

## *This is the year of change...*

### *Staff Changes...*

We all have heard the slogan “this is the year of change!” We can echo that here at SETC as we have had some major staff changes.

Janis Pock, a long standing and highly valued member of the SETC staff resigned her position to take a job closer to home. She is now working as an SLP and assistive technology specialist in Issaquah school district.

Bob Mahan, OTR/L, has also resigned from SETC to focus his attentions on his caseload in the Clover Park School District.

Many of you have benefited from both Janis and Bob’s expertise in collaborations over the years and know that their insights will be missed here at SETC. We wish Janis and Bob the best in their future endeavors.

### *Staff Additions...*

Barbaralyn Harden, M.S., C.C.C., SLP and Karen Foreman M.S., C.C.C., SLP are the newest additions to the SETC team. Both have extensive experience with AAC with clients of all ages and abilities. We feel privileged to have them on board.

Barbaralyn has degrees both in Speech-Language Pathology as well as in Early Childhood Education.

Barbaralyn began her career in the public schools serving a more typical caseload of students requiring speech-language services. She then worked with the Program for the Orthopedically Impaired provided by Oregon Regional Programs. During her tenure in the program, she also served as the SLP for several of their other programs serving children with autism and rare disorders; children with severe emotional disturbances; children with deaf-blindness and other multiple, severe/profound impairments.

Barbaralyn came to Washington in 1991, taking a position as speech-language pathologist and AAC Specialist for the Special Ed Tech Center. Barbaralyn was involved in the development of the SETC collaboration format, the SETC summer institutes, and in establishing our SETC site in Tacoma. She left the SETC in 1998 to take a position in Federal Way School District where she was key in establishing their AT program.

The past few years Barbaralyn has been at the University of Central Florida where she worked as the Assistant Coordinator for FAAST (Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology).

Barbaralyn will be working out of our new Kelso site. In addition to participating in collaborations and teaching workshops for the SETC, Barbaralyn is working for ESD 112, providing SLP services for students in the Vancouver area.

Karen will be participating in collaborations for SETC in Tacoma and Ellensburg, as well as continuing her role as the Assistive Technology/AAC Specialist with North Thurston Public Schools in Lacey. Karen has 24 years of experience in speech-language pathology and augmentative communication. She has extensive experience in evaluating and implementing augmentative communication systems and strategies for severely involved students, as well as in designing visual strategies for students with autism. She has worked for North Thurston School

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District for 15 years, and in a variety of other settings including hospitals, clinics, and home health in Washington, California and England.

In the fall of 2006, Julie Macdonald, OTR/L, joined the SETC team. Julie participates in collaborations two days per week at both the Tacoma and Kelso sites. She is instrumental in responding to AT questions and e-mails which require OT expertise. Julie is expanding her role this year to co-teach a class on switch access and switch accessible software. Julie also works as an OT with students K-12 in the Tumwater School District. Her interests are in switch accessible software, literacy and language for students with autism, and accommodation and modification for students with learning disabilities and ADHD.

In the fall of 2007 Kristin Leslie, OTR/L, joined the SETC team. Kristin divides her time between the Special Ed Tech Center at CWU in Ellensburg, the ESD 105 in Yakima, and inpatient rehab. She has taken on some new roles at SETC this year, which include coordinating with school district teams on scheduling collaborations, and coordinating and providing workshops and webinars. Kristin has worked as a pediatric occupational therapist in school-based settings for 10 years serving students in Shoreline, Federal Way, and the Yakima valley. Her interests focus on integrating assistive technology into the daily lives of students to facilitate active, engaged learning and social interaction for kids who often sit on the sidelines as observers.

## New SETC Site in Kelso

The SETC is looking at expanding its presence around the state and as a first step we have established a new satellite site this year in Kelso. Like our longtime satellite site in Tacoma, the new site in Kelso will be used for conducting technology collaborations.

Our two staff in that region, Julie Macdonald and Barbaralyn Harden, will conduct both face-to-face and video-conference collaborations. For southwest Washington districts wishing to meet face-to-face at a SETC site, the Kelso location will be much more convenient than traveling to Tacoma.

Depending on the success of this new site and the number of collaborations that we conduct, we may be able to consider another site or two in the future. Time will tell.

## Changes in Technology Collaboration Practices

Beginning with applications received in September of 2008 there will be a fee charged for all technology collaborations conducted by the Special Education Technology Center. This has become necessary due to rising costs and increased demand for our services, contrasted against the static nature of our funding from the federal government. *See below for a breakdown of pricing.*

In addition, we have initiated a new collaboration option, a school site collaboration that involves the SETC team coming to the child's school building. This is a limited option in that our current staffing will permit us to conduct only a certain number of these collaborations in a school year. This option also has a higher fee attached, as shown below. The process of applying for a school site collaboration is the same as applying for a SETC site or video conference collaboration.

A face-to-face collaboration at the school site can be focused on technology solutions for a single child or, in some cases, classroom-wide solutions. Typically, we can cover the needs of one child in a half-day (3 hour) session. Exploring the needs of more than one child may require a full day (6 hour) session for which there is a greater charge. A half-day collaboration session can be combined with a half-day training.

### Collaboration Fees:

<b>Full-day face-to-face collaboration or collaboration/training at the school site (includes all travel costs)</b>	<b>\$1200</b>
<b>Half-day face-to-face collaboration at the school site (includes all travel costs)</b>	<b>\$ 800</b>
<b>Face-to-face collaboration at a SETC site (Ellensburg, Tacoma or Kelso)</b>	<b>\$ 400</b>
<b>Video conference collaboration</b>	<b>\$ 400</b>

We sincerely hope that the introduction of this fee-for-service approach to collaborations will not discourage school districts from seeking this type of support when needed. In addition, we are doing everything we can to maintain and expand lower cost and no-cost avenues for support where more informal types of assistance will suffice. For example, we can also provide on-site observations/consultations at an hourly rate where a single SETC staff member can provide adequate support. We will continue free e-mail and telephone consultation along with our recently introduced webinars and **new discussion forum**.

## SETC Discussion Forum

At the SETC we receive a great number of requests for information. Often we receive numerous telephone and e-mail inquiries on the same question or topic. In order to be more efficient in sharing this information we have decided to establish a SETC Discussion Forum where anyone can post a question and field responses in a public venue. Moving in this direction will provide three positive outcomes:

1. Time will be saved as the SETC staff will not have to answer a given question multiple times.
2. Anyone visiting the forum can benefit from the information generated by the questions that others have asked.
3. Others around the state who have expertise in the field of AT can share their knowledge and insight.

The forum is in development at this time and should be ready around the first of the year. At that time we will be asking that you, our friends in Washington schools, begin to shift away from use of telephone and e-mail for general questions about assistive technology options, resources and research, etc. Please continue to contact us directly when you have student-specific issues to discuss.

We will certainly not refuse to answer inquiries on the phone or by e-mail but we may ask that you post your question to the forum if we feel that the answer will be of benefit to others, especially when it pertains to a topic of common interest. Please watch our website for an announcement when the forum is to be launched.

## CEC Convention

The national CEC convention will be held April 1-4, 2009 in Seattle this year at the Washington State Convention Center. Jerry Connolly, Director of the Special Ed Tech Center, along with Mark Harniss of the Washington Assistive Technology Access Program (WATAP) will be co-chairing the technology subcommittee.

The convention will include one optional day of pre-convention workshops and three days of general sessions and vendor exhibits. The technology division will include peer-to-peer sessions by local special education practitioners demonstrating their use of assistive technology in their classrooms. Other strands include paraeducator issues, RTI, behavior intervention, autism, special education, recruitment, literacy, and family school partnership.

Actress Marlee Matlin will be this year's keynote speaker. Ms. Matlin has starred in numerous feature films and television shows and won the 1986 Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in "Children of a Lesser God." Passionate about children, she has appeared in numerous educational children's programs and authored three children's novels about coping with deafness. Ms. Matlin was instrumental in persuading Congress to pass federal legislation requiring that all televisions manufactured in the United States be equipped with closed captioning technology.

If you are interested in volunteering at the convention, either as a peer-to-peer presenter or in some other capacity such as registration, exhibitor check-in, etc., please contact Jerry Connolly at [connolly@cwu.edu](mailto:connolly@cwu.edu) or 509-963-3350. Volunteers receive a substantial discount on their registration.

For registration and other information please go to the CEC 2009 convention website:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ConventionExpo/default.htm>

## *New items in the lending library*

### Fusion



The Fusion is a portable writing device with built in writing supports. Some of these supports include: word prediction, thesaurus, dictionary, spell check, voice output through headphones, writing prompts, writing rubrics and more. This device allows a student to compose written work at his/her own desk and with the touch of a button send the text to a nearby computer. The text is transferred wirelessly, no cords to plug in. The Fusion can also be used as a text reader with electronic books once downloaded to an e-card.

### ClassMate Reader



The ClassMate Reader is a new portable text reader designed to boost reading and learning independence. Students can listen to the audio version of their textbooks and study materials, while following the highlighted text on screen. Students gain access to their curricular materials anywhere and anytime with this easy-to-use device. Ability and interest level 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Tango



#### **An Opinion of the Tango by Barbaralyn Harden**

The Tango is a relatively new communication device with a navigational design that is a departure from the more traditional dynamic displays. Within a few minutes a person can begin to experience successful communication.

The device has a streamlined profile that almost has the feel of a game operator. The developers indicated that through research a mix of soft and hard buttons were required to meet the different styles of usage: drag, pound, or peck. Having only 6 message keys set up as a dynamic display and 8 navigational keys and a message bar, one could get the feeling that the device might be inadequate to the task for an individual with high vocabulary needs. However, navigation is intuitive and supports phrases, core vocabulary, stories, lists, quick chat (called poptalk!) and spelling. There is support for building sentences with approximately the same memory demands as other dynamic displays. Other features include scanning, an SD card slot plus expansion slots for future use with features such as WiFi, Bluetooth and cell phone. A state-of-the-art sound design allows voices to be heard even in noisy environments.

The language structure was developed to provide quick access to topics and relevant vocabulary achieved through novel scanning patterns and scripts to promote social interaction. These scripts were created by Caroline Musselwhite and Linda Burkhart. Users can switch from nearly 2,500

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## *new AAC speech generating devices...*

### FL4SH Scanning Communicator



The FL4SH Scanning Communicator's unique frame lighting provides a visible light source that frames each picture in succession as it scans. It incorporates automatic overlay detection that allows the FL4SH to recognize individual overlays and adjust its output accordingly. FL4SH can be activated by direct selection, with one or two switches, or by connecting one switch for each message location. Features include 16 minutes of recording time with variable message lengths, 4 message locations, built-in overlay storage, adjustable viewing angle, 3 scan modes, and adjustable scan rate control.

### Chat PC D4+



ChatPC-D4+ is a modified version of the ChatPC that has access to the PocketPC functionality disabled. Besides functioning as a dedicated communication device, the ChatPC-D4+ is designed for individuals with existing or emerging literacy skills. This model includes a number of features that are designed to assist individuals who use spelling for communication. ChatPC-D4+ contains numerous features for adapting the vocabulary for the specific communication needs of the individual using the device. The Mayer Johnson PCS symbols and the Imagine symbols are included for customizing and creating your own pages. Support persons can also use the included DesktopChat software for customizing vocabulary by creating pages and to import photos and other images from a computer. ChatPC-D4+ also contains pre-programmed starter vocabulary sets, which can save hours of setup time.

## *help for switch users...*

### Gooseneck Mount



The TASH Gooseneck Mount is heavy-duty and stable. This 13-inch gooseneck mount can be mounted to a table or wheelchair. The flexible gooseneck can bend into any position, yet will not come out of its position without a lot of force. It is very useful for determining the optimum switch position for a user.

When you check out a gooseneck mount, be sure to specify the type of switch or switches you would like to use the mount with. SETC will set up the mount with the switch you request.

- a. Gooseneck with Microlight switch
- b. Gooseneck with Mini/Specs switch
- c. Gooseneck with Buddy /Jellybean switch
- d. Gooseneck with Ribbon/Leaf switch

### Switch Training Kits

Switch Training Kits include an iBook with switch accessible software, a switch interface, and a variety of switches. The iBooks are loaded with a variety of software programs ranging from early learning to life skills software. Simtech switch programs are included and provide a fun and simple way for kids to learn and practice scanning. The purpose of these kits is to simplify the process of trialing both switches and software. Switch mounts are not included in the kits, but are available in the lending library for check out.

## let's Tango!

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intuitively organized and customizable phrases to word selection or spelling keyboards for more specific communication. There is also access to limited word prediction as well as computer hook-up to type reports using the Tango as the input device. All phrase text, keyboarding, and individual words will be sent to any standard computer application like Microsoft Word©.

There are a few very unique features such as the camera and the voice morphing. The latter allows you to alter a synthesized voice to better match the child's voice, or a preferred voice to match a message. For example, should an adult male need to record a message into a message key (perhaps a photo that was just taken), he would be able to alter or 'morph' the voice to better match the gender or age of the child. While this is an interesting feature, in my opinion it has limited value. However, the camera has many potential uses such as in identifying new people or describing new events in a child's life. It also comes with a Sponge Bob voice and associated scripts and vocabulary using that voice.

You can create up to 120 new Talk Topics and can get support to develop these by signing up for the mailing list [info@blink-twice.com](mailto:info@blink-twice.com). There are webinars available to learn more applications for the device as well as packages for the device such as Tango to Literacy. Also available is the Assessment Assistant on an SD card that goes in the Tango and guides the user through the assessment steps. While I have not used these, in general these types of supports create better accessibility for the user by providing greater device literacy to those supporting the end user.

I have had success using this device with 2 children having autism. They learned to navigate quickly. While in Florida we had access to it for 18 months and used it frequently during assessments where I experienced a variety of responses to the use of the device.

In short, it is another device in the tool kit that we bring to the assistive technology table. There are unique features that make this device a novel one that may address those unique needs a student might bring to the table.

For more background on the news regarding the development and use of this device, go to the following website:

<http://www.blink-twice.com/tango/news.html>

On the home page of the above website are some very good video-demos that provide a lot of feature demonstration of the Tango as well as links and many more answers to questions you may have.

### Check-out from Lending Library

The Tango has two character libraries: one for children and one for teens. Each character library has character sets that feature girls and boys who are ambulatory or in a wheelchair and various ethnic groups are represented within the libraries.

The character library for children uses different phrases than the character library for teens. Tango for Teens features thousands of phrases specifically designed for quick, engaging conversations in teen situations and attitudes.

When you request the Tango it will be necessary for you to know which character library you want to use and which character set(s) you would like to trial. A separate SD card for each character set requested will be shipped with the device. The trial period for the device is 6 weeks so it is possible to use the device with several children during that period. Due to the popularity of the device, we cannot extend the loan period on the device.