Region AT Representatives

Sponsored by MN Regions 5 & 7

Benton-Stearns—Kelly Peterson

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Elk River—Jodie Forrey

Freshwater—Eric Weber

Little Falls—Jeannie McKee

MAWSECO—Shawna Moe

Mid-State—Ashley Thompson

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Regional Low Incidence Facilitator—Mary Ruprecht

Rum River—Jenny Groess

St Cloud—Barbara Commers/Pamela Moening

SCRED—Connie Sim

Sherburne-Northern Wright—Joran Swedzinski

West Central—Cindy Ostrander

In This Issue:

Calendar of Events

2015-2016 REGIONAL MEETINGS
Benton-Stearns Ed District Office, Sartell MN   9:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

September 15—Processes in AT: SETT, Consideration, Assessment
October 7—Sample Language for Processes in AT
November 4—Components & Issues for Technology: Writing & Keyboarding
December 2— Components & Issues for Technology: Early Childhood
January 6— Components & Issues for Technology: Reading & Literacy
February 3— Components & Issues for Technology: Math
March 2— Components & Issues for Technology: Transition
April 6—Components & Issues for Technology: App Evaluation Systems
May 4— Components & Issues for Technology: Content Areas

33rd ANNUAL CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE
Minneapolis MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: October 12-13, 2015
Conference Sessions: October 14-16, 2015

CHARTING THE CS CONFERENCE
Arrowwood, Alexandria, MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: April 24, 2016
Conference Sessions: 25 & 26, April 2016

AT Information: Listservs

AT Listserv
The AT Listserv is a wonderful resource for educators who work with students who use technology for learning. Members ask questions, share information, and discuss topics that are relevant to our day-to-day work with students ages birth through 21.

How to Join: To subscribe, visit https://webmail.mnet.state.mn.us/mailman/listinfo/assistive-tech or send a message with the word "help" in it to the request address, assistive-tech-request@lists.statemn.us for further instructions.

To Post on the Listserv: Send message to assistive-tech@lists.state.mn.us. Complete the subject line identifying the topic of your post. Type your message and send it. Remember confidentiality when posting!

QIAT Listserv
The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT—pronounced quiet) listserv is a place to share resources, questions ideas, and problem-solving in an on-going email discussion (there are archives and a website of resources to assist you, too). To sign up, go to the following website http://qiat.org and follow the links to join the listserv.

Resources for Accessible Books

[Accessible Book Collection](#)
Accessible Book Collection or ABC is a website with the goal of "providing digital text to persons with disabilities." The site requires a membership for full access, but assistive technology professionals can apply for a free subscription.

ABC has accessible books from Accelerated Reader, classics and popular books, and adapted for Classroom Suite, Clicker 5 and Boardmaker Plus.

Directions for downloading and using are featured for PC and Mac on the website.

[Bookshare](#)
Bookshare® "offers the world's largest collection of accessible titles. As a result, people of all ages, as well as schools and many organizations around the globe can access the books they need for school, work, career advancement, skill development and the simple love of reading in formats that work for them."

Users of Bookshare® can read books in several ways:
- "Listen to books with high quality text-to-speech voices.
- "Hear and see highlighted words on screen
- "Read with digital braille or enlarged fonts" (UEB is available)
- "Create physical braille or large print
- "Read directly from the Internet browser."

Student members of Bookshare® must have "expert confirmation" of a print disability that prevents the student "from reading traditional print materials."

Eligible disability areas include: learning disability, physical disability, or vision impairment. Students with "hearing loss, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or emotional or intellectual disabilities or whose first language is not English generally do not qualify based on those criteria unless they also have a qualifying vision, physical, or learning disability."

Membership is free for U.S. school district students.

[Bookshare Tutorials](#)
Bookshare® has a an excellent page for the beginning user of Bookshare® and for those who are troubleshooting. There are quick tours of the website, membership start-up videos, information about accessing and using Bookshare®, videos for users to make application of the technology more streamlined, suggestions for finding and organizing books, etc. Many of the videos also have accompanying transcripts. There are directions for using Read:OutLoud Bookshare edition and Read2Go Mobile App on this site.

[Books That Grow](#)
Books That Grow has a wide range of biographies, classics, folktales, content area materials, etc. You are able to adapt the reading level of the material to the level of the reader using this web app.

[Classic Reader](#)
Classic Reader is a membership based website featuring literature in the areas of fiction, non-fiction, young readers, poetry, short stories, drama, and classical. Literary pieces can be downloaded and read with a text reader or screen reader.

The non-membership access does include pop-up ads that may be distracting.

[Learning Ally](#)
Learning Ally is "a national non-profit dedicated to helping blind, visually impaired and dyslexic students succeed in education. Started in 1948 in the New York Public Library as Recording for the Blind, the organization utilized volunteers to record books for blinded veterans returning from WW II. They now offer the world's largest collection of human-narrated audio textbooks and literature as well as solutions, support and community for parents, teachers and students." To access books from Learning Ally, the school district must be a yearly subscriber to the service for the student(s) in grades K-12. The audiobooks are mostly textbooks, and college students can access Learning Ally after high school with their own membership.

Membership includes strategy ideas for improving reading comprehension and listening, VOICEtext (highlights words and sentences as they are read), and free reading apps for Mac, Windows, Chromebook, Android, and Apple devices.

[Reading Rockets](#)
Reading Rockets has an article from CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology) and LD Online entitled *Accessible Textbooks: A Guide for Parents of Children with Disabilities.* The article discusses environments and materials that are designed from the beginning to meet the needs of all students. It goes on to discuss reading software, e-texts, and resources. It is fairly reader friendly for those who have not heard about digital reading materials and formats. The article also discusses the fact that not all e-text materials are accessible to text readers and screen readers.

[Tumble Books](#)
Tumble Book Library is an online library for children's books. It is subscription based. Some public libraries have access to the library.

Resources for Literacy and Reading

[60 Second Recap](#)
60 Second Recap is a decoder for students reading the classics. Each of the books in the "library" has a synopsis and summary of context and resources. Links take the student to other resource pages. Themes are outlined and videos provide quick summaries.

[Google Lit Trips](#)
Google Lit Trips allows readers of stories and novels to experience the actual places where the story and events occur using the book and Google Earth. Teachers and students can create and post their own Google Lit Trips to the website.

[LitCharts](#)
LitCharts is a website that helps students "visualize" what a book is all about. Many of the classics and those books commonly read by students in grades 6-12 are included. Charts are available in each area to help with instruction and understanding of key themes. Books are divided by Chart Boards, background, summaries, detailed summary and analysis, themes, symbols, quotes, and characters.

[Literacy for All!](#)
"These 11 video clips and related learning guides provide an opportunity to enhance and support teacher's practice in the area of literacy for students with significant disabilities. Dr. Caroline Musselwhite is an assistive technology specialist with more than 30 years of experience with children and adolescents with significant disabilities." The learning guides that accompany each clip are great resources.

In the 11 video clips she discusses:
1. Good Literacy Instruction is Good for All Students
2. Creating Opportunities for Students to Explore and Understand Text

3. Symbols and Learning to Read
4. Choosing Words for the Classroom Word Wall
5. Importance of Repetition and Variety in Learning
6. Importance of Building Background Knowledge
7. Give Both Reinforcement AND Informative Feedback
8. Knowing the Difference Between Teaching and Testing Questions
9. The Art of Attributing Meaning to Student Attempts
10. Engaging Older Students
11. The Cost of Underestimating the Potential of Individual Students.

Rewordify

When reading text that is difficult, students can use Rewordify to simplify the passage and learn new vocabulary. The difficult text is entered into a yellow box on the home page. The user clicks *Rewordify text* and a simpler version of the same text appears. "The reworded words are highlighted—click them to hear and learn the original harder word." Rewordify has several features that will assist students with reading comprehension. Teachers can track the number of minutes of reading, words learned and learning errors with the website using *Educator Central.* This is a free website.

SparkNotes

SparkNotes give the student an overview of the book in video format with short print reference guides to context, plot overview, characters, themes, symbols, etc. Each chapter is generally summarized and analyzed, too. Novels and other subjects are available. Be aware of pop-up ads.

Resources for Text Reading

Natural Reader Text to Speech

Natural Reader Text to Speech reads aloud PDF, Word, and eBook files. FREE iDevice app.

Read&Write Gold for Google Chrome

"Read&Write for Google Chrome™ offers a range of powerful support tools to help students gain confidence with reading, writing, studying and research, including:

- Hear words, passages, or whole documents read aloud with easy-to-follow dual color highlighting
- See the meaning of words explained with text and picture dictionaries
- Hear text translated into other languages
- Get suggestions for the current or next word as you type
- Turn words into text as you speak
- Highlight text in documents or the web and collect for use in other documents
- Create and listen to voice notes directly inside of Google Docs
- Simplify and summarize text on web pages.

"Read&Write for Google Chrome™ is a user-friendly chrome extension to use with PCs, Macs and Chromebooks. It works with web pages and common file types in Google Drive, including:

- Google Docs
- PDF
- ePub
- Kes

"Install Read&Write for Google Chrome™ to access ALL of these features FREE for 30 days!

"After 30 days, you can still access Read Aloud and Translator features in Google Docs and web pages. Premium features for Google Docs, web, PDF, ePub, and Kes files are available by purchasing a subscription for single users, groups of users, or domains.

"Teachers can get a FREE premium subscription to Read&Write for Google Chrome™. To register and activate your subscription, go to [TextHelp Free for Teachers](#) after installing the Read&Write for Google Chrome™ trial.

"Get more information on Read&Write for Google Chrome™ features, licensing, and pricing at [TextHelp Support Premium](#).

[Snapverter](#)
"Snapverter™ quickly transforms classroom papers, images, and Bookshare eBooks into accessible Google Drive-friendly files." It is an add-on for Read&Write for Google.

[Voice Dream Reader](#)
Voice Dream Reader has "advanced text-to-speech and a highly configurable screen layout." The app "supports reading PDF and Word documents, DRM-free EPUB and DAISY eBooks, web pages and more. It is directly integrated with Bookshare, Dropbox, Google Drive, Evernote, Pocket, Instapaper, and Gutenberg." $9.99 on iTunes.

VoiceOver
VoiceOver is the integrated screen reader that is built into Apple mobile devices. It reads screen icons, documents, websites, etc.

Apps of the Month

Starfall

Free on iTunes
Requires iOS 5.1.1 or higher
Updated 3/17/15
iPad, iPhone, iPod

If you love the Starfall website activities, you will love the Starfall app. It does require an internet connection. If you become a Starfall member, you get access to everything featured.

Starfall has been designed to interest and teach literacy skills to children who are struggling with reading.

App Hint

Many of us use free apps with students as a part of the trialing of the app. The only problem is the advertising pop-ups that tend to be frequently appearing as you move through the app. If the app is not wifi driven, shut off the wifi on your device to allow the student to use the free version of the app without the pop-ups.