

## Free and (Low Cost) Technology to Enhance Learning Across the Curriculum

Sharon Meldgin, M.A., AT Specialist,

Leyden Area Special Education Cooperative

Elmhurst College

sharmel5@yahoo.com

### LITERACY: Reading, Writing, Spelling

[www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org) Bookshare is a free online subscription for accessible books for all U.S. students with qualifying disabilities. Downloadable free reading tools can be played on the computer, CD, or converted to play on an Mp3 player. Students can also have access at home. Over more than 50,000 digital books, textbooks, teacher-recommended reading, & periodicals are available. Great video from Bookshare site:

<http://www.bookshare.org/assets/guides/read-with-ROL/lib/playback.html>

Key Features of Read OutLoud Bookshare Edition

- Ebook Style
- Text to Speech Options
- Start and Stop Speech
- Go to page number
- Outlining Tools
- Text Notes
- Dictionary
- Web Search

[www.progressivephonics.com](http://www.progressivephonics.com) Progressive Phonics is a free series of ebooks that teachers and parents can use to help their students learn to read and write. Progressive Phonics offers free ebooks that cover everything from learning the alphabet, to learning to write, to learning the construction of words and sentences. As the name implies, Progressive Phonics arranges the series of free ebooks to build upon each other. You do have to register for the service, but once you do you can download the ebooks.

<http://www.wordweb.info> WordWeb is a comprehensive one-click English thesaurus and dictionary for Windows. It can be used to look up words from almost any program, showing definitions, synonyms and related words. It includes pronunciations and usage examples, and has helpful spelling and sounds-like links.

<http://www.fcrr.org/activities> - The Florida Center for Reading Research provides up-to-date information on literacy and research related to reading.

[www.spellingcity.com](http://www.spellingcity.com) This free site allows you to create spelling activities for your students. Teachers/parents can enter specific words and the student can interact in a “test me”, “teach me”, or “game mode”. A variety of additional teacher resources are also available on this site.

[www.literactive.com](http://www.literactive.com) Literactive is the leading provider of reading material for pre-school, kindergarten and grade 1 students available online. The program is comprised of carefully leveled guided readers, comprehensive phonic activities and a wealth of supplemental reading material which gradually develop a child's reading skills in a sequential and enjoyable manner. Developed and approved by teachers and parents

[www.hiyah.net](http://www.hiyah.net) This website offers free educational software (literacy and math) for children ages 18 months to 4 years of age. This educational software is beneficial for children who are motivated by the computer, but can't yet use a mouse, as it can be accessed by hitting the spacebar. (These programs can be downloaded or simply played online.)

<http://vocabahead.com> VocabAhead Study Room provides a distraction free environment with [over 1000 difficult words](#) explained using Vocabulary Videos and Flash Cards. Additional vocabulary videos are continuously added

[www.wordle.net/](http://www.wordle.net/) Wordle is a toy for generating “word clouds” from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes. You can print them out, or save them to the Wordle gallery to share with others.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District75/Departments/Literacy/AdaptedBooks/default.htm> This website provides free adapted books in a variety of formats (e.g. Boardmaker, Writing with Symbols, Power Point) from the New York City Department of Education, Special Education District 75. Many are age-appropriate for older students.

[www.readworks.org](http://www.readworks.org) - ReadWorks is presented by educators and the not-for-profit organization Urban Education Exchange. It provides K-6 educators with a proven online reading comprehension curriculum and methodology, together with targeted online and in-person training.

[www.tarheelreader.org](http://www.tarheelreader.org) Tar Heel Reader provides a collection of free, easy-to-read, accessible books on a wide range of topics. The books may be downloaded as slide shows in PowerPoint, Impress, or Flash format. Each book can be speech enabled and

accessed using multiple interfaces, including touch screens, the IntelliKeys with custom overlays, and 1 to 3 switches.

<http://www.wordia.com/> Wordia is a free visual, video dictionary. Wordia features a selection of user-submitted and professionally created videos explaining the meaning of a word. The videos focus on the everyday use of words while the text accompanying each video provides the dictionary definition of the word.

### **Alternatives to Traditional Book Reports :**

<http://animoto.com/education> *Create book trailers.* In short, a book trailer is a short video created by students to highlight the key points of a book. When creating their book trailers students should be trying to "sell" viewers on a book,

[www.photopeach.com](http://www.photopeach.com) -Photo Peach is a free service that allows you to quickly and easily create an audio slideshow, with captions, from images in your Flickr, Picassa, or Facebook account. You can also use images saved on your local hard drive to create your slideshow.

### **TEXT TO SPEECH:**

<http://www.naturalreaders.com> free text-to-speech software program which converts any written text to speech (Word, pdf, websites, emails)

<http://clickspeak.clcworld.net> a free Firefox extension that reads the Internet and highlights phrases and sentences as it reads

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/text-to-voice> 'Text to Voice' or 'Text to Speech' is one of the coolest add-ons. It gives Firefox the power of speech. Select text, click the button on the bottom right and this add-on speaks the selected text for you. Isn't it brilliant? Audio is downloadable.

<http://www.cross-plus-a.com/balabolka.htm> Free text-to-speech download, can also download a portable version that runs off a USB thumb drive can save as wav or MP3 file.

<http://readplease.com> ReadPlease offers a free version as well as a pay version.

<http://www.wordtalk.org.uk> Free plugin for all versions of Microsoft Word. It highlights words and contains a talking dictionary.

[www.fullmeasure.co.uk/powerstalk/](http://www.fullmeasure.co.uk/powerstalk/) free text-to-speech for PowerPoint presentations

My Study Bar is a tool which helps overcome problems that students commonly experience with studying, reading and writing. The tool consists of a set of portable open source and freeware applications, assembled into one convenient package.  
[http://eduapps.openforeducation.org/?page\\_id=7#MyStudyBar+step-by-step+guides](http://eduapps.openforeducation.org/?page_id=7#MyStudyBar+step-by-step+guides)

<http://www.callscotland.org.uk/Resources/Information-Sheets/> This is a PDF on Reading the Web using a web browser with Text-to-Speech support for people with Reading Difficulties

[www.makeuseof.com](http://www.makeuseof.com) –How to guides that are downloadable

### **UDL / RTI / AT / SPEECH-LANGUAGE RESOURCES:**

<http://www.boardmakershare.com> This free web resource from Mayer-Johnson and DynaVox combines file sharing, powerful search capabilities, implementation articles, open discussion forums, and community functions. This resource works with Boardmaker, Boardmaker Plus or Boardmaker SD-Pro

[www.microsoft.com/enable](http://www.microsoft.com/enable) Accessibility Features in Microsoft: This website provides information on the accessibility of Microsoft products, accessibility resources, and assistive technology products compatible with the Windows operating system. The “Accessibility Update”, an e-mail newsletter is also available free of charge each month.

[www.bookbuilder.cast.org](http://www.bookbuilder.cast.org) Use this site to create, share, publish, and read digital books that engage and support diverse learners according to their individual needs, interests, and skills.

<http://lessonbuilder.cast.org> provides educators with models and tools to create and adapt lessons that increase access and participation in the general education curriculum for all students.

[www.cast.org/learningtools/index.html](http://www.cast.org/learningtools/index.html) - Supports for 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade students who struggle with writing science reports.

[www.myinfinitec.org](http://www.myinfinitec.org) Additional assistive technology resources available from the State of Illinois. (This website is for Infinitec members. Members must log in using their school email address.)

[www.speakingofspeech.com](http://www.speakingofspeech.com) This is an interactive forum for speech/language pathologists and teachers to improve communication skills in our schools

[www.carlscorner.us.com](http://www.carlscorner.us.com) This website was created by a retired classroom teacher / university instructor to provide resources and materials in the area of language arts.

Due to the extensive amount of information available on Carl's Corner, additional website links have been created to provide more resources: Little Book Lane: [www.littlebooklane.com](http://www.littlebooklane.com), Word Way: [www.wordway.us.com](http://www.wordway.us.com), and Alphabet Avenue: [alphabetavenue.net](http://alphabetavenue.net)

[www.scholastic.com/tbwwidget](http://www.scholastic.com/tbwwidget) The Teacher Book Wizard Widget is a quick, easy-to-use tool that helps you find just-right books for all ages, grades, and reading levels

<http://www.patinsproject.com/videos.html> Technical Training Videos & Tutorials created by the PATINS staff. (The PATINS Project is an Indiana state-wide technical assistance network for the provision of assistive/accessible technology.)

<http://cooltoolsforschools.wikispaces.com/> This resource provides a list of "cool teacher tools". Some categories include: presentation, collaborative, drawing, audio, music, quiz, writing. The tools are also indexed A-Z, with their corresponding category.

<http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com/> The UDL Toolkit is a resource of free technology that can be utilized in all classrooms, across the curriculum. Resources include: apps, audio books, text to speech, graphic organizers, study supports, and reading & writing tools

<http://www.freetech4teachers.com>

[www.handwritingworksheets.com](http://www.handwritingworksheets.com) This website allows you to create free worksheets for your students. You will be able to create simple worksheets in basic print, D'nealian style and cursive and include the student's key words

[www.aboutonehandtyping.com](http://www.aboutonehandtyping.com) This website includes a variety of resources (free and purchased) related to one-handed typing. Although this site links to "purchased products" for one-handed typists, it also includes ideas and resources, answers to frequently asked questions about one-handed typing, and discussion groups and news.

[http://www.beenleigss.eq.edu.au/requested\\_sites/mousepractice/index.html](http://www.beenleigss.eq.edu.au/requested_sites/mousepractice/index.html) This free resource has a variety of interactive activities to use with students when they are learning how to use a mouse.

### **MATH RESOURCES:**

<http://bigbrainz.com> TIMEZ Attack teaches multiplication through a video game, with pre and post tests built into the program. A basic core version is available free of charge. An upgraded, paid version is also available.

[www.webmath.com](http://www.webmath.com) students can get answers and step-by-step study help for math problems

<http://nlvm.usu.edu> The National Library of Virtual Manipulatives (NLVM) is a National Science Foundation supported project that began in 1999 to develop a library of uniquely interactive, web-based virtual manipulatives or concept tutorials for mathematics instruction (K-12 emphasis). A free trial version is available; along with a paid version.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/4\\_11/site/numeracy.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/4_11/site/numeracy.shtml) Math games for students ages 4-11 yrs

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/11\\_16/site/maths.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/11_16/site/maths.shtml) Math games for students ages 11-16 yrs

<http://www.visualfractions.com> includes online tools for learning fractions, PowerPoints to help teach fractions, downloadable worksheets, and downloadable software for creating circle fractions

[www.harcourtschool.com/glossary/math\\_advantage/index.html](http://www.harcourtschool.com/glossary/math_advantage/index.html) This K-8 site includes an animated glossary of common mathematical terms, categorized by grade level.

[www.mathslice.com](http://www.mathslice.com) This website provides a variety of free resources including math worksheets and online interactive functional “games”. It includes resources for basic to advanced math, as well as functional math skills.

<http://www.amathsdictionaryforkids.com/> Math Dictionary for Kids is an animated, interactive math dictionary which explains over 600 common mathematical terms and math words in simple language.

[www.cumbavac.org/Math.htm](http://www.cumbavac.org/Math.htm) Math Websites for Teachers and Students provides numerous math resources across all grade and ability level

<http://www.aplusmath.com> Games, homework tutoring and flashcard activities that include basic operations, rounding, time, geometry, algebra and more.

<http://www.schools.ash.org.au/stkierans-manly/Graph/graph.html> **Bar Graph Maker** This online tool creates vertical and horizontal bar graphs. Just replace the data in the existing graph with your own and print if you wish.

<http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/createagraph/default.aspx> **Create a Graph** This National Center for Educational Statistics site provides a step-by-step process to the creation of many types of graphs. The finished product can be printed, downloaded or emailed.

<http://www.greylolwit.com/educational.html#Mathematics> **Grey Olltwit Educational Software** Find many math programs that are freeware: graphing, 24 hour clocks, multiplication, division tables, worksheets and more.

<http://www.oatsoft.org/Software/NumberNavigator> **Number Navigator** A program that assists those with fine motor problems to set out columnar arithmetic, without the need for a spreadsheet. It looks and functions much like the program, MathPad. Not compatible with Windows 7

[www.hippocampus.org](http://www.hippocampus.org) **Hippocampus** Stuck on a problem in your math textbook, but it's 8:30 PM and you can't ask your teacher for help? Try HippoCampus! In the left-hand column, find the textbook you're using and click on it. In the right-hand column a list of pages and chapters will open up. Find the one(s) you're working on, and voila! You have an interactive explanation or reading of those pages.

<http://www.hbschool.com/hspmath/na/index.html> **HSP Math** Harcourt School Publishers interactive math site for Pre-K through 6 grade levels.

<http://www.handwritingforkids.com/handwrite/math/> **Interactive Math Worksheets** This website provides interactive and printable math drills/worksheets using JavaScript. The four basic operations and money are included. Customization of the worksheets is possible

<http://www.khanacademy.org/> This is an incredible, FREE, resource of over 2100 videos in YouTube format covering a range of math topics from arithmetic to calculus. Videos allow for self-paced learning and require mastery before advancing. Science, humanities and test prep videos are available too.

<http://www.kidsnumbers.com/> **Math for Kids** Kidsnumbers.com is a free resource designed by teachers. There are drills and games for the basic operations, time, money, algebra, fractions and geometry.

### **APPS for the iPhone, iPodTouch, and iPad**

<http://learninginhand.com/> **Learning in Hand** is an educator's resources for mobile learning. It was started in 2002 as part of Tony Vincent's classroom website. At first focusing on Palm handhelds, Learning in Hand now covers podcasting, iPods, iPod touch, iPhone, iPad, and netbooks.

[www.momswithapps.com](http://www.momswithapps.com) Moms with Apps is a group of family-friendly developers who share best practices on making and marketing mobile apps. It began as a small conference call and has grown to represent hundreds of mobile apps for kids and families. Check the site each Friday as one of the developer's apps is highlighted, along with a FREE download or special promotion.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/24470331/iPhone-and-iPod-touch-Apps-for-Special-Education> This website provides over 24 pages of apps available for special education.

<http://www.famigo.com/> Famigo is designed for parents to find apps and games for their kids. It could also be a good place for teachers to find apps to use in their classrooms.

[http://www.gofreeapp.com/app/2011/10/01/?category\\_name=ipad](http://www.gofreeapp.com/app/2011/10/01/?category_name=ipad)

<http://freeappalert.com>

<http://www.iear.org/>

<http://dailyappshow.com> App review with video

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/article/apps-for-literacy-support>

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=0AjbIta8OTS0KdHRMVWx0Q3pvOWRXXBfd01jc3lqakE&hl=en&single=true&gid=0&output=html>

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/resource-library/autism-apps>

## Apps

**Mobilewalla** is a new web platform that provides a deep search engine and breakthrough technology to help consumers, advertisers and developers navigate the mobile application marketplace. Mobilewalla offers a real time rating and ranking system for every category of mobile app available on Apple, Android, Blackberry and Windows 7

**AppShopper** <http://appshopper.com/> AppShopper keeps you up to date on the newest App Store apps, sales and freebies. Organize apps in your own customized Wish List and automatically get notified when there is a sale or update.

**Autism Apps-** is simple a comprehensive list of apps that are being used with and by people diagnosed with autism and other special needs. The apps are separated into over 30 categories.

## 3 Tools to Help You Save Paper & Ink

<http://www.printfriendly.com/> **PrintFriendly** strips away all of the ads and side bar content allowing you to print only the article on the page.

**Printliminator** is a handy little bookmarklet for Firefox, Chrome, and Safari. **Printliminator** allows you to highlight a webpage and select only the elements which you wish to print.



You can install [Printliminator](#) in seconds by just clicking and dragging it into your browser's toolbar.

### **Free and Simple Timers**

<http://www.online-stopwatch.com/full-screen-stopwatch/> Online Stopwatch is a free website that gives you the choice of a stopwatch function or a countdown function. You can set the countdown timer for any length of time and an alarm sounds when time is up.

<http://my.online-eggtimer.com> Online Egg Timer is a simple website offering three countdown timers on one screen. You can set just one timer or run all three at the same time with different settings. No registration is required in order to use [Online Egg Timer](#). Just go to the site, set the countdown timer(s) using the up and down arrows, then click "start timers."

<http://timerrr.com> Timerrr.com offers two versions of their free countdown service. The regular Timerrr displays a dial like my grandmother used to have on top of her stove. The "egg timer" version displays an egg timer as the countdown device. Both can be used to set a countdown of up to sixty minutes.

### **Sites to Learn Tech Skills**

<http://thinktutorial.com/> Think Tutorial is a site providing free, easy to follow tutorials on a variety of web services and software. On [Think Tutorial](#) you will find tutorials for taking advantage of the many features of popular email services like Gmail, Apple Mail, Hotmail, and Yahoo mail. You will also find tutorials for using iWork and Word

<http://www.learnitin5.com> Learn It In 5 is a site authored by [Mark Barnes](#) that features short how-to videos for teachers. The videos are intended to help teachers quickly learn how to use some of the the web tools are essential to being a successful user of classroom technology.

### **Various other Technology sites**

<http://quietube.com/> Quietube is a handy little browser extension that removes all the clutter from YouTube allowing you to view only your selected video. [Quietube](#) removes all advertising, sidebar content, comments, and ratings. Installing [Quietube](#) requires nothing more than dragging the Quietube button to your toolbar. Then anytime that you're on YouTube click the Quietube button to remove all of the clutter and just watch your selected video. Quietube works for Viddler and Vimeo videos too. -

<http://www.twurdy.com/about.html> Twurdy This new search engine provides results based on readability. A color-coded scale indicates a range of levels from 'Easier to Read' to 'Harder to Read'. Each entry also has a numerical value for readability based

on the number of words on the page, the average number of syllables in each word, the average sentence length and more. Results are from the Google search engine. -

<http://www.techmatrix.org/> A technology tool to find educational and assistive technology products for students with disabilities.

## **Software and Products**

**Classroom Suite 4** is a intervention tool that combines direct instruction with a flexible tool environment to help students in grades Pre K through 5 achieve mastery in reading, writing and math. Classroom Suite 4 includes research-based activity templates that can be used out-of-the-box, or easily customized to meet targeted needs

**Wordq/Speakq**- The first and only writing tool that integrates word prediction, spoken feedback and speech recognition.

**Livescribe Pen**-Records everything you write and hear so you'll never miss a word. Replay your meetings or lectures simply by tapping on your notes. Livescribe Desktop saves your notes and recordings to your computer for fast, easy access to what's important.

**Flip Camera**- The Flip is easy to use for family and school events. The camera starts up within seconds, and is very portable. To upload clips to a computer, simply flip out a USB connection and hook it up. The small LCD screen helps save power. The camera is perfect for capturing random moments.