Technology Solutions for Reading, Writing & Organization

Sheila Simmons, Assistive Technology for Kansans
Session Roadmap

- Assistive technology devices and supports
- Technology for reading
- Technology for writing
- Technology for organization
- Resources
Assistive technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

- Universal design or usability is increasingly prioritized
- Range of technology solutions within any area should be considered
  - Individual’s comfort level with technology
  - Activity requirements
  - Environmental demands
Common categories of assistive technology are:

- Positioning & mobility (scooters, wheelchairs, walkers)
- Speech communication (voice amplifiers, electronic speech)
- Hearing (signalers for phone, doorbell; hearing aids)
- Vision (screen magnifiers, screen readers, video magnifiers)
- Computers and software
- Vehicle adaptations (lifts, hand controls)
- Home & office modifications (ramps, ergonomic set-ups)
Assistive Technology for Kansans

- Lead agency is the KU Lifespan Institute at Parsons
  - Each state and territory has a Technology Act Program
  - All statewide AT programs provide four core services (device borrowing, device demonstration, device refurbish and reuse, financing activities) in addition to product information, public awareness, and training

- Statewide AT Expo, training workshops
- ATK Device Loan System
- Kansas has five AT Access Sites and one affiliate office
AT Access Sites & Affiliate

Western AT Access Site, NW Educational Service Center, Oakley
- SW Kansas sector, Center for Independent Living of SW Kansas, 800-295-4122
North Central AT Access Site, OCCK, Salina
South Central AT Access Site, SKIL, Wichita
Northeast AT Access Site, Independence Inc., Lawrence
SE AT Access Site, SKIL, Parsons
Management, Kansas University Center on Disabilities – Parsons

800-KAN DO IT
800-526-3648
Culinary Student

- High school student with average grades, great social skills, and unreported difficulties with reading and writing

- Recognized that her strategies of studying with friends, borrowing notes, and collaborating with learning partners on assignments might not be available to her in culinary school

- Concerned that the amount of time it took to read textbook assignments would result in not being able to keep up

- Concerned that her writing skills without peer support would not acceptable in post-secondary school
Seminary Student

- Senior in small high school with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that identified supports and services for reading, writing, and organization
  - Peer note-taking
  - Graphic organizer & PDA
  - Additional time to take tests
  - Talking dictionary & calculator
Online, digital text resources

- Project Gutenberg – provides educators with downloadable digital books free of charge
- Bookshare – similar service for copyrighted material
  - Victor Reader Soft or ReadOutLoud Bookshare Version – text to speech application for eligible students
- Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic – library of books in audio books plus format (digital books on CD)
- AudioAccess – members allowed to download audio textbooks and literature directly to a Windows-compatible machine & played on MP3

NIMAS - K-12 requires teachers of eligible students
AT for Reading

- Software
  - WYNN
  - Read & Write Gold

- Screen Readers
  - Zoomtext
  - JAWS
  - Mac OS X – VoiceOver
  - Accessibility features of Microsoft Office
Portable note takers
- AlphaSmart NEO 2,
- Dana
- The Writer and Writer Fusion

Netbooks (write, access internet, conduct research, can run text to speech software)

Voice activation software
- Dragon Dictate Naturally Speaking
- MacSpeech
AT for Writing

- Talking word processors & word prediction/spelling tools
  - Write Outloud
  - Read & Write Gold
  - Co:Writer
- Livescribe Pulse Pen
- USB software
  - Read & Write Gold
  - WinZoom
AT for Organization, Memory

- Digital devices for schedules, appointments, assignments, exams, project deadlines
  - Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)
  - Smartphones (Blackberry, iPhone)
  - iPod Touch
- Concept mapping and webs to support comprehension and planning
  - Inspiration
Selected AT Solutions

- Culinary student
  - Read & Write Gold for assignments & reading excerpts
    - Allows for extra time for reading assignments
  - Livescribe pen – important for new terms and upload to her laptop
    - Note-taking partner
  - iPhone - assignments
  - Extra time for tests

- Seminary student
  - Inspiration for organizing and outlining written assignments and projects
  - Trained note-taker
  - Color coded week at a glance organizer
  - Color coded folders & highlighters
  - Extra time for tests
Resources

- Assistive Technology for Kansans (www.atk.ku.edu)
  - 800 KAN DO IT (800-526-3648)

- Center for Applied Special Technology (www.cast.org)

- Center for Implementing Technology in Education (CITEd) (www.cited.org)

- Family Center on Technology and Disability (fact sheets to CEU studies for educators)
  - www.fctd.info/show/home

- LD Online – basic information on AT
Questions

- Sheila Simmons
  - ssimmons@ku.edu
  - 620-421-8367

- AT Access Sites
  - 800 KAN DO IT (800-526-3648)