



DIANE PAINTER, EDITOR

MARCH-JUNE 2010

## Editor's Message

*Diane D. Painter*

This spring issue of the *TAM Connector* highlights TAM Board initiatives such as professional development opportunities, new TAM publications, product reviews, updates on legislative issues and information about upcoming elections.

Running for an elective office on the TAM Board provides an opportunity to become actively involved in the critically important work for our division. For example, the members-at-large represent our membership in many different ways. As a member-at-large, I serve as membership chairperson and attend the representative assembly at the annual CEC meeting each spring. This gives our division a "voice" in CEC's policy-making initiatives. The TAM secretary keeps meeting minutes and assists the president as needed with correspondence. Board members also work with TAM members in the areas of product production, professional development and legislative monitoring. Won't you consider running for office? Past President, **Betty Nelson**, is now taking nominations for President Elect. This person serves one year as President and one year as Past President. Nominations for the position of Secretary, and one Member-at-Large position (serving a 2-year term) are also being sought. Please contact [benelson@uab.edu](mailto:benelson@uab.edu) to nominate yourself or another TAM member who would like to be considered.

Our CAN coordinator, **Joel Mittler**, writes in his article about the concern developing in Washington about the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) formerly known as NCLB. In addition, he reveals a new resource from the Office of Special

Education Programs (OSEP), a wonderful new technical assistance resource: LearningPort (<http://www.learningport.us/>). This national online library of professional development resources helps bridge research, policy, and practice.

Have you thought about how TAM products can be used to disseminate technology ideas that support teaching and learning? For example, in the TAM products review section of this newsletter, I highlight information presented in the new *Accessibility in Action: Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Settings* monograph, as well as the new TAM fan on Universal Design for Learning. Our Member's Corner contains a message from TAM member, **Cheryl Temple**, who reviewed the Smartpen. This product is also described in the UDL monograph as an AT tool that can be used to take class notes that can be easily posted online for all class members to access. In addition, please look for information in this newsletter on creating university-school connections, how TAM products can be used to support staff development initiatives, and the newly launched [Learningport.org](http://Learningport.org).

In summary, our TAM Connector can only be as good as those who contribute to it. Please let us know what you are doing in the field and how technology is being used to support teaching and learning. We would love to share your product review, ideas for staff development, experiences related to research, policy and practice. Please contact me, **Diane Painter**, editor at [ddpainter@rstarmail.com](mailto:ddpainter@rstarmail.com). 📧

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# Forging University-School Connections


Diane D. Painter

In spring 2009, Shenandoah University partnered with Northern Virginia CEC's chapter to present an after school special on supporting the IEP process. Members from that chapter and I, a CEC-TAM member, presented five different learning "stations" on how to use available resources to manage one's time and responsibilities before, during and after IEP's are created. CEC member, **Judy Shanley**, shared resources from the OSEP Web site, and I shared the TAM products wheels, fans and AT planners as resources that can be used when considering, selecting, and implementing assistive technology in the IEP process. Teachers, administrators and university students attended this after-school event, representing

five school districts and two private schools.

Then in spring 2010, CEC-TAM member, **Cheryl Temple**, and I from Shenandoah University worked with two Northern Virginia school districts' assistive technology specialists to hold an after-school Assistive Technology information event. This time over sixty students in the graduate special education and occupational therapy programs at the university attended to learn about Web 2.0 tools, Smartboard learning centers, AIM-VA accessible materials, making accessible activities using Microsoft WORD, and using portable AT devices in inclusive classrooms. Again,

attendees learned about how TAM products can be used when considering AT for persons with disabilities.

As a TAM member and university faculty coordinating these events, I called upon my friends and colleagues from CEC to help me plan and present the sessions. In particular, I am grateful to **Cynthia Warger**, TAM products manager, for supplying me with product flyers, and products such as wheels and fans at special bonus offer rates that we could then make available as give-aways or for special purchase at the these events. If interested in using TAM products at your next professional development event, contact [cwarger@msn.com](mailto:cwarger@msn.com). 

## New TAM Product Reviews

Diane D. Painter

### Accessibility in Action: Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Settings

*Accessibility in Action: Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Settings* is a new TAM publication edited by **John Castellani** and **Cynthia Warger**. There are four chapters in this monograph written by postsecondary educators who embrace Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and the use of technology to meet the needs of today's diverse student population in higher education settings. The first chapter, *Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Classrooms* by **James Stachowiak** and **John Castellani**, explains that IDEA does not provide for students once they transition into postsecondary

environments. Students with disabilities are expected to become advocates for themselves and seek out accommodations they know will be of benefit to them. The article outlines what can be done to ensure students' needs are met in large lecture halls, lab settings, and field experiences; as well as ways students can have successful access to course products and assessments.

**James Stachowiak's** second article, *Technology Tools for Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Settings*, addresses the common misunderstanding that Universal Design for Learning and assistive technology (AT) are essentially the same thing. General technology used in UDL implementation and AT tools that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities are described in detail,

with numerous references to products and Web sites that can be used to help postsecondary students with learning challenges achieve.

The third article, *Universal Design for Learning: Working with Adult Students in Online Courses* by **John Castellani**, **Tara Jeffs** and **Melissa Engleman**, highlights Web accessibility designs and online content management tools that follow Federal guidelines (Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998) and UDL principles. Online learning development tips such as designing activities around learner goals and the UDL principles of representation, engagement and expression activities can help any Web developer understand the issues related to online accessibility.

**Linda Carling** and **Kristen Winter** penned the fourth article, *Enhancing the Adult*

*(continued on page 3)*

## CAN Report

# Public Policy Much Discussed at the CEC Convention

Joel Mittler, TAM CAN Coordinator


Amid the 900+ professional development sessions at the recently completed CEC Convention in Nashville, TN, were several that focused on public policy. Of course, CEC was pleased that Secretary of Education Arne Duncan agreed to keynote the conference, reportedly giving his first major speech on Special Education. While he was very supportive of our field, he also made sure to discuss children with exceptionalities within the context of the overall Obama agenda for education.

Also speaking was Alexa Posny, the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Dr. Posny, who is a long time member of CEC, was complimented for her availability to CEC staff as issues arise that require her attention. At other sessions, we heard from Larry Wexler, Director of the Research to Practice Division within the Office of Special Education Programs, who unveiled a wonderful new technical assistance resource: LearningPort (<http://www.learningport.us/>)

a national online library of professional development resources compiled to help bridge research, policy, and practice. Of course there were many other public policy presentations by many within and outside government.

The current discussions in Washington concern the developing reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) formerly known as NCLB. Hearings before Congress have begun and many ideas are being debated. While it is still too early to know if the reauthorization will occur before Congress adjourns late this summer and begins their 2010 election campaigns, both the Obama administration and CEC have issued publications that include their recommendations for this new legislation. It is encouraging to hear that the Obama administration will keep children with exceptionalities in mind as they move to revise the current law.

Of course the other current legislative item that requires attention is the approval of a Federal budget for fiscal year 2011, which begins October 1. While the Obama administration has requested a large increase for education, they have only asked for a small one for IDEA programs with many programs flat funded and one that we care about, the Technology and Media Program under Pt. D, getting a cut. Meanwhile, funding for the Javits program for gifted and talented youth is proposed to be absorbed into a larger program that addresses other issues. If adopted, it is hard to know if any money will be available for the Javits program. CEC will continue to advocate for overall increases as well as restoration of the proposed cut in the Technology and Media program.


If you have any questions, want to be included in a weekly update from CEC, or have concerns, feel free to contact me at [jmittle@liu.edu](mailto:jmittle@liu.edu). 

## New TAM Product Reviews (continued from p. 2)

*Learning Experience with Web 2.0 Tools.* The authors describe how Web 2.0 tools can be used to effectively promote engagement in an integrated higher education learning environment. In particular, the authors offer numerous resources that instructors and students can use to produce and share course documents, and engage in collaborative activities in password-protected environments.

### Universal Design for Learning TAM Fan

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to curriculum development, instruction, and assessment that uses instructional and assistive technologies (AT) to accommodate individual differences while engaging all learners. This new TAM Technology fan

authored by John Castellani helps educators consider how instructional and assistive technologies can be used to access the curriculum through multiple means of presentation, engagement and assessment modes. Varying learning materials, integrating technology into authentic learning experiences, and using flexible assessment ideas are all included in this easy-to-use TAM Technology fan. 

## Member's Corner

# Member's Corner

Cheryl Temple, Manager, Assistive Technology Services  
Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia

## Pulse Smartpen: A Product Review

Has this ever happened to you? You attend an inspiring presentation, you take a few notes, but when you try to explain it to someone else you can't remember all of the information that excited you in the first place? Do you ever wish that you could go back and listen to a presentation again and again and again? The Pulse™ Smartpen by Livescribe might be just the technology tool you or your students need.

How does the technology tool work? The infrared camera in the tip of the Pulse Smartpen records everything you write or draw. If you choose to use the record feature, the Smartpen will link audio to what you write, tap or draw on Livescribe dot paper. The built in speaker records the audio and the microdots on the special paper enable the infrared camera to track everything. There is a 3D recording headset with embedded microphones that come with the Pulse Smartpen that improves the recording quality. You can replay the recorded audio by tapping directly on your notes. You can also save your notes to your computer and search for words within your notes. You can export your written notes as PDF files and you can export your audio files. If you logon to the Livescribe Community, you can share your notes and recordings publicly or privately. Depending on the size of the Pulse smartpen that you purchase, you can record up to 400 hours of audio.

### How Can the Smartpen Be Used?

The list is almost endless, but below are some of the ways I am using the smartpen or ways I have seen it being used in my school district.

### Taking Notes at Meetings

I have uploaded all of my meeting notes from 2009-2010 onto my computer. Whenever I need to refer back to a meeting, I use the Search Feature. All of the pages with the search word that I enter will be shown. I can then find the information that I need. TIP: At the top of every page, put a title. For example, Office of Special Education Meeting, April 26, 2010.

### Staff Observations

As an administrator, I complete staff observations. When I go into a classroom to observe a lesson, I can record audio as I am taking notes. When I write up the observation, I can use the notes to refresh my memory or as a talking point to share with the teacher. TIP: You can stop and start the record feature. You don't necessarily need to record the entire lesson, maybe just parts of the lesson.

### Teaching College Courses

I teach graduate courses in special education technology and when my students make presentations to the class, I take notes and record their presentation. When it's time to grade their assignment(s), I have a record of their presentation that I can go back and listen to if needed.

### Staff Use

As Assistive Technology Resource Teachers, my staff members have large caseloads which require them to visit multiple schools. For record keeping purposes, after they work with a student, they enter the information into a database. To make this process easier, some of them use the Pulse smartpen to write notes and then use a piece of


software that converts handwritten notes into digital text. This software, *MyScript for Livescribe*, can be purchased from Vision Objects.

### General Education Teachers

Some of our second grade general education teachers are using the Pulse smartpen for taking running records. By using the smartpen, teachers are able to record a one minute reading sample and create audio files for the students. This allows the teacher to listen to the recording again if they have questions about what they heard the student read. In addition, students may benefit from hearing what they read as they work on their reading skills.

### Students

We are beginning to use the Pulse Smartpen for middle or high schools students who have difficulty taking notes in class. Sometimes students use tape recorders or get notes from another student or the teacher. By using the Smartpen, the student can write down keywords and use the record feature that links their writing to an audio file. They no longer have to worry about getting lots of information down on paper. By tapping on the keyword, the student can gain access to whatever the teacher was saying at that point. They can pick and choose what they want to hear again. It also allows them to be independent and not rely on others for their notes.

To see more educational uses or to view recent webinars on the Smartpen, go to the K-12 Education link at the Livescribe website at: <http://www.livescribe.com/education/learning.html/> Questions about this article? Contact Cheryl Temple, [Cttemple@fcps.edu](mailto:Cttemple@fcps.edu). 


# LearningPort.org Resources Supports Special Education Programs

Diane D. Painter

LearningPort is a free national professional development library of resources designed by U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support the use of ARRA funds.

LearningPort makes available a variety of materials from national associations, state education departments, and technical assistance centers like the IRIS Center in a variety of formats, including full video training modules, Webinars, and conference materials. Many of these free resources can be incorporated into larger training packages being developed in states and school districts. OSEP expects that the catalogue of LearningPort resources will grow rapidly.

LearningPort was developed in response to an OSEP document titled *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Using ARRA Funds Provided Through Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) To Drive School Reform and Improvement*. In addition to suggesting uses for ARRA funds, OSEP included a detailed description of what the department considered high-quality professional development. It is assumed that many school districts will use a portion of their ARRA funds to support the provision of professional development. This being the case, we hope this Web site will become a valuable resource for states, LEAs, and schools to help avoid duplicating efforts.

To view the available resources, visit the LearningPort site at <http://www.learningport.us>. 

## TAM CONNECTOR

**TAM Connector** is published 4 times a year by the Technology & Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Email all news items to Diane Painter ([ddpainter@rstarmail.com](mailto:ddpainter@rstarmail.com)). Change of address should be sent to Susan Simmons at the Council for Exceptional Children, 1110, N. Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22201-5704.

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