The Monitor

From the Director

This is the last issue of *The Monitor* for the 2004-2005 school year. I hope each of the five issues has found you. This is the first year that we have distributed them exclusively electronically, and from our perspective, that worked well. I hope it worked on your end. One person reported that she got one issue about 24 times. I think there was something wrong somewhere; either that or she has 23 really good friends that wanted to make sure she didn't miss an issue. But as we all know, using technology is not always a smooth path.

Later in the issue I highlighted several of the 30 plus workshops that are being offered the last two weeks of June at the WATI Summer Institute. The full program is online at www.wati.org. Since I doubt this issue will not reach you before the pre-registration date (May 16) I am extending a special offer to all of you to register without the late fee if you register before June 1, and use the special password of "May Monitor". Write that on your registration form and send it in right away. After June 1 we will be closing any workshops that have fewer than 12 registrants. From then on we will update the website daily to show filled and cancelled sessions.

Are you looking for other training opportunities? Check the WATI website by clicking on 'Training'. Throughout the year we try to keep it up-to-date with what each of the consultants has planned. If you would like some training on a topic that you do not see listed, call your consultant. You are probably not the only one interested and if a large enough group is identified, one can be scheduled. Your WATI consultant is interested in meeting your needs.

So what are your plans for the summer? Are you going to kick back and take a much needed break and rejuvenate for the fall? How about sitting in the sun, sipping whatever pleases you, and reading up on AT? Granted, it's not the same as a best selling novel, but think about all the exciting ideas you will come up with. You could try some of the WATI best sellers: Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology, Designing Environments for Successful Kids (DESK), and How Do You Know It? How Can You Show It? Our complete product catalog is on our website or call Mary at 800-991-5576. Then in the fall you can turn those ideas into reality.

On those rainy days, travel the web. Challenge yourself to thoroughly explore one area of interest, like AT for reading or computer access. I'm sure you will find many super sites. Bring back what you found and send in your favorites to us at info@wati.org. I can take a look at them and share them back with everyone in a future issue of *The Monitor*.

Whatever your plans, I hope you have a restful summer and come back really refreshed!

Liz Lahm

Assistive Technology Use in Wisconsin: Where are We?
Liz Lahm,WATI Director

Have you ever wondered how many students actually use assistive technology? You are often only exposed to your school, maybe to your whole school district. Do you wonder how you compare to other schools and districts across the state? The Department of Public Instruction, through the December Child Counts, collects some data that help us answer these questions.

I would like to preface this analysis by saying that it is unclear if there is a consistent manner of reporting this data. The December Child Count report is submitted each year recording the number of students with special needs enrolled in a school district on December 1st. Based on the numbers reported, school districts receive funds to help operate their special education programs. One of the statistics districts record is whether or not a student is using AT. They use whatever is noted on the IEP.

The data show that 3,168 of 127,828, or 2.48% of students with special needs used AT in 2003. Based on my interactions with teachers in Wisconsin, this seems extremely low. I suspect that AT is not consistently noted on the IEP thus the data presented here may not be an accurate picture. AT should be

included in at least one of three areas on the IEP: 1) special education program; 2) related services; or 3) supplementary aids and services. As part of the special education program, goals and objectives are listed. If the person collecting the data looks only at the goals and not at the objectives, much of AT may be missed. For example, a student may have the goal of completing all written work independently. One or more of the objectives may include AT that was overlooked if it is not named in the goal itself. Another student may have speech listed as a related service and is working on using an AAC device. Does this service get counted as both speech and AT or just speech? We need to work toward some consistent, accurate measures of AT use in order to really know what is happening in Wisconsin.

Regardless, the data we have can tell us something. For instance, the percentage of students using AT more than doubled between 2001 and 2003. Students preparing to exit the school system use a lot more AT than any other age group of students. (See Figure 1.) Are they hurrying to get ready for post-school environments? Figure 2 shows AT use by primary disability. The numbers raise curious questions. For example, there are 5 students in Wisconsin with a primary disability of deaf-

blindness. Only one of these students is recorded as using AT. How can you not use AT with a student with deaf-blindness? Two things may explain this: one is that the way it was recorded on the IEP was not picked up by the person doing the December Child Count, or second, the teachers and related service providers do not consider what they are using as AT. This raises questions about a shared definition of AT but it may also indicate that the AT being used is so integrated that it is not seen as AT anymore. Only 15.9% of students with visual impairments are recorded as using AT. If low tech items were counted such as magnifiers, light boards, and raised line paper, this number would surely be higher. So what is really going on around Wisconsin related to AT use? We have lots of questions. I only hope we find a better way of recording it because I certainly do not believe that less than 2.5% of students are benefiting from assistive technology.

Please see the next page for the statistics on assistive technology use from 2001-2003 based on age and disability.
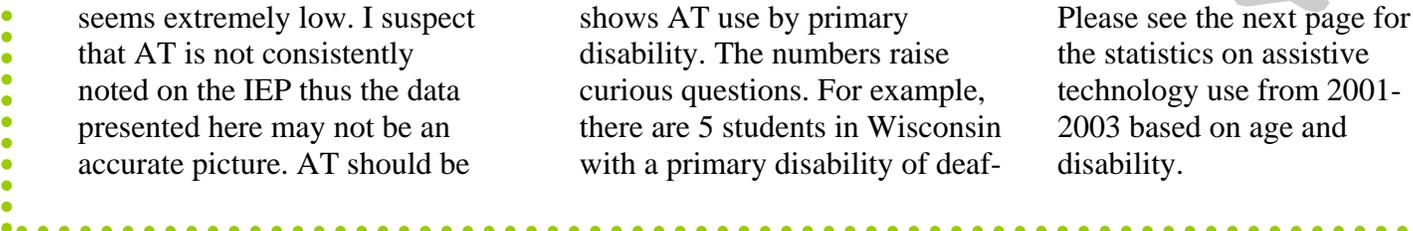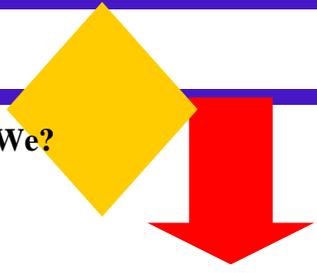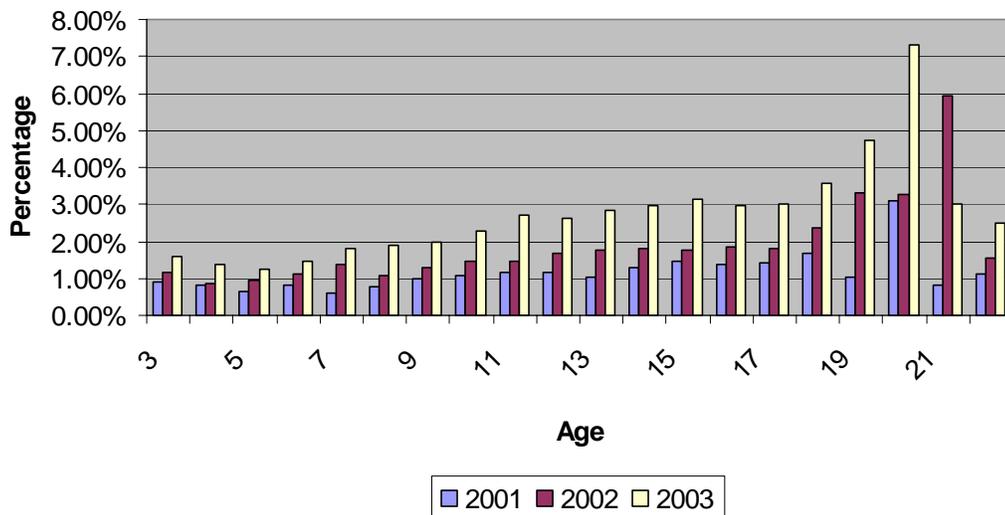
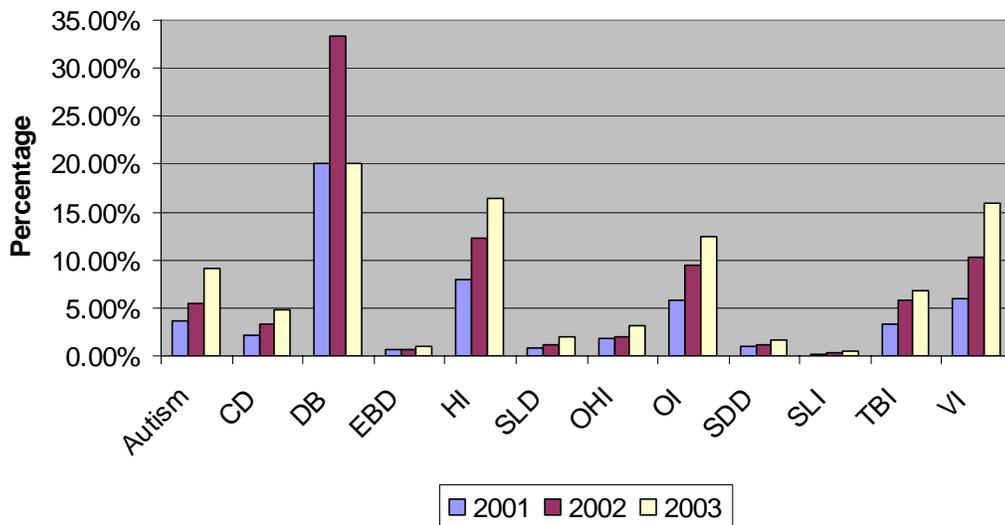**Assistive Technology Use in Wisconsin: Where are We?**
Liz Lahm,WATI Director
Continued

Figure 1: AT Use in Wisconsin by Age (2001-2003)

Figure 2: AT Use in Wisconsin by Disability

Meeting the Needs of the Struggling Student: Teaming Up with Special Ed
Diane Rozanski, Assistive Technology Coordinator and Pam Penn, Library Media Specialist
Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI

What happens when you bring passionate educators together who have the interests of students, ALL students, as their mission? What if these educators come from different areas of service to students? You get the "Teaming Up with Special Ed" collaboration at Milwaukee Public Schools!

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Assistive Technology (AT) Coordinator, Diane Rozanski, Physical Therapist & AT District Specialist, Martha Reiser, and District Library Media Specialist, Pamela Penn began thinking and talking. They each were seeing potentially valuable information within the other's specialty and decided to work together to share that discovery with building level educators. "Teaming Up with Special Ed" was promoted as an opportunity for the school library media specialists and special education teachers to come together for sessions at the district's Technology Support Center to learn and share information about technology that can help students overcome obstacles that may be preventing them from full participation. Rather than district staff presenting, building staff shared with one another and used district staff expertise for support and enhancement. The purchase of Start-to-Finish® Books (Don Johnston Incorporated), which consists of paperback book, computer book and audio book, for all middle schools and K-8 schools in MPS provided a mutual starting point for the team, and it just grew from there. Four half-day sessions were scheduled to bring together the special education teachers and library media specialists to explore opportunities for collaboration.

The library media specialists shared information on research tools that support a broad range of reading levels, interest levels, and learning styles. The research tools included:

* BigChalk Library Elementary http://www.bigchalk.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOPortal.woa/db/Home.html
  Search for information using natural language. Results of search indicate the Lexile reading level and are in multiple formats including: newspaper and magazine articles, books, maps, audio/video, pictures, TV and radio transcripts.
* KidsClick! http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick!/
  A web search for kids made by librarians. Directs students to age appropriate sites (Grades K-8). Advanced Search allows users to limit their searches by reading level.
* Yahooligans http: //www.yahooligans.com/
  Kid-friendly version of Yahoo for 8-14 year olds. Search results in multiple formats including text, movies, and digital pictures. In the area of assistive technology the special education teachers shared information on AT tools to support students who struggle with reading.

Visual supports: colored overlays, highlighter tape, hefty tabs, Post-it® Notes, bookmarks, and picture supported text.

Auditory supports:
talking word processors (Write:OutLoud®), hand held scanners (Quicktionary Reading Pen), and spell checkers with Auditory Feedback (Speaking Homework Wiz).

Assistive Technology Tools:
Scan and Read (WYNN) programs, hand held scanners (Link), and a graphic organizer (Draft:Builder®). Participates received the AT Tools for use in their schools.

Meeting the Needs of the Struggling Student: Teaming Up with Special Ed
Diane Rozanski, Assistive Technology Coordinator and Pam Penn, Library Media Specialist
Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI
Continued

"Teaming Up with Special Ed" collaboration was a huge success and in the second year of the project even more teams participated. Positive results and comments included:

"I feel more confident that the library media center can meet the needs of academically struggling students at my school because of the wealth of information, tools, and techniques that were shared during this in-service." - Joan Bach, Library Media Specialist, Milwaukee Public Schools.

"One of our special needs students shared with me that he never read an entire book. I taught him how to use Don Johnston's Start-to-Finish Books®. He enjoyed using the series and had success completing the quizzes at the end of each chapter. After completing the first book, his face lit up and it was obvious that he was clearly proud of his accomplishment. Eventually, he had the confidence to come to the library to check out his own books. This experience was something that he never had and it inspired him to continue reading" - Debbie Lopez-Prado, Library Media Specialist, Milwaukee Public Schools.

"This collaboration gave the special education teachers another resource in their school, a person who could be on the look out for exciting and relevant information for their classroom. I think often special education teachers feel quite alone and sharing with another professional was exciting for both groups."
– Martha Reiser, Physical Therapist, Milwaukee Public Schools.

"The connection between special education and the library media center has been strengthened. There is more collaboration between us." - Ursula E Milton, Special Education Teacher, Milwaukee Public Schools.

Around the same time this idea was taking off, but happening independently, the Milwaukee Public Library (MPL) was exploring the idea of reaching out more meaningfully to the population that has special needs in the Milwaukee community, especially the children. They began framing ideas for the Learning for All federal grant and contacted Pamela Penn. Pam shared information on the "Teaming Up with Special Ed" project and a new collaboration was born! The Learning for All grant was awarded to MPL and focused on improving services to youth with learning disabilities. Kathy Emanuele, Milwaukee Public Schools' Special Education Staff Development Support Teacher, facilitated informational sessions on Learning Disabilities and supports for struggling readers to all librarian staff, from children's librarians to adult services. New materials were reviewed and added to the MPL collection including books, videos, and assistive technology tools to support struggling readers and writers.

For more information on this initiative see: http://www.mpl.org/file/kids_learning_index.htm

Creating Communication Environments
2005-2006 Class Schedule

Holiday Inn, Tomah
    Oct. 14, Dec. 16, Feb. 24, Arp. 21

CESA 1 and CESA 2
    Oct. 7, Dec. 1, Feb. 8, Apr. 3

Northeast Wisconsin - TBA

See WATI website for more information.

WATI manages a Used Equipment Marketplace that offers a place for individuals to list items they would like to sell or donate when they no longer need them. Likewise, the Used Equipment Marketplace is a place for an individual to look for a needed item. There is no charge for this service.

The current list of available items is located below and on our website at www.wati.org. The form to list something on the Used Equipment Marketplace is also on our website, or you can call to request one. Forms must be submitted to WATI at the following address:

Sharon Rhode	QUESTIONS? call Sharon at 800-991-5576 or
WATI	email her at mailto:srhode@cesa6.k12.wi.us
Polk Library	
800 Algoma Blvd	
Oshkosh, WI 54901	

Please note, WATI does not physically collect or keep these items. We are a liaison between the seller and the buyer. If you are interested in a product, contact WATI to receive the contact information for the person selling the item. Tell them what item you are interested in and we will give you the appropriate information. Please see the WATI website to view the latest Marketplace items.

Summer Institute on the Horizon

It doesn't seem like summer could be anywhere near with all the cold weather we have been having but the WATI Summer Institute begins in less than 6 weeks. Early registrations were due May 16. Here is some of what we have to offer this year.

This year's featured speaker: Judy Sweeney, Onion Mountain Technology
Technology and Brain-Based Learning ($120) (Monday, June 27)
So much technology . . . so much research . . . so little time. Spend a day exploring a myriad of research findings that focus on how your students learn and how you can change the learning environments in your classroom to best meet their needs and strengths. We'll quickly explore and demonstrate low to high tech tools that you can use to create specialized lessons or that your students can use in learning - all of which are supported by research based on how our brain learns, recalls, and applies. We'll cover a variety of topics including the use of color, lighting, sound and music, smells, using digital images and graphics, memory aids, then tie it to specific technology tools and strategies you and/or your students can use to make this kind of learning part of your classroom.

For those working with younger children:
Buckets of Literacy™ for Children Birth to Five ($150) (Wednesday, June 22)
Buckets of Literacy™ is an innovative way that follows the Universal Design for Learning framework to provide literacy access to all learners. This make and take workshop empowers you to create many engaging activities that focus on creating a print rich environment so you can help set the stage for emergent literacy success. Activities within the Bucket allow for true collaboration between the SLP, OT, PT, VI, and HI. The activities are designed so that children who are non-verbal or have limited interaction skills can be engaged in purposeful activities. You will create your own "Bucket" full of themed activities around a widely used storybook. You will see ideas for integrating voice output, creating switch activities, making accessible manipulatives and using the computer as a developmentally appropriate tool, and much more. Each participant will leave with a CD full of IntelliTools Classroom Suite activities based around the storybook.

Start With a Single Message ($95) (Wednesday, June 22)
Creatively use Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) and Assistive Technology (AT) tools to communicate ideas in this exciting session. Low cost AAC devices are excellent implementation tools when creating a language rich environment, receptively or expressively. Share practical ideas about AAC/AT devices and strategies to take home and implement with students.

Summer Institute on the Horizon, Continued

Planning a Parent Party: A New Look at Family Involvement ($95) (Tuesday, June 28)
Early interactions have a critical impact on a young child's development. Language and literacy skills, as well as social/emotional competence are particularly influenced by the responsiveness of significant adults. In this workshop, participants will create child-parent activities that support responsive communication, demonstrate simple strategies for everyday routines, enrich children's storybooks with extension activities and adaptive props, provide structured and effective training, along with…….. food, fun, and networking with other parents!!

Assessing Students' Need for Assistive Technology ($130) (Thursday, June 30)
This beginning level workshop is designed to lead teams of school district or Birth to Three providers through the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative's assessment process for determining if a child needs assistive technology. Participants will have hands-on experience completing the Student Information Guide, Environmental Observation Guide, Decision Making Guide, and the Trial Use Guide.

Build a Better Book

> **Book 1:** *MyTruck Is Stuck!* by K. Lewis & D. Kirk **($145) (Wednesday, June 27)**
>
> > This book is appropriate for pre-K-grade 2. It focuses on counting, ordinal numbers 1-5, estimating, and predicting.
>
> **Book 2:** *The Little Old Lady Who was not Afraid of Anything*, by L. Williams **($145) (Thursday, June 30)**
>
> > This is a fun book to use in fall with its scarecrow and pumpkin theme.

These hands on sessions will allow the participant to learn how to use scanned text and PowerPoint to create an electronic talking book. Come and complete a unit that you may use in the classroom come fall. All materials, props and book will be provided. Please bring: scissors, markers, crayons, ruler, and wear comfortable clothing.

Amherst Too Far? These Are For YOU!
Four session will be offered in the four corners of the state. In Milton (CESA 2), West Salem (CESA 4), Oshkosh (CESA 6), and Hayward Middle School, the following are offered:

Assistive Technology for Learning ($95) (Monday, June 20)
Challenging you to think about forms of assistive technology that enhance academic performance

Demonstrating What Students Know: Assistive Technology for Testing ($95) (Tuesday, June 21)
Examining accommodation versus modification of tests; classroom and curriculum-based tests through high-stakes tests; and the role of assistive technology in all testing situations.

In Fennimore (CESA 3), Gillett (CESA 8), Chippewa Falls (CESA 10), and Milwaukee Public Schools, the following are offered:

Understanding and Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in Your Assistive Technology ($115) (Monday, June 20)
Providing excellent resources to help you implement EBP as well as online and print resources to help you implement evidence-based practice to avoid assistive technology mistakes.

Using Visual Supports to Enhance Expressive Communication Throughout the Day When Working With Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder ($95) (Tuesday, June 21)
Learning ways to incorporate communication training/support strategies within functional settings throughout the day for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who are nonfunctional verbal communicators.

Monitor Schedule
September 15
November 15
January 15
March 15
May 15

Articles due the first of the month

Monitor Editor
Sue Loesl
5225 West Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Phone:
(414) 475-8127

Fax:
(414) 475-8277

E-Mail:

loeslsd@mail.milwaukee
k12.wi.us

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.wati.org

Contacting WATI

Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative

Elizabeth A. Lahm, Director
elahm@cesa6.k12.wi.us

Polk Library

800 Algoma Blvd.

Oshkosh, WI 5490

800-991-5576

920-424-2247

fax: 920-424-1396

www.wati.org

MPS/WATI

WATI LENDING LIBRARY NEWS

Spring time always means a flurry of spending at the WATI Lending Library. After watching the lending trends of the year, the new AT tools on the market, and the dollars remaining in the budget, we attempt to anticipate the needs of the next year. Here are a few of new items you will see in the WATI Lending Library that will be available for check-out starting in Fall of 2005. These and all new items will be included in our online catalog and searchable database this fall.

Neo by AlphaSmart
The Neo is a portable word processor with a full size keyboard and over 700 hours of battery life. Neo features a larger screen and font selection allowing twice as much display as the AlphaSmart 3000. The keyboard supports QWERTY, Dvorak, and left and right handed layouts. Neo is lightweight at 2 lbs. AlphaWord, a full feature word processor, includes a dictionary, thesaurus, spell check, and Spanish-English word look-up. Also, it includes the Inspiration outliner SmartApplet.

MiniMo by Dynavox
The MiniMo combines color, dynamic display screens with powerful communication and programming tools for digitized speech-output solutions. MiniMo weighs 3 lbs. 5 oz and has an average run time of 8 hours continuous use.

CalcuScan (for Windows) by Mayer Johnson
CalcuScan is a scanning calculator that provides teachers and students with a valuable math aid for the classroom that allows you to:

- Edit and re-assign key names and functions
- Display calculator key layouts at any size, up to full-screen
- Enter answers with or without using calculator functions
- Specify and save Layout, Access, Sound, Miscellaneous, and Work options
- Display or print records of student progress

Start-to-Finish Books by Don Johnston
New books will be added to our current sets in the lending library.
Gold Library Sets have grade 2-3 readable text with 5000-7000 words per book, 100-150 words per page, 10-12 chapters with full-page illustrations.

New Gold Sets include:
- The Night of the Loch Ness Monster

- 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

Blue Library Sets have grade 4-5 readable text with 10,000-12,000 words per book, 150 words per page, 10-12 chapters with illustrations that vary in size and placement.

New Blue Library Sets include:
- The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
- Call of the Wild

Gold Library Sets already in our lending library include: Treasure Island, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Nick Ford Mysteries (The Graveyard Mystery, The Crossbow Mystery, Alcatraz the Rock), Natural Disasters (Earthquake, Hurricane, and Liddy and the Volcanoes)

(Sharon Rhode, Lending Library Manager)

HAVE
A
GREAT
SUMMER!