

# ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS FOR EDUCATORS

Many students with learning disabilities (LD) have difficulties with reading and writing despite the fact that they have average to above average intelligence. In addition, these students can also struggle with spelling and the quantity of written output, more so than their peers. Today, students can benefit from assistive technology (AT) that can help them read, learn, and understand. AT can help students with LD to compensate for their reading and writing difficulties by building on their strengths and compensating for processing difficulties (Forgrave, 2002).

Each of the following workshops will help educators, educational assistants, assistive technologists, and other professionals to learn how to use some assistive technology programs. They can then use this knowledge to help students with learning disabilities to learn, to understand, and to be successful in school.



## Full Day Workshop

### Integrating Assistive Technology with Learning Strategies

*If you give a starving man a fish, you feed him for a day. But if you teach the man how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.*

Teaching learning strategies and how to use assistive technology can help students with learning disabilities to use technology more effectively.

This **full-day workshop** will expand participants' knowledge of assistive technology and learning strategies and will bring their skills to an advanced level. Participants should be familiar with some assistive technology software such as Kurzweil 3000, textHELP Read & Write, and Inspiration. The workshop includes:

- Why teach learning strategies?
- Strategic Instructional Model (SIM)
- Integrating Assistive Technology with Learning Strategies in:
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Note taking
  - Time management
  - Test taking

#### Training Resources:

- CD-ROM with strategy resources

## Cost

### On-site training at your location

- **\$1,200** for a full-day of training (combination of any two half-day workshops)\*
- **\$800** for half-day training session\*  
\*plus travel expenses and accommodations
- Training resources are included for up to 15 participants.

### Training at Cambrian College

- **\$220** per person for full-day training sessions offered at Cambrian College
- **\$140** per person for half-day training sessions offered at Cambrian College

## Half Day Workshop

### TextHELP! Read and Write

During this workshop, educators will learn how to use textHELP! Read and Write. A training guide will be provided that can be used by participants to teach students in a school setting.

This instructor-led training session will help educators to understand not only how to use the program, but how it can benefit students who require assistance with the writing and editing processes.

The instructor is a certified textHELP! Read and Write trainer.

### Inspiration

In this workshop, participants will learn how to use Inspiration and will receive a training guide that can be used as a training tool to help to teach and assist students in a school setting. The instructor will lead participants through several exercises that will help them to:

- use the program efficiently and effectively, and
- assist students with writing, note taking, and studying.

### Kurzweil 3000

Learn how to use Kurzweil 3000. The training guide that workshop participants will receive can also be used as a training tool to help their students. The instructor will lead participants through several exercises that will help them to:

- use the program efficiently and effectively, and
- assist their students with the reading process.

### Dragon NaturallySpeaking Preferred

During the Dragon NaturallySpeaking training session, educators will be able to go through the process of training Dragon NaturallySpeaking to their voice, and will be able to test its capabilities.

The instructor will provide participants with training tips that will enable educators to assist students with learning disabilities to train and use Dragon NaturallySpeaking in an educational setting. The instructor will also provide practical suggestions for the use of the Dragon NaturallySpeaking software in the writing process.

### Beating Technology Abandonment

Assistive technology abandonment is a crucial issue that can be avoided. Johnson and Evans quoted the assistive technology abandonment rate to be ranging from 8% to 75%. The main reason cited for technology abandonment was that the AT did not meet students' important functional needs; they grew beyond the AT's capacities. Therefore, individuals formerly using the AT chose not to use it further. Mismatches lead to frustration, AT equipment abandonment, and task avoidance (Silver-Pacuilla, 2006, p. 122). Research shows that technology should be used to compensate for processing difficulties; it should be used as a compensatory tool. It should also be matched to students' needs. However, some students still outgrow the capabilities of the assistive technology and abandon its use (Beigel, 2000; Alper & Rahariririna, 2006).

During this workshop, participants will explore ideas and techniques that they can use with their students to help them to try assistive technology and to keep using it!