



DIANE PAINTER, EDITOR

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2010

## Editor's Message

*Diane D. Painter*

This winter issue of the *TAM Connector* welcomes in the beginning of a new decade, 2010. In her president's message, our newly installed president, Dr. Deborah Newton, highlights the past year's production of TAM products, publications, and the presentations TAM members made at various conferences. She mentions that we have a new look to our website—[www.tamcec.org](http://www.tamcec.org)—and explains the cost saving measures the TAM Board has taken for this year. She also mentions that TAM members continue to contribute their knowledge and expertise to the profession.

In Joel Mittler's CAN report, he highlights fiscal issues states are having and how they are working hard to prepare

their applications for the "Race To The Top" grants, hoping to be awarded much needed funding. Specific to TAM interests, CEC has offered comments to the Department of Education as it moves forward with National Education Technology Plan initiatives.

Finally, a special thank you goes to TAM member, Carla Hatton, for contributing to this winter edition's Member's Corner a wonderful article about DAISY and digital media. We are always looking for a product review or special technology news for the next issue! E-mail [ddpainter@rstarmail.com](mailto:ddpainter@rstarmail.com). Looking forward to hearing from you!

## President's Message

*Deborah Newton*

### Looking Back

I am honored to begin a year of service as TAM's president. As I do so, I'd like to acknowledge Betty Nelson, past-president, for the leadership she has provided for TAM during the past year.

2009 was an exciting and productive one for TAM,

which continues to provide leadership in the field by arranging conference presentations, publishing the premier peer-reviewed journal in the field (JSET), and publishing products to support and promote implementation of assistive technology. TAM arranged presentation strands at ATIA 2009 in Orlando, TRLD in San

Francisco, CEC Convention and Expo in Seattle, and the first ATIA Conference held in Chicago.

New publications were introduced in 2009 to support both practitioners and scholars. *AT for Students with Learning Disabilities* and *Accommodating Students with Disabilities* were added to the existing monograph

What's Inside...	
Editor's Message .....	1
President's Message .....	1
Members' Corner .....	2
CAN Report .....	3

*(continued on page 2)*

## President's Message (continued from p. 1)

series, and a new monograph series, *JSET Readings in Assistive Technology*, was introduced. The titles in this new series compile previously published JSET articles into topic specific volumes. Coming soon will be a new TAM Technology Fan on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and a monograph on UDL in postsecondary settings.

Two other publication-related accomplishments also deserve mention. TAM has updated its website ([www.tamcec.org](http://www.tamcec.org)) to support online access to current and archived issues of JSET. You also can read the latest *Technology in Action* on the website. Diane Painter has taken over as the editor of TAM's *Connector* newsletter and will be keeping us informed, up-to-date, and connected. We are still in need of an editor for *Technology in Action*.

The Executive Board of TAM voted to suspend elections this year while it investigates restructuring the board as a cost-saving measure. All officers in the presidential line advanced as usual, and any positions with expired terms were not refilled. This leaves three positions vacant – vice president, secretary, and one member-at-large. Of course, any proposals for permanent changes to the structure of the board will be brought to the membership for a vote.

### Looking Ahead

This year promises to be another productive one for TAM. Already this year, TAM has arranged a strand of sessions that were presented at ATIA 2010 in Orlando, January 28-30, 2010. Another strand of presentations has been arranged for the upcoming CEC

2010 Convention and Expo to be held in Nashville, April 21-24, 2010. For all the 2009 and 2010 conferences impressive collections of proposals were reviewed. Our members are doing marvelous work as both practitioners and researchers.

In 2010 TAM will continue its leadership in assistive technology, provide members with high-quality publications, and introduce new products to support students with exceptional learning needs. With a newly appointed professional development chair, I hope that TAM will take an active role in providing professional development opportunities in both online and face-to-face formats. I also hope to forge connections with other CEC divisions and outside organizations that will support TAM's mission and be beneficial to members.

### Member's Corner

## DAISY and Digital Media

Darla Hatton

Digital media provides access to the curriculum for students who are blind, or have visual or print disabilities. For children with print disabilities, this access to the curriculum provides additional benefits. It helps students improve fluency, increase vocabulary, and enhance comprehension. Digital media can help foster a love of literature. E-text can be utilized to create study guides—thus improving organization, studying skills and ultimately test outcomes. The ability to transfer e-text or audio to a portable MP3 player—makes digital literacy discreet and can help foster self-esteem and self-empowerment. In order to understand digital literacy, it is helpful for a parent or educator to understand some basic principals related to digital media.

### What is DAISY?

When digital media became available, like the scroll or codex (book) -- a standardized format needed be agreed upon. That is DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) that is the standardized format that allows users to navigate and hear digital media (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DAISY>).

Let's compare digital media to movies. Originally, movies were only available on film which was played on film projectors. To make movies more accessible to consumers, Hollywood needed to agree on a standardized code that would allow consumers to access and play movies. Standardized codes allow consumers to locate the start of the movie, play, rewind, and fast forward to

individual scenes, and bonus features. One standard code for movies is called Universal Disk Format ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_Disk\\_Format](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Disk_Format)). Universal Disk Format was created to allow users to navigate DVD's. In much the same way, DAISY is the standard format for digital literacy.

### Formats: Audio and E-text

Movies have been made available in various formats including VHS and DVD. DAISY books are available in audio only, e-text only, and full audio and e-text formats. RFB&D provide DAISY books in an audio format that lets you hear the text spoken. Bookshare provides DAISY books in an e-text file format that enables a player to display

(continued on page 3)

## CAN Report

# A Quiet Beginning to the New Year for Policy Makers and Students with Exceptionalities

Joel Mittler, TAM-CAN Coordinator

With financial matters for fiscal year 2010, which began October 1, 2009, finally settled and before the President's budget requests for FY2011 gets released in February, specific federal actions in Washington that relate to students with exceptional conditions has been minimal but centered in other areas. Yet the discussions about fiscal issues continue. A recent article suggested that many states have used their IDEA Economic Stimulus (ARRA) money to assist in their general education budgets and not, as they were expected to do, on students with disabilities. Also, many states are working to prepare their applications for the "Race To The Top" programs, in the hopes of getting some of that additional money. Interestingly, there are suggestions that the principles that guided both the availability of the ARRA funds and those that are required by the "Race To The Top" will be similar to those that the administration will push for in the upcoming reauthorization of ESEA (NCLB). So, fiscal news is never that far from our thinking.

In legislative news, both houses of Congress saw bills addressing the inappropriate treatment of students with disabilities introduced. In the Senate, Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) introduced legislation to protect children from the misuse of restraint and seclusion practices. The *Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act*, which includes recommendations from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and its division, the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD), was introduced simultaneously in the House of Representatives by Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) and Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) The legislation is the first national effort to address harmful restraint and seclusion. The bill seeks to establish minimum standards for their use in schools, provide resources for staff training and support, and improve data collection of incidents and identification of effective practices. In technology related news, CEC offered comments to the Department of Education as they are working on the

development of a National Education Technology Plan. CEC worked with TAM to assemble CEC's recommendations to this far-reaching plan for future policy and practice. In discussing technology and students with exceptionalities, CEC believes that "technology is a driving force that will shape the future of our nation and, as such, it must be fully integrated and embedded in education. Technology can facilitate learning, engage students, and create opportunities for adaptation and creativity that benefit all learners." CEC urged the Technical Working Group to consider the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents, throughout the plan. You can read CEC's recommendations at <http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=13604>.

If you have any comments or questions, or wish to receive a weekly update from CEC, feel free to contact me at [jmittler@liu.edu](mailto:jmittler@liu.edu).

## DAISY and Digital Media (continued from p. 2)

typed words on a screen that can be read by a screen reader or player.

### Outlets

Where can you obtain DAISY books? With movies you could go to Blockbuster, Amazon, or even your local library. DAISY books may be obtained through Bookshare, RFB&D and the National Library Service. In addition, schools can request NIMAS format, which is a close cousin of DAISY, through the National Instruction Materials Accessibility

Center (NIMAC). There are up to five NIMAC Authorized Users (AU) provided per state. Schools and district personnel can either go through their state ed agency to find the NIMAC AU or AUs in their state to make their request, or if Bookshare has been named as one of their AUs, they can ask Bookshare to get it out of the NIMAC repository. Once a state has named Bookshare as an Authorized User, any teacher whose school has an organizational membership to Bookshare may request NIMAC

books directly from Bookshare, who will provide them for qualified students in the DAISY format.

### 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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DIANE PAINTER, EDITOR

AUGUST-DECEMBER 2009

**Special  
Double  
Issue**

## 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](mailto:ddpainter@rstarmail.com). Contributing to the TAM Connector is an exciting way for members to keep in touch with one another!

**What's Inside...**

Editor's Message .....	1
TAM Publications Report .....	2
Special Publications Offer .....	2
Product Reviews .....	3
CAN Report .....	4
Members' Corner .....	5
Update on 2010 Officers and Elections.....	5

**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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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

Rita.Mulholland@stockton.edu

## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

*(continued on page 4)*

## 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](mailto: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

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