

ATN introduces their new staff person....

Hello Everyone,

As a start, let me please introduce myself – my name is Arlinda Cela and I am a new team member with the new Learning Disabilities Services for ATN Access Inc. I am very proud and excited to have started working with a highly motivated and dedicated team that has changed my way of seeing the world. My first introduction to ATN was made possible a couple of years ago when I was in the position of “Transition Coordinator”. That experience was absolutely eye opening and also, the main reason for me to return after completing the Faculty of Education program with a Bachelor of Education Degree. As an Ontario-certified teacher, I am now focusing most of my time and energy assisting individuals with learning disabilities to meet their learning or employment goals; our outstanding services and our most welcoming staff can turn their lives around.

To better serve our community and fulfill our mission, we are actively looking for opportunities to deliver presentations that can provide you with carefully selected information on learning disabilities and more. Our speakers, who themselves have Dyslexia, Language based learning disability, Math based learning disability etc, are always eager to share their inspirational stories of struggles and success. Listening to their presentations has been an inspiring experience in the past and the feedback has always been very encouraging. As you already know it is impossible to outgrow a learning disability, but it is entirely possible to succeed in almost anything with the proper help and support from qualified and experienced people. Our speakers’ stories emphasize the importance of this much needed support and especially the dramatic change that the assistive technology has in their lives. If you are interested in such a presentation please refer to page 4 of this newsletter to get more information.



Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
London Region



UWO Centre for Inclusive
Education



Written Language Disability

By: Mary Rushe

Simplified, the brain processes that are used to assimilate and apply information fall under four categories: input, organization, storage and output. A person who has a learning disability can have processing deficits that vary in severity and can include shortfalls that affect more than one of these four areas.

A written language disability, at first glance, may be seen as a processing problem that specifically involves output processes. The complexity of the writing process, according to educator and lecturer Mel Levine (Developmental Variation and Learning Disorders, 1987) is one of the most complicated cognitive tasks that a student faces because a student is required to perform many demanding cognitive tasks simultaneously. Further, the cognitive process of writing requires students to first master many fundamental language skills. These fundamental skills include: alphabet knowledge, phonological and phonemic abilities, spelling, syllabification, capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, sequential order, vocabulary and thought initiation and maintenance.

A combination, referred to as co-morbidity or co-occurrence, of learning disabilities is a common occurrence. For example, the output of information can be impeded if a learner cannot retrieve information from his memory and organize his thoughts before speaking and/or writing; in addition, a learner with this deficit may have motor skill challenges that make the physical act of writing difficult. A learner who has been diagnosed with a specific learning disability will therefore require strategic approaches and interventions that support and honour his unique learning style and aid in the development of sound fundamental skills. Taking the time to understand a person's challenges is the first step in developing a collaborative learning plan that meets a student's needs.

A plan that is designed to foster long-term success will support a student in the development of self-understanding and respect for his learning style and challenges; all of which are vital pieces in the development of self-advocacy skills and life-long learning.

The technology available that can enhance learning is extensive, some are described below. To explore other alternatives visit <http://www.ldonline.org/article/6380>

Inspiration and Kidspiration

Organizing and planning can be an intimidating for a person with a written language disability. This important stage in the writing process can be entered more readily if the student is engaged in a process that is non-threatening and fun. As its name predicts, Inspiration inspires the writer to enter the beginning stages of the writing process by providing graphic organizers to sort out their brainstorming ideas by clustering ideas, themes or keywords into "bubbles" or graphic organizers. This visual aid will provide a framework for the writer's ideas and help him/her to develop the ideas that will eventually increase the content required in writing assignments. The graphic organizer can then transfer the material into an outline.

Word Q

For a student with a written language disability written expression does not always reflect his knowledge and abilities. Spelling, grammar, and phrasing challenges can inhibit his willingness to express himself in written form or the end result may not reflect his true thoughts, making it appear naive or incomplete.

Word Q is a software tool that adapts to standard word processors. It provides assistance to writers whose thoughts are not easily translated into written form. The software aids the translation by predicting the next word, phrase or correct spelling. With this software a writer can complete his thoughts and move through assignments in a timely manner. This software also offers users editing practice by providing spoken feedback and help to find mistakes.

...continued on page 4

11th Annual ATN Access Charity Golf Tournament

Monday, July, 6th 2009
Forest City National Golf Course

18 Holes of Golf with Power Cart – Includes Lunch and Dinner
Shotgun Tee-off: 11:00 a.m. – Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Golf, Lunch & Dinner - \$140 per person!

Great Prizes – **Win a trip anywhere in Canada on WestJet** - Silent Auction

Water and refreshments will be provided

To register, call 519 433 7950 or go to www.atn.on.ca :

ATN Access Inc

141 Dundas Street, London, ON N6A 1G3



Honourary Chair:
Phoenix Coyotes Brandon Prust
(Formerly Calgary Flames)

Fundraising events are an integral part of ATN's ability to provide and expand programs geared to enhancing the quality of life of persons with disabilities. Being a non-profit agency, we look to the community to assist us in our endeavours, particularly those that are not supported by traditional government sponsorship. Thank you for supporting this event!

ATN Access for Persons with Disabilities Inc. - Celebrating 21 Years!

www.atn.on.ca

Help ATN celebrate their 21st year of service and make the 11th Annual ATN Charity Golf Tournament, Monday, July 6, 2009, an extra special event for our golfers!

You can take part in this special event by:

- **Registering your team of 4** (\$140.00 per person visit www.atn.on.ca)
- **Sponsoring a Hole** for \$100 (Your company's name would be prominently displayed on a flag)
- **Donating a Prize**
- **Contributing a Silent Auction Item**
- **Registration Goodie Bags** (160 pieces of corporate promotional items or samples)

Charitable receipts can be provided. All sponsors will be recognized. *Thank you for supporting ATN!*

504, 141 Dundas St, London, ON N6A 1G3 Phone: 519 433-7950 Fax: 519 433-0282 www.atn.on.ca info@atn.on.ca

Contact Us:



LD Edge Newsletter
c/o ATN Access Inc.
504-141 Dundas Street
London, ON Canada N6A 1G3

If you have any information, articles or submissions to share with us, please contact us at anytime.

Phone: 519-433-7950 ext 372
Fax: 519-433-0282
E-mail: info@atn.on.ca
Web: www.atn.on.ca

We hope you have enjoyed this month's issue of the LD Edge Newsletter and that you are looking forward to the next issue.



For a .pdf version of this document click on the link "LD Edge Newsletter" at:
www.atn.on.ca

If we give them an edge,
They may give us one!

...continued from page 2 – **Written Language Disability**

By listening to the sentence structure and word choice writers can determine if they have captured what they were trying to express. The words displayed can be programmed in to reflect a topic or can be based on the most common and grammatically correct word usage.

Dragon Naturally Speaking

Writing and self expression are enhanced and grammar improved when students have an opportunity to hear their words back using the text to speech feature in Dragon Naturally Speaking. This software provides a mode of self-expression that is unencumbered by the physical act of writing and barriers experienced by students with written language disabilities in its speech-to-text technology. Both features enhance learning by empowering students to write, develop and integrate their ideas and thoughts with curriculum-based material.

Resources: LD online: Tech Tools for Students with Learning Disabilities: Infusion into Inclusive Classrooms, April 30, 2009
<http://www.ldonline.org/article/6380>

LDA: Learning Disability Association of America
Types of Learning Disabilities, April 30, 2009
<http://www.lidaamerica.org/aboutld/teachers/understanding/types.asp>

Roanne G. Brice, PhD: Vol. 40, No. 1, September 2004,
Connecting Oral and Written Language through Applied Writing Strategies. April 30, 2009
<http://educ.queensu.ca/course/prof 150-155/learning/readings/documents/Bricelanguage.pdf>

Speakers Bureau Update...

Our **Speakers Bureau** is off and running with presentations being made to community groups and employers. Each of our current speakers has a 30-40 minute presentation that they can bring to your workplace, meeting or event - free of charge. Each speaker has their own unique presentation that shares their personal experience of living and succeeding with a Learning Disability.

To book your presentation, please call us today at
519-433-7950 ext 372.

ATN Access Inc. would like to thank the London Community Foundation for their generous support of the Speakers Bureau Initiative.

