself and Auto Play.

Night & Day: (www.night-andday.com) New apps from the makers of the excellent Peekaboo series: **Caillou Stickers** is fun for children and a good way to learn language in an open creative setting. There are seven different backgrounds and 138 stickers (Caillou's pets, friends, food, toys and more) to drag and drop on the background, then scale and rotate. In **Peekaboo Fridge**, children watch the picture of the refrigerator and when it starts to shake, they can touch to open and find a new fruit, vegetable or other healthy treats. Great to help language development, as well as concepts of healthy foods. **Peekaboo Friends** is a new free app and offers lite versions of all Peekaboo apps. You can now try before you buy. Upcoming Peekaboos this year will be Peekaboo Trick or Treat, Richard Scarry's Peekaboo People, Peekaboo Presents for Christmas and Peekaboo Band.

Socially Speaking App (www.SociallySpeakingLLC.info) This app was designed as an assessment protocol containing two checklists about social skills development and a lesson plan template to help young children with autism and special needs. You can document lesson materials/techniques, customize behavior plans and IEP goals, upload photos and export your entire evaluation as a PDF that can be emailed immediately to file.

Tell A Story With Tommy: Consequences (http://listen-talkdraw.com/) This app takes typical childhood events, such as playing with a friend, and through the context of a story, gives a child the opportunity to make choices. The story continues, based on the choices made and ends with the consequence of those choices. There are seven stories in the category of Consequences, including Playing, Dinner, Play Outside,

Store Trip, See My Friend, In Class and Lunchroom. Each gives two choices related to behavior in these different situations. Which-ever choice is made directs the story down a path that explains the consequence of the choice. The option of saying 'I'm sorry' is built into the app. There is also a 14-item quiz that relates to the stories and can be used to measure improvement and to use as a point of discussion regarding making good choices. Excellent app to help children understand the consequences of their behavior.

AbleLink Technologies (www.ablelinktech.com) This company has an excellent group of apps that help older learners with everyday skills and transition skills, using visual modeling techniques. Many are free and many have been previously reviewed in DISKoveries. **Visual Impact Pro** lets users create multimedia task instruc-

tional sequences, social stories and visual modeling sequences for any activity. It provides easy step-by-step instructions to help you create your own custom step-by-step task instructions for any activity by adding pictures from your iPad photo library or taking new photos as you build the task steps. You record your own verbal instructions for each step. After instructional task sets are created, they are available on the app's home screen for immediate use. (Creating custom video-based task instructions is not currently supported but will be in a future update to the app.) You are also able to purchase premium content tasks for the AbleLink Learning Library of over 125 new tasks. There is a free version of **Visual Impact** that will let you download tasks from the Learning Library and play them. However, you will be unable to create your own tasks or edit the ones that are down-

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Visual Impact Pro (www.ablelinktech.com)

loaded. That can only be done with the Pro version. **Everyday Cooking: Eating Safely** is one of AbleLink's cooking-related training apps and is part of the Everyday Cooking series of step-by-step video instructions for preparing basic meals, designed specifically for individuals who can benefit from simple-to-follow picture and audio instructions for independent living. It contains eight topics – Preparing a Meal, Mealtime, Kitchen & Dining Room Safety, Putting Food Away & Doing Dishes, Doing Dishes by Hand, Dishwasher Safety, Garbage Disposal Safety and Recycling & Garbage. Each sequence has pictures and audio narration that presents a step-by-step sequence that can be followed to complete the task. Rationale for steps is also included. **Everyday Cooking: Fried Egg Breakfast** is another. It presents sequences for Fried Egg, Bacon, Orange Juice, Instant Coffee, Hot Tea and Washing Dishes.

Pixel & Parker (Spinlight Studio: www.spinlight.com) This is the first in a series of new Spinlight adventures apps that use an interactive spinner to advance the story and alter the path. There are more than 30 activities embedded into the story about Parker and his lost cat. With each

spin, there's a different activity that moves the action forward. For example, after the introduction, there is a spinner to decide where Parker looks next for Pixel. (There are six numbers on the spinner.) If he lands at the fountain, he puts coins in; if he finds garbage pails, he can move the covers to look inside. He can open a present, eat some apples, touch some spiders to make them disappear, smooth over footprints, clear the path, open an umbrella, and finally arrive home and find Pixel. Fun and interactive story that gives children choices and control. Each time the story is read, the actions and locations can be different.

TenseBuilder (www.mobile-educationstore.com) This app, from the developer of the excellent Builder series (StoryBuilder, ConversationBuilder, LanguageBuilder, SentenceBuilder and Rainbow Sentences) is designed to help students learn how to identify and use correct tense forms, especially the past tense of irregular verbs. There are 36 high quality animated videos that demonstrate past, present and future tense. With two levels, users will learn how to sequence events and how to differentiate between events that will happen, those that are

happening now and those that have already happened. They can also identify correct written verb forms and drag them to complete sentences. A recording feature allows students to record sentences in their own voice. These recordings can be saved and emailed. Data collection is also available and can be emailed also. This is a great way to teach users of all ages about verb tenses!

BidBox (www.bidbox.com) These programs help improve your reaction time and eye-hand coordination. **Brain Blast Trainer** displays a number in the center of the screen and the user presses the matching number. **Sign Language Alphabet Trainer** displays a sign for a letter of the alphabet and user matches as fast as possible. In **Brain Blast Turbo Tap**, just press the circles as they appear – try to increase your speed and catch them before they disappear.

Coming Soon: Switch Accessible Puzzles (Judy Lynn: www.judylynn.com) This first app from Judy Lynn will have 12 form-board type puzzles, each with a minimum of 20 discrete puzzle pieces. Users can select between two and five pieces to appear on the board at a time. The puzzles will be accessible by switch and with three touch options. Some of the puzzle categories are animals, colors, food, letters, numbers, shapes, toys and matching pictures to words and upper to lower case letters.

Free Apps Worth Checking Out: Kahn Academy, TED, Moma, My First App: Series3, PuzzleMe, Sort It Out2; Understanding Faces, Paint with Time, The Entire World of AR, Toddler Tunes, Alligator Apps: My Little Suitcase, Word Wizard, Action Words, Toddler; SimpleSort, Make a Scene: Farmyard, Lexico Sounds, Magic Voice, Peekaboo Friends, Visual Impact.

MULTIMEDIA AND GRAPHICS

Adobe Products have always been the industry standard in multimedia and visual presentations. Their products can be used to integrate technology (Web, video, print, design, etc.) into curriculum at all levels of education. Students can create projects using digital imaging products; teachers can integrate digital photography and video into classroom activities and administrators can create and publish online learning content and collaborate through online meetings. Adobe also helps users create apps!!

Creative Suite CS 6 Master Collection, new for both Windows and Macintosh, delivers unmatched performance with 64-bit native support and GPU acceleration. There are sets of new creative tools that provide innovative ways to design, create and inspire. This amazing collection of software includes all new CS6 versions of the following software.

Photoshop CS 6 Extended is used to edit, manipulate, organize, show and analyze digital images with amazing new features, such as the new Content-Aware Patch, Blur Gallery, all-new crop tools, Background Save, Auto-Recovery and increased support for more camera models.

You can create and edit vector graphics with **Illustrator CS6** and its new enhanced interface. It has more responsive performance, new tracing engine and color panel enhancements.

InDesign CS6 is a versatile desktop publishing application that gives you pixel-perfect control over design and typography with new features, such as Liquid Layout, Linked Content, Content Collector tools, PDF forms within InDesign, split window and grayscale preview.

Acrobat X Pro helps you boost the impact of your PDF

files with video, audio and interactive content. It can increase your productivity by automating routine tasks and reduce costly errors at press time with enhanced preflight and auto-correction features.

Flash Professional CS6 is a powerful authoring environment for creating animation and multimedia content. It lets you design immersive interactive experiences that present consistently across desktops and multiple devices, including tablets, smartphones and televisions, with its new features, such as new support for HTML5, wide platform and device support, prepackaged Adobe AIR application creation, Adobe AIR mobile simulation and Stage 3-D targeting.

Flash Builder 4.6 Premium is an Eclipse-based development tool for building mobile, Web and desktop applications using ActionScript and the open source Flex framework. You can create native applications for iOS, Android and BlackBerry Tablet OS, debug and test easily and code faster.

Adobe Dreamweaver CS6 is an intuitive visual interface for making and editing HTML websites and mobile apps with Fluid Grid Layout, improved FTP performance, updated Live View and Multiscreen Preview panel. With it, you can build native mobile apps for iOS and Android.

Fireworks helps you create beautiful designs for websites and mobile apps in a snap, without coding, with improved CSS support, new jQuery Mobile theme skinning support, quicker access to color and updated symbols and templates.

Adobe Premiere Pro CS6 allows you to work natively and in real time with the latest mobile, DSLR, HD and RAW formats with all-new creative tools and support for gestural control on the Mac.

After Effects CS6 lets you deliver cinematic visual effects and motion graphics faster than ever before with new Global Performance Cache, built-in text and shape extrusion, new mask feathering options and the fast, easy-to-use 3-D Camera Tracker.

Adobe Audition CS6 has high-performance tools for audio editing, mixing, restoration and effects and has new features, such as real-time clip stretching, automatic speech alignment and control surface support.

Adobe SpeedGrade CS6 is a new color grading software component of CS.

Adobe Prelude CS6 helps you ingest, log, and find assets faster.

Adobe Encore CS6 is 64-bit software that enables users to create DVDs, Blu-ray discs and Web DVDs from a single interface, send Adobe Premiere Pro projects directly to Encore without rendering and then use flowcharts to define and view their navigation.

Adobe Bridge CS6 digital asset management software is a powerful photo and design organizer that provides centralized access to all your creative assets.

Adobe Media Encoder CS6 software automates the process of creating multiple encoded versions of source files, Adobe Premiere Pro sequences and Adobe After Effects compositions).

If you are a student or educator, be sure to check out Adobe's Education Pricing and save on all products.

INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS

New and exciting football and soccer games to enhance social interaction, turn taking and peer relations while providing fun too. Great also for those who, because of disabilities, might not be able to play the real games.

Madden NFL 13 for Xbox (www.ea.com) The new Madden NFL 13 is amazing ñ there have been improvements in lighting, animations, equipment, uniforms, new broadcast booths and more. New features include Total Control Passing and new throwing animations. The Infinity Engine gives a greater variety of player interactions, a new balance system (body types of players will determine what happens when different parts of the body are hit and will lead to different reactions and outcomes), new commentary, authentic sound effects and much more. Kinect users will be able to use voice commands to make adjustments on both offense and defense. Connected Careers is a brand new mode that lets you play as a coach and control your entire team or as any player in the NFL. **FIFA Soccer 13** is another new and

upgraded game from EA Sports. In Match Day mode, real-world news will be collated, allowing actual injuries, suspensions, etc. to be integrated into the game through commentary. There will also be better first-touch control and an improved dribbling experience. FIFA 13 has 15,000 players from 500 officially licensed clubs drawn from 30 leagues from around the world. A very realistic soccer experience!!

Joan Tanenhaus, M.A., CCC, Speech-Language Pathologist/ Assistive Technology Specialist, is Founder and Executive Director of Technology for Language and Learning, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the use of computers and technology with children and adults with Special Needs. (e-mail: ForTLL@aol.com) ■

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