

Teacher Appreciation Month 2007 Youth Is *Not* Wasted on the Young

In this Issue...

George Bernard Shaw wrote that youth is wasted on the young, but GBS never met the new breed of young teachers now entering the profession whose presence in increasing numbers, along with their vast technology knowledge and expertise, may dramatically change U.S. education and its relationship to assistive technology.

Until now AT and technology in general has been the province of technophiles. Most educators, like professionals in other fields and industries, learned technology because they had to in order to keep pace with a changing environment. For the most part, however, they were, are and remain creatures of the radio, TV and telephone era. The new breed of teacher, however, has technology in his/her DNA, evolves with technology naturally and utilizes it in all its forms, including AT, like earlier generations used basic utensils like a knife and fork.

For these teachers and educators, the technology in today's special education and general education classrooms is but a primitive precursor to what will come, as their presence causes a paradigm shift that will likely transform teachers, teaching and the American classroom in the years ahead.

This issue honors teachers nationwide and examines the role of assistive technology in their classrooms now and in the future.

Denise McGuire Speaks

"I grew up in the computer age and am a product of it. I'm a younger teacher who grew up with the rapid changes in technology. My knowledge does not come from extra training but from extra usage. It's part of my DNA. I don't fear technology; technology is a part of my life."



With just over two years as a special education teacher of children with multiple and profound disabilities, Denise McGuire is a youthful representative of her profession. In her youth, however, are the seeds of what may be: a teacher corps so well versed in technology and technology-related issues that its members not only devour pre-service and in-service AT training but can also teach it.

Denise is a special education teacher at the Elizabeth Lee Black School in Erie, Pennsylvania, where her classroom, which is outfitted with the latest AT, consists of eight students grades 1-7 with multiple and profound disabilities. The Black School is an "approved private school (APS)" to which students in surrounding public school districts are referred when those districts are unable to meet the students' special needs. The referring districts pick up the cost of each student's



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tuition.

Denise prepared for what she intends to be her life's work by working in group homes during college. "I really enjoyed that experience," she says. "These individuals face so many challenges. They need a person who will take the time and make the effort to look at them as a whole person, in their totality, to see their talents as well as their disabilities and then develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will emphasize their abilities and bring them out."

A graduate of Pennsylvania's Edinboro University where she earned a BS in special education/elementary education, Denise is obtaining her masters degree as a reading specialist from Gannon University.

Supporting our interview with Ms. McGuire are resources to assist parents and others in obtaining updated information on the current state of classroom AT. We also feature members of our **Knowledge Network**. The members spotlighted this month focus on assistive technology in special education and general ed classrooms. We invite you to contact these members for further information.

Please share this newsletter with other organizations, families and professionals who may benefit from it. We invite you to contact us at <http://www.fctd.info>. We welcome feedback, new members and all who contribute to our growing knowledge base.



The Future is Theirs: Generation T Takes the Field

An Interview with Denise McGuire, Special Education Teacher

Like the first robins arriving in the spring, the representatives of Generation T, the incoming generation of technology savvy young teachers, are appearing in schools nationwide. Fresh out of graduate school and in their early 20s, these young teachers offer a glimpse of a future in which assistive technology, from low-tech to high-tech, will likely be regarded as normal in the classroom as pencils and loose-leaf paper have been to earlier generations.



Denise McGuire

With their arrival on the scene, now just a trickle but soon to be a flood, can it be long before debates that have occupied educators for so long – for example, whether the use of AT is a form of “cheating” – will become irrelevant? Their appearance in force may also coincide with the full convergence of assistive and educational technology, a confluence that may result in universally designed classroom technology that could end the school funding debates that have pre-occupied so many budget-conscious communities nationwide.

In short, the appearance of youthful teachers like Denise McGuire in Pennsylvania may signal a paradigm shift in American education.

But that's then. For now, these young teachers, like all those who have preceded them, have their hands full acclimating themselves to their new profession and their new charges. In Denise's case, that mean a class of eight children grades 1-7 with multiple and profound disabilities.

An AT Rich Environment

Fortunately, Denise's classroom environment at the Elizabeth Lee Black School is AT rich. Also, administrators at the Black School and its umbrella organization, the Dr. Gertrude Barber National Institute, actively support the employment of AT for all programs.

According to Denise, “students are sent here because we have specially designed programs that feature integrated therapies that could not be administered in a student's home school district. We have an intensive autism program. For the multiple disabilities support classroom, like mine, we have a speech program and occupational therapy along with physical therapy and vision. All are thoroughly integrated into our curriculum.”

AT plays a vital and integral part in each school day. "AT is on every student's IEP. The technology and its usage are built into our curriculum and daily routines."

AT, she says, is part of the Black School's formula for success.

"What's unique about the school is that the administration, the principals and teachers want AT in our classrooms. They clearly understand the value of AT."

AT, Denise says, plays a vital and integral part in each school day. "AT is on every student's IEP. The technology and its usage are built into our curriculum and daily routines. Technology helps the students interact with each other and with me and aids the children in achieving full participation in classroom activities."

Her own lifelong background and interest in technology helps her to stay on top of the latest developments in classroom AT as well as other technology. "I feel very proficient in the knowledge and use of the AT. I've had a lot of in-service training. We also have a team that helps the students to get the most of their AT. The team approach is crucial to the success that these children achieve."

Her team, she explains, consists of a special educator, occupational therapist, speech therapist, physical therapist and the student's parents.

AT Training Programs for Parents

The Black School also runs programs aimed at assisting parents in understanding and operating assistive technology as well as other programs for parents. "Parental programs are a big part of our mission. We have programs that assist them with AT. The Barber Institute has programs to help parents cope and sibling programs for kids who have a brother or sister with a disability."



"When we do have in-service trainings for the family, the Institute provides a babysitting service, staffed by babysitters, to make it easier for parents to attend. The babysitters are qualified for students with autism and/or multiple disabilities."

Some AT familiarization programs are offered to parents during the holiday season. "We run programs on toys that can be bought for Christmas or Chanukah that are adaptive. These programs pinpoint what specific students need and how to obtain funding for a purchase."

No Child Goes Without

Students referred to the Black School by their home districts bring their own AT with them. Students requiring additional AT can obtain it from the Black School.

"This school has a great range of AT for the students' use," Denise explains. "No child here goes without the AT that they need. All our classrooms come adapted. Even before I know what students I'll have in my class, I have my communication devices and adaptive computer programs in place."

"Every classroom here that deals with students who have multiple and profound disabilities is that way. The school's intensive autism program has different AT for its students. As far as AT is concerned, the school is fully equipped. We're as close to state-of-the-art as budget parameters allow."

"Technology Is Who We Are"

Denise comes to her current classroom environment armed with a lifelong love of technology.

"I have a specific interest in AT and in technology, especially computer usage. I have an extensive and deep computer background, like many in my age group. I've been able to put that background to use for my students."

For example, she says, "I've adapted PowerPoint presentations to help cope with my students' vision issues. I can add environment sound and adapt programs to meet their needs. Anything I can do along these lines helps keep their interest and enhances their productivity."

She is a product of the computer age, adept in the use and language of technology, and she is not alone.

"The younger teachers of today are almost all like me. I guess the same can be said also of individuals my age who will one day become administrators, board of education members and parents. Technology is who we are. We accept it. We embrace it. We don't debate whether or not its classroom use, especially by children with special needs, is tantamount to some sort of 'cheating.'"

Technology in general and AT in particular, she declares, "is a tool that we have used in and out of school since we were very, very young."

"No child here goes without the AT that they need. All our classrooms come adapted. Even before I know what students I'll have in my class, I have my communication devices and adaptive computer programs in place."

Although those who immediately preceded Denise and her generation also understand technology and use it in their daily working environments and personal lives, most are not natural and instinctive technophiles. Technological advances must be adapted to and for many in their 30s, 40s and beyond, every step of the adaptation process can be difficult, even painful at times. Not so for Generation T whose members are unaware of the paradigm shift their expertise is causing. They are the paradigm.

Time Is a Challenge

Still, however, there are challenges Denise and her peers must face in implementing the AT with which they are so comfortable. For Denise, time represents a major classroom challenge.



“With students that have multiple and profound disabilities, it takes time to properly set up AT according to their IEPs. Therefore, time is always a factor in the classroom because we integrate a lot of physical therapy

into the students’ programs. Fortunately, I have two classroom assistants who are trained in all aspects of AT. Their expertise really helps mitigate the time issue.”

“We have set routines, set instructions for each student. Each assistant is well trained on what to do and when to do it. We stick to a very strict routine and share our ideas daily after school as a team, reflecting on what we need to do to work together.”

Her team members, she says, “are all professionals. They’ve evaluated the student. They’ve done testing on the student. We know what each student’s specific needs are and can gear AT for each individual student.”

AT and the IEP

AT, she explains, represents a significant portion of her students’ IEPs. “Because we are a specialized school, the use of AT is encouraged to help our students. My students’ goals are written with AT in the adaptations/modifications section of the IEP, which includes all the types of AT they’ll need in the daily curriculum.”

Communication devices are the most commonly utilized forms of AT in her classroom. “But AT that enhances self-help skills is also prevalent as are adaptive items for material usage, computer usage in the form of adaptive computer programs, plus other equipment that make the computer adaptive to our students.”

What Can Be Learned from the Elizabeth Lee Black School Experience?

Granted, the Black School has advantages regarding the use of AT that public schools are not designed to match. Still, however, according to Denise there are lessons to be gleaned from her experience that may be useful to her public school counterparts.

“General ed teachers and administrators at public schools have also seen the increased use of AT, which may result in a lessening of resistance to its classroom use where resistance continues to exist.”

“AT equipment like projectors and SmartBoards are now widely used almost everywhere, for example. Public school teachers use computers in their classrooms. The sight of a public school student with a communication device in a classroom no longer causes trepidation among teachers. Most teachers are familiar with that sight and don’t become nervous about it. In fact, many more now embrace it.”

“All of us, in public and private schools, have been exposed to much more technology in the classroom. For general ed teachers, this continued exposure to classroom technology in general and AT specifically will make life easier in ways that will further enrich the classroom experience for teachers and students, those with disabilities and those without disabilities.”

Convergence is Underway

Denise senses that the convergence of AT with educational technology is well underway. “There are many more educational technology products out now that are geared toward special educators,” she notes.

Acceleration of the convergence process, she says, will result in the need for more intense training on the new products that appear.

“We’ll need to be kept updated on the newest technologies.” Additionally, she says, “The parents of my students will also need to know what the new products are and be kept up to date on how to obtain them and on what funding streams are available to access AT products that can be used at home.”

Convergence, she predicts, may inevitably yield universally designed classroom technology for use by special ed and gen ed classrooms. “The benefits of a concept like universal design eventually trickle down to us. We are positively affected by universal design and by the products it generates. We want to remain updated on the progress that’s being made in this area and also gain the benefits of those technologies.”

Repair Is a Problem, AT Abandonment Is Not

Back in the present, the lone drawback to the use of today's AT in the classroom, she says, "is that if a piece of equipment breaks, it takes a long time to get it repaired! We can't fix that equipment. It has to be sent out to the manufacturer for repair. The students need their equipment to fulfill the goals of their IEPs so we are then forced to borrow the needed equipment from another classroom or from another therapist. With these students, the need is so great for their AT that they literally cannot go even one day without it."

Equipment abandonment, an issue that plagues public schools, is a near non-issue at the Black School, Denise says. "Because we have a team approach and the team members are involved in the ordering of AT equipment, we as a team look very closely at the equipment and how it will be used by the student for whom it's recommended."

"For us, that team approach, which includes equipment testing and very detailed evaluations, has resulted in an abandonment rate that is low enough so that abandonment is a non-issue for us."

In their equipment testing her team members "evaluate the student, the need and how the equipment will be used and the benefits the student will derive from its use."

For example, she continues, "if the equipment is a communications device, we run it past a speech therapist. Our students have different range-of-motion or finer growth motor issues, so an occupational therapist might tell us, 'You need a different pressure switch due to this student's range of motion,' and will ascertain for us that this student does indeed have adequate range of motion and the ability to touch and press a switch. The OT will then develop a plan for the student and for us. The team approach really helps in delivering equipment that a student will derive maximum benefit from."

Her team approach, she notes, also seems to enhance efficiency in that at the Black School there does not appear to be much wastage of equipment.

"With our school system, if we order equipment for our school in general we can always filter equipment that is not being used for whatever reason to another student who needs it, wants it and will use it."

Often, she adds, "it is not the school district that purchases the equipment, it's the individual school that is the purchaser. Therefore, that individual school can apportion the equipment to where it is needed most if the equipment fails to meet the needs of the original user."

Some of the bigger pieces of equipment, she explains, do come

from the school district, "but each piece is ordered differently. Much of what we order is generated by us, through our school."

Training? Not Much Needed

For Denise and her peers, pre- and in-service AT training may be an obsolete concept. "I didn't need much AT training," she declares, "but I've given in-service training in how to adapt PowerPoint presentations for our students' needs. I've been a part of the in-service training process as a whole, helping other teachers in the multiple disabilities support program by showing them how to adapt it for their students' interests."

For Generation T, she implies, comprehensive intense AT training is a waste of time. "Some of what we learn provides a good review. When I help with the training we break teachers into groups according to their levels of skill, so we can target teachers and skills to help provide individualized training."

Given the disparity in technology aptitude that exists between the youngest and older teachers – and accounting for the arrival of older career-change teachers whose aptitude in technology is generally less than Generation T but more than many veteran teachers – Denise recommends the implementation of refined, customized pre- and in-service technology training.

"I'd make it much more interactive," she explains. "I'd make sure trainees spend a lot more time in computer labs as they proceed through their in-service careers. For teachers who require basic instruction, we can teach them how to include a PowerPoint presentation in an IEP. Teachers can also be taught how to create digital portfolios for their students."

Denise would like to see the emergence of vocational technology that students like hers could make use of. "I'd like to see more AT that my students could use to improve vo-tech training skills so that they can get a job later in life. I'd like to see students like mine, with profound multiple disabilities, get help with vo-tech training that they can avail themselves of after graduation."

She'd also like to see SmartBoard technology adapted for use by students with multiple and profound disabilities. "In regular ed, many classrooms are employing SmartBoards. However, adaptive equipment is needed to support the use of SmartBoards by students with different needs and abilities."

Emerging Trends

Denise has noted the emergence of many more computer programs and computer technologies. She comments, "There are many more programs now for children with disabilities and autism than there were even as recently as two years ago when I first started teaching. Also, AT items are becoming more computer-

“I can see myself only in special ed with the type of students I now have, those with profound disabilities. Why? Because those communication breakthroughs that I’ve been part of with them are life changing for the family and for the student, when the student is able to use adaptive equipment, when their ability to communicate improves. Those are amazing changes to see – and they are life changing for me as well.”

ized, more involved, more in-depth. Despite the emergence of more sophisticated assistive classroom technologies, however, she emphasizes that multiple low-tech options will continue to exist for classroom teachers.

She predicts that five or 10 years from now “general ed teachers will become far more adept at using AT because students with disabilities will be even more integrated into inclusion classrooms. We’ll see a proliferation of new communication devices, for example.”

Convergence, too, she adds, “will produce new and even better programs that will be very useful for my students. Of course convergence will also create an even greater need for training.”

“Amazing Changes to See”

An impassioned advocate for her students and profession, Denise McGuire aims to be exactly where she is when these changes take shape – in her classroom.

“Although the work is tough,” she admits, “I can see myself only in special ed with the type of students I now have, those with profound disabilities. Why? Because those communication breakthroughs that I’ve been part of with them are life changing for the family and for the student, when the student is able to use adaptive equipment, when their ability to communicate improves. Those are amazing changes to see – and they are life changing for me as well.”

“I’ll bet that very few other professions provide that kind of exhilarating moment. Every ‘Eureka!’ is worth every second of hard work and persistence on the part of the student, the student’s family and those who support the student at school: teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals and administrators, too.”

What’s not often recognized by outsiders, she remarks, “is the physical toll that this job takes. It requires a lot of lifting. There are eight students in my class. They each have a physical therapy program that we integrate into the classroom environment. The classroom staff and teacher and staff are trained in the administration of these programs. We implement the students’ standing positions

and walking positions into our daily schedules and routines, which means that we are lifting and carrying students and equipment.

To mitigate the physical, Denise and her colleagues are trained in lifting techniques, “but at the end of the day your back and arms are very tired.”

Yet despite the physical and emotional requirements of her work, she intends to keep at it. Some of her Generation T college classmates, however, have already moved on. “Most are like me and remain strongly and enthusiastically committed to our field but many have transitioned from special education to elementary education.”

“I want to make it clear,” she concludes, “that being a special ed teacher is as rewarding as it is tough – and the rewards are wonderful!”

June 4-29, 2007

Join FCTD throughout the month of June for an online discussion of Best Practices for Implementing Universal Design for Learning!

The FCTD June online discussion will be moderated by Kentucky’s UDL Initiative coordinator, Linnie Lee, and Dr. Jennifer Bell, UDL project director for Strode Station Elementary in Clark County. Based on their extensive involvement with Universal Design for Learning at the classroom, district, and state level, Linnie Lee and Dr. Jennifer Bell will guide a conversation about best practices and models for the planning and implementation of Universal Design for Learning in K-12 schools.

- How do schools apply UDL in a practical way?
- How do schools fund UDL initiatives
- Who needs to be involved to implement UDL?
- What are the steps and components of the implementation process?
- How do you measure success?
- What are the differences in how school districts implement UDL?
- Low versus high tech strategies
- Successes/lessons learned
- Differentiating between AT and UDL and Ed tech.

To join the discussion.... Simply log in at <http://www.fctd.info/webboard/index.php>.

RESOURCES

Articles

GLOBE Tech: Using Technology to Maximize Classroom Performance with Team-Based Instruction

Lynne Mainzer, John Castellani, Betsy Lowry, Jacqueline Nunn
Council for Exceptional Children,
Technology and Media Division - 2006

The authors provide an overview and assessment of GLOBE Tech, a component of the Boundless Learning program created by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education.

Using examples and carefully explaining the five stages of GLOBE Tech, the article introduces instructors to the uses for this instructional system and demonstrates its applications inside a framework for universally designed learning. The five stages of GLOBE Tech are:

- 1.) Get ready and focused
- 2.) Learn about teacher presentation and list for big ideas
- 3.) Organize team learning and essential questions
- 4.) Boost individual learning and build a summary
- 5.) Evaluate and celebrate accomplishments

<http://www.tamcec.org/assets/action/2006-01.pdf>

Integrating AT into the Curriculum

Landmark College Institute for Research and Training – 2005

The Landmark College authors combined several salient articles and websites to address the integration of AT into the school curriculum. Using the articles and website from Cynthia Warger in the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, and Gayle Bowser and Penny Reed in Educational TECH Points, Landmark developed an overview that examines curriculum and AT tools used to achieve improved outcomes. Six strategies are outlined to guide teachers and administrators in implementing and evaluating the tools and processes employed to integrate technology into the curriculum. The six strategies are:

- 1.) Referral
- 2.) Evaluation
- 3.) Extended assessment
- 4.) Plan development
- 5.) Implementation
- 6.) Periodic review.

Landmark College is one of the only accredited colleges in the U.S. designed exclusively for students with dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), or other specific learning disabilities. <http://www.landmarkcollege.org/institute/assistive-technology/integration.html>

Addressing the Special Needs Student Through Technology

Diane Forte Barfield
techLEARNING.com – 2003

Aimed at improving the organizational abilities of children with disabilities, this study suggests using the outline function of word processing to set out ideas and subtopics. For note taking, Ms. Barfield writes, “scanners should be used to copy the teacher’s notes if the student has difficulty writing.” SmartBoards, she adds, “can also help because notes can be printed out after the lecture is finished. Tape recorders can be used to record notes, and videotaping may be helpful for visual learners who gain knowledge from body language and facial expressions. Laptop computers can provide high-tech tools for note taking because of their mobility.”

She concludes, “By using the tools offered by computers and other technology, educators can adapt the appearance of work to address special needs students. Color schemes can be changed to accommodate children with attention deficit. The size of items is flexible using operating systems such as Windows. Auditory signals and visual cues are available under the control panels of most PC units and many offer a special icon entitled “accessibility options” which allows for the setting of special features. By using this option, teachers can tell the computer to ignore slight key strokes and only accept the firm ones, for example.”

http://www.techlearning.com/db_area/archives/WCE/archives/dianesn1.php

Universal Design

Assistive Technology Training Online Project
University of Buffalo Center for Assistive Technology – 2000

This training module, available online, was developed by the University of Buffalo Center for Assistive Technology. The ATTO Universal Design module discusses the importance of teachers varying the ways they deliver homework, make assignments and test students’ comprehension. Educational technologies which have universal designs for learning built in will “allow all students to succeed.”

The training module provides the reader with web resources for general information on Universal Design for Learning as well as provides statistics on the prevalence of use of technology in the classroom.

The training module is divided into sections that discuss ways to display information, amplify sound, and modify video (captioning and describing). It also provides information about electronic learning tools, reference materials, computers, concept

mapping, personal digital assistants, and PDA notetakers.
<http://atto.buffalo.edu/registered/ATBasics/Populations/UDesign/index.php>

Universal Design with Technology

By: Paul Horwitz and Robert Tinker
Concord Consortium – 2005

Universal design makes it possible to teach individuals with varied requirements by using different degrees of technology. The authors suggest ways that universally designed technology can enhance math education. They write, “Even as UDL is helping to transform technology for reading, mathematics education lags behind. The research results that gave rise to UDL make general statements about human cognition and perception, and are not specific to a single area of learning. But those findings have yet to be applied toward the creation of mathematical educational products that can meet the widely varying needs of students with different learning styles and strengths.”

The Concord Consortium, the authors write, is developing graphs that will generate text and verbal descriptions to enhance the learning of algebra. This, the authors say, will be accomplished by using varying screen display options controlled by the teacher or student. Audio descriptions will be used with simple lines and animations, or with other effects to make the desired point.

Use of alternatives such as text, graphs, tables, algebraic expressions and animations increase the possibilities that the student will find a method to facilitate learning, the authors claim. When the concept is fully developed, these assisting options can be employed singly, or by adding one at a time, until the student achieves comprehension. Feedback will be available to help teachers identify the most useful methods.

<http://www.concord.org/publications/newsletter/2005-spring/universal>

Using Flexible Technology to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners: What Teachers Can Do

By: Lisa Wahl and Julie Duffield
WestEd – 2005

This article discusses ways teachers can use technology, including: the classroom computer, graphic organizers, Internet resources, and readily available software such as Microsoft Word, and Kid Pix, to assure that diverse learners succeed in the general education classroom. The authors also provide tips to help schools and districts support the use of technology in the classroom.

http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/kn-05-01.pdf

Twelve Tips for Classroom Teachers

Barbara Cheadle
National Federation for the Blind – 2005

The tips were compiled by the mother of a son who is visually impaired. She wrote these tips for teachers based on her experiences with her son’s education. The tips include advice on arranging and managing the classroom with emphasis on how not to make a child with visual impairments feel different from his classmates. The author includes tips on managing the IEP, sharing the curriculum verbally, using assistive technology in the classroom, maintaining equal expectations, and encouraging a positive attitude for and in that student within the classroom and throughout his educational career.

<http://www.nfb.org/Images/nfb/Publications/fr/fr19/fr05si10.htm>

Accessible Education Through Assistive Technology

Elizabeth White, Shelley Wepner, Donna Wetzel
The Journal Online – 2003

This article focused on providing pre-service and in-service trainings to teachers. The authors provide examples of teacher training programs that include courses on AT. Online courses are discussed. A list of AT devices is included that provides a list of AT devices that can be found on a college campus. The authors detail the ways in which some colleges and universities have been able to acquire devices for hands-on training. They also describe field projects that can be used as models of successful training programs.

<http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A4321C.cfm>

Assistive Technology in Regular Education!

By: Kathleen M. Whitbread, Ph.D.
ConnSENSE – 2002

Writes Dr. Whitbread, “A child’s transition from elementary to middle school is often a time filled with excitement and expectations. For a child with disabilities, this can also be a time filled with anxiety. When Tim was preparing to enter middle school, he and his parents were anxious about the transition. Although Tim had been in inclusive settings since pre-school, he required a great deal of assistance to complete his work, and he always seemed to trail behind his classmates. Tim’s learning disabilities prevented him from reading grade-level material, and he had difficulty with writing, organization, and auditory processing. The supports Tim received in the classroom, such as scribing and reading materials aloud, became a problem as Tim got older. He was embarrassed by his need for constant adult assistance. Not surprisingly, Tim disliked school and was not looking forward to middle school.”

“During the summer before his entrance into middle school,

Tim's elementary and middle school planning and placement teams met and designed a transition plan that included an assistive technology evaluation. The strategies that resulted from the evaluation helped Tim to excel in his classes as well as remain in general education. In fact, he made the honor roll his first quarter at middle school, and no one was prouder of this achievement than Tim."

According to Dr. Whitbread, Tim utilized a combination of devices and strategies allowed him to keep up with the curriculum and use his skills to his best advantage. The devices included:

- A small handheld tape recorder to record lectures, class discussions, assignments, notes, and reminders
- Textbooks on tape (available free from Recordings for the Blind)
- Word prediction software to enable the user to type in the first few letters of a word and the software provides a list of potential words to choose from. Tim used Co-writer which also reads the list of words aloud
- A computer text-reading program to translate written text to speech
- Color filters, color highlighters, and color backgrounds for computer work. (Tim is sensitive to light and color)
- Software to help organize ideas into graphic webs for presentations or papers

<http://www.connsensebulletin.com/whitart.html>

Understanding Kids Who Are Different: Activities for Teaching About Disabilities

Linda Starr

Education World – 2005

Ms. Starr provides general and special educators with information on online resources that can be accessed by their students. The sites she recommends offer information on disabilities and are useful for both special and gen ed students. She recommends other sites that provide information on activities, that special and gen ed students can share, sites that describe physical disabilities and other sites created for children with specific disabilities, including learning disabilities.

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson115.shtml

Using AT: Is It Working?

Margaret E. Bausch, ED.D., Ted S. Hasselbring, ED.D.

Cable in the Classroom – 2005

The authors evaluate the effectiveness of AT in the classroom and offer insight into and preliminary findings from their recent studies with the National Assistive Technology Research Institute (NATRI). Those findings include the following:

- AT is used by more students with low-incidence disabilities than by those with high-incidence disabilities

- Teachers use a range of low-tech to high-tech devices but they may not always consider low-tech devices to be AT
- AT is used more often in special ed classes than in other settings
- AT service providers are receiving AT training at the pre-service level
- Gen ed teachers rely on the opinions of specialists for information about AT
- When teachers receive professional development about AT, it is most likely to focus on the operation of specific devices

http://www.ciconline.org/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=30&name=T-Win05-IsATWorking.pdf

Websites

Schwab Foundation for Learning Web Site

This site provides information for parents and teachers on strategies and technology, related to children with learning differences. The site features a search tool in the parent and teacher resource sections, as well as a bulletin board to facilitate discussions.

<http://www.schwablearning.org/index.asp>

LD Online: The Interactive Guide to Learning Disabilities for Parents, Teachers and Children Website

LD Online is a comprehensive site for parents and teachers of students with learning disabilities (LD) as well as for individuals with learning disabilities. The site offers a section that defines learning disabilities and another that provides information and support from both professionals and parents. Also featured are numerous online articles about LD, advocacy and other issues relevant to families dealing with LD and the problems associated with LD.

<http://www.ldonline.org>

Early Connections: Technology in Early Childhood Education

Northwest Educational Technology Consortium – 2005

This website disseminates information for parents, teachers, and caregivers on a variety of topics associated with the teaching and support of the developing child. The site is divided into categories by age from birth through the primary grades. Information is provided on topics that include before/after school care, technology and implementation, software/hardware and classroom management.

<http://www.netc.org/earlyconnections/baschool/curriculum.html>

National Teacher of the Year Program

The National Teacher of the Year Program began in 1952 and

remains today the oldest national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. A national selection committee representing the major national education organizations chooses the National Teacher of the Year from among the state Teachers of the Year. The website provides information about the program as well as information about past honorees.

http://www.ccsso.org/projects/National_Teacher_of_the_Year/

Answers.com : Teacher Blogs

Within the Answers.com Blogger Directory are blogs dedicated to education and to language and technology associated with the classroom. This website contains a list of related blogs related to classroom technology. Blog topics include technology in education, general information, classroom and language issues, history/social studies and science.

http://www.teachers.answers.com/main/teachers_weblogs.jsp

Info Sheets

Accommodations and Modifications: Adjusting the Classroom Experience

Jan Baumel, MS

Schwab Learning – 2001

This sheet explains the difference between accommodation and modification in classrooms for students with special education eligibilities and defines both terms. The sheet also describes how accommodations and modifications affect students and the classroom experience.

<http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=306&q=2>

SAVE THE DATE!

The time is soon approaching for the FCTD 2007 Summer Institute on Assistive Technology.

JULY 9- 20, 2007

The FCTD Summer Institute is offered entirely online, so that you can participate when and where it is most convenient for you.

Participants will be able to apply for and receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs), issued by RESNA, for their participation.

As always, there is no fee for the Institute, as it is supported by the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Details for registration will be coming soon!

KNOWLEDGE NETWORK MEMBERS

The Elizabeth Lee Black School

Part of the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute, the Elizabeth Lee Black School in Erie, PA offers a full range of programs for children with multiple disabilities and autism who are referred to the Black School by surrounding public school districts in northwestern Pennsylvania. The 11-classroom facility features state-of-the-art technology, including computers with Internet access as well as areas for individual and group instruction and a low student-to-teacher ratio. The school encourages the acquisition and classroom implementation of assistive technology. Tuitions at the Black School, a private facility, are paid by the referring public school districts.



In addition to the Black School, the Barber Institute offers the following services and facilities for children with disabilities: early intervention for infants and pre-school students; the Happy Hearts Pre-School; a deaf/hard-of-hearing program; a private school with an autism center; programs for children with developmental delays and for high functioning children and teens; respite care; and childcare programs.

The Institute maintains additional facilities in Philadelphia and Bridgeville, PA serving the Delaware Valley and Ohio River Valley, respectively.

For more information on the Elizabeth Lee Black School and the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute, please contact: The Dr. Gertrude A. Barber National Institute
100 Barber Place
(136 East Avenue)
Erie, PA 16507
Phone: (814) 453-7661
Fax: (814) 455-1132

BNlerie@barberinstitute.org

<http://www.drbarbercenter.org/>

PATINS Project



PATINS PROJECT

An Indiana Department of Education assistive technology systems change initiative, the PATINS (Promoting Achievement Through Technology and Instruction for All Students) Project helps public schools deliver assistive technology services and implement Universal Design for Learning principles

in five regions throughout Indiana.

PATINS has established lending libraries in each of these five regions. These libraries contain equipment, software, videos, and print materials that are made available to all public school staff for preview and evaluation purposes. The libraries also offer onsite and offsite workshops and technical assistance on specific devices to local school personnel.

The project provides refurbished computer technology to qualifying public schools for use with students who are at risk, disadvantaged or who have disabilities.

The PATINS Project operates under the five Division of Exception Learning Goals, which are:

- To assist school aged children to successfully meet challenging academic and behavior standards.
- To improve early childhood programs and transitions.
- To improve and enhance post-secondary education and employment outcomes for students with disabilities.
- To improve and system-level partnerships and collaborations among families, schools and community agencies.
- To improve the quantity and quality of personnel to meet student needs.

For more information on the PATINS Project, please contact:

Central PATINS

West Central Joint Services

4730 W. Gadsden St.

Indianapolis, IN 46241

Phone: (317) 227-8544

Fax: (317) 243-5510

Contact: Vicki Hershman, PATINS State Project Director

Email: vicki.hershman@wayne.k12.in.us

<http://www.patinsproject.com/>

Bayonne, N.J. Board of Education: Department of Special Services

The Special Services Department of the Bayonne, NJ Board of Education serves students between the ages of 3 and 21 years. The district is committed to inclusive education and has received a federal grant to support practices and programs which allow students who have IEPs to remain in their neighborhood schools in general education classrooms.

Within the district, five Child Study Teams are available to each school for identification, evaluation and to determine eligibility of students for special education and related services. A district-wide school psychologist and a behavior management specialist are available via Project Support, which provides in-school counseling services to students who require these services according to their IEP.

The Department of Special Services' transition program addresses the needs of students ages 14 and older. The Student Advocacy Team that promotes student empowerment and advocacy issues has been recognized by the State of New Jersey as a "Best Practice" award recipient. Many high school students have the opportunity to participate in a supervised internship program at a variety of regional corporations.

A library at Bayonne High School provides wheelchair accessible computer stations, a large mobile projection screen for use anywhere in the library, and headsets for individual audio learning. Many AT devices are also available for loan through the library.

For more information on the Special Services in the Bayonne, NJ School Districts, please contact:

Bayonne Board of Education,

Department of Special Services

669 Avenue A

Bayonne, NJ 07002

Phone: (201) 858-5870

Contact: C. Trojan

Email: mailbag@bboed.org

<http://www.bhs.bboed.org/curriculum/sped.htm>

National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)

NASET is the professional organization for special education



teachers. The orga-

nization provides support for pre-service special ed teachers, promotes the maintenance of high professional standards for excellence and innovation, keeps special ed teachers up to date on current practices via publications and other resources and recognizes outstanding special education teachers for their efforts.

For more information on the National Association of Special Education Teachers, please contact:

National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)
1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Suite 300

Washington D.C. 20004

Phone/Fax: 1-(800) 754-4421

Contact: Dr. Roger Pierangelo, Executive Director

Email: contactus@naset.org

<http://www.naset.org/>

Giant Steps of St. Louis

Giant Steps of St. Louis is a non-profit organization that contracts with school districts to provide therapy and educational support to children with autism spectrum disorders. The organization's academic curriculum is integrated with its therapeutic program. Giant Steps encourages special education teachers, therapists and assistants to function as teams that meet frequently to assure coordination of therapies. The organization's objective is to place each child in the most inclusive environment possible. Many of the students served by Giant Steps have progressed to daily inclusion.



Giant Steps of St. Louis offers academic instruction, occupational therapy, speech therapy, music therapy, play/social communication therapy, art and physical education. Giant Steps teams participate in Special Olympics.

For more information on Giant Steps of St. Louis, please contact:

Giant Steps of St. Louis
800 Maryville Centre Drive, Suite B
St. Louis, MO 63017
Phone: (314) 989-7884
Email: giantstp@concentric.net
<http://giantsteps-stlouis.org/Home.html>

South Central Ohio Educational Service Center (ESC)

The South Central Ohio Educational Service Center (ESC) provides cost-effective services and resources to the students and schools of Adams, Jackson, and Scioto Counties in southern Ohio. The ESC offers customized services in a variety of areas such as curriculum design, technology and media services.



The Center offers professional development opportunities to help teachers learn ways to aid individuals with disabilities in their classrooms. Professional development opportunities include assessment, differentiating instruction and effective practices for teaching content standards.

ESC's South Central Ohio Media Center provides over 9,000 videos, DVDs and curriculum services to participating schools in southern Ohio. Through INFOhio, schools can obtain access to over 100,000 items that exist at other Media Centers.

For more information on the South Central Ohio Educational Service Center, please contact:

South Central Ohio Educational Service Center (ESC)
411 Court Street, Room 105
Portsmouth, OH 45662
Phone: (740) 354-7761
Fax: (740) 353-1882
<http://www.scoesc.k12.oh.us/>

Council of Educators for Students with Disabilities (CESD)

The Council of Educators for Students with Disabilities is a 4,000-member nationwide organization. The Council provides information and training to assist educators in complying with federal laws protecting students with disabilities.



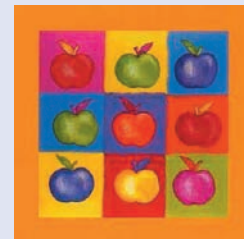
CESD provides information to members via three annual conferences in Austin, TX as well as numerous customized in-services and presentations at education service centers, school districts and campuses.

For more information on the Council of Educators for Students with Disabilities, please contact:

13091 Pond Springs Road, Suite 300
Austin, TX 78729
Phone: (512) 219-5043
Contact: Dave Richards
Email: dave@rlmedlaw.com
http://www.504idea.org/about_us.html

Oxford Area Community Schools: Office of Special Education

The Oxford Area (MI) Community Schools Special Education Department serves students with disabilities who reside in the Oxford school district.



Office of Special Education classroom support services available to district students ages birth-26 include resource room, inclusion, pre-school and center-based programs. Diagnostic and support services include a school psychologist, teacher consultant, school social worker, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and a child find coordinator.

For more information on the Office of Special Education Services, please contact:
Office of Special Education Services
Oxford Area Community Schools

105 Pontiac Street
Oxford, MI 48371
Phone: (248) 969-1844
Fax: (248) 969-1833
Contact: Jerry K. Oermann, Director
Email: oermaj01@oxford.k12.mi.us
http://www.oxford.k12.mi.us/education/dept/dept.php?sectionid=16&sc_id=1179335328&PHPSESSID=479ced59e80575643c519d4b919d5a24

The Division of Special Education: Los Angeles Unified School District

The Division of Special Education for the Los Angeles Unified School District offers program services directed towards multiple disabilities

In support of the Least Restrictive Environment concept, the district offers general education classrooms curricular modifications, behavioral interventions or assistance with social skills. This support may be direct, indirect, and/or in the form of technical support. Direct support involves assistance given to the student within the general education classroom and includes co-teaching, teaming, modeling, or small group instruction. Indirect support occurs outside the classroom and is provided in order to coordinate the instructional program. This support may include creating curricular modifications, co-planning with the general education teacher; collaborative team meetings; IEP preparation; and classroom observation.

The district's AT program provides specialized equipment and services designed to maximize functional independence in all LAUSD classrooms. Multidisciplinary teams comprised of general and special educators, speech-language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists provide support to school staff within each discipline in identifying appropriate AT devices and/or services for their students.

For more information on the Division of Special Education for the Los Angeles Unified School District, please contact:
Division of Special Education, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUD)
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 17th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 241-6701
Fax: (213) 241-8915
Contact: Donnalyn Jaque-Antón, Executive Director
Email: spec-ed@lausd.k12.ca.us
<http://sped.lausd.net/index.html>



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fctd@aed.org
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