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MN Regions 5 & 7 Assistive Technology Community of Practice

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Verbally

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.

Writing

Working with students who need support with writing may or may not involve keyboarding or speech-to-text accommodations. Teachers working with students who need such support will want to look at the student's academic skills, knowledge of the writing process, physical skills and other skills for inputting information as a means of considering assistive technology. There are many skills involved in writing about a topic.

The Georgia Project on Assistive Technology (GPAT) identified instructional areas that should be considered when looking at a student's needs for completing writing tasks. The relevant tasks, the student's performance on those tasks, and the needs of the student will lead the educational team to look at appropriate accommodations, modifications, and technology to support the student. The areas listed by GPAT include:

- "Write name
- Copy letters/words/numbers for skills practice
- Write words from memory
- Copy print from book or worksheet
- Copy notes from board or overhead
- Complete written worksheets with single word responses (fill-in-the blank)
- Complete written worksheets with phrase or sentence response
- Complete written test with multiple choice response (circle/mark answer)
- Complete written test and forms with fill-in-the-blank response
- Complete written test with matching response
- Complete written test with phrase/sentence (short answer) Complete written test with essay response (multi-paragraph)
- Record notes from teacher dictation/lecture with teacher recording notes on board/overhead
- Record notes from teacher dictation/lecture without teacher notes
- Generate creative/spontaneous writing samples
- Copy numbers
- Enter number in correct location within calculation problems
- Copy math calculation problems with correct alignment"

Source: [GPAT Resource Guide 2008](#) (AT Consideration Resource Guide section)

When the student is doing a written project, more strategies must be considered in terms of how the student will approach the task. The writer must consider what goes into good writing:

- Ideas
- Organization
- Word choice
- Sentence fluency
- Voice
- Conventions (grammar/spelling)
- Presentation (how will the final product look to the reader?)

Source : [The 6 Traits of Writing](#) by Jennifer Heidl-Knoblock and Jody Drake.

The writer uses the following writing process:

1. Prewriting—brainstorming and planning ideas about a topic
2. Drafting—recording (in some form) ideas for writing
3. Revising—organizing ideas and putting the ideas in an order to allow reader to understand writing
4. Editing—correcting order of ideas, grammar, spelling, etc.
5. Evaluating—reviewing the writing for reader understanding
6. Publishing —sharing one's ideas with others

Accommodating or Modifying Writing Tasks

A 2006 resource from the state of Virginia called *Teaching All Students: Staff Guide to Accommodations and Modifications* provides a great way to share ideas for accommodating and modifying writing tasks for students. This manual is useful for general and special educators. The summary of ideas for writing include:

Prewriting Ideas

- Write frequently during the school day
- Provide guidance for specific writing tasks
- Utilize outlines and graphic organizers
- Use word and idea banks
- Use pictures to generate ideas
- Gradually increase the expectation for written output
- Write about familiar topics/interests
- :Use lists and simple sentences to build more complex materials
- Allow the student to dictate writing to a scribe
- Provide vocabulary for the student to use
- Provide the topic sentence (page 22)

Drafting

- “Avoid corrections in the mechanical aspects in early stages of writing concentrate on idea development”
- Utilize graphic organizers, outlines, maps to develop the writing paths
- “Teach importance of beginning, middle and end of stories”
- “Teach proofreading skills”
- Use a checklist for proofreading
- “Have the students read the story aloud to identify inaccurate construction of sentences”
- Write drafts on computer or word processor
- “Allow fill-in-the-blank forms for the beginning stages of report writing”
- “Allow multiple formats for presentations, including some that don’t include writing”
- “Allow reduced sources and modified format when writing research papers”
- “Allow students to dictate stories, reports, etc.”
- “Develop a spelling dictionary for frequently misspelled words” (page 23)

Revising and Editing

Pre-spelling activities:

- “Create a spelling list of consonant sounds that coincide with the initial letter sounds of the class spelling list
- Student writes the beginning sound of word while the class writes the word
- Begin with simple sight words and short phonetic words as soon as the child knows enough letters and sounds
- Practice spelling student’s own name and gradually add other familiar names to spell • Develop a spelling list that also makes a sentence-‘I am Meg.’
- Allow lots of practice reading, tracing, writing, sequencing, stamping, building and finding spelling words and sentences.” (page 24)

Spelling activities:

- “Give student a PRINTED list of words to practice (not cursive)
- Reduce the number of spelling words on the list
- Allow student to set an individual spelling goal for number correct on test
- Gradually increase the number of required spelling words IF the student is making a mastery goal
- Group spelling words into word families or similar patterns
- Replace a few unfamiliar words with high frequency sight words
- Incorporate familiar words from student’s basal reader or leveled books
- Choose spelling words relevant to curriculum and consistent with the child’s vocabulary
- Teach students to isolate (say) each sound in the word and match them with the spelling for that sound: through sound: /th/ /r/ /oo/ (as in pool) Spelling: th r ough” (pages 24-25)

Source: [Teaching All Students](#)

Assistive Technology Devices for Writing and Spelling

The Georgia Project for Assistive Technology developed a document in 2010 called Assistive Technology Devices for Writing and Spelling. In the document, there are concrete ideas for providing students with a continuum of ideas for support in writing and spelling. It is not the purpose of support to start with the most sophisticated device, it is the purpose of support for the student’s need to be bridged when writing.

Low Technology Strategies:

- **Positioning**
 - Dycem
 - Shelf-liner/nonslip mats
 - Clipboards
- **Contrast**
 - Highlighter tape
 - Pens
 - Change in paper color brightness
 - Skip every other line for writing
- **Adapted Writing Utensils**
 - Use a triangle pencil grip for better control
 - Use a weighted pencil
 - Vary length and thickness of pencil
 - Vary writing implement (crayons, colored pencils, fine markers)
 - Pens of different weights/sizes
- **Adapted Paper/Writing Guides**
 - Bold line paper
 - Colored paper
- **Personal Vocabulary/Spelling Dictionaries**
 - Notebook of personal vocabulary/spelling
 - Bookmarks
- **Graphic Organizers**
 - Printed and provided to student

Mid Level Technology Strategies:

- **Positioning**
 - Slantboards
 - Page holders
 - Book stands

- **Adapted Paper/Writing Guides**
 - Bold line paper
 - Raised line paper
 - Personal dry erase board
 - Writing guides

High Technology Strategies:

- **Positioning**
 - Page turner
- **Contrast**
 - EZC Reader/Reading Helper (colored reading strips)
 - Colored overlays
 - Control contrast on iPad or computer monitor
- **Adapted Writing Utensils**
 - Keyboard
 - Online keyboard
- **Adapted Paper/Writing Guides**
 - Templates for writing on the computer or iPad
- **Personal Vocabulary/Spelling Dictionaries**
- **Hand Held Word Identification Aids**
- **Recorders**
- **Handheld Scanners**
- **Graphic Organizers**
- **Portable Word Processor**
- **Concept/Webbing Applications**
- **Word Identification Aid**
- **Standard Word Processing**
- **Graphic Word Processing**
- **Talking Word Processing**
- **Word Prediction**
 - Co:Writer
 - Read & Write Gold
- **Text Correction**
- **Electronic Worksheets**
- **Reading and Writing Software/Apps**
 - Kurzweil
 - VoiceOver
- **Voice Recognition**
 - Dragon
 - Siri

Source: [AT Technology Devices for Writing and Spelling](#)

Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative

WATI has two chapters in their *Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology (ASNAT) 5th Edition* devoted to writing. Chapter 5 is AT for Writing, Including Motor Aspects, and Chapter 6 is AT for Composition of Written Material.

Chapter 5 highlights the process of actually doing handwriting which includes:

- Visual perception
- Neuromuscular abilities
- Motor skills
- Cognition
- Social-emotional factors

Chapter 5 also describes research on:

- Complexity and multiple factors involved with handwriting
- Grip
- Visual motor integration
- Time spent on fine motor skills

Page 12 of Chapter 5 features A Continuum of Considerations for Assistive Technology: The Motor Aspects of Writing. This flowchart is very helpful in determining what type of AT adaptations may support the needs that actually exist for the student. Pages 24 and 25 present a feature match form.

The chapter contains a great amount of information regarding consideration topics, environmental issues, and ideas for solutions. The chapter was authored in 2009, so many of the resources have been updated in daily use.

Chapter 6 addresses the concerns for writing involving the environment, sensory system, tasks, etc. It discusses the process of considering solutions to issues the student experiences.

Page 6 features A Continuum of Considerations for Assistive Technology for Composing Written Materials. Again, teams will find a flowchart of simple to higher technology options for supporting writers.

Source: [WATI: Writing Chapters 5 & 6](#)

App of the Month

Verbally—Intuary

Free on iTunes
Requires iOS 8.0 or higher
Updated 10/30/15
iPad

“Verbally is an easy-to-use, comprehensive Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) app for the iPad. Verbally brings speech to those without and enables real conversation with its simple, intuitive design. Just tap in what you want to say and Verbally speaks for you. Premium Features available with an in-app purchase.”