



DIANE PAINTER, EDITOR

AUGUST-DECEMBER 2009

**Special
Double
Issue
December
2009**

Editor's Message

Diane D. Painter

Welcome to this special double issue of the *TAM Connector* newsletter. It's packed with information I hope you find interesting and useful. Following are a few highlights.

In the fall we called for members to share information about how they use TAM products in their teaching or training, as well as information about technologies that support students with special needs. I am pleased to say that in this newsletter we have two member contributions:

- **Candace Cortiella**, director of The Advocacy Institute, explains how the Advocate Academy's Webinar service meets the training needs of special education advocates.
- **Rita Mulholland** reviews two software products: 3D Choreographer, an animation program geared to students in elementary and middle school, and Team Up With Timo, a program that helps students build language skills.

We would love to hear from other members about how they are using TAM products in their teaching, conference presentations, or with members of an IEP team considering the use of technology in the IEP process. Would you like to contribute a product review in the next newsletter?

Board member and TAM CAN Coordinator, **Joel Mittler**, gives us the latest information about federal government initiatives. As Joel tells us, a lot is happening in Washington in addition to health care!

What an exciting year for new TAM products! **John Castellani**, TAM Publications Chair, summarizes all of the new products. And, check out the special offer to TAM members in his message!

2010 promises to be a great year for TAM. Let me know what you would like to read about in upcoming *TAM Connectors*! Please contact me, **Diane Painter**, at ddpainter@rstarmail.com. Contributing to the TAM Connector is an exciting way for members to keep in touch with one another!

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See You in Nashville!

The Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) 2010 Convention and Expo is scheduled for April 21-24, 2010 in Nashville, Tennessee. The Technology and Media strand will feature 35 different presentations. A listing of scheduled events can be found at <http://cec.networkats.com/2010/scheduler/>.

TAM Publications Report

John Castellani, TAM Publications Chair

TAM Publications have continued to bring new and useful information about instructional and assistive technology to the field. Sales of TAM Publications also help subsidize member benefits, such as the *Journal of Special Education Technology* (JSET).

This year, JSET editor **Jim Gardner** proved once again why JSET is the premiere journal in special education technology. In addition to a year of strong research articles, Volume 24(3) featured a special issue on Supported E-Text, guest edited by researcher **Lynne Anderson-Inman**. Copies of the issue were distributed at a major conference hosted by the National Center on Technology Innovation. JSET columns continued to provide readers with practical applications of research and thoughtful discourse. Watch for the 2010 special issue of JSET on "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics" guest edited by **James Basham** and **Matthew Marino**.

Two new monographs were published. *Learning Disabilities and Assistive Technology—Learning Tools Across the Curriculum* was written by TAM members **Deborah Newton** and **Amy Dell**. The authors present practical strategies and assistive technology tools for helping students with learning disabilities access the general education curriculum. Topics include:

- Assistive technology helps remediate reading disabilities.
- Assistive technology helps students compensate for reading difficulties.
- Assistive technology and writing.
- Math learning and assistive technology.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Instructional and Assistive Technology Tools That Work! was edited by **John Castellani** and **Cynthia Warger**. It features the following articles:

- "Technology Supports for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders" by **Joanne Cafiero**.
- "Selecting English Language Acquisition Technology" by **John Lowdermilk**, **Cheryl Fielding**, **Raúl Mendoza**, **Román García de Alba**, and **Cynthia Simpson**.
- "Adaptive Access" by **Elizabeth Lahm**.
- "Creating Your Own Electronic Text to Support Comprehension by Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities" by **Karen Douglas** and **Kevin Ayers**.
- "The Software √-List" by **Randall Boone** and **Kyle Higgins**.

- "Assistive Technology Assessment Tools" by **Elizabeth Lahm** and **Rachel Mendonca**.

With the support of The Universal Access project (www.education.uiowa.edu/universalaccess), which is managed and conducted by the Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (www.education.uiowa.edu/icater), which is affiliated with the College of Education at the University of Iowa, TAM launched a new series, *Accessibility in Action: Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Settings*. TAM Board members, John Castellani and Cynthia Warger worked with The Universal Access Project director, **Jim Stachowiak** to develop the series. The series will be available as a monograph in early 2010. We are looking for writers for additional issues. Contact Cynthia Warger, TAM Publications Manager, at cwarger@msn.com if you are interested in proposing a topic.

Special Publications Offer for TAM Members

Through January 31, 2010 take advantage of this special offer on TAM's new monographs:

- *Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Instructional and Assistive Technology Tools that Work!* (\$20.00 plus s/h)
- *Learning Disabilities and Assistive Technology: Learning Tools Across the Curriculum* (\$20.00 plus s/h)

Buy both for the discounted price of \$24.00 (plus s/h \$12). On your order form include your CEC ID# to qualify for this offer. *Note:* This offer is for prepaid orders only (check or money order). It is not available with credit cards or P.O. purchases. Order forms may be downloaded from the TAM website.

Product Reviews

Product Reviews

Contributed by Rita Mulholland

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3D Choreographer

Animated Communications, PO Box 16907, Chapel Hill, NC 27516

<http://www.3dchor.com/3d/edu-products.html>

Universal Design for Learning Principles (UDL) address the educational approach to teaching, learning, and assessment through using multiple ways of presenting information, providing multiple methods of student expression, and offering multiple means of student engagement. I teach graduate courses in special education and have the teachers sometimes use 3D Choreographer (Windows) software during class to immediately demonstrate a multi-modality approach to something they are teaching.

3D Choreographer is an animation program geared to students in elementary and middle school. Teachers can use this software to introduce a lesson, to review material, or to engage the student in demonstrating understanding. This software has over 70 actors (people/animals) built in, but allows for importing heads and choosing the type and look of the body (human or animal). This means you can put the head of a person on the body of an animal if you want, such as a student's face on a dinosaur or penguin. You can choose how many actors you want animated in your movie.

The teacher/student can then choose the types of movement (commands) for the 3D actors; there are over 200 hundred in the program that allow for manipulating all parts of the actor's body (jumping, walking, skating, kicking, etc). Finally a movement path is selected so that the actor moves across

the screen. The teacher/student can choose from 20 built-in backgrounds or import one. The final step is to produce the movie which turns it into an Avi file. Once saved, you can import the movie into Windows Movie Maker where you can record or add background sounds. You can also add the Avi file to a PowerPoint.

Teachers have commented that 3D choreographer keeps their students engaged and motivated to learn. Some teachers now let their students create their own AVI file as a follow-up to a narrative or expository reading. Students catch on easily to importing the file into Movie Maker or a PowerPoint and adding their voice. 3D Choreographer software is clearly aligned with UDL principles.

A tutorial is available as a free download. The website also offers many free animations for download.

Team Up with Timo

Animated Speech Corporation, 2261 Market Street #293, SF, CA 94114

<http://www.animatedspeech.com/index.html>

Current research shows that integrating computer based instruction into classroom practice is an effective way to promote expressive and receptive language development. Computer based video instruction which combines the use of video in establishing word context with interactive animated software is showing promising results in the area of promoting functional language behaviors. Team Up With Timo software provides an animated tutor (Timo) for teachers to build language skills. There are 3 separate

programs: Stories, Vocabulary, and Lesson Creator. When working on any of these programs, the computer has to be connected to the Internet. I have used all 3 programs with children in a special education classroom, and can attest to students staying engaged with Timo! One student (5 year old on the ASD spectrum) told Timo he hoped to see him someday.

Team Up with Timo Stories is geared to children Pre-K through 2nd grade. There are two levels with 6 stories: beginner and advanced. Timo provides an animated scaffolded story with interactive activities that require the students to demonstrate understanding as they read. The tutor provides immediate feedback to the student and redirects the student to the correct response. A report is provided for each student.

Team Up with Timo Vocabulary is geared to children in grades K through 4th grade. Over 100 vocabulary lessons with more than 600 words are provided. The vocabulary lessons are divided by topics. Each lesson includes a pre-test, the presentation, identification practice, reading response, spelling, imitation activities, elicitation activities, and a post-test. The teacher determines what parts of the lessons to use for each student. Timo guides each student by highlighting the visuals as the words are pronounced and provides immediate feedback and redirection as needed. As the administrator, the teacher individualizes each lesson by choosing the vocabulary words, the activities, and the animated reinforcers. The program provides a detailed report for the teacher, including an audio recording of the student's responses.

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CAN Report

Work in DC Continues Despite Focus on Health Care

Joel Mittler, TAM-CAN Coordinator

While Washington focuses on health care, reforming our financial system, and other issues of current national importance, work is continuing on the education of children with disabilities and those with gifts and talents. As this is written, the federal budget for education for FY2010, which began on October 1, 2009, still has not been passed. There are recent reports that the education budget will not be approved until after Congress completes its work on health care legislation. As you may recall, Continuing Resolutions have kept the government functioning over the past few weeks at FY2009 levels. Another such Continuing Resolution was recently passed that is in place until December 18, 2009. When the budget is finally approved, those same FY2009 levels are expected to be approved for FY2010 for IDEA funding as well as for funding for the gifted and talented. The Administration argued that with the additional money that states were receiving through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), there was no need for increases in IDEA funding. ARRA, commonly known as the Economic Stimulus Act, did indeed double IDEA funding for FY2009 and 2010, but this significant increase in

funding is scheduled to end in 2011. Thus, CEC will be fighting for increase our funding for FY2011 when the ARRA money will be gone. In fact, bills have already been introduced in both the House and the Senate that would fully fund IDEA up to its promised level of 40%. CEC will be supporting these and working for their passage.

In other news, in early October the Senate confirmed the nomination of Alexa Posny as Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the highest ranking official in the federal government with responsibilities for our issues. Dr. Posny had previously served as the Director of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) before returning to her native Kansas as Commissioner of Education. CEC looks forward to working with Dr. Posny as she assumes her new office.

While Congress continues to focus elsewhere, work proceeds at the Department of Education. Although it is not anticipated that a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), formerly known

as No Child Left Behind or NCLB, will begin in Congress until the spring, Secretary Duncan continues to travel and gather information while outlining the Obama administration's agenda for education. He recently released guidelines for states to use to apply for the \$4.35 billion "Race to the Top" funds. These guidelines clearly indicate some areas that are being emphasized by the administration. In addition, in late October, Secretary Duncan spoke at Teachers College, Columbia University and was quite critical of teacher education. Read his remarks at: <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/10/10222009.html>. Among the areas that are being mentioned that may be of interest to TAM members is the continuing reference to the collection of data on student performance and the use of such data to evaluate teachers and even the colleges that prepare those teachers. The next few months should prove interesting as these ideas get incorporated into legislation and funding.

With any questions, comments, or to be included on a distribution of weekly policy updates, feel free to contact me at jmittler@liu.edu.

Product Reviews (continued from p. 3)

Team Up with Timo's Lesson Creator is the program I have used most often. It allows the teacher to customize the vocabulary lessons in several ways: programming Timo to address each student by name, to respond or redirect each student (Good to see you again, good job, perfect, etc.), to determine the vocabulary for each student, to determine the images to represent the vocabulary,

and the visual reinforcement for correct responses. The teacher can choose to use the Boardmaker images in the program (over 3,000) or import any photo or image to match the vocabulary words. For any one student the teacher might import images of classmates/family members so that the student learns their names. For another student the teacher might import images of words

connected to a science, social studies, or reading lesson. The teacher saves each lesson under the student's name and the lesson then shows up in the Team Up with Timo Vocabulary category. A detailed report, including an audio recording, is provided. For the student, My Work report provides virtual stickers to each of their completed lessons.

Member's Corner

The Advocacy Institute

The Advocacy Institute is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the development of products, projects and services that work to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Founder **Candace Cortiella** is an advocate for students with disabilities and the parent of a young adult with learning disabilities.

One of The Advocacy Institute's ongoing projects is the Advocate Academy®, a Webinar service designed to meet

the training needs of special education advocates nationwide by providing ongoing training and professional development. Advocates learn critical information that prepares and supports their work with families and organizations on behalf of children with disabilities. Several TAM members have presented Webinars for the Advocate Academy since the project began in 2006. Check out their archived presentations.

Visit <http://www.advocacyinstitute.org/academy/Sep09ATpromo/> for promotional information.

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Update on 2010 Officers and Elections

Brenda Heiman, TAM Vice President

The TAM Executive Board, during its most recent meeting on November 17, 2009, voted to suspend the Constitutional election rules for a period of one calendar year. The suspension of rules provides TAM the ability to operate in a more streamlined fashion in order to reduce its operating budget during these difficult and uncertain financial times.

The suspension of election rules allows the Board to forego election of the

Secretary, one Member-at-Large, and Vice President positions for 2010. During this year, another Board officer will take over the secretary responsibilities. The Secretary position will be reinstated, and an election held at the end of 2010 to fill the position for 2011-2012. The Member-at-Large and Vice President positions will be eliminated, and the President-Elect position will also be reinstated and an election held at the end of 2010 to fill that position for 2011-2012.

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). 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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