



DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

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Alternative Financing

Part 1

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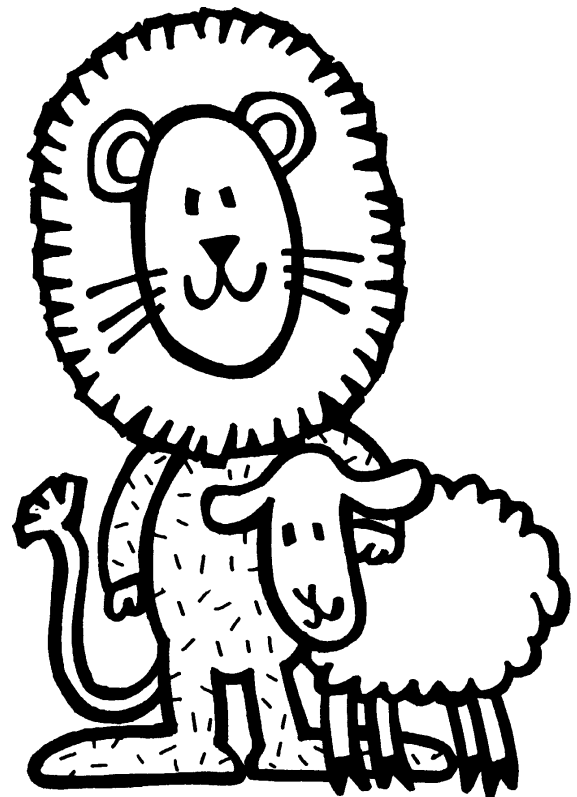
Excerpt from Blueprint for the Millenium: An Analysis of Regional Hearings on Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities

The Need for Financing Options

Problems with the affordability of assistive technology (AT) devices and services were common themes for presenters at all five hearings. Access to appropriate and effective technology-related assistance is most often dependent upon third party funding. Despite the positive efforts at systems change at local, State, and national levels during the past 10 years, entitlement to public funding of AT devices and services is not self-enforcing. Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act, policy interpretations of Medicaid/Medicare laws and regulations, and legal precedents established under the Americans with Disabilities Act have all added to a framework of financial support for technology assistance in the home, classroom, and workplace. Despite these positive efforts, witnesses at each hearing described substantial barriers to funding AT through public education, rehabilitation, and health care service systems. As the number of individuals with disabilities and their need for AT increases, the current strain on available public and private third-party funding sources is likely to worsen.

Questions about financing can be raised at many points along the AT continuum, for example, basic research and product development (who pays and for what research?), marketing and distribution systems, consumer purchase, maintenance, and post acquisition support. Similar questions surround the issues of AT services and the need for coordination, as well as the funding, evaluation, training, purchase, and installation of AT devices.

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Accessible Learning

by Lorianne Hoenninger

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Locating software for older students with cognitive disabilities, that is simultaneously age appropriate, life skills oriented and at an optimal difficulty level has always been a challenge. This month we will explore some of the newest software for this group of students.

LatticeWork Software at <http://www.latticeworksw.com> produces several shareware programs for the Windows platform that are perfect for this population. Recently, new versions of several of their titles have been released, and are better than ever. **Roxie's Reading Fish** (\$9.95), is a Go Fish game in which students easily learn basic, high-frequency words from the pre-school age to late-second grade level. In **Roxie's Math Fish** (\$9.95), Roxie, plays "Go Fish" with a student, but, instead of asking for a number, Roxie asks, "Please give me your cards that equal" and says a number corresponding to the result of an addition, subtraction, multiplication or division equation. **Rosie's ABC Fish** (freeware) is an alphabet and number recognition instruction program for students to learn their upper and lower case letters and numbers to 100.

All the new versions have a new, better-quality voice and allow the incorporation of custom images as part of this game. The words on the "Go

Fish" cards have been enlarged for greater readability. Roxie's Reading and Math Fish now also incorporate a feature where the parent or teacher can record their own words, and enter their word/math problem lists into the program with an easy-to-use database. Word/fact lists are easy to enter, select, modify and delete when no longer needed. With these features, the child can now learn words/math facts with which they are having difficulty, or words that they would like to learn to read, or words in a book they will be reading, extending the program's life considerably. With purchase of the full version, the capacity to add and record customized vocabulary lists is available.

When a "Reading Go Fish" game is completed, Roxie then sets up a "memory" game. This problem solving game provides a fun reward game. To play, the child needs to find pairs of words and patterned tiles. When a match is made, Roxie will say that word. The words used are all words from the next reading level. In this way, the child painlessly begins to learn the next set of words he or she will encounter in the next levels of the game. When they reach the next level, they already have some familiarity with those words, and learn them much more quickly!

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DIRECTIONS

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Vendors - We welcome product news. Please include pricing and contact name with press releases.

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Introduction to Technology in Transition

Part 2

Sherrilyn K. Fisher & J. Emmett Gardner

CLARIFYING AND DEFINING DEFINITIONS IN TRANSITION AND AT

The first significant breakthrough for AT in legislation and policy came with the passage of The Technology Related Assistance Act (1988). In addition to establishing a systems change program of statewide technology assistance centers for AT consumers (Cook & Hussey, 1995), for the first time, AT and services became clearly and directly identified as part of the continuum of services for persons with disabilities (Galvin & Wodshall, 1996). The Technology Related Assistance Act (1988) also established a legal definition of AT and AT services and instituted provisions that identified and defined the selection, acquisition, or use of AT service, by specifying a broad spectrum of services. Table 1 provides these services

The second major breakthrough in legislation came with the passage of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (P.L. 1010476), which included landmark stipulations regarding transition planning and services. For the first time, transition planning of services for persons with disabilities was clearly and legally defined; most importantly, it was *required* as part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. In

much the same way the Technology Related Assistance Act (1988) defined AT devices and services, IDEA (1990) included a wide spectrum to define transition and transition-related services. Table 2 provides a listing of these services. (*note - please contact DIRECTIONS if you would like a copy of either table).

The 1997 Amendments of IDEA addressed both AT and transition in new and direct ways, but still without any explicit merger of the two principles. IDEA expanded its definition of AT services, clearly stating that if AT was needed to insure a child's free and appropriate education, it was to be provided. With respect to IEPs, IDEA stated that the IEP team must consider whether a child needs an AT device or services. The 1997 Amendments also provided strong directives regarding transition planning and AT as part of students' individualized education. Specifically, IEP teams *must* include goals and objectives in the major areas of transition services, or provide justification why they are not addressed (see Table 1). Thus, language in IDEA allowed a reasonable interpretation: When a child reaches the age that transition planning begins, beginning then and on each subsequent IEP, consideration

of AT devices and services could be a part of the yearly IEP process. In fact, the definition of transition services was amended to add related services to the types of services to be provided, thereby removing any doubt that transition services may include AT.

Unfortunately, there are differences in the way in which IEP teams are required to document provisions of transition planning and AT. In the case of AT, the team is only required to "consider" AT, and not specify the listing of different instructional areas that might prompt the team to look very specifically at technology assistance. The requirement is only to justify an AT device or service if it is needed. Clearly, transition services are given greater emphasis, with firm guidelines for inclusion in the IEP, while the inclusion of AT is stated more ambiguously with the wording "if needed."

As the critical need for legal definitions and clarification of services became increasingly apparent during the 1990's, professionals in both transition and technology fields were working to further define and broaden the definitions and practices associated with transition (e.g., Berkell & Brown, 1989; Clark & Kolstoe, 1995; deFur & Patton, 1999; Halpern, 1994; Sitlington,

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When a “Math Go Fish” game is completed, Roxie then sets up a game of “Roxie’s Dice,” the classic “Shut The Box” game. As a reward, the child may play one round of the game after each “Go Fish game. The object of Roxie’s Dice is to try to close all nine boxes, or as many of the nine boxes as possible, to score the lowest score possible. In this game, children need to be able to add and subtract to determine the best boxes to shut

during each roll of the dice. Other titles include **Penguin Math Bingo** and **Mattie’s Math Games**.

Waypoint Software is a brand new software producer and their first product, **Dollarville** (Windows/Mac hybrid CD), is a winner. This commercial program is available for \$29.95 and screen shots can be viewed at <http://www.waypointinc.com>. The software uses a western format and although it is designed for students K-3, it is age appropriate for older students. The screens are visually simple, and could be easily adapted for switch access with Clickit or Kenix. The money skills are very basic and no reading is required. The one disadvantage to this program is that the main screen describes the levels as Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Older students who can read may be upset.

Independent Living Activities are a series of Macintosh Hyperstudio stacks designed to teach life skills to students with disabilities. Titles include Dialing the Phone, Dressing, Grocery Shopping, Identifying Money and

Sounds, McDonalds, Reading a Clock, Community Signs and Functional Words. Each title is \$30.00 and is available from Computer Options for the Exceptional. There phone number is 1-914-452-1850.

I hope you find these programs as useful as I do. Next month we will explore typing tutor software. Until then...see you on the internet!§

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Neubert, & Leconte, 1997) and instructional services and AT (e.g., Church and Glennen, 1992; Cook & Hussey, 1995; Gray, Quatrano, & Lieberman, 1998; Lewis, 1995; Lindsey, 1993; Woodward & Reith, 1997). Special education and transition legislation helped clarify definitions, services, and legal obligations of transition and technology-related services; however, little has been done to formally integrate these seemingly unique disciplines.

Inherently, there are striking similarities in the fields of transition and AT. The major foci of both fields are much the same: future environments and independence within those environments and the use of effective methodologies to enhance functionally relevant knowledge and skills for all students with disabilities (Fisher, 1999). Shared horizons for both the areas of transition and technology rest in the need for cooperation and collaboration between professionals and agencies in IEP development, transition, and instructional planning.

Don’t miss Part 3 Next Month! §

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Our nation never has had a policy regarding who should receive AT. What we do have is a number of service systems — vocational rehabilitation, special education, and public health insurance (Medicaid and Medicare) — that have, in various ways, acknowledged and met some of the AT needs of the specialized populations they serve. In both vocational rehabilitation and special education, AT devices and services have statutory recognition as items or services that can be provided to recipients of services. But in neither system is the governing Federal law clear that AT must be provided where it could be useful. Instead, these statutes mainly require that the State agencies and school districts implementing the programs take AT fully into account in their evaluation and planning with those they serve. Based on this procedural requirement, the Federal laws leave it to the implementing agencies to decide, under the facts of each particular case, when AT would be appropriate and what technology should be provided. “There is a reluctance of Medicaid agencies to purchase newer technology. I think every time new technology is developed, those of us who are advocates with people with disabilities see it as an opportunity for freedom. Medicaid agencies see it as an opportunity to have to spend more money.” (Wendell Matas, Owner, Wheelchairs Northwest, Redmond, WA, March 4, 1998) Under Medicaid and Medicare, no explicit acknowledgment of AT exists in the

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Special Needs Project Book List

Source: The Catalyst, Fall 1999, Volume 16#1, ISSN #0897-5318

The Special Needs Project is a convenient and thorough source for books on disabilities, including both standard and new releases, with a bibliography on nearly 50 subjects. In addition, SNP publishes a quarterly newsletter with reviews of the best new titles, and information on upcoming conferences. Books can be ordered from: Special Needs Project, 324 State St., Suite H, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Tel. 800-333-6867, Fax 805-962-5087. E-mail: Books@specialneeds.com.

#6150 Contested Words, Contested Science: Unraveling the Facilitated Communication Controversy \$27.00 – Paperback. Doug Biklen. Edited By Don Cardinal. Assistive Technology.

Facilitated Communication remains controversial. For those who have followed this particular professional-academic drama, this is the latest word—by the person who has done the most in this country to make Facilitated Communication, in more ways than one, a hot topic. Long an outspoken figure, Biklen has been a lightning rod for bitter criticism of Facilitated Communication. 256 pages, 1997. Special Needs Project also carries this book in hardcover.

#6424 Contested Words, Contested Science: Unraveling the Facilitated Communication Controversy \$58.50 – Hardcover. Doug Biklen. Edited By Don Cardinal. Assistive Technology.

Facilitated Communication remains controversial. For those who have followed this particular professional-academic drama, this is the latest word—by the person who has done the most in this country to make Facilitated Communication a hot topic (in more ways than one). Long an outspoken figure, Biklen has been a lightning rod for bitter criticism of Facilitated Communication as well. 256 pages, 1996. Available as a paperback (#6150, \$24.95).

#7382 Designing and Using Assistive Technology: The Human Perspective \$31.00 – Edited By David B. Gray, Louis A. Quatrano, & Morton L. Leiberman. Assistive Technology.

Noteworthy for its holistic view of assistive technology, this book brings together the expertise of researchers, theorists, and practitioners, and personal insights from Assistive Technology (TAT) users of all ages, to examine how and why people choose and use various forms of AT. In addition to sharing the latest available findings on design and development, it examines the crucial intangibles of AT, such as judging environmental compatibility, assessing an individual's need for AT, justifying third-party payment, acknowledging public perceptions of AT and measuring life outcomes. 368 pages, 1998.

#6324 Directory of Computer and High Technology Grants: Third edition \$59.50 – Paperback. Edited by Richard M. Eckstein. Assistive Technology.

Not a general treatise on funding—but an excellent grants reference in this specialized area. 500 foundations profiled, state-by-state arrangement, Internet sources for grant seekers, four outstanding articles target winning grant strategies. The "Directory" identifies qualified funding sources for computer, software, sophisticated office equipment, and technology related grants. Each profile lists the address and areas of support. Geographic restrictions, grant range, and a list of previously awarded grants are included. A fine featured article on grantsmanship by Andrew J. Grant and Suzy D. Sonenberg guides newcomers and on-line veterans to sources on the Internet that provide information about funding availability, proposal writing, and specific foundations. 116 pages, 1996. §

Look for more listings in next month's issue!

Conferences

Date: March 31 - April 3, 2000
80th Annual American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Conference & Exhibition
Seattle, WA
Contact: 301-652-6611,
www.aota.org

Date: April 5 - 8, 2000
CEC Annual Convention
Vancouver, British Columbia
Contact: 888-CEC-SPED,
www.cec.sped.org

Date: April 5 - 8, 2000
PEPNet 2000, Innovation in Education
Denver, CO
Contact: 423-974-0607,
www.pepnet.org

Date: June 25-27, 2000
ConnSENSE 2000
Mystic, CT,
800-622-9905

Date: June 26-28, 2000
NECC 2000
Atlanta, GA
www.neccsite.org

Date: October 17, 2000
Total Technology - CT's Premier Assistive Technology Trade Fair
Hartford, CT,
www.techact.uconn.edu

ENTRY DEADLINE: April 1, 2000
Ninth Annual Art Competition for Artists Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired
Louisville, KY
Contact: 800-223-1839,
rwilliams@aph.org

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law. If AT is available, it is because it is included in other service categories such as prosthetics/orthotics, speech pathology, or durable medical equipment. Eligibility for any of these services, let alone for AT as one of the modalities by which the service will be provided, depends on an assessment of the case, and in particular upon a determination whether the item in question is medically necessary.

Special education and Medicaid often are described as entitlement programs. But as far as AT is concerned, these systems offer no guarantee that AT will be provided on an entitlement basis. Although initial determinations about AT need and appropriateness by school district individualized education plan teams or by Medicaid authorization reviewers can be appealed, most individuals are not familiar with the appeals process and are hesitant to embark upon it without skilled representation.

The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act and other statutes have emphasized the importance of teaching consumers self-advocacy skills for acquiring or accessing technology. But the deeper question of why self-advocacy should be so necessary is not often asked. One need only look at the services that vocational rehabilitation, special education, and Medicaid routinely provide to recognize that AT holds a lower status than other services in the consciousness and in the competition for resources within these systems. Within each of these programs AT is a recent add-on, competing for funds

and for top priority with many other critical and often long-established services that these systems provide.

The Tech Act was the first major Federal legislation to address AT as a subject worthy of Federal interest and support in its own right. State Tech Act programs, established under Title I of the Act, have done a great deal to increase the availability of funding for AT. Through their "systems change activities," the seeding of revolving loan funds, input into new regulations and policies, and stimulation of public awareness of AT, these programs have improved AT funding. But these programs were never designed as primary sources of direct funding for AT. Given the limited resources available to them, it would be impossible for them to play this role, and indeed it would be poor public policy for them to do so. Separately and in combination, the major service programs do not have sufficient resources to meet the growing demand for AT.

Additionally, third party funding currently is inadequate to meet the needs of today's end users. "As we look at what the researchers are telling us, an estimated 20.3 million families, or nearly a third of the nation's 69.6 million families in America, have at least one family member with a disability that limits daily activities or mobility." (Michael Morris, United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Arlington, VA, January 15, 1998). As important as the need for increased AT funding is, a person's acquiring of AT depends on receiving an appropriate and accurate assessment of AT needs.

Today's AT does not lend itself to neat compartmentalization based on identification of a single purpose, even though AT devices that meet a medical need often can be used to meet educational or vocational objectives as well. An accurate and expert assessment of an individual's AT needs currently is difficult to obtain, and an inaccurate or inexperienced assessment may deny a person necessary AT. Consequently, this lack of AT may severely limit or diminish a person's quality of life.

Even when entitlement to AT is established, the role of the end user in its selection may be far less than today's citizens expect. Despite efforts in vocational rehabilitation and education to include recipients and families in planning and decision-making about services, these service programs remain limited in their ability to accommodate the full range of individual preferences and situations. §



Family Center on Technology and Disability Update

Contact information for Network members can be found on the Family Center website at www.fctd.org/netorgst.htm. We are in the process of updating the network list of organizations to reflect the growing membership in the network. The Family Center on Technology and Disability Network welcomes all of you, and hopes that you will find participation in the Network useful in providing services!

Resources

Want some good sites for objective information on voice recognition software? Check the following: Center for Accessible Technology has articles about the latest developments in voice input technology of specific interest to users with disabilities. <http://www.el.net/CAT/voicein/VI.html>

Speaking to Write, a federally funded project using speech recognition for secondary students with disabilities. <http://www.edc.org/spk2wrt/>

Speech Recognition web site — for users and enthusiasts of speech recognition software. The site contains articles, BB's, and mailing lists for voice recognition. <http://www.scottrell.com/Speech/index.html>

21st Century Eloquence's web site has an informational page that has a voice recognition forum, FAQ, a glossary of terms and the latest news and developments in voice recognition technology. <http://voicerecognition.com/1999/information/>. If you have questions, or would like to get involved in a discussion about technology for students with learning disabilities, go to <http://>

www.ucpa.org/fctd/bbt.htm. Follow the instructions to log in.

New Documents

A complete set of assistive technology funding booklets published by United Cerebral Palsy and Neighborhood Legal Services, Buffalo, NY is available at www.nls.org/booklets.htm. Let Us Know if you have recommendations for organizations to join the FCTD Network! A network is only as good as its members, and while new members are joining weekly, we are always looking for good organizations that are interested in assistive technology and families with members with disabilities. Brochures can be obtained from Toni Ndika (Tndika@ucpa.org) and all it takes to join is an email message!§

DIRECTIONS on CD

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AdaptZ.com Highlights

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With the launch of our advertising campaign on Friday, February 11, our name officially changed to HalfthePlanet.com. Full page ads in Friday's New York Times and Wall Street Journal and Monday's New York Times and Washington Post announced, "Now There's a Whole New Way to Reach Nearly Half the Planet."

There are some 54 million Americans that have a disability. When one includes those with close ties to a person with a disability, the number nearly reaches 150 million in the U.S. alone. As a company with the goal of connecting the entire adaptation community, we feel that HalfthePlanet.com more appropriately describes our company and our mission.

Know Before You Vote

The adaptation community, with its size, should have enormous political clout, but in actuality, our community has surprisingly little clout. HalfthePlanet.com wants to change

that. Our intention is to give our community what it deserves and what it realistically can have . . . Half the vote. "Know Before You Vote" is our new feature section providing ongoing coverage of the political races that affect the adaptation community. Our articles, candidate profiles, and interactive polls will better inform you of the facts and resources you need to select the right candidate.

In order to make this section as effective and useful as possible, we encourage your participation in our polls and welcome any feedback you might have. Each section of "Know Before You Vote" offers email links where you can send us your comments.

Check our site for "Know Before You Vote" in the upcoming days.

Resource Directory Update

The Directory now has over 10,000 entries and continues to grow rapidly. Organizations that wish to gain better visibility within the Directory may do so

through the Preferred Listings Program. Companies like In Touch Systems and VMI (Vantage Mobility International) have acted on this offer and will soon appear at the top of their respective lists in the form of an advertisement. To receive more information about the Preferred Listings Program, email <mailto:advertising@halftheplanet.com>.

Visit the Directory at <http://www.halftheplanet.com/directory>. §

Sight Systems

Sight Systems is a small business that services low vision patients, employers, schools, and state organizations throughout the US with rental and sales of CCTV's (reading machines).

Visit: <http://www.sightsystems.com> §



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