

T/TAC BULLETIN

The Virginia Department of Education's Training & Technical Assistance Centers

An inside view

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The top ten things that you should know about assistive technology

by Glenna Gustafson

Many students with disabilities utilize assistive technologies to be more successful and independent in their daily lives. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its 1997 reauthorization requires that all students receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. Assistive technology devices and services are tools that support many students with disabilities in receiving a FAPE.

The assumption is that IEP teams and school divisions have personnel that have been trained in the selection and use of assistive technologies (AT). Unfortunately the majority of professionals that serve on IEP teams have had little or no training in the use of AT or in assistive technology decision-making. Many perceive AT as only used by students with the most complex disabilities or speech impairments. This article provides a description of the top 10 concepts you should know about assistive technology. The remainder of this *T/TAC Bulletin* provides further ideas regarding the use of AT for a wide variety of students.

Those preparing to make assistive technology decisions should keep in mind:

1. The term "assistive technology" is a legal term and as defined by IDEA includes assistive technology devices and services. An assistive technology device means "any item, piece of

equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability. Public Law 105-17, Section 602(1)."

An "assistive technology service" as defined by IDEA refers to "any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such term includes—the evaluation of the needs of such child, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment; purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by such child; selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices; coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs; training or technical assistance for such child, or, where appropriate, the family of such child; and training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services),

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- employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of such child. (IDEA: 20 U.S.C. Part A, Section 602.)”
2. Assistive technologies should focus on the use and need of a tool(s) to assist an individual with educational, recreational, and daily functional activities. These activities can include reading, writing, mathematics, positioning, hearing, self care or organization. In order to accomplish these tasks an individual may require a variety of tools to be used in a variety of situations.
 3. No one assistive technology device may be applicable for all situations nor will the same device be useful for all individuals with the same disability. In addition many individuals that do not have identified disabilities would benefit from the use of certain assistive technology devices.
 4. AT occurs along a continuum from no tech to high tech. The AT device/service that is the least complex and results in the greatest success for the students should be the first consideration.
 5. Assessment and intervention form a continuous and dynamic process. As students mature and change so will the tools that they need to experience independence and success. This means that the tools that the students are using will need to be changed as their needs change (Zabala, 1992).
 6. In order to be successful, IEP teams should utilize a structured and research based evaluation process, such as the *Student, Environment, Task, Tools* (SETT) model, or *Functional Evaluation for Assistive Technology* (FEAT). For more information on the SETT model go to: www2.edc.org/NCIP/workshops/sett/SETT_Framework.html or for FEAT go to: <http://www.psychological.com>. In addition the QIAT Guidelines should be utilized. For a description of QIAT please see "Bits and bytes" on page 4 of this *T/TAC Bulletin*.
 7. The use of assistive technology by a student does not eliminate the need for instruction in academic or social skills. Also keep in mind that students will need instruction in the use of the AT device and extended time for practice before becoming efficient users.
 8. Training and preparation of those individuals that are working with the student and the technology are essential. Individuals working with the student should be able to model the use of the technology for the student as well as perform basic troubleshooting tasks for the device. Training for these individuals should be ongoing.
 9. Assistive technology devices and services should be included throughout a student's IEP if deemed necessary for the student to benefit from FAPE. AT can be designated as either special education, a related service, or as supplementary aids and services.
 10. The assistive technology decision and selection making process should be a student-centered team process. When considering AT it is essential to have input from multiple individuals that work with the student including parents, teachers, therapist, and assistants. Each of these team members brings with them different knowledge, skills, and ideas. Most importantly the student must be included in making the decision about assistive technologies. This is perhaps one of the most overlooked areas in the AT decision making process. Failure to consider a student's input regarding a potential technology solution can be an instant formula for disaster (Richardson, 2001).
- With these top 10 considerations in mind, think about your students and whether they are participating in and benefiting from instruction in the general curriculum. If not, perhaps assistive technology may assist them in participating in, learning from, and enjoying their educational experience.

References

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Conceive, believe, achieve

Reprinted with permission by Caroline Musselwhite

I've been looking for good ideas to help students who use Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) in learning to write. I wanted to share some information that I've found. Here are a few ideas.

Expectations:

Many of the articles talk about the importance of expectations - that means that we need to expect that ALL of our students will become writers . . . and help them have that personal expectation. Remember that many children who cannot hold a crayon or a pencil can become writers by using a communication device and/or a computer. Talk to your child about writing from early childhood.

Modeling:

It's very important for children to see adults writing, and know how fun and helpful writing is for adults. Children with disabilities, especially children who don't walk independently, often miss out on everyday models of writing. For example, when Maria gets home from school, she needs to get out of her wheelchair. Today she is lying in a beanbag chair in the living room watching a video. Here are some of the literacy models she is missing, that her 4 year old brother sees:

- Mom taking down a phone number for her big sister
- Mom writing checks to pay a bill
- Dad writing a note for the postal carrier
- Big sister writing an email to her friend

Some of these models could be easily shared with Maria. For example, Mom could sit on the floor next to Maria to write those

bills. The main point is to make sure that your child sees family members writing for real purposes every day! This will help your child see many reasons for writing, and will make him or her want to write, just like everyone else in the family.

Scribbling:

Have you ever had to clean scribbles off your books, your furniture, even your walls? Scribbling is a normal part of the development of writing. We need to help AT and AAC users "scribble" using whatever material is best for them. Try these suggestions:

- For students who have good use of their hands, let them use crayons and markers, with adaptations if necessary (Talk to your special ed teacher or occupational therapist for ideas on adapting writing materials for your child.) Start this early - some studies show that children with disabilities may not get a chance to scribble using markers and crayons until they are eight years old - don't wait that long!
- For students who use AAC, let them scribble using their devices. Their exploration and selection of words, even when they don't make a lot of sense, is the equivalent to other children using a crayon to fill a page with marks. Encourage your child to write using the device. For example, "Let's write a letter to Grandma!" Then write down everything the child says, even if it makes no sense to you, and don't forget to actually send it to grandma! Another idea: after your child finishes an art project (using SpinArt, fingerpaint, or whatever), offer them the communication device to write what they've drawn. Children

can also scribble their names on projects.

- For students who use computers, or students whose devices include the alphabet, be sure to give them an alphabet page to scribble with way before you think they're "ready." Use a talking word processor such as *IntelliTalk* (www.intellitools.com), *AllWrite* (info@zygo-usa.com), or *Write OutLoud* (www.donjohnston.com). If you set the talking word processor to speak letters and words, it will speak out the scribbling, which is highly motivating. For example, Roger scribbled:

"Zzfpln tbbbbbb rrod kky"

Each time he activated the space bar, it spoke the "word" such as "zzfpln." After your child spends some time just exploring the keyboard, point out to him or her that the space makes a word, and the computer will speak the word when s/he chooses space.

I hope these ideas are helpful! Folk wisdom tells us that we should:

Conceive . . . believe . . . achieve!
Here's how that can work for our students:

Conceive:

Think of a way to help your student access lots of words and, if possible, the alphabet.

Believe:

Have high expectations for your students, and be sure that others around them also believe in them.

Achieve:

Working together, we can make it happen!

Bits and bytes: Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology – QIAT (pronounced "quiet")

by Glenna Gustafson

IDEA requires that assistive technology devices and services be considered for all students with disabilities and that these considerations are noted in the IEP. The QIAT Consortium, a nationwide collegial endeavor has worked to compile specific guidelines to assist educators in making effective AT decisions. Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services in School Settings can be used as a tool to support students, service providers, consumers, policy makers, and universities and professional developers.

There are three basic assumptions to consider when using QIAT.

- It is essential that all AT services developed and delivered are legally correct and are aligned to district policies.
- Families, caregivers, school personnel, and other needed individuals and service agencies should be involved in the AT process.
- Multidisciplinary team members involved in AT processes should abide by the code of ethics for their specific profession.

Quality indicators for administrative support

These indicators define the critical areas of administrative support and leadership for developing and delivering assistive technology services. It involves the development of policies, procedures, and other supports necessary to sustain effective assistive technology programs.

Quality indicators for assessment of assistive technology needs

These indicators are a process conducted by a team, used to identify

tools and strategies to address a student's specific need(s).

Quality indicators for documentation in the IEP

These indicators assist the IEP team to describe the role of assistive technology in the child's educational program.

Quality indicators for assistive technology implementation

These indicators pertain to the ways that AT devices and services, as included in the IEP (including goals/objectives, related services, supplementary aids and services and accommodations or modifications) are delivered and integrated into the student's educational program.

Quality indicators for evaluation of effectiveness

These indicators assist in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the AT devices and services be provided. It includes data collection and documentation to monitor changes in student performance resulting from the implementation.

For more information:

To learn more about QIAT and the specific indicators for each heading, go to:

QIAT
<http://sweb.uky.edu/~jszaba0/QIAT.html>

Quality Indicators of Assistive Technology Services
<http://www.wati.org/qualityindicators.htm>

More about AT

Assistive Technology Questions for Administrators

http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/schools/specprograms/discover_idea-edv5/OSE/AssistiveTechnology/ATfaq.pdf

This document lists ten FAQs about assistive technology and offers guidance to special education administrators.

Education Tech Points

http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/schools/specprograms/discover_idea-edv5/OSE/AssistiveTechnology/

The Education Tech Points Framework can be used to help IEP teams address questions of assistive technology throughout every step in the special education process.

Hey! Can I Try That?

http://www.hsd.k12.or.us/schools/specprograms/discover_idea-edv5/OSE/AssistiveTechnology/HCITT.pdf

This is the complete text of a workbook for students with disabilities who want to be a part of the team that helps them identify and use assistive technology.

Engaging Differences Project – The University of Kentucky

http://www.uky.edu/TLC/grants/uk_ed/index.html

Assistive Technology Assessment

<http://www.ataccess.org/resources/atk12/assessment.html>

Use these assessments to see if your school system is meeting the assistive technology needs of students with disabilities.

Assistive Technology, Special Education

<http://www.isd194.k12.mn.us/se/tech.shtml>

A great collection of AT resources.

We must say goodbye

It is with mixed emotions that we announce Barbara Flanagan, Project Director, is leaving the T/TAC at Virginia Tech. Barbara is taking on a new challenge as Director of Special Education for Pulaski County Public Schools. We congratulate Barbara on this exciting opportunity and congratulate Pulaski on their new administrator.

We will all miss seeing our good friend and colleague in our T/TAC office on a regular basis. Barbara has served Virginia Tech and Regions VI and VII for 10 years, and her absence will be strongly felt. However, she'll be working in our region, and will know who to call should she need assistance!

Best of luck, Barbara!

Free DynaVox workshop

A free 2-day DynaVox workshop is scheduled for March 24-25, 2004 at the Blacksburg Public Library from 9:00-3:00 each day.

These workshops will cover introduction to the Dynavox products, creating pages for the more advanced user and an introduction to the Series 4 product.

Please call Lora Kingma at 1-800-848-2714 or email at lkingma@vt.edu to register or for additional information.

Your computer can read aloud

by Leslie Daniel

Did you know that your computer can read aloud any text that you can highlight. It will read Word documents, emails, webpages, and anything else where you can highlight text. This option is built into Macintosh computers, and can be added to PCs. Just follow the easy steps below and your computer can read aloud to young children, individuals with visual impairments, learning disabilities, and other disabilities, or anyone else!

To make speech accessible on a Macintosh computer

1. Open System Preferences
2. Find and open the Speech preference
3. You may need to click on the tab for Spoken User Interface
4. Look for "Other spoken items" at the bottom.
5. Place a check in the box next to "Selected Text when the key is pressed"
6. At this point a box will pop up asking you to designate a key to activate speech. (Leslie chose the F5 key, as she doesn't use it for anything else).
If the box doesn't automatically pop up, click on Change key then designate a key.
7. Say OK
8. Close System Preferences.
9. If you like write, on your keyboard with a permanent marker which key is for speaking.
10. Try it out, highlight text anywhere, and press your designated "speak" key. Text should be read aloud.

Word Speak 2001 for Macintosh

Word Speak allows you to have text in Word 2001 documents read aloud using Apple Text-To-Speech technology. With this tool, you can select a voice to use to read any selection from your Word document (similar to Write OutLoud © from Don Johnston.)

To download this free software go to <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=29cd456c-3bdd-4f3c-af38-430f440be089&DisplayLang=en> and follow the onscreen directions. If this link doesn't work for some reason go to <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/> and do a search for "Word Speak 2001." I also searched by "voice" and found the software.

To obtain a screen reader for PC users

1. Go to <http://readplease.com>
2. On the menu on the left click on Downloads
3. In the middle of the screen click on "Download ReadPlease 2003 Now"
4. It should automatically begin downloading. Follow the directions as you are prompted following the download.



"You can't get better at something without regular opportunities to do it."

**Karen Erickson, University
of North Carolina**

T/TACs receive materials for working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing

by Debbie Pfeiffer, Ed.D.

Between March, 2002 and June, 2003, close to 600 professionals from every region of Virginia attended PREP Project workshops. These individuals attended one of the 20, four-hour awareness level trainings and/or the five three-day trainings designed to increase competencies for "Working with Infants and Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Their Families". Early interventionists, early childhood special educators, regular and special educators, day care providers, health professionals, administrators, speech and language pathologists, and audiologists were among the professionals represented at these trainings.

The project was funded by the Virginia Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services (Part C), and the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Many participants expressed the need for a PREP training in their school division. If you are interested in sponsoring a four-hour awareness level training or a three-day intermediate level training, please contact Diann Eaton, dweaton@vt.edu or Lora Kingma lkingma@vt.edu at the T/TAC, or Debbie Pfeiffer at dlpfeiffer@vcu.edu.

There was also a great deal of interest in borrowing the videotapes and books used in the PREP trainings. We are happy to inform you that each regional T/TAC now has the following resources available for you to borrow:

Videotapes

Teaching the Kids with High-Tech Ears: Meeting the Unique Needs of Students with Cochlear Implants in the Real World of Public Education.

Communication Choices. Explains the various communication options through families who have chosen that option.

The Nonhearing World: Understanding Hearing Loss. Explains sound, hearing, hearing loss, and the relationship between listening to speech and different kinds of hearing loss.

Families With Deaf Children. Designed for parents whose child has just been diagnosed with a significant hearing loss; other parents talk about their experiences.

Pediatric Hearing Assessment. Segments used show Auditory Brainstem Evoked Response and Otoacoustic Emissions testing being conducted on babies.

Extend-Ear Behind the Ear FM Hearing System. Dr. Mark Ross, Audiologist, explains how an FM system improves the signal to noise ratio and a simulation is provided.

Curricula or Texts

*SKI *HI Curriculum* for home-based, early intervention with deaf and hard of hearing.

INSITE Curriculum for home-based, early intervention with multidisabled, sensory impaired or dual sensory impaired

Sign Language for the Family: A Total Communication Picture Reference book.

Developing Cognition in Young Children Who are Deaf

Access for All: Integrating Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing Preschoolers by Solit, Taylor, and Bednarczyk

IDEA Advocacy for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: A Question and Answer Book for Professionals and Parents by Poitras Tucker

Cochlear Implants: A Handbook by Poitras Tucker

If you are interested in borrowing any of these materials, please call or search the T/TAC library at Virginia Tech by going to <http://www.ttac.vt.edu/libraryframe.html>. You can request to have 5 items sent directly to you.



46th Annual SHAV Conference

The Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV)'s 46th annual conference will be held in Fredericksburg, Virginia on March 11 - 13, 2004 at the Holiday Inn Select.

This exciting conference highlights proven clinical methods and innovative strategies for both speech language pathologists and audiologists.

Information is posted on the SHAV website at <http://www.shav.org/annual.htm> Registration information and information on the speakers and schedule is available.

Contact jenshav@vhva.org with any questions.

The power of vision: Vol. IV No. 1: The power of voice

A Publication of the AbleNet Consortium for Excellence in Special Education
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Imagine...

Someday, every child will be able to experience The Power of Voice because every child will have a way to effectively communicate with others...and dozens of opportunities across home and school environments to express their wants and needs, share stories and ideas, provide information and participate in learning activities along with their peers.

Making this vision a reality is the dream of parents and educators across the county, and although we have along way to go, there are some simple steps we can take to move us in the right direction.

John Costello

John Costello has been a speech-language pathologist at the Communication Enhancement Center, Children's Hospital Boston for 18 years where he focuses on AAC assessment. He also consults with schools and community residences about providing foundations for successful communication through AAC strategies.

AbleNet: You've often been heard saying, "There are no prerequisites for access to simple voice output communication." In your opinion, what are the key benefits, from a quality of life perspective, when individuals with significant developmental cognitive disabilities are provided with access to voice-output communication?

John: The power of voice can only be learned and understood by experiencing it. After all, it is hard to know what you don't know! For many people, it is only through the experience of using voice output and receiving the reinforcement that comes with it - the social attention, the tangible, the rub on the back, the break from an activ-

ity, etc. - that the true power of voice output may be understood.

To expect someone to understand how to use voice output before you make it available would be like expecting a newborn to understand the power of crying before allowing her to cry. Instead, the only way we can expect a child to learn the power of crying and finally the power of communication is the opportunity to experience it. Through this experience, and more importantly the experience of the consequence it yields, meaningful communication is born. How can we expect this to be any different for individuals with significant disabilities?

Regarding a 'quality of life' perspective, I am a firm believer that each of us is the sum of our experiences. If an opportunity has not been made available to a person, then regardless of potential competence, it will never be demonstrated. The ability to learn to communicate is a basic human right. If a basic human right is not addressed, than the foundations of 'quality of life issues' are not being fully respected. Supporting the quality of life for many people with the most significant disabilities is an enormous job and I think sometimes overwhelms many families and service providers. It becomes much simpler, however, when one realizes that the goal is the opportunity to communicate. And these opportunities can be provided repeatedly throughout the day using structured and incidental exposure.

Benefits of Voice-output

If students never learn to independently and intentionally communicate using a voice output communication aid, access to one is still essential as it provides oppor-

tunities to gain independence and enhance social/emotional experiences and skill development via:

Participation...by being more actively involved in a variety of experiences like greeting others at a social gathering, singing songs with others, ordering food in a restaurant, playing games with friends or doing an interview for the school newspaper.

Social closeness...by making it easier to connect with others. Peers, teachers, and family members are sure to respond when a child initiates an interaction with "Come play with me", "I love you", "You look nice today", or "Want to have lunch with me?"

Inclusion...voice output allows students more opportunities to be meaningfully included in activities with classmates, neighbors, family and friends. Field trips, class plays, science experiments, and in-school jobs are a few examples.

Learning about communication...through daily experience with their voices, students will have opportunities to experience the power of communication. This may be by gaining attention, making comments, asking questions, turn-taking or learning that language is meaningful by simply observing the consequence of using speech output (cause-effect).

Try This...

Record a song into a single message communication aid (e.g. a One Step or BIGmack communicator) that can be sung 'in round' such as Row Row Row Your Boat. As needed, provide assistance to a person using the VOCA to activate

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their device and join in the song at the right 'entry point'. Other people (using natural voice or VOCA) should join in so the song is sung 'in round' with at least three different voices participating.

"Ready, on your mark, get set, GO!" From races to pie eating contests, there is no one more central and important to the success of competitions than the person who announces "GO." Program a One Step with the entire message, or use a Step by Step communication aid to sequence each segment—"ready, on your mark, get set, go"—for separate activations by the student.

Provide an opportunity for a person who is inclined to 'fade into the woodwork and watch the world go by' to accidentally speak out a social message. Actual messages that have been used include "Don't forget about me!" or "I could do that better than you can...I just choose not to!" I've put a BIGmack communicator in a chair with someone so it is activated when he or she moves or adjusts his/her positioning, or placed it in an area toward which a person tends to lean. Such messages are sure to elicit a social response, such as "How could I forget you Mary, you're one of my favorite people," or "Hey Bob, those sound like fighting words!"

More to Know...

It may be easier for your students to identify a spoken message as their own communication if the recorded voice is a) always the same voice and b) not the voice of a familiar and readily available person. After all, a natural speaker identifies with his or her own voice, which does not change day to day. AND it may be confusing for the student to understand that THEY are communicating if it is their friend's or classmate's voice talking.

When social messages that elicit responses from communication partners are recorded—versus comments about schedule or messages that everyone already knows—it is more likely to result in meaningful and genuine responses from communication partners. The quality of these responses will provide a richer learning opportunity for the person who is just starting to explore the impact of speech output on their world.

Ablenet

Visit the AbleNet Web site for more resources and ideas. New and fun ideas are added weekly!!
<http://www.ablenetinc.com/ideas/POVIdeas.htm>>www.ablenetinc.com/ideas/POVIdeas.htm



The Musselwhite 30-second Rule:

"If you can't set it up in 30 seconds, it's not going to happen"

Caroline Musselwhite

Brochures are in your school!

Autism Spectrum Disorders: Information Today, Strategies Tomorrow

March 4-5, 2004

**Southwest Virginia Higher Ed Center
Abingdon, VA**

March 4

We will offer a choice of intensive, full day sessions entitled:

- Autism and Literacy: Beyond Emergent
- Developmental Individual Difference Relationship-Based Program (DIR) and Sensory Integration
- Structuring for success: Structured Teaching for Students with Autism
- Teaching Students with Asperger Syndrome: Strategies that Work

March 5

Susan Norwell will provide the keynote "Autism a Personal Paradigm Shift."

Participants may then choose 3 breakout sessions from a variety that will cover social skills, communication, and teaching strategies.

Register online at:

<http://www.conted.vt.edu/asd/>

We hope to see you there!

“On a national level, educational performance standards, curriculum demands and graduation requirements are being increased. Students with learning differences or disabilities will be held to the same increased standards. They cannot be denied access to general education expectations or standardized testing and need to be provided with appropriate and reasonable services to maintain them. Without appropriate support and services, these students will frequently be at risk for grade retention, not be able to remain in general education, not be competitive for a degree (even a high school diploma) and become a statistic for “dropping out” or underachieving.”

© 2002 Leonard V. Pisano, Ph.D.

Coming soon: Math enhanced scope and sequence website

from Virginia Department of Education

The Virginia Department of Education is creating a website for the Enhanced Scope and Sequence Project. The Project is designed to provide teachers across the Commonwealth with a tool to deliver SOL-based content area instruction to a diverse population of learners, including those with unique needs and learning challenges.

The website will feature:

- Lesson plans and activities aligned to the Standards of Learning (SOL) with strategies to facilitate differentiated instruction
- Researched based information and links
- Content instructional strategies for all learners
- Specific content strategies for students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency
- Information on assessment accommodations for students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency

Who will benefit from the website?

- General educators
- Special educators
- Co-teaching teams
- LEP teachers

Stay tuned!

Instructions for accessing and navigating the Enhanced Scope and Sequence Website will be featured in upcoming issues of T/TAC newsletters.

SOL are truly Inspiration-al!

By Helen Barrier

With SOL at the top of every student's, teacher's and parent's list of concerns, Inspiration © Software, Inc. has designed *Inspired Standards Match* © to help school districts integrate Kidspiration and Inspiration © into their instruction.

Don't miss the opportunity to visit www.inspiration.com and click on "Standards matches" and you'll see the 17 states that have met their match. Then click on "VA state standards matches" and you can download (in PDF) all the standards that are directly supported by this software.

The standards that match will be highlighted in pink with green notes that provide suggested templates and activities included in the software. Each of these tools can be used as style sheets or starter documents that can be individualized to meet the needs of all learners.

Check it out- Virginia's SOL are truly INSPIRATION-al!

“Technology is a tool that serves a set of educational goals, and if we don't think about what we want the technology for first, we end up with technology driven solutions that have very little impact in the lives of children and in our educational system.”

Linda Roberts, U.S.
Department of Education

**T/TAC Technology
Network Conference**
The largest assistive technology
and augmentative communication
conference in southwestern VA

AT and Aug Com



Making the Connections '04

June 24-25, 2004
Hotel Roanoke and
Conference Center
Roanoke, VA

Ideas in Assistive Technology and Augmentative Communication

Keynote Speaker: Caroline Musselwhite

Caroline Musselwhite is an assistive technology specialist with more than 20 years of experience working with children and adolescents with severe disabilities, in a variety of settings.

Dr. Musselwhite has authored a number of books on a range of topics, including *Emergent Literacy Success*, *Communication Programming for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, and *Reading Activities Project for Older Students (R.A.P.S.)* as well as a number of software programs for children with disabilities, e.g. *Poetry Collection 1*.

See the article "Conceive, Believe, Achieve" by Dr. Musselwhite on page 3 of this *T/TAC Bulletin*.

Who Should Attend

There's something for everyone working in all age groups, pre-school through high school, who want to learn more about using technology to support students with disabilities.

Sessions on:

- ☆ AT and Literacy
- ☆ Accessing the Curriculum Using AT and Aug Com
- ☆ Make and Take Demonstrations
- ☆ Hands on Computer Sessions
- ☆ Vendor Product Demonstrations

Schedule at a glance

June 24, 2004

8:30-9:00 Registration and continental breakfast

9:00-11:45 Poetry Power with Caroline Musselwhite

11:45-1:00 Lunch (provided)

1:00-1:45 Vendor sessions

2:00-5:00 Your choice of extended sessions

June 25, 2004

8:30-9:00 Registration and continental breakfast

9:00-10:15 Breakout sessions

10:30-12:00 Breakout sessions

12:00-1:00 Lunch (provided)

1:15-2:45 Breakout sessions

3:00-4:15 Breakout sessions

Registration Fee

The registration fee is \$65.00 for both days of the conference and includes one of Caroline Musselwhite's books, other materials lunch and continuous breaks on both days.

How to Register

Register on-line through our secure server at <https://www.conted.vt.edu/ssl/augcom/>

Additionally, brochures with registration forms will come to your school this spring.

For More Information

If you have questions or desire more information about this conference, please email gsgustaf@vt.edu or lkingma@vt.edu.

If you are a person with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this conference, please discuss your needs at (540) 231-6248, (800) 848-2714 or TDD (540) 231-3315 at your earliest convenience.

Hold the dates,
we hope to see you there!

This year's conference
will be the best yet!



T/TAC staff directory

Mark your Calendars!
Access for All:
Supporting
Students with
Moderate to
Significant
Disabilities
Third Annual Institute
June 28-29, 2004
Lynchburg, VA

Sponsored by:

The VA Department of Education, the Training and Technical Assistance Centers across Virginia and Together We Can: Virginia's Deaf-Blind Project

About the institute:

This institute is about access for all children. IDEA '97 special education regulations require that all students must have access to the general curriculum. In Virginia the general curriculum is steered by the Standards of Learning (SOL).

Who should attend:

This institute is designed for families and professional members of educational teams. Ideas and strategies will be presented that will help students with moderate to significant disabilities access the general education curriculum.

Brochures are coming to your school soon!

Virginia Tech

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Mission

The mission of Virginia's Training and Technical Assistance Centers is to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth–22 years). The Centers provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth.

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Region 6

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