June 2012

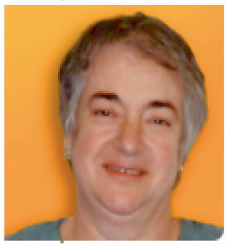
Central Washington University

Volume XX, Issue 1

The SETC Focus Newsletter

Special points of interest:

- AIM–Mini Conference break-out sessions from a variety of guest speakers
- iPad ....How to choose the right apps
- What's new?



Gayl Bowser, AIM presenter

Integrating Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) in the Classroom and District

The Special Education Technology Center has invited Gayl Bowser to present at our annual mini-conference this fall.

Gayl worked for 20 years as the Coordinator of the Oregon Technology Access Program (OTAP). She is a leader in the field of Assistive Technology Integration and Alternate Instructional Materials (AIM). She currently works privately as a consultant and presenter across the country and internationally.

On day one of this mini-conference, we'll start with an overview and then work with key concepts for integrating AIM into classrooms. Implementation planning, inclusion strategies, and evaluation of the effectiveness of AIM are essential if it is to become an integral part of student learning.

District-wide involvement is also essential for developing of quality AIM services. Many activities in the selection, acquisition, and use of AIM can only be addressed by changes initiated at a building or district level. Administrators and program specialists have a significant role to play in establishing systems, ensuring availability of materials in specialized formats, and in overcoming barriers to the provision of AIM. Success will come when AIM concepts and ideas are integrated into systems of curriculum, instruction, technology acquisition, and supports for students.

What should teachers and school districts do to ensure that individuals who require AIM have full access to classroom activities and learning opportunities? We'll share ideas and stories and together, explore a practical plan for improving school-wide conditions for successful AIM-based learning.

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Review apps we've recommended at the SETC software database.
www.specialedtechcenter.org/services/software-library/software-library

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The Burning Question: Which App?

Even though experts say that tablets and iPads are still in their infancy stage, there are more than 100,000 software applications in the Apple.com Apps Store. That is one giant baby! Because of its "infancy" we don't have research proving the effectiveness of teaching a skill using any particular application. We don't have evidence on the effectiveness with children in special education, although no one can deny the appeal of an iPad or tablet to a child. With so many apps to choose from and a limited budget, your school district has to be selective. The difficult question is "Which app should you buy?" Since none of the apps have long term research, how can you be selective? If it is free, should you get it and 'check it out'? When not everyone in your discipline can agree on which apps are best, how do you prioritize?"

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Which App? (Continued)

How about a rubric! A well designed rubric can help in determining which apps will be most effective for a particular age group and to address specific skill development needs. This article will highlight a rubric designed to guide you through effective app selection, as well as provide additional web resources for districts to design their own process for app selection.

Harry Walker, a principal at Sandy Plains Elementary School in Maryland, has developed a rubric through his studies at John Hopkins University called the Evaluation Rubric for iPod/iPad Applications. His goal was to determine the quality and effectiveness of an app in terms of student achievement.

His criteria areas include:

- Curriculum Connection: Are the reinforced skills strongly connected to the targeted skill?
- Authenticity: Are the targeted skills practiced in an authentic format?
- Feedback: Is feedback specific and does it result in improved student performance?
- Differentiation: Is there flexibility to alter settings to meet student's needs?
- User Friendliness: Is the app highly intuitive so that students can launch with little support?
- Student Motivation: Are students motivated to participate in the app?

Shannon Collins and Angie Sterling, speech language pathologists (SLPs) and Clinical Associate Professors at the University of Wisconsin, have adapted the rubric and have added another criteria area: evidence-based practice. Within special education, it is critical that we are following a model of evidenced-based practice in all of our activities, including those on the iPad. For example, in the area of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), a team of SLPs use evidence-based practices to move the child along the developmental continuum for language learning. When looking at AAC apps for students, the application needs to reflect the developmental sequence and a wide range of communication skills. Rather than merely selecting a choice-making app, which is only one component of language, the app may also need to include a wider range of communication opportunities, such as labeling, requesting, and initiating communication. That is not to say that there isn't a place for a "choice making" application. Some evidence-based practices demonstrate that providing children with choices is an emergent language concept and an effective way to manage behavior. The key in choosing the best AAC app is to recognize the targeted skills, and then consider, the research behind how that skill is taught, practiced, and acquired.

SETC offers webinars on a variety of applications in the area of special education. Harry Walker has given SETC approval to demonstrate the use of his rubric during our webinar courses this fall. We will kick off the iPad series with a webinar that will focus specifically on how to use this rubric. Throughout our iPad webinar series we will be applying the rubric to critically evaluate each application.

See www.specialedtechcenter.org/services/upcoming-classes for a list of upcoming webinars and sign up today! Space is limited.

Try new apps with your students using an iPad from the SETC Lending Library

This frame of reference can be applied to making decisions on apps for academics, as well as fine-motor and functional skills acquisition. With a solid grasp of the developmental progression of a skill and an understanding of effective learning strategies, we can critically view apps and make appropriate decisions on which apps to purchase.

Using iPads in the educational setting can be polarizing within a discipline if the focus does not remain on academic standards for the general population and IEP objectives for the special education population. There is no evidence that if your team uses a rubric you will always make the right decision, however; the rubric provides a great starting point and a process for app selection for disciplines and districts. Remember, the rubric is necessary because there are so many options available, and that's a good thing.

Brenda Del Monte, MA CCC-SLP

AIM mini conference break-out sessions

On day two of this workshop, we'll provide break-out sessions covering a variety of software and services that can be implemented to advance the goals of AIM.

Using Bookshare to Provide Print Alternatives
Presenter: Kristina Cohen

Literacy Support Solutions From Freedom Scientific
Presenter: Steve Boyle

Literacy Support Solutions From Don Johnson
Presenter: Jason Burke

Literacy Support Solutions From Kurzweil
Presenter: Will Skeels

Literacy Support Solutions From TextHelp
Presenter: Mo Doherty

To register for the AIM event visit our web page at:
www.specialedtechcenter.org/services/upcoming-conferences

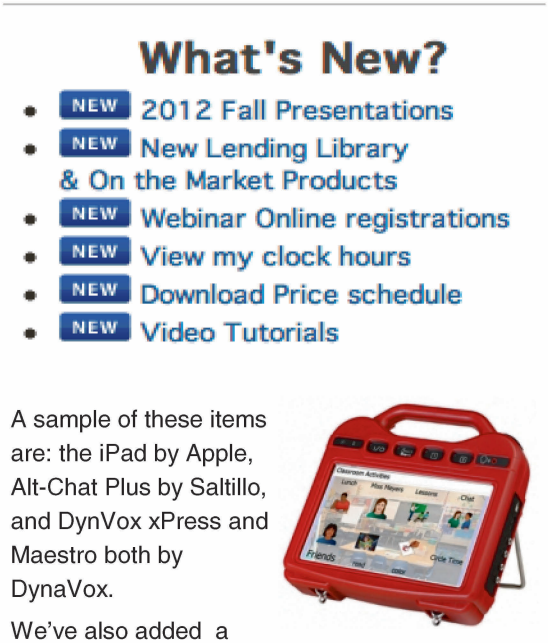
The SETC Web page provides answers

A "**What's New?**" section has been added to our home page. This section gives quick links to frequently used pages that we think will be helpful.

From the home page a viewer can go directly to the Webinar Registration Page. The self-registration page is now fully functional. Participants can make course choices and get a class confirmation all in one step.

But wait, there's more! Once a class participant has logged into the site they can view completed training hours from previous classes. Most class hours are eligible for clock hour credit.

There is also a link to the new equipment that we've made available in the Lending Library this year.



A sample of these items are: the iPad by Apple, Alt-Chat Plus by Saltillo, and DynVox xPress and Maestro both by DynaVox.

We've also added a large number of video tutorials to our web page. If you would like to learn about a new device or a favorite software program in small steps, these may be just the thing.

Each video is between 3-15 minutes in length and can be viewed over and over. Some people add tutorials to their browser bookmark list.

Did we help you with the your software question? You can be the judge. Review the videos and give each one a star rating.

Have you been thinking a consultation is in order for one of your students? Or a training at your school site? You can download the SETC Assistive Technology Support Services price schedule and share it with your administrator as you explore options for staff development and technical support.

So check-out our website and see what's new.

http://www.specialedtechcenter.org/

The SETC Focus Newsletter

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Upcoming trainings

AIM Conference may be the training you have been seeking

Join us for two exciting days exploring AIM concepts and practices with nationally recognized leader in the field, Gayl Bowser. Gayl is on Day One and on Day Two many other presenters will be covering related software and services. See details inside or visit our website, **www.specialedtechcenter.org**.

SETC Staff will be presenting at the Combined Summer Institute

CSI will be held in Wenatchee this year from July 30 through August 2.

To get more information visit **www.ncesd.org/csi**.

Pragmatic Organization Dynamic Display (PODD) Training

Linda Burkhart will present a PODD training in Yakima from August 21-23.

To get more information visit **www.esd105.wednet.edu/**.

SETC is a statewide grant funded by OSPI, Special Education Unit, and administered by Central Washington University.

CWU is an AA/EEO/Title IX Institution. For accommodation: CDS@cwu.edu.

CWU Central Washington University