Assistive Technology Evaluation

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Over the course of the two weeks that we worked with WordTalk, Joe seemed to like it. He had seen apps that typed what you said, but nothing that read what was typed. Initially we had to change the speed settings several times for Joe to be able to read along with the highlighted text, but once we found the right speed he really enjoyed following along. The tool he liked the most was the tool that would speak a single word to you. Before we started reading, Joe would look for words he did not recognize and use the tool to listen to how they were pronounced. The plugin also allowed him to listen to a sentence, paragraph, highlighted section, or an entire document, which gave him lots of options when he was practicing.

I also asked Joe's mother if she thought he liked WordTalk. She told me he had been using at home to read things he liked on the internet. He would copy and paste the text from the web site into Word and then read along with it.

Over the course of the two weeks I could already see some improvement in Joe's reading fluency. Initially he read with many awkward pauses and did not always acknowledge punctuation. After using WordTalk to listen to sentences and paragraphs, he started to pay a little more attention to where pauses and breaks should be. His reading comprehension also improved a little, but he is still not consistently reaching the 80% benchmark set in his IEP.

As I worked with Joe over such a short period of time, it hard to say with certainty that this Assistive Technology will be successful. In this short period of time, though, WordTalk did hold his interest and he did make some progress. I have encouraged his mother to keep using it at home and see if he continues to use it to read things that interest him.

In general, I liked the features offered by WordTalk. Just like the GPS in my car, though, the computerized voice sometimes pronounces words incorrectly. Due to the level Joe was reading at this was not really a problem in our sessions, but I did let his mother know that this could happen when he is reading things off of web pages or practicing something more difficult. For a free plugin, I think this could make a great Assistive Technology to help students who struggle in reading. Of course, every student is different, and it would have to be tested on a student-by-student basis.

WATI Assistive Technology Consideration Guide

1. What task is it that we want this student to do, that they are unable to do at a level that reflects their skills/abilities (writing, reading, communicating, seeing, hearing)? Document by checking each relevant task below. Please leave blank any tasks that are not relevant to the student's IEP.
2. Is the student currently able to complete tasks with special strategies or accommodations? If yes, describe in Column A for each checked task.
3. Is there available assistive technology (either devices, tools, hardware, o software) that could be used to address this task? (If none are known, review WATI's AT Checklist.) If any assistive technology tools are currently being used (or were tried in the past), describe in Column B.
4. Would the use of assistive technology help the student perform this skill more easily or efficiently, in the least restrictive environment, or perform successfully with less personal assistance? If yes, complete Column C.

Task	A. If currently completes task with special strategies and / or accommodations, describe.	B. If currently completes task with assistive technology tools, describe.	C. Describe new or additional assistive technology to be tried.
☐ Motor Aspects of Writing			
☐ Computer Access			
☐ Composing Written Material			
☐ Communication			
☐ Reading – specifically reading fluency and comprehension	• Student reads aloud • Student sometimes points to words as he speaks them	• For printed materials, student uses a ruler or similar object to keep his place on the page • Student listens to books on CD when available	• WordTalk plugin for Microsoft Word to help with reading text that is on a computer screen – speaks text and highlights the words as it reads
☐ Organization			

Task	A. If currently completes task with special strategies and / or accommodations, describe.	B. If currently completes task with assistive technology tools, describe.	C. Describe new or additional assistive technology to be tried.
☐ Math			
☐ Recreation and Leisure			
☐ Activities of Daily Living			
☐ Mobility			
☐ Positioning and Seating			
☐ Vision			
☐ Hearing			

5. Are there assistive technology services (more specific evaluation of need for assistive technology, adapting or modifying the assistive technology, technical assistance on its operation or use, or training of student, staff, or family) that this student needs? If yes, describe what will be provided, the initiation and duration.

The student, along with his parents and any teachers who work with him, will need to be shown how to access WordTalk through the Add-ins tab in Microsoft Word. The function of each tool will also need to be explained and demonstrated. After the initial demonstration, the student, parent, or teacher, will practice using the tools with the person training them. They will then be expected to practice on their own with various types of documents.

University of Kentucky

NATRI
National Assistive
Technology
Research Institute

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name Joseph A.	Grade 2	Date of Birth 5/12/2006
School Pine Log Elementary School	Date 6/23/2014	AT Plan Review Date 7/14/2014

POINT OF CONTACT (Individual assigned to keep the Implementation Plan updated)

Kathleen Landolt		

EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE TO BE USED	STATUS (e.g., owned by school, will purchase, will borrow, etc…)
School computer	Owned by school
Home computer	Owned by student/parent
WordTalk plugin for Microsoft Word	Free online download

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

NAME (List all individuals who will implement the AT with the student.)	ROLE (e.g., administrator, teacher, family member, service provider, etc…)
Kathleen Landolt	Teacher
Mrs. A	Joe's mother

EQUIPMENT TASKS

TASK (e.g., order/procure AT, load software, adapt/customize devices/software, set up at home/school, maintain/repair, etc.)	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE DUE
Download and add plugin to school computer	Kathleen Landolt (and school tech support if password needed)	6/23/2014
Download and add plugin to home computer	Mrs. A (with help from Kathleen Landolt if necessary)	6/25/2014

TRAINING

TRAINING NEED	TRAINEES	TRAINER	DATES & TIMES	FOLLOW UP / ALONG PLAN
How to access WordTalk and use the different tools included	Joe A. Mrs. A	Kathleen Landolt	6/23/2014 3:00-4:00	Mrs. A will install WordTalk on home computer. Mrs. A and Joe will practice using the tools at home with different types of documents.

CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION

IEP GOAL	CURRICULUM/DOMAIN (e.g., math, science, PE, art, etc…)	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	AT NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL (List specific AT and customized settings if appropriate)
Read sentences and paragraphs fluently	Reading, Language Arts	Kathleen Landolt (if implemented during school year, add General Ed. Teachers)	School computer with WordTalk plugin for Microsoft Word installed, headphones
Read at grade level and answer comprehension questions with at least 80% accuracy	Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science	Kathleen Landolt (if implemented during school year, add General Ed. Teachers)	School computer with WordTalk plugin for Microsoft Word installed, headphones

HOME IMPLEMENTATION

IEP GOAL	CURRICULUM/DOMAIN (e.g., math, science, PE, art, etc…)	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	AT NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL (List specific AT and customized settings if appropriate)
Read sentences and paragraphs fluently	Reading, Language Arts	Mrs. A	Home computer with WordTalk plugin for Microsoft Word installed, headphones
Read at grade level and answer comprehension questions with at least 80% accuracy	Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science	Mrs. A	Home computer with WordTalk plugin for Microsoft Word installed, headphones

MONITORING/EVALUATION

GOAL	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY (How will you teach student to use equipment and/or how to achieve goals.)	RECORDING SYSTEM & FREQUENCY (e.g., task analysis recording system; score + or - on data recording sheet)	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / DATA COLLECTION
Read sentences and paragraphs fluently	Demonstration, guide, assess progress	Assess fluency reading of at least one reading passage per session	Kathleen Landolt (if implemented during school year, add General Ed. Teachers)
Read at grade level and answer comprehension questions with at least 80% accuracy	Demonstration, guide, assess progress	Weekly passage with comprehension questions	Kathleen Landolt (if implemented during school year, General Ed. Teachers)