

# Inclusion Times

Technology  
for Children  
& Youth with  
Disabilities

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## Changing the Face of Science Education in the Classroom with Technology

By **Brian S. Friedlander, Ph.D.**

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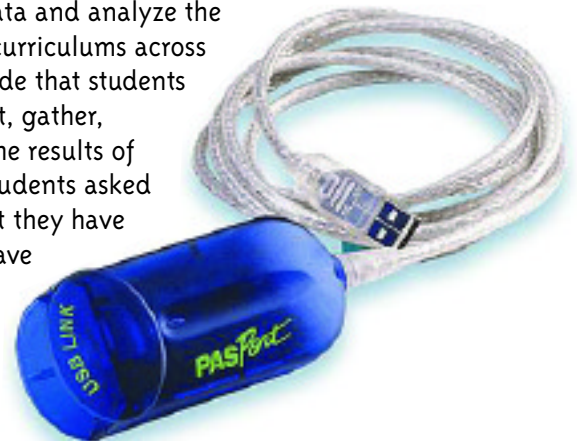
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I have always been intrigued and have had a keen interest in Science, ever since I can remember. While it has been more years, than I care to confess since I was in elementary school, I can still remember some of the experiments that my teachers did in front of the class to highlight a scientific concept or idea. Having had the experience of viewing the lab reinforced the idea and made learning more fun. Now, if we had only had the opportunity to do the lab at our desks. Having the opportunity to do hands on experiments and labs should be the cornerstone of any Science classroom. A lot has changed since I have been in elementary school and science curriculums have evolved to include many more hands on opportunities for students to observe, collect data and analyze the results. When looking at Science curriculums across the United States many now include that students will have the opportunity to collect, gather, hypothesize, graph and analyze the results of their experiments. Not only are students asked to make sense out of the data that they have collected, but many curriculums have also stressed the need to integrate technology into the equation.



# Editor's Note

It never ceases to amaze me just how fast time seems to be going? I was just starting to prepare my schedule for the summer, and it is nearly over. This can only mean that the fall will soon be here, and with that, the start of another school year. For those of us who had the opportunity to attend the National Educational Computer Conference in New Orleans at the end of June, we had the chance to see first hand some new and exciting products that I am certain you will want to use in your classrooms. This was the first time in a number of years that attendance was at an all time high with over 17,000 participants. There was a great deal of excitement about the field of educational technology and its impact on learning, that is taking place in classrooms throughout the United States. There were some very innovative new products shown, as well as some products that we have used for years which have been updated. One of my favorite announcements was from Alphasmart, Inc. — which will shortly release their latest portable note taker called the Neo. Look for more information about this exciting tool in this issue. Likewise, Tom Snyder has released two new programs, which should be of interest, Thinking Reader and Scholastic Keys, which will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of Inclusion Times. Both programs will certainly have a place for the students we work with. Lastly, Crick Software had announced the release of ClozePro an application that lets



teachers create exciting cloze activities on the computer.

With more and more special needs students spending the majority of their time in the mainstream, I have needed to come up with assistive technology solutions in the areas of Science, Math, and Social Studies. In an effort to support students in these classrooms, it became clear to me that we need to expand our toolkit and look for software tools that can provide teachers with new ways to instruct and give students hands-on experience with the concepts and ideas that they are working on. Late last spring, I began to explore solutions that could impact learning in the area of Science. As I began to work with these tools and show them to

Science educators it became apparent, that these hardware and software applications make a big impact on the learning of students with special needs. In this issue I will explore Science applications and share with you how they can be used in classrooms to support students with a wide variety of needs. I trust that you will enjoy this special focused issue and would be interested in your feedback. As always, I wish you a great school year ahead and I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at [brian@assistivetek.com](mailto:brian@assistivetek.com).

Regards,  
Brian

## Changing the Face of Science Education...

continued

With the Federal mandate for the Least Restrictive Environment, many students are now being supported in the mainstream in most of the academic subject areas. Science is just one of the subjects where we as special educators, will need to sup-

port them. In this article, we will explore a host of new and innovative Science supports that can bring new life into the Science curriculum, but more importantly will provide special educators with a range of science tools to support students

# Changing the Face of Science Education...

continued

with special needs. As special educators and assistive technology specialists we are always looking for tools whether low, mid or high tech that can help to serve the students we work with. We are certainly aware that multi-sensory opportunities for the students that we work with is important and having the tools to do this at our disposal is key.

For the past several months, I have been exploring, researching and investigating and using a number of Science tools that hold much promise for the work that we do. Tools that help students visualize data that were once difficult to conceptualize. These Science tools engage students in making hypotheses, collecting data and analyzing the results. From my vantage point, these tools and supports have much to offer the students we work with and I wanted to share them with you.

Most of what we know in the field of Science has been learned in the past 50 years. With the advent of the computer we have been able to measure and analyze data in ways that were once thought impossible to do so. Scientists once they had access to the tools were now able to make scientific finds and advance our body of knowledge. Scientists after all are very dependent on the latest technology and tools to help guide their research.

The same could be said for students who are sitting in our classrooms. Many students often feel that Science is nothing more than memorizing a bunch of facts. But nothing could be further from the truth. Science should engage our students in questioning, observing and analyzing. How are we going to change their attitudes and perceptions of Science?

One way to change the experience for our students is to give them more hands on opportunities in their Science classrooms. Over the past couple of months I have been working with what is often referred to in the scientific literature as "probeware." Probeware is simply any sensor or probe that is attached to a computer, standalone device, or PDA that can record an event that is occurring in real time. For example, one could attach a temperature probe to the computer and in real time collect and sample the temperature of a

liquid or the air. The probes come with a software application that is installed on the computer that lets students graphically collect and record the data, which can be saved for further analysis. Students now have the opportunity to collect, evaluate and share their information with their classmates using the computer as a scientific tool. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2000, Science Assessment, found that twelfth grade students who frequently used computers to collect data, use probes, download data and analyze data had higher scores on the Science assessment than those students who reported never doing so (NAEP, 2000, Science Assessment). Giving students opportunities to use these tools is important and one more way to engage and help reinforce concept development in the Sciences. In the remainder of this article I will highlight some of the products that can be used to get you started using probes in your classrooms. I am certain that once you and your students begin using probes you will sense their excitement about learning Science — in a hands on way!

One of the newest probeware solutions to be released is from Vernier ([www.vernier.com](http://www.vernier.com)) a company that has a long standing tradition of providing educators with innovative Science solutions. Vernier just recently released a new probe called Go!Temp. Go!Temp is an affordable temperature probe that plugs right into the USB port on your Macintosh or Windows computer. Go!Temp comes with a free copy of Logger Lite, a very easy to use software application that records in real

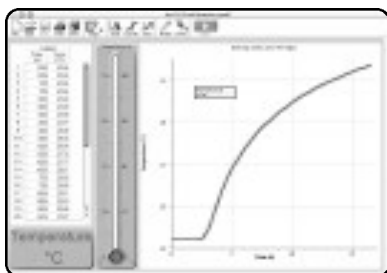


Students Using Go!Temp

# Changing the Face of Science Education...

continued

time the temperature from the probe. Using Go!Temp is as easy as plugging in the Go!Temp sensor, opening up Logger Lite software, and clicking on the Collect icon. Once you click on the Collect icon you will see the temperature being graphed on the screen. Students can also graphically see the temperature represented as an analog thermometer, a digital readout, or as a number on a dial. For students with visual impairment it is easy to arrange the screen to enlarge the readout. Students with fine-motor difficulties will find holding the Go!Temp probe a lot easier to grip



Logger Lite software

without the fear of breaking a glass thermometer. After the data has been recorded, students can review the data table and use a host of tools that are available in Logger Lite to examine the graph.

Students can examine data points on the graph, make predictions, calculate statistics and complete their lab reports right, within Logger Lite. Logger Lite is a powerful and easy to use software application. More importantly teachers will enjoy the fact that once Go!Temp is plugged in Logger Lite will automatically detect that a temperature probe has been plugged in so that you can quickly record your data. Teachers on a tight budget will enjoy the fact that Go!Temp is priced at just \$39 dollars.

For the elementary grades, Vernier has put together a curriculum guide, Let's Go! Investigating Temperature for use with Go!Temp that provides teachers with 10 complete lesson plans and activities for grades 2 through 5 that can be used in the classroom. Each of the ten lessons is included with Logger Lite so that students can quickly begin to make a hypothesis, collect and analyze their data. This is a real timesaver and the labs are well organized complete with teacher guides and student handouts in PDF format. Some of the labs that are included are: why do we need thermometers?; Celsius and Fahrenheit – what's the difference?; Cool reaction! The reaction of baking soda and

vinegar; and Keeping it Cool! Design your own thermos. Having used Go!Temp with students in the classroom something magical happens when you use this technology. Students are more engaged, excited, and inquisitive as they actively participate in the lab. It is amazing how many different ways you will find to use Go!Temp in your curriculum. It is also a great tool for teachers to use with a projector or interactive whiteboard attached to your computer to demonstrate a concept or do a whole classroom lesson.

While using Go!Temp will get you started on the way to using probeware in the classroom, why be restricted to just collecting temperature data? Vernier is certainly aware of your needs and has just come out with Go!Link, an affordable USB interface that allows you to connect one of 36 Vernier sensors to your Windows or Macintosh computer. Simply plug your Go!Link into your USB port and then you can attach sensors to collect data such as light, sound, pH, magnetic field, barometric pressure, and conductivity – to name just a few. Go!Link ships with a free copy of Logger Lite which automatically detects which probe you have attached to your computer and sets up the program to begin to collect data. Your students will quickly be able to collect and analyze the data that they have collected with the Logger Lite software that ships with Go!Link. Logger Lite makes for an ideal environment for students to record their observations, since each data collection file can consist of multiple pages that can be formatted to be used as a word processor. Students can go from the graph to the word processor page by clicking on the Page icon. Keeping the data and the graphs in the same file will make it easy for students who have difficulty shifting from one application to another. Having access to Go!Link will allow students a way to visualize scientific phenomenon that was just impossible to do so without the advent of the computer. If you have been trying to integrate the computer into your Science lessons then this is a truly wonderful way to do so.

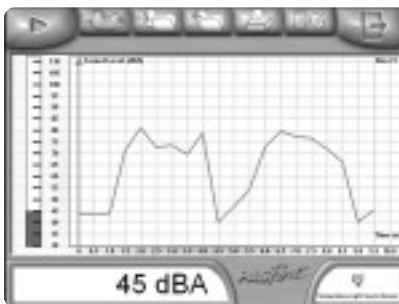
Pasco ([www.pasco.com](http://www.pasco.com)) is another leader in the field of probeware and they have recently released

# Changing the Face of Science Education...

continued



the Xplorer datalogger which is a handheld device about the size of large Palm device with a small LCD screen which operates on four AA batteries. The Xplorer is made from a very strong Polycarbonate material that can withstand the day-to-day use by students who are using it in the field. The Xplorer can be purchased with Multi-Measure sensors that connect to the rugged sensor mount on the top of the Xplorer. With the Science Sleuth Kit, students can use the Multi-Measure Sensor to measure temperature, light and sound simultaneously. It is very easy to get started with the Xplorer. Just plug in the Multi-Measure Sensor to the Xplorer and click on the Start button on the Xplorer. The Xplorer will begin to record the data in real time. To stop data collection, simply press the Start button. It is easy to review the data set using the 2 line LCD display. With the MultiMeasure Sensor, students will be able to easily collect ambient temperature, the sound level in the environment and the light level. An optional stainless steel temperature probe can be purchased to take the temperature of water, soil, and liquids. Once the data has been collected the fun really begins. Just plug the Xplorer into your USB port and within seconds DataStudio opens and asks if you want to retrieve the data. Click yes and within seconds all of the data is graphed for you. There are lots of ways to customize the graph and annotate it. DataStudio is a full-featured graphing program that works hand and hand with the Xplorer. Depending on your needs Xplorer ships with a free version of DataStudio Lite. If you need more features, then you can purchase the full featured version of DataStudio that runs on Windows and Macintosh OS. Xplorer is a very versatile data capture tool that will allow students the flexibility to record their observations away from the computer. There are a number of sensors that can be con-



EZScreen Software (PASCO): Measuring Sound Level

ected to the Xplorer that will extend the usefulness of this tool. The Xplorer is unique in that it supports a wide range of sensors as well as Multi-Measure probes that can record several different events at one time. The Weather Sensor is just the tool to help students collect data about the weather. Students can conduct weather station experiments and take readings or collect data over days or weeks. With the sensor students can record barometric pressure, humidity, temperature, and dew point.

If you have access to a computer and want to collect data with the Xplorer all you need to do is plug it into the USB port, attach a sensor and click the Start button on DataStudio. This begins the data collection and you will see your data graphed. For schools on a tight budget who are interested in working with probeware you may want to take a look at USB Link from Pasco. USB Link is an affordable interface that plugs into your USB port, on your Mac or PC, and allows you to connect all of the various sensors. USB Link is an ideal tool when you have access to a computer and when you don't need the portability of collecting data in the field.

The last tool that I will discuss is from the Onset Computer Corporation which manufactures the HOBO datalogger. The HOBO

datalogger is the size of a matchbox and is a battery powered datalogger that students can use to record and time stamp conditions such as temperature, humidity, and light intensity. The HOBO datalogger works a little differently then the other probes that have been discussed. With the HOBO datalogger you initially attach it to your computer and using the software that comes with it you determine how you would like to sample the data. For example, you may want to sample the temperature for a 24 hour period starting on a certain date and time, taking one sample every hour, or you may decide that you want to collect the

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# Videostreaming – A Whole New Way to Use Video in the Classroom

By **Brian S. Friedlander, Ph.D.**

It wasn't too long ago that if you wanted to use an instructional video in your classroom that you had to go to the main office and fill out a requisition form and submit it to the Audio Visual Services Department. But even before you did that, you had to search through the large unwieldy AVA Directory, complete the Requisition Form and make sure that it arrived in the office before the courier came to pick them up. After completing these steps you would hold your breath that everything worked like clock work so that it arrived for the lesson that you had faithfully planned to use it with.

Well a lot has changed in the arena of educational and instructional videos over the last two years with the advent of the Internet and high speed connections. For the past year I have been working with schools showing them how they can integrate instructional videos into their classroom using an innovative service from United Learning called video streaming. With high speed connection to the Internet and a subscription to United Learning it is now possible for teachers to search their repository of videos and then stream the video over the Internet for the class to view. United Learning realizes that you may not want to view the full featured video from start to finish and so they have broken up the video into small sections that you can use for your lesson. Being able to video stream a short section of a video is a wonderful way to engage students in the lesson or to stimulate a classroom discussion. United Learning is aware of the demands of educators and so every video is correlated with your State's Core Curriculum Standards should you need to cross reference

them. For some of the videos, there are blackline masters for teachers as well as video quizzes for students to take. Teachers will find this a wonderful tool to have at your disposal to support your curriculum. With a subscription, teachers can download the entire video to their computer or can download a small section of the movie. This is a great feature and one that I recommend using, just in case you have planned a great lesson to include the video streaming and your network goes down. Videos that you download can also be inserted into your Powerpoint presentations or Microsoft Word documents as well.

United Learning's library of videos keeps growing and last year the company was purchased by the Discovery Learning Company – so expect to see more high quality educational videos added to the service. United Learning estimates that there are over 2,000 videos in their collection. United Learning just purchased AIMS Digital Curriculum – which was one of their competitors in the video streaming industry. So expect to see more media available as time goes on. United Learning also has a digital picture library as well that educators can search for pictures that they want to include in their presentation.

Why are these services important for the students we work with? Many of the students that we work with special needs tend to learn best when we can provide them with multi-sensory learning opportunities and having access to high quality educational videos can help you meet their goals and objectives. Giving students access to information via an alternative method other than text is cer-

# Videostreaming – Video in the Classroom...

## Continued

tainly consistent with universal design for learning and helps promote learning for students that may present with reading disabilities. Additionally, United Learning has a number of videos in their library that are Closed Captioned for students with auditory impairment. There is a lot to like about United Learning services and for students with behavioral disabilities video is another means to engage them in the learning process.

United Learning offers 30 day trial subscriptions to educators and has a special offer this year to

give away a free, one year subscription to United Learning to one school building in each district in the United States. For more information go to [www.unitedstreaming.com](http://www.unitedstreaming.com). Once you have tried the service you will see that there is no going back to the way you used to use video in the classroom. Having access to Smartboards, mimio Xi's, or computer projectors really maximizes the experience of using streaming video service. Give it a try and let me know what you think.

# Changing the Face of Science Education...

## continued from page 5



HOBOTemp RH Temp Light External

humidity, and light intensity for a week collecting samples every 15 minutes. Once you have set the parameters with the software, you can unplug the USB cable and place the HOBOTemp datalogger in the spot where you want it to start collecting the data. Once the data-logging session is over, open up the data logging software on your Mac or PC and plug HOBOTemp into the USB port to retrieve and graph the data. Using

these handy little device students can perform some rather interesting experiments much like scientist do when they use probes. The HOBOTemp datalogger comes with a handy manual that will get you up and running in no time with some great ideas for getting started with data collection. If you need more information about HOBOTemp dataloggers you can go to [www.iScienceProject.com](http://www.iScienceProject.com). The

company is loaning out HOBOTemp datalogger so that teachers can have the chance to use them in their curriculum.

I hope that you have enjoyed this article, but more importantly, learned about some new tools that can be used with the students with special needs. Giving students the hands on experience to collect and see first hand the data is key for engaging them and raising the bar for their achievement. The combination of hands on activity and the graphical representation of the data can help students understand Science concepts in a way that was once not possible. For students with motor difficulties, having access to these tools will enable them to handle scientific instruments without the fear of breakage or injury to themselves. Having the graphical representation of the data can support students learning and give teachers who work with students with visual impairment the opportunity to enlarge the output so that they can more fully participate in Science class. Once teachers start using probeware you will begin to think of new ways to raise the bar for Science achievement in your classroom. The Science probes capture the imagination of students and provide a platform for integrating computers into the Science classroom.

# Brookfield Zoo Uses Technology to Help Chicago Public School Students with Disabilities...

## Access Technology Partnership Named One of the Nation's Most Innovative

by **Josh Mogerman,**  
**Web Projects Manager, Brookfield Zoo**

Brookfield Zoo's Every Student is a Scientist: Using Technology to Foster Inclusive Learning (ESS) pilot program partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) was recently named to the prestigious InfoWorld 100—a list of the most innovative technology programs in the nation. ESS uses tablet personal computers with wireless connections to allow CPS students with visual, hearing, or physical impairments to actively explore conservation concepts and work alongside classmates who are not disabled.

The project strives to give students with disabilities increased access to the same experiences that their general education counterparts have at the zoo, and technology helps fill that gap. Beta testing for the first ESS offering titled "Primate Populations" has concluded with rousing success. The curriculum unit focuses on primate behavioral research and allows all students to use the same techniques that Brookfield Zoo's animal keepers and field scientists use to track the activities of baboons, monkeys, and gibbons at the zoo's Baboon Island and Tropic World exhibits. Students record their observations on tablet PCs, which transfer the information to the zoo's wireless network servers. It is then available via the Web for classroom activities after the zoo visit. Several of Brookfield Zoo's educational award-winning Connections curricula will be modified for future phases of this project. The Every Student is a Scientist leadership program is supported by the Chicago Zoological Society, an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant,

Polk Bros. Foundation, and Microsoft Corporation.

When students from participating CPS inclusion classrooms visit Brookfield Zoo for the field trip portion of the zoo curricula, they are divided into groups. Each group is outfitted with a stopwatch and a tablet PC. Tablets include harness cases for easy handling, and can be mounted to wheelchairs, if necessary. Each student team then works together to collect data on primate activity. The tablet PCs are outfitted with software that adjusts for a variety of visual, hearing, and physical disabilities. For instance, students with visual disabilities can choose to enlarge type fonts, view high contrast images, listen to descriptive narrations of video clips, or engage a screen reader to "read" text on the screen. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students are able to convert all audio to text or increase the volume of audio clips. Students who have difficulty holding the tablet's stylus can make choices using a scanning software and a common access instrument referred to as a switch.

"It is really exciting to watch the kids work together as a team," said Ann Roth, Brookfield Zoo access coordinator. "On a tablet PC, students can choose how they access information. No matter what happens, the student is right in the middle of the action."

Though still in the pilot phase, more than 400 students and nearly 20 teachers have already used Every Student Is a Scientist and gave it rave reviews. The prospects for the project are enormous.





# BrainPop

What do you get when mix Moby, Tim and Flash animation? Of course I am referring to BrainPop, a unique subscription service that is a wonderful way for students to learn about a host of different subjects. Tim, a student who along with Moby, a robot act as your guides as they discuss various subjects. BrainPop for those who are not familiar with the service can be found on the web at [www.BrainPop.com](http://www.BrainPop.com). With a subscription you can view short four to five minute Flash animated movies which highlight and encapsulate a subject. You will find short movies in the area of Science, Language arts, History, Technology, Math, and Health. Students, after viewing the animated movie can take quizzes and there are teacher resources available for further class discussions. Students with learning or behavioral difficulties will enjoy the short animated movies which do a wonderful job of condensing and summarizing the material. The animated movies really get to the gist of the topic and are often done in a humorous way that students will enjoy. The number of movies in their library has grown and teachers will find it a rich resource for the classroom. Teachers can try out BrainPop at the website to see if it meets your needs. There are home, school, and teacher subscriptions – that should meet a host of needs.

BrainPop has recently teamed up with Popular Science to publish a wonderful resource book on Science and technology. The book is visually very appealing and the material is presented in a manner that will have your students keep picking it up to look at – time and time again. Tim and Moby are featured in the book and the book includes ideas and labs that you can do with your students to highlight a Science concept. The book covers a wide array of Science topics including everything from the weather, erosion, to computer technology. Everyone will find something in the book that will be of interest to them. The book also has links to the BrainPop movies on the Web. This is a wonderful book and one which your students will pick up time and time again. For more information about BrainPop, subscriptions or the book go to [www.BrainPop.com](http://www.BrainPop.com).

## Brookfield Zoo... Continued

Wireless technology allows students to upload their collected data, analyze it at their schools, and even compare their findings with those of other students in their class, other schools, or Brookfield Zoo researchers. As the technology is incorporated into more Brookfield Zoo exhibits, student data collection and animal observation opportunities will increase.

ESS was listed among the most innovative information technology programs in America by InfoWorld magazine for the novel use of three new technologies – Wi-Fi, the tablet PC, and the .NET platform – to vault over a variety of accessibility barriers.

This first phase of Brookfield Zoo's ESS program is the result of a broad and unique partnership, at times involving zoo staff, CPS instructors and Subject Matter Experts, assistive technology experts at University of Illinois Chicago, evaluators from the Illinois Institute of Technology, and ongoing project management and solution consultation from Quilogy. The result is a groundbreaking project. "It really is a remarkable program," said Kambri Hauser-Zielinski, a seventh- and eighth-grade teacher at Bell School whose students were among the 400 who helped pilot the program. "Not only did my students enjoy observing and recording animal behaviors, ESS allowed them to truly work as a team."

Brookfield Zoo is known throughout the world for its innovative, naturalistic, multi-species exhibits, its international role in animal population management and wildlife conservation and its devotion to helping people develop a sustainable and harmonious relationship with nature. For more information about Brookfield Zoo, visit [www.brookfieldzoo.org](http://www.brookfieldzoo.org).

# Neo is New

One of the hottest products to be announced at this year's National Educational Computer Conference was the Neo from the Alphasmart Company. The Neo has a whole new form factor and sports a whole new color. The Neo is sage green, and while it was at first hard to get used to, the color grows on you as you use it. The form factor and style is very different from its predecessor, the Alphasmart 3000. Neo has the same chassis as the Dana with the same keyboard, giving it a quieter and smoother touch. The screen is noticeably larger than the Alphasmart 3000, but smaller than the Dana. For me one of the key features of the Alphasmart has been ease of use and long battery life. The Neo holds to the same tradition and users can expect to get at least 700 hours of battery life from 3 AA Alkaline batteries. When using the Neo, you will quickly notice that the screen is much brighter than the Alphasmart 3000. One of the nicest features to be added to the Neo is the ability to change the size of the font on the screen. Younger students and students with visual impairment will find this to be an invaluable feature. One of the features that we have requested from the Alphasmart Company has finally found its way into the Neo—a much improved spell checker with the ability to add words to the dictionary. This is a welcome addition. Likewise students will have access to a set of writers tools which was originally part of the WritersTools Smart applet that was marketed for a time when the Alphasmart 3000 was released. With the built in writers tools, students will have access to a thesaurus and word count tools at their disposal. There is also a Spanish dictionary built in which writers can use.

One of the newest applets to be included with the Neo is the Beamer Smart applet. All Neo's will come standard with the infrared (IrDA) built in so that students with the assistance of the Beamer Smart applet can beam text from one Neo to another. Think of all the possibilities! For that matter, Neo users will be able to beam text to a Dana, Palm, or IrDA compliant device. Beamer should also be available as a Smart applet for the Alphasmart 3000 IR model. One of the newest



features which teachers will enjoy using is the ability to link a document with a student file. Imagine being able to have a File linked to a writing rubric that students can toggle between as they write. The Alphasmart Company for the first time will also allow students to name their files instead of just being stored in a workspace. As much as things have changed users should feel right at home with the Neo. The Alphasmart Company will have Beamer, Inspiration, Keywords, and AlphaQuiz Smart applets available when the Neo starts shipping. Don Johnston, Inc is committed to developing the Co:Writer Smart applet for the Neo, but at this time, no official release date has been announced. As part of their announcement, the Alphasmart Company will shortly be releasing the Alphasmart Manager 2.0. Alphasmart Manager 2.0 will allow teachers to manage a whole cart or set of Alphasmarts. Teachers will be able to send text to an entire cart of Alphasmarts, clear files and set features with Alphasmart Manager 2.0. While the Neo is new, all of the accessibility features that we have come to love are all available from this new portable notetaker. With the mix of a brighter screen, choice of six different sized text fonts, improved spell checker, improved keyboard, larger LCD screen, and writer tools this Alphasmart should be a hands down winner in the educational marketplace. The Alphasmart Company has heard our recommendations and produced what I consider to be the best portable writing tool for the money. By the time you read this, the Neo should be shipping. For more information go to [www.alphasmart.com](http://www.alphasmart.com).

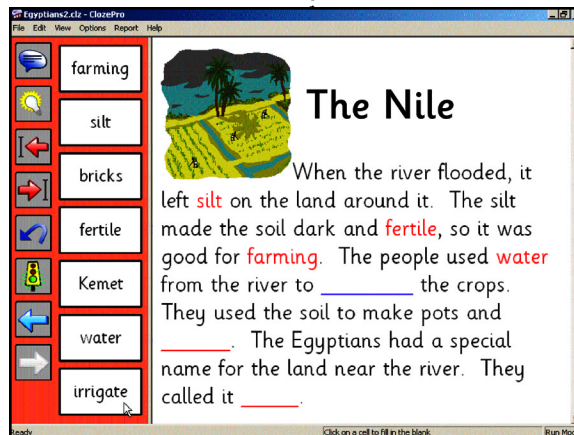
# ClozePro – Filling in All the Gaps

Having recently attended the National Educational Computer Conference this past June, I stopped by the Crick Software booth to see what all the commotion was about. Their theatre presentation was packed and educators were lined up knee deep to preview their new software application ClozePro. There was certainly a lot of excitement about their new product and Crick Software, was generous enough to give each educator a free copy of ClozePro, who attended the demonstration.

In a nut shell ClozePro, allows teachers to create cloze activities from text that is typed or copied into the application. Cloze techniques have a long tradition in education of being used to assess a student's comprehension of material that they have read. ClozePro makes the task of making cloze activities a real cinch. Type or copy text into the top part of the ClozePro window, click on the Remove Words icon, determine how words are removed, click OK and your cloze activity is created. The words that were pulled out now appear on the bottom of the screen, ready to be used. Click on the Run icon and your students are ready to use the activity. There are lots of ways to customize the activity and teachers can also provide picture supports for students who need them. Teachers can use their own clip art, or if you have access to the Picture Communication Symbols (metafiles) or Crick's Animated picture library, they can be easily used with ClozePro.

Student can use the cloze activity with a host of supports that are provided by the program. Students who need reading support will be able to

click on the Speak button to have the program read the sentence. For students who may have difficulty reading the words that were pulled out, they can right click on the word to have ClozePro read it. Teachers can set up multiple activities that are linked so that students can work on several cloze activities in succession. Students who need hints or prompts as they are referred to in ClozePro



Activity Created with ClozePro

can click on the Light bulb icon to display a letter prompt. Multiple clicks on the Light bulb icon will reveal all but the last letter of the word. Teachers can disable this feature for students that don't need this level of support. Teachers working with students who use switches will be glad to learn that the application is switch accessible.

ClozePro gives teachers a

wide array of features to customize the cloze activities and teachers will find it a very intuitive application to use.

For teachers that are looking for new ways to assess their students, ClozePro may be the right tool for the job. After students take a cloze activity, teachers can review the child's progress and print out their score and report. ClozePro will also allow you to print a report complete with whether the student used prompts to accomplish the task. ClozePro can certainly be used for alternative assessment and its reporting tools are certainly welcome in this era of accountability. Teachers will certainly enjoy the programs flexibility and reporting features and find it a welcome addition to their toolkit. For more information go to: [www.cricksoft.com/us](http://www.cricksoft.com/us).

New Video  
Coming Fall of 2004

# Assistive Technology

A Way to Differentiate Instruction for  
Students with Disabilities

featuring Brian S. Friedlander, Ph.D.



With the reauthorization of **IDEA**, all school districts are required to consider assistive technology for each and every student as part of the evaluation process. **Find out how you can meet this requirement and learn about the commonly used assistive technology tools** that are available for student use. This video discusses and demonstrates ways in which low to high tech solutions can enable students to function to their highest potential and to meet their IEP goals, resulting in improved levels of academic performance.

**Educators, students and parents** are invited to join Dr. Friedlander as he works directly with students; selects appropriate solutions to their special education challenges; and oversees their progress. **See first hand how students become more empowered, successful, and less frustrated.**

**Dr. Friedlander** is an adjunct faculty member at the College of St. Elizabeth and at Lesley University. He is the editor of Inclusion Times, a nationally distributed special education and technology newsletter published by AssistiveTek, LLC ([www.assistivetek.com](http://www.assistivetek.com)), and he is a moderator and presenter on assistive technology at national and state conferences.

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