

# The Monitor

PROVIDING A LINK TO QUALITY EDUCATION THROUGH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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Milwaukee Public  
Schools Division of  
Special Services -  
Assistive Technology  
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Assistive Technology  
Initiative*



Here is the first issue of the Monitor to be available only on line! Please share with your colleagues who maybe were not aware of the change. There are so many excellent resources and networking opportunities within this newsletter... and we are always looking for more to add!

In this month's highlight photo, Luther, an art student is using an adaptive paint roller to create a mural for a program. By taping a foam paint roller to an 8 foot piece of 1" PVC pipe, and then adjusting it to the student's grasp, Luther was able to paint in the clouds on the mural.

To update you on the WTAC Conference for 2005, we regret to inform you that there will no longer be a Wisconsin Technology Access Conference in Milwaukee. Due to a variety of reasons, including local budget cuts, lack of availability of substitute teachers, and a need to directly service students and teachers in the classrooms, other alternative means to inform and support teachers are being explored. There are other annual conferences in Wisconsin that you may want to look at; the Eau Claire Conference in March, Oshkosh Special Education Conference in February, and the WATI Summer Training Institute in June.

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## **AT in Action** *Assistive Technology for Writing, Karen Stindt*

One of the most prominent areas that assistive technology can assist students with disabilities is in the area of writing. Assistive technology can help with the motor aspects of writing for children who have motor deficits. It can also help with the writing process for students who have difficulty with organizing information for stories or reports. I have spent the past 20 years working in the public schools as an OT with students who have difficulties with handwriting and other motor skills. Assistive technology has greatly impacted the lives of many of these children as it has been able to help them perform motor tasks that are beyond their current motor abilities. Students with Cerebral Palsy or other neurological difficulties have been able to use the keyboard, a switch, an adapted computer access keyboard or other types of input for writing. They have gone from being able to use a mouth stick to hunt and peck on a keyboard to using sophisticated software aligned with the movements they possess to input text into the computer.



From using a switch to scan an onscreen keyboard, to a touch window, to using a headmaster, they are able to input text to the computer and begin the writing process. I have also spent a lot of time working on handwriting skills with students who have mild motor deficits. Many times these

children can learn the motor aspects of writing but due to slow speed, difficulties with spelling, difficulties with organizing what they want to write, they are not functional in the classroom. For the past several years, I have worked with many students who are able to master the fine motor skills of handwriting but due to the deficits previously mentioned they are not demonstrating the ability to perform written tasks in the classroom. I would like to share with you some of the strategies and techniques that I have worked on to make the children with mild disabilities more successful in the classroom



When working with students with mild disabilities, there are many techniques that can be utilized to improve fine motor skills that directly assist with handwriting. Mary Benbow MS OTR has developed an observational checklist for hand skills for students in kindergarten and first grade. Practicing the skills has helped many children to develop the fine motor abilities that will allow them to have better control of their hands for handwriting activities. Some of these activities include increasing wrist extension and stabilizing the wrist on the writing surface so that the movements are made entirely with the fingers rather than the wrist and forearm or shoulder. Drawing small circles (1/8 to 1/4 inch in diameter) and coloring them in also helps refine the movements needed for handwriting. Picking up objects such as pennies and hiding them in your hand and then bringing them from your

palm back to your fingertips and thumb (without using your other hand) also improves dexterity and coordination of the hand. Another activity is inching up and down the pencil. If a child holds the pencil at the eraser end and "inches" towards the tip, this helps strengthen the muscles that provide an appropriate grasp of the pencil. Holding a pencil with the writing hand and then flipping to the eraser end, without the use of the other hand, also helps improve hand dexterity. Using colored pencils that have different colors on each end to make color patterns, practices this movement in a fun way.

Using these activities to strengthen the hand, and to improve coordination and dexterity greatly improves the underlying skills for handwriting. Another activity that helps students improve their ability to learn to write letters is teaching them to rely on their kinesthetic sense. This is done by having them practice writing with their eyes closed. If you ask them to write something that they already know how to write, for example their name, with their eyes closed, they are often surprised that they are able to do this.

Practicing writing with your eyes closed helps them learn to rely on their muscle memory. Emphasis is then placed on having the eyes monitor what the hand does to keep the letters on the line. Many times however, students learn to improve their fine motor and handwriting skills yet, when they get in the classroom the skills deteriorate. This is mostly due to the cognitive load that is added to the handwriting activity.

(Continued on Page 5.)

# Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative

## From the Director

We are moving into spring, a time for new growth and development. It's time to start thinking about how you will grow professionally, and be ready to face the fall and new students with new assistive technology challenges. Beginning in July 2004, PI 34 will be the new guidelines for professional development. Initial Educators will have a Professional Development Plan outlining personal strategies for increasing knowledge, skill, and disposition in at least two areas of the Wisconsin Teacher Standards. Individuals holding a Professional Educator License will have to develop a similar plan, though the make up of the review team differs. Professional development goals will be set, rationalized, strategies for achievement described. These provide logical points to review your growth and goals in the area of assistive technology. Keep in mind the myriad of opportunities provided by WATI to update your knowledge and skills in this area. Don't hesitate to include us in your plans. Often formal coursework is included in professional development plans. I encourage you to consider pursuing a license in assistive technology. Here is an excerpt from the DPI web page that describes the requirements (<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dlsis/tel/pi3sub7.html#pi338>). Currently St. Norbert College in De Pere is the only higher education institution offering this license ([www.snc.edu/adaped/](http://www.snc.edu/adaped/)). But you can make inquiries at your favorite higher education institution and ask them to get the ball rolling.

For more info on the Assistive Technology License, see page 7.

See you this Summer!

Liz

## WATI Summer Institute

The Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative Summer Institute is just over the horizon. Can you believe it? Summer is almost here!

Some new and old features of the Summer Institute can be found this year. Traditionally Summer Institute is held the last two weeks in June. Because of the way the calendar falls this year, it will be the last week and a half of June, although it will still have eight full days of training opportunities.

The week of June 21-25, 2004, will be the traditional face-to-face full day workshops, held in Amherst, WI once again. From Monday through Friday, five to six workshops are scheduled, giving you 25-30 training options. Nowhere else can you find this many in depth training opportunities in assistive technology in such a short period of time!

To add to that, from June 28 through June 30, six additional full day workshops will be offered. These will be held via distance education delivered to the four corners of the state of Wisconsin! There will be two sites in each of the following geographical areas: Chippewa Falls (Northwest), Fennimore (Southwest), Milwaukee (Southeast), and Green Bay/Gillett (Northeast). Each of the two sites will hold a different workshop each day. This will allow those who are unable to travel to Amherst the week before to attend three of six different workshops in their own geographical area. We hope to provide training opportunities to all AT service providers in Wisconsin this way.

The schedule for the Summer Institute is posted on the WATI website (<http://www.wati.org>). This year we have two special guest presenters.

Dan Herlihy will be presenting on adapting books using multimedia and Karen Kangas on seating and positioning. We are extremely fortunate to get these two nationally known presenters to join us this June! As in previous years, many of our Wisconsin residents who are also nationally known assistive technology specialists will be presenting as well. And many other of your colleagues, who may not be on the 'national speaking circuit' but have terrific ideas to share, will be conducting workshops as well.

Watch for more information coming your way on the WATI Summer Institute. If we have a current address and/or email address for you from past Leadership Institutes or Summer Institutes you should receive an announcement via email. If you would like to be sure that you get a notice sent to you, email your name, address, and email address to WATI at [info@wati.org](mailto:info@wati.org).

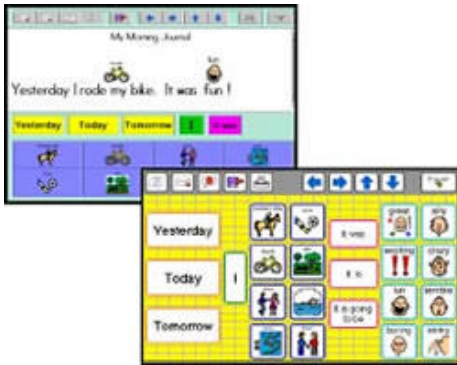
## New Items of Interest

*IntelliShare – What is it? When is it?*  
Elizabeth A. Lahm

Do you have enough time to implement all of the ideas that you have for instructional materials and strategies to use them? If you don't, and who does, IntelliShare is a concept and a place worth visiting.

IntelliShare is a sharing activity sponsored by IntelliTools for individuals who create things for or with the IntelliTools products to share them with other potential users. It provides a great opportunity to maximize the benefit of having and using IntelliTools products because you don't have to make all the materials yourself. You are not alone in desiring good teaching materials and strategies for your students and don't have to be alone in development. Although your

students are unique in their needs, there are similar students in other classrooms. Other teachers have created and shared materials that may only need minor modifications to be appropriate for your students.



Similarly, what you create can help another teacher somewhere. That's what IntelliShare is all about – sharing. IntelliTools has a place on their website for you to exchange your ideas and materials with others.

It is located at: [www.intellitools.com](http://www.intellitools.com). Products covered at the site include Overlay Maker, IntelliTalk II, IntelliPics, IntelliPics Studio, IntelliMathics, and ClickIt! An example is the Journal in 3 Tenses activity submitted by Solana Reed. IntelliKeys overlays were created to help her students write personal journals.

What if you don't have these IntelliTools products? You can still use many of the activities by downloading free players for most of these programs.

In addition to maintaining a website exchange, IntelliTools also holds IntelliShare Local Conferences at IntelliShare Centers. One such conference will be held May 4-5, 2004 in Milton, WI, at CEAS 2. The conference features intensive training in the latest IntelliTools products as well as networking and sharing. For more information about this and other IntelliShare Conferences, look under Training at [www.wati.org](http://www.wati.org).

**Test Talker** is a software program that makes adapting tests, forms and worksheets a breeze. The program holds the formatting of the document scanned in, easily adapts areas in the

form that need to be completed through a menu bar of point and click features, then reads the document to the user if needed. The program is from the folks who created the text reader, WYNN and is currently on a state buy through WATI.

Test Talker has two modes, teacher and student. In the teacher mode tests can be adapted to the needs of the student through a tool bar of adaptation features. The tool bar is easy to use decreasing the need to use drop down windows. For those familiar with WYNN's toolbar the ease of use is similar. Adaptation supports include Dynamic Zoning which allows you to order how a test is read, features for adapting True/False, Multiple Choice, Fill-in, and Extended Answers on tests and forms, a wordbank creator and an easy port to transfer a file already in a digital (computerized) format such as files from MS Word or PDF files into Text Talker through a virtual printer. Adapted tests can then be sent to "reading" or "work" stations for completion.

In the student mode: The test or form can be completed on a computer allowing those who struggle with writing or reading.

The program was quick to learn taking about 5 minutes to get it up and running. As with WYNN using a recommended scanner eased many of the setup issues. Documents scan quickly and I was soon into adapting the test. With the image up on screen, follow the tip sheets provided at the Freedom Scientific Website to get started.

[http://www.freedomscientific.com/LSG/products/testtalker\\_tipsheets.asp](http://www.freedomscientific.com/LSG/products/testtalker_tipsheets.asp)

#### **Navigating the Tool Bar:**

**Read Button:** Reads the text highlighted  
**Scan:** activates scanner  
**New, Open, Close, Save and Print:** Document Handling functions

**Point and click test fields:** **Fill In:** Creates text boxes over sections that need a written answer. You can limit the number of lines available.

**Multiple Choice:** can choose to auto group 4 answers so that only one can be selected. Manual mode allows the user to select any or all the answers.  
**True False:** allows the 2 answers to be grouped so that only one can be selected.  
**Clean Up:** This feature allows you to go into the document and fix a variety of problems. Poorly scanned words can be corrected, Words on charts and maps can be highlighted, so the names can be read, pronunciations can be corrected and graphs or math problems can be formatted to read better.  
**Student/Teacher mode:** To go to test taking mode press the graduation cap and to toggle back to teacher mode click on the black board and teacher.

#### **Menu Functions:**

**View:** allows you to make text bigger all smaller with zoom feature  
**Dynamic Zoning:** Allows the test to be read in an order that you prefer the student to see. If a test has columns test talker will work its way down the column. However if the test is written with # 1 in the right column and # 2 in the left column than dynamic zoning tells the reader to work back and forth between the column.  
**Pronunciation Editor:** Teaches the computer how to say difficult words. Aligning Answer blanks will straighten out the answers of the test.

**TestTalker Getting started: Teacher Mode** 1) Open Testtalker 2) Scan, import or download tests, worksheets or documents to be completed in the TestTalker program.

3) Use Dynamic Zoning to reorder the reading order before doing other fixes. Only use if needed. An example: Test Talker will read down through a column of test questions yet on the document scanned, the order of the test crosses the columns. ie column 1 has #s 1,3,5 and Column 2 has #s 2,4,6. Dynamic zoning allows the program to read the text in the correct order. **Special note:** Do the dynamic zoning before doing other adaptations.

*TestTalker*, (cont.)

4) Use **Clean-Up** to fix poor scans. A common problem is a graph or chart that the OCR software reads as letters. Or the OCR misses names on a diagram that are not horizontal.

5) Use **Fill-in, Extended Answer, Multiple Choice, and True/False** to add the correct answer feature to the test. Add drop down menus or wordbanks to the document if needed. Then, try the document out using Student Mode.  
Submitted by Marcia Obukowicz

### ***Assistive Technology for Writing, Karen Stindt, (cont. from page 3)***

When students are doing handwriting activities, such as copying in a handwriting workbook, they can concentrate on how the writing looks and make it as neat as possible. However when they are asked to answer questions or to do other writing tasks that are more complex than simply copying, their focus is no longer on handwriting, but on the questions and their answers. They are trying to juggle too many things at one time and can't focus on the handwriting. Making modifications such as allowing single word answers instead of complete sentences, circling answers, drawing lines to answers, using word banks, numbering answers and putting the number in the answer blank, as well as circling multiple-choice and not rewriting it are all ways to help compensate for poor handwriting and let the child focus on the content of the activity.

As a child moves up in the grades, more time is spent on activities that require handwriting. Activities such as notetaking become very frustrating for the child with fine motor difficulties. With the availability of computers and portable word processors, many students have chosen to use keyboarding as a method of producing written work. To become an efficient keyboarder requires upwards of 100 hours of practice. Once again the student with motor difficulties may be able to learn the task, but many times the task does not become automatic. As soon as the cognitive load is placed on the keyboarding activity, keyboarding becomes more difficult. Another way for students to input text to the computer is by using voice recognition. Voice recognition has greatly improved since its first inception. I have been using this program with students with learning disabilities as young as third grade. Success rates vary, however students seem to be able to establish a voice file and become proficient with the software in much less time than it takes to become a successful keyboarder. Voice recognition also assists with spelling and reading. Students learn to visually attend to the words as they are printed on the screen to ensure accuracy. Voice recognition will not misspell a word but it can put in an incorrect word. As the children go through the correction process, they must visually look at the words to determine what word they want. New features such as 'spell that' and 'play that' allow the child to hear a playback of the exact word they spoke as well as to hear the computer read the word it types. Then they can determine if the computer put the correct word in. In the future, voice recognition will be available in the mainstream as it is seen now with automated phone answering services that allow selections to be made by voice rather than through the numeric keypad on the phone.

As the students learn to use voice recognition, it is important for them to determine what is the best tool for them to use for various assignments. They have to be taught that voice recognition is not the correct tool for all written language activities. Voice recognition works best for activities that require lengthy answers, projects that may need to be edited or revised or projects in which spelling is an important factor. For worksheets or assignments that only require one or two word answers or multiple-choice, the student needs to recognize that handwriting generally will work better than voice recognition. Understanding this hierarchy of tool use for written language will ensure that the child does not become frustrated by trying to complete a simple task with a complex tool such as voice recognition. On the other hand if the activity or assignment is complex, needs revising, requires multiple time frames to complete or needs accurate spelling, voice recognition may be the appropriate tool. I have tried to summarize some of the ways that I have used assistive technology to help students with mild disabilities perform written tasks. I hope you will be able to find one or two things that will help you and your students. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email ([kstindt@cesa6.k12.wi.us](mailto:kstindt@cesa6.k12.wi.us)) or phone (920) 236-0585. Karen Jackson Stindt MS OTR

**PS I wrote this using voice recognition as it is much faster for me than keyboarding. I love it!**



### Used Equipment Marketplace

The Used Equipment Marketplace (UEM) has always been listed in the *Monitor*. With the end of the paper version of the *Monitor* we have decided to streamline the UEM a bit. You will now find an online version of the *Monitor* newsletter on the MPS website and on the WATI website. To ensure that you get timely notices when new *Monitor*'s are published online, please email Cori Nelson at [cnelson@cesa6k12.wis.us](mailto:cnelson@cesa6k12.wis.us) and ask to be added to the notice list. You will receive a brief email telling you when each new edition is available.

This is also a good time to remind you of the purpose of the UEM and how to use it.

The Used Equipment Marketplace offers a place to list items that you may want to sell or donate because you no longer need them. Or, you may be in search of an item to either buy or receive as a donation. WATI does not physically collect or keep these items. We are a liaison between the seller and the buyer. To receive contact information about an item that is listed, call WATI. Tell us what item you are interested in and we will give you the appropriate information.

You will find the Release of Information form on the WATI and the MPS websites. You will need to print the form, fill it out and send it to WATI at the following address: WATI - Cori Nelson, Polk Library, 800 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh, WI 54901. If you have any questions, call Cori at 800-991-5576 or email her at [cnelson@cesa6k12.wis.us](mailto:cnelson@cesa6k12.wis.us).

Item No	Description	Asking Price
199B	Rubbermaid polystyrene bath transfer seat, large seat and back.	\$30
199C	2002 Prairie View foldable aluminum ramp for easy installation in Mini van side door opening, 26' x 6'	\$300 OBO
200A	Rifton Gait Trainer, size medium (up to 75 lbs.), excellent condition - frame and hip, chest & arm prompts w/detachable Velcro straps.	\$600 OBO
200B	2001 Detecto pediatric weight and bar scale for sitting or lying down, 40 lb. capacity, excellent condition.	\$275 OBO
201A	Hoyer Lift, new, never used (child through adult).	\$300
201B	Guardian Bath Chair Model #9400, mesh w/restraints, PVC frame, excellent condition.	\$100
201C	Rifton Potty Chair Model #882, size large, wood w/restraints, excellent condition.	\$100
201D	Rifton Swing Model #8831 size large, mesh w/restraint straps, PVC frame, excellent condition.	\$30
203A	1999 Ford E150 Econoline full size van w/ 6' full cut dropped floor, Crow River Vangster lift, E-Z lock, removable (quick release) passenger's chair in front, 32,000 miles, one owner.	\$28,000.
203B	Hospital Bed-Twin Size, Excellent condition, used by small child.	\$250
204	Kid Kart TL CL2000 (used 3 months) Excellent Condition, Comes with Pediatric Butterfly Harness, lap belt, removable storage bag and tray, Sunshade, Wheel Locks, adjustable arm rests & knee angle. Max. child weight 75#. Retail \$3894.	\$1,200 OBO
205A-205K	Alpha Smart 2000 it is a small portable word processor which can be used with a Mac or PC computer. Retail \$408 (11 for sale)	\$100 per unit.
205L-205P	Touch Window by Bimark 9-15 inch monitor ABD Retail \$400 (5 for sale)	\$75 per unit.
206A	Freestyle Aug Communication Device (less than 3 years old) Retail \$7,046. Comes with case, Speaking Dynamically, Boardmaker, and extra battery.	\$1,000

Used Equipment Marketplace, Continued...

206B	Grandstander, excellent condition, Quad adaptations if needed. Retail \$2400.	\$800 OBO
206C	Myotek Tes machine One 2 One TES (Therapeutic Electrical Stimulation machine), case and extra leads/wires. Retail \$1200.	\$175
208	Geraventa Stair Trac II, portable wheelchair lift/stair climber. Retail \$6,000.	\$2000
Item #	Items Wanted	Asking Price
202	Macintosh with Color Monitor, Color Printer, CD Rom	
207	Electric wheelchair or scooter to support up to 350#, right hand use, wide seat, leg lifts on wheelchair. (This lady is in a nursing home would like to have donation or small payment.)	Looking for used equipment in range of \$500-\$1000
209	Dynarec 2C dynamic communication system, New battery 303, ac power cor, all manuals, Daessymount plate.	\$1000

### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY LICENSE CRITERIA

Here is an excerpt from the DPI web page that describes the requirements (<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dlsis/tel/pi3sub7.html#pi338>).

#### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY - 858.

A regular license in assistive technology - 858 may be issued to a person who holds a regular license which requires a bachelor's degree under subchapter VII and who has completed a concentration in assistive technology including the following:

- (a) Psychology and nature of the exceptional child.
- (b) Curriculum modification and instructional strategies through use of assistive technology.
- (c) Practicum in assistive technology.

Contact a university near you to begin your professional plans soon!

The Monitor is looking for ideas for articles, websites of interest, tips and tricks with the tools of assistive technology and articles of YOUR successes with low to high technology with you or your students. Please send to:

Sue Loesl, Monitor Editor  
loeslsd@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us

THANK YOU !



Julius also enjoys painting with the paint roller.

## *Dates to Remember*

### **WATI SUMMER INSTITUTE**

**June 21-25, 2004**-Amhearst, WI

**June 28 through June 30, 2004** : Chippewa Falls  
(Northwest), Fennimore (Southwest),  
Milwaukee (Southeast),  
and Green Bay/Gillett (Northeast).

Call 1-800-991-5576 for details

The Schedule is available at

(<http://www.wati.org>)

*The Monitor* is a part of MPS Assistive Technology and the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative. If you wish to become involved in either program, or would like to submit articles or ideas for articles, contact:

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