Adaptive Technology - A Tool from the Literacy Toolbox

by Jennifer Hunt

Years ago, I was introduced to the world of adaptive technology and was convinced that it would become an excellent tool that students with learning difficulties could use to break down walls and overcome barriers. Just like other accommodations that students with disabilities maintain, I quickly learned that an environment that encourages the use of adaptive technology creates an opportunity for students with learning difficulties to compete on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers. Ultimately, adaptive technology is responsible for two paramount outcomes; it encourages independence and enhances self-confidence.

I am an Adaptive Technology Project Co-ordinator for a Literacy Centre called Action Read in Guelph, Ontario. I run a program that has been generously funded by the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities called the Adaptive Technology Project Phase Two: Technology and Expressive Writing. The goal of the project is to research, field test, evaluate and promote a selection of technologies that will assist adult learners with expressive writing whether that be for writing a memo for their workplace, an e-mail to a friend or a cover letter. There are 15 participants in the project and they were selected from our current population of learners. The criteria from which these participants were selected included learners who may have dysgraphia (average reader, poor

Sharing Online with eLit.ca

by Diane McCargar

eLit.ca is the latest metamorphosis of eNorthwest and the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy (AAAL) Conferencing Services. eLit.ca provides a location online for discussion and sharing of information related to literacy. This service is being funded and managed by literacy coalitions in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It continues to maintain links with similar services in British Columbia (The Hub); and the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (North of 60). There are also links to conferences outside of Canada including a series of listservs maintained by the American National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). NIFL – Technology is one such conference that we have recommended to our readers in the past.

This online community is organized by province and includes a Literacy Cafe for all members. Much of the communication centres around literacy organizations but there are also discussions on specific topics such as literacy resources. They have recently begun to introduce places for learners to participate. The majority of the conferences are open to all members but there are facilities for private online conferences or chats.

eLit.ca can be viewed using an Internet browser such as Netscape or special software called FirstClass. Over 500 people currently access this service. To receive full access you must “join” and receive a User ID and password. Membership is currently free to members of literacy coalitions in Alberta, Saskatchewan and
Adaptive Technology
Continued from Page 1

writing abilities), individuals who have had little success with basic remediation techniques, and individuals who may have a learning disability, cognitive delay or physical impairment. We were particularly interested in selecting learners who have been limited from having success with expressive writing in the past.

One of the most attractive lures of adaptive technology has to be its multi-sensory approach. If you think about the laborious task it can be sometimes to put pen to paper or if you’ve ever had to read an enormous amount of text you will understand why students who use adaptive technology might be more inspired to learn. The adaptive technology that we use at our centre was selected to help learners who have difficulty with visual processing, auditory processing and organization, mobility issues and individuals with visual and hearing impairments.

Some of the text reading software that we used in Phase One of our project includes Kurzweil 3000 v. 5.00, Read & Write 5.0 and ReadPlease 2002. Text readers help to interpret computerized text or text that has been scanned from a printed page, and then generate a voice that will read the text aloud to the user. We found in Phase One of our project that for individuals who had difficulty with reading because they were focusing so much on decoding, text readers were invaluable. Learners now had the ability to get immediate auditory feedback if they had difficulty with their comprehension and fluency. Text readers became invaluable tools for students with learning difficulties when used in conjunction with other technologies such as word prediction, word processing, and spell checking, since they allowed students to hear the words on the screen.

In Phase Two of our project the focus was on expressive writing. We found that a growing number of assistive software programs that surpass basic word processors are available to the user to support the writing process. Many of these software features are available with voice output. Spell checkers, dictionaries, and thesauruses are also available as features of some adaptive software programs, enabling the user to verify or correct spellings and access word definitions and synonyms.

Some other features of these programs are grammatical checks and proofreading functions which help the user to scan through a document and identify errors in grammar, word usage, structure, spelling, style, punctuation and capitalization. Word prediction is another feature of some adaptive software programs that helps to suggest words that one might be typing. Word prediction enables students to pay less attention to spelling, and at times the suggestions can even trigger the students’ ideas when they don’t know what to say next. Some of the other adaptive software programs we are using for Phase 2 - Adaptive Technology and Expressive Writing are Kurzweil 3000, Word Q, Write:Outloud and Co-Writer.

Organizational software tools are available to writers who need help with organization and benefit from visually oriented systems of organizing. Pre-writing software programs in the form of semantic webs can help the writer get started with a writing assignment by organizing and brainstorming ideas. We use Draft:Builder and Inspiration 6 to assist our learners with writing and organization.

We have had much success with adaptive technology in our literacy program. Learners often comment about their accomplishments using adaptive technology. In the words of one of our learners, “Reading and writing my own work, I never thought I could do it.” We also have had several learners who thrive on the computer because they learn software very quickly. We have these learners working as peer tutors in the computer lab. It is a great motivator and self-esteem booster for these individuals.

A major component of our project is to be able to share the results of our work and make recommendations to peer practitioners both locally and throughout the province. We are working closely with researchers from CLLRNet (Canadian Literacy and Language Research Network) who will help to collaborate on a final report that will be available on our website in August 2003 at www.home.golden.net/~actionr. Learners involved in our project completed an attitudinal survey and written assessment previous to being introduced to the adaptive software. At the end of the project learners will again be surveyed and given the opportunity to use the adaptive software as an accommodation while completing a post-assessment.

If you have any questions about our project or are interested in visiting our centre to learn more about the way we are using adaptive technology in our literacy program, please do not hesitate to call me, Jennifer Hunt, Adaptive Technology Project Coordinator, Action Read Community Literacy Centre, 519-836-2759 or by e-mail at manne@on.aibn.com.

Sharing Online with eLit.ca
Continued from Page 1

Manitoba. For more information about membership visit their website at http://www.elit.ca. While you’re there, you can browse through many of the conferences and see what this service has to offer the literacy community.
**Software Review**

**CONNEXIONS**

Learning about Public Transit

by Diane McCargar

Connexions was developed to help individuals with developmental, learning, literacy and/or language barriers gain confidence using public transit. Five CDs cover the following topics: Pedestrian Safety, Transportation, Communication, Safety and Courtesy, and Fares and Transfers. Information is presented in a series of slides that includes impressive multimedia features. All text is read to the user and can be reread on request. Each module begins with a simple mouse Practice Session. This section could be used independently. The simplicity of the delivery is carried through to the information being provided. Because of this, experienced bus users may find a lot of the material to be obvious or common sense. On the other hand, beginner ESL learners may find some of the vocabulary too difficult.

The Transportation CD contains the most practical information. It covers Using City Maps and Bus Routes and Schedules. The Fares and Transfers CD explains different fare rates and the use of transfers. Learners should be aware that the information being provided here is for Mississauga and may be different in their area. Lastly, the Safety and Courtesy CD contains some interesting facts about things such as what you can and can’t bring on a bus.

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**Just the facts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Public Transit</th>
<th>User Level: Beginner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System Requirements:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>486 DX2 66 or better</td>
<td>Windows 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 MB of RAM</td>
<td>up to 170 MB of Hard Disk space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 bit video display and sound</td>
<td>4X CD ROM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost: $50 for a limited time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering:</td>
<td>Centre for Education &amp; Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-668-1179 Ext. 2228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- Lyle Burbidge

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**Accu-Reading**  
*Improving Reading Skills*  

by Elyse Schwartz

*Accu-Reading* from Merit Software is an easy-to-use program designed to improve specific reading skills. It would be especially useful for learners who are preparing to take high school courses or studying to pass a high school equivalency test. The software is available with two different sets of material. Set one covers skill levels 5-8; set two is for levels 8-11. Each set contains 144 non-fiction passages and 302 questions.

After an initial assessment, the learner can choose to practice a specific skill such as main idea, factual recall, vocabulary or inference. A series of seven short passages accompanied by multiple choice questions will help the learner practise the chosen skill. Learners receive feedback after each answer. When the answer is incorrect, an explanation box comes on to the screen to help the learner make a correct choice. After practising skills separately or in combination, the learner can take a test to measure progress. This program tracks learners’ results and creates progress reports for teachers.

Although *Accu-Reading* is clear and easy to follow, the reading material is best suited to advanced literacy learners. The feedback and encouragement included in the software would also make it attractive to students who enjoy working independently.

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**BasicFunder**  
*Helping Solicit and Track Donations*  

by Diane McCargar

Nonprofit organizations that solicit donations will be interested to learn about *BasicFunder*, fundraising database software that can be downloaded for free. This complex software can help organizations track donations and produce thank-you letters and tax receipts. The software will also generate a variety of reports, labels and mailing lists relating to donors.

The software is fairly complex in design. It is probably not worth investing the time involved in setting up the software if your organization rarely deals with donations. But if your organization is involved in soliciting donations on a regular basis this software is designed with you in mind. And you can’t beat the price!

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**FREE CANADIAN WEB TOOLS FOR ADULT LEARNERS**

Ten learning modules on topics such as street safety, renters and landlords, family violence and emergencies, all for new readers or new speakers of English. Each module begins with a realistic graphics-driven story to provide context. Lots of audio support including an on-line glossary and pronunciation guide.

Learners can challenge their vocabulary and comprehension through more than 70 quizzes and word games. No registration required. Just go to: [www.newlanguage.ca](http://www.newlanguage.ca) and click on *Newcomer’s Guide to Security and Rights.*
Firstfind.info
http://www.firstfind.info/

*Firstfind.info* is a directory of websites that provides basic information on a number of topics. This site was produced by the Westchester Library System in New York. Although the website is American, a lot of the information provided is general enough to be useful to anyone. All of the websites have been reviewed by librarians for accuracy and ease of use. This site covers topics including Computers & Technology, Education, Family, The American System of Government, Health, History, Housing, US Immigration, Jobs & Job Training, Legal Issues, Magazines Online, Money Matters and Transportation & Travel Maps.

The topic of most interest for this review is the Computers & Technology section. There is a wealth of useful information here, broken down into the following areas: Finding A Computer Class in Your Community (only for Massachusetts and New York), Learning about Computers and Software Online, Connecting with the Internet, Buying a Computer and Computer Problems.

Also included with this site is a very useful HELP section. Clear screen captures help to explain the basics of the Internet to first time users. Easy to read explanations have been added to these graphics as labels, so the amount of reading required is quite limited. The Help section covers topics including the Internet, websites, home pages, links, search tools, common icons, changing print size, printing, scrolling, and basic troubleshooting. The creators have also included instructions on how to use this site and very useful information on how to use PDF files.

Other than the areas that are only of use to Americans, the only drawback to this site is that some of the texts may be too advanced for literacy learners. In general though, this is a valuable site that could provide the literacy learner with a lot of very easily accessible, useful and current information.

Randall’s
http://www.esl-lab.com

Randall’s Listening Lab has a wealth of material that could be useful for literacy learners. Although this site is intended primarily for ESL learners to practise listening to authentic conversations, learners can improve their literacy skills by reading the text as they listen and doing the text completion quizzes.

The General Listening Quizzes are divided into three levels: Easy, Medium, and Difficult. Each level has a list of about 25 topics of everyday conversation. After selecting a topic, the learner can click on Play Audio, which accesses Real Player. The voices are clear and varied, with authentic background noise. A few of the listening quizzes have a Play Audio Captioned Version button. This scrolls through the text a few lines at a time as the conversation is spoken. Because the captioned lines move quickly, The Quiz Script button is probably more useful for reading practice, and is present in all of the topics. The script can be read while listening to the conversation, and key vocabulary words are highlighted in pink. When the cursor is placed on one of these words, a definition box pops up. Most of the topics also have text completion quizzes. These are cloze exercises to be filled in while listening to the conversations. The Listening Exercises contain multiple-choice questions which require reading and selecting the best answer. Pre-Listening and Post-Listening Exercises are intended for discussion, but they could be used as writing topics for a literacy class. Randall’s is a large and well-maintained site with a variety of applications for literacy learning.

Book of Changes
http://www.literacy.ca/lan/bookchng/intro.htm

The Book of Changes is an online collection of stories from learners across Canada. It is a project of the Movement for Canadian Literacy’s (MCL) Learner’s Advisory Network. The stories were originally written for display at Literacy Action Day in October of 2001.

There are alphabetized links for each province and territory. Within these links the authors are listed alphabetically by first name. The stories vary widely in length and writing proficiency. Some are only two or three sentences, and have grammatical and spelling errors. Others are several paragraphs long and are written at an advanced level. They are all testimonials as to how the acquisition of literacy has enriched the lives of the authors.

This website is designed in a simple, user friendly manner. The text is clear and easy to read. These stories could be used for reading practice or as modeling for learners to write their own stories based on their literacy experiences.
Lesson Plans for the Literacy Lab

PDF and Word 97 versions of all of the handouts and word processing sheets are now available for download from our website: www.nald.ca/connect.htm. PDF versions are best for printing and include a clear version of the keyboard handout from the last issue. Word versions are best for editing if you wish to adapt the handouts to your learners.

We have created these lessons with the assumption that many of the automatic features in Word have been temporarily turned off to allow the students to practise the English and word processing skills being taught without assistance from the software. Some may argue that this isn’t an authentic task since these tools are normally available. Others may argue that students should be encouraged to use these tools as adaptive devices. When and if you make these tools available to learners is up to you. Doing this may require some changes to the lesson plans provided. You can turn off most of the automatic features in Word 97 by going to AutoCorrect and Options in the Tool menu.

Lesson 6
Editing Text and Spacing

by Elyse Schwartz

Computer Objective 6-1: Learners will be able to insert new text and spaces and use the Backspace key to delete unwanted text and spaces. 6-2: Learners will be able to delete unwanted text and spaces by highlighting and using the Backspace key.

Literacy Objective: Learners will become more familiar with cooking vocabulary and measurement abbreviations.


Introduction: Asking the learners to edit an already-typed document is an efficient way to practice specific word processing skills. It eliminates the need for unnecessary typing, which can take up a lot of class time and cause frustration not related to the skill that is being taught.

Preparation 6-1: Be sure the learners know how to position the cursor to the right of the text or space(s) they need to delete. This can be done by clicking with the mouse. However, if the instructor wishes to introduce the use of the four arrow keys on the keyboard, this lesson would provide excellent practice for using those keys. The Word Processing 2 skill sheet can be given to learners for reference. Also, insure that the learners know how to type fractions.

Preparation 6-2: Be sure the learners know how to highlight text by using the mouse. Have learners refer to the Word Processing 2 skill sheet to learn how to highlight phrases, words and lines. Ensure that all the learners understand the concept of doubling fractions.

Procedure: Give each learner access to the instructions and the recipe file (5-2Handout6-1A.doc or 5-2Handout6-2A.doc) by putting a copy on each desktop, on learners’ disks or in a shared network folder. The file can be downloaded from our website. Following the instructions, make the corrections to the recipe together as a group. The handout could be put on an overhead for the class to follow.

Variation: For higher levels, give a copy of the instructions to each learner and let them work on their own. When they have finished, give them a copy of the corrected version (5-2Handout6-1B.doc or 5-2Handout6-2B.doc) to check their work. If learners are familiar with highlighting text, Lesson 6-1 could be omitted.

Lesson 7
Typing Paragraphs

by Liz Devries

Computer Objective: Learners will be able to type consecutive sentences in a paragraph format using the Tab key, Enter key and the Space bar.

Literacy Objective: Learners will be able to type consecutive short descriptive paragraphs.

Materials: The model paragraphs from Lesson 7 – Handout 1.

Introduction: Moving from one paragraph to the next requires the Enter key. Using the Tab key to indent a paragraph rather than using the space bar is an important skill.

Procedure: Have the learners save a new word processing document. Give them the model paragraphs to type. For further practice, learners can re-type newspaper articles which have several short paragraphs. Higher level learners can produce their own text without copying.
Lesson 8

Checking Spelling

by Elyse Schwartz

Computer Objective: Learners will be able to check spelling in a document using the Spelling Tool.
Literacy Objective: Learners will be able to pick the correct word out of a list and find errors that the Spelling Tool does not catch.
Introduction: The Spelling Tool is invaluable to anyone who is typing a text of any length. However, if this tool is not used correctly, a text can end up with more errors than it started with. In the process of mastering the Spelling Tool, learners will also get spelling and reading practice.
Procedure: Learners should be familiar with the Spelling Tool. They should understand that it will not recognize some proper nouns even when they are spelled correctly. They should also understand that the Spelling Tool will not catch an incorrect word—for example, a homonym—if it is spelled correctly. Give the learners the Word Processing 3 skill sheet for reference. Give the learners access to computer file, 5-1Handout8-1.doc, and a photocopy of the handout to keep track of their corrections. Do the exercise together as a class. An In-Focus or overhead projector would be helpful. More advanced learners who have used the Spelling Tool before could do the exercise on their own. If someone clicks on Ignore by mistake, the Spelling Tool won’t recognize these mistakes again unless you tell Word to Recheck the document. To do this, select Tools, Options, Spelling and Grammar and click on Recheck Document.

Lesson 9

Using Tabs

by Diane McCargar

Computer Objective: Learners will be able to type a chart using the Tab key.
Literacy Objective: Learners will be able to read and write a simple schedule.
Introduction: Learners had an introduction to the Tab key when they typed paragraphs in Lesson 7. In Lesson 9, they will learn how to use the Tab key to type a chart. We have chosen to focus on personal and bus schedules. Ensure that learners are familiar with vocabulary such as schedule, chart, column and row. Learners attempting the bus schedule should have experience using 24 hour time. They should also be fairly familiar with the Internet and the following Canadian city names: Victoria, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Ottawa.
Procedure: Have lower level learners write a personal schedule in Lesson 9 - Handout 1. Draw attention to the fact that all items in the second column should be lined up. Next, show learners how to type their personal schedule using the Tab key, NOT the spacebar, to get to the second column. More advanced learners can type a schedule for a bus trip across Canada. Provide learners with the Lesson 9 – Handout 2. Instruct them to go to the Greyhound website, www.greyhound.ca, and use the search tool to fill in the schedule on the handout. Finally, learners can type their schedule in a word processing program.

Lesson 10

Typing Friendly Letters

by Diane McCargar

Computer Objective: Learners will be able to type a friendly letter with the correct spacing.
Literacy Objective: Learners will be able to write a simple thank-you letter.
Materials: Lesson 10 - Handout 1 and a slip of paper for each student with an event and a gift written on it.
Introduction: Typing a friendly letter is a great next step for learners after they have mastered typing short paragraphs. In this lesson, we have chosen to focus on friendly letters, specifically a thank-you. Some students will need practice writing addresses before attempting a letter.
Procedure: Show learners the sample thank-you letter contained in Lesson 10 – Handout 1. Review the parts of the letter: address, date, greeting, body and closing. Discuss the spacing of the letter as well. Give each student a slip of paper with an event and a gift written on it. Ask them to write a thank-you letter to a friend thanking them for this gift.
Variation: Lower level students should be given time to write and edit their letter on paper before attempting to type the letter on the computer.
Lesson 6 - Handout 2A  Editing Text & Spaces

1. Type your name on the line above *Spicy Apple Muffins*.
2. Double the recipe. (Example: change 2 c. all purpose flour to 4 c. all purpose flour)
3. Delete the blank line between *white sugar* and *cinnamon*.
4. Delete *1/2 c. cocoa*.
5. Add the word *Topping* and a blank line between *1/3 c. melted butter* and *
   1 tbsp. brown sugar*.
6. Change *4000F* to *400F*.
7. Delete the *extra spaces* between *muffin* and *tins*.
8. Add the word *Combine* before *egg, milk and melted butter*.
9. Delete the word *juice* after *liquid*.
10. Change the word *bottle* to *bowl*.
Spicy Apple Muffins

2 c. all purpose flour
3 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 c. white sugar

1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/4 tsp. cardamom
1 c. peeled chopped apple
1/2 c. cocoa
1 egg
1 c. milk
1/3 c. melted butter
1 tbsp. brown sugar
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 400F.
Grease muffin tins.
Sift together flour, baking powder, salt and sugar in a mixing bowl.
Stir in chopped apple.
egg, milk and melted butter.
Add liquid juice to dry ingredients. Do not overmix.
Spoon into prepared muffin tins.

Topping
In a small bottle, combine brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg.
Sprinkle on tops of unbaked muffins.
Bake 15-20 minutes. Makes about 1 dozen muffins.

Lesson 6 - Handout 1A contains a shorter, simpler recipe for Four Bean Salad. It can be downloaded from our website at http://www.nald.ca/connect.htm. The corrected versions of these handouts, 5-2Handout6-1B and 5-2Handout6-2B, are also available.
Lesson 7 - Handout 1  Typing Paragraphs

Read the story. Fill in your information. Then type these paragraphs. Remember to use ENTER to move to the next paragraph. Remember to use TAB to indent.

My name is _______________. I am a student here at ______________. I am ___ years old. I have ______ hair, ____ eyes, and I’m very ____ today because _______________________. Right now, I am sitting close to a person named ___________.

This person’s name is ___________. This person has ________ hair and ______ eyes.

There are ________ people in the room. We are all learning about ________________.

Read the story. Then type these paragraphs. When you finish, you could change these paragraphs so that they are about you. Then type your story.

My name is Liz Devries. I am an instructor at Ottawa Technical Learning Centre. I teach English to adults. I am also a mother and I have three teenage children. I have a busy life.

Sometimes I am too busy and I get tired. One day when I was teaching, I looked down and saw that my sweater was on inside out. That was embarrassing!

I’ve decided that I am going to try to be better organized in the future. I like to be busy, but I don’t like to go around with my clothes on inside out! I will make sure that someone checks my clothes before I go out the door every morning. Then I can be busy and happy too.
1. Click on **Tools**.
2. Click on **Spelling and Grammar**.

3. If the correct spelling is listed...
   a) Click on correct spelling.
   b) Click on **Change**.

   ![Image of Spelling and Grammar window with correct spelling change options]

   or

   ![Image of Spelling and Grammar window with spelling ignored]

   If a name isn't in the dictionary ...
   a) Click on **Ignore**.

   ![Image of Spelling and Grammar window with ignored spelling]

   or

   ![Image of Spelling and Grammar window with spelling change suggested]

   If the correct spelling isn't listed ...
   a) Click on mistake.
   b) Correct mistake.
   c) Click on **Change**.

   ![Image of Spelling and Grammar window with suggested spelling change]

4. Click on **OK**.
Lesson 8 - Handout 1  
Checking Spelling

To correct the mistakes in this school newsletter:
1. Put your cursor at the beginning of the document.
2. Click Tools.
3. Click Spelling and Grammar.
4. Correct the spelling mistakes.
5. When the spelling check is complete, look for the mistakes the Spelling Tool did not find. There is one wrong word in each paragraph.

The Class Communicator
January/February, 2003

Winter Isn’t So Bad!

by Derek Kartoum

In case you haven’t noticed, it’s cold outside! Many people want to hibernate like the bears. Some people don’t even want to come to school. It’s so much easier to stay inside with a cup of tea than to put on all those layers and brave the Arctic winds. But what happens if you stay inside all the time? You get restless and depressed and irritable. You snap at your kids, and after awhile you don’t feel like doing anything. This is my advice. Go outside and find something fun to do. You’ll be surprised to see how many other people are outside having fun.

To enjoy the snow or ice, you need at least one of the following: a toboggan, a pair of ice skates, a pair of snow soes or a pair of skis. You can ski or snow shoe anywhere in Ottawa or in the Gatineau. There are lots of trails to follow. Their are also many toboggan hills, but the best one is Conroy Pit near Hunt Club. The best place for ice skating is the Rideau Canal. It’s the world’s longest skating rink. Be sure to check the condition of the ice. A green flag means good; a yellow flag means not very good; a red flag means danger—don’t skate. The best time to go skating is early in the morning. The canal isn’t crowded, and the ice is smooth because they flood it with water every night.

None of these activities costs much money. You can get used skates and skies at stores that sell outdoor equipment. You can also rent skates and skies. It’s free to skate on the canal, although sometimes they ask for donations. Cross-country skiing, snow shoeing and tobogganing are also free in Ottawa.

So, there’s no excuse for staying inside. Get out and enjoy the winter! Take a thermos of hot chocolate, wrap yourself up like a mummy, and do something active. Maybe I’ll see you there. I’m there with the funny hat!
Write down at least 10 things you do every day. (Get up., Eat breakfast., Go to school., ...)
Write down the time you do each thing. (6:30 a.m., 7:45 a.m., 3:30 p.m., ...)
Type your schedule on the computer. Use the Tab key to move to the second column.

### Personal Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Get up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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You are going to plan a bus trip from Victoria to Ottawa. You will have to stop in many cities along the way. You can decide how long you need to rest in each city. If you leave Victoria on Sunday, March 2, 2003, when will you arrive in Ottawa?

1. Go to [www.greyhound.ca](http://www.greyhound.ca)
2. Choose your origin and Victoria.
3. GO
4. Edmonton.
5. Show Schedule.

Write your arrival date and time in Edmonton. Remember to look at the duration of the trip to see if you will arrive on the same day or the next day?

➤ search again.

Repeat this for each Origin and Destination below. Then, type your chart using Tab.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Date/ Departure Time</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Date/ Arrival Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Sun., March 2, 8:00</td>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regina</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Toronto</td>
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<td>Ottawa</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Friendly Letter

440 Albert St.
Ottawa, ON
K1R 5B5

January 26, 2003

Dear Fran,

Thank you very much for the purple sweater. You must have spent a lot of time knitting it. I appreciate all of your hard work. It fits well and it will keep me very warm this winter. It was very kind of you to remember my birthday.

All the best,

Rita

You have received a gift from a friend. Write him or her a thank-you letter for the gift.
The second most important component of a computer after the processor is memory. The amount and type of memory inside your computer affects how fast your computer performs and the numbers of software programs and documents you can store and use.

Computer memory can be divided into two categories: short term and long term. Long term memory includes things like hard disks, floppy disks, CDs and DVDs. These devices don’t require electricity to store information. Therefore, they can store information for long periods of time, even when the computer is turned off. RAM can only store information when the computer is turned on because it needs electricity.

A computer uses these two types of memory for different purposes. Long term memory can permanently store computer programs and documents. The only problem with this type of storage is that it takes a relatively long time for processors to access information stored this way. On the other hand, they can access information stored in RAM very quickly. When you decide to do something on your computer, the processor temporarily copies information it needs from long term memory to RAM. It places a copy of the program you are using and the document you are working on in RAM where it can quickly access them. When you close a document, the copy in RAM is erased. If you haven’t “saved” a copy of it in long term memory the document is lost. When you exit a program the copy of the program in RAM is also removed. The number of active programs and documents you can use at the same time depends on the amount of RAM in your computer.

Every computer must have a hard disk to store programs and documents. People who work with programs and documents that contain multimedia will want more hard disk space. Here’s how much memory PCWorld.com recommends for our three different computer users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAM</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Mainstream</th>
<th>High-End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>128MB to 256MB</td>
<td>256MB to 512MB</td>
<td>512MB and up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Disk</td>
<td>20GB to 40GB</td>
<td>40GB to 80GB</td>
<td>80GB and up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A megabyte (MB) = approx. a million bytes. A gigabyte (GB) = 1000 megabytes.)

The remaining long term storage devices are removable storage. Floppy disks are on their way out but they aren’t extinct yet. Your new computer will probably still have a floppy disk drive. CDs are becoming the removable storage medium of choice. Most new computers come with CD drives that allow you to “burn” or store information on CDs. These drives are called CD-RW (rewritable) drives. The old drives were CD-ROM (read only memory). Similarly DVD-ROM drives allow you to play movies on DVDs and writable DVD drives allow you to create DVDs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Mainstream</th>
<th>High-End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM or CD-RW</td>
<td>DVD-ROM or CD-RW</td>
<td>CD-RW or writable DVD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next issue we will continue to discuss issues around multimedia. Look for information about monitors, video and sound components of a computer.

Current Events

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ‘BEST PRACTICES’ CONFERENCE
Assistive Technology Application and Integration - Nova Scotia (ATAINS) is hosting a 3-day conference that will explore best practices in assistive technology. The conference will be held at Nova Scotia Community College in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia on April 3 - 5, 2003. For more information visit http://atains.ednet.ns.ca or call 902-543-4702.
You can purchase the five issues that make up Volume 5 of CONNECT at a cost of $10.00. This nominal fee helps to offset some of our distribution costs. Non-profit literacy organizations may request a free copy of CONNECT which can be freely photocopied for use within literacy programs. Issues of CONNECT can also be accessed through the NALD website at: http://www.nald.ca/connect.htm

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We welcome submissions on the following topics

Reviews:
Write a review of a software program or Internet site.

Reports From Learners:
Have students write about their experiences using computers, and why they think computers are useful in literacy programs.

Lesson Plans:
Describe a lesson or activity that you have used successfully in your program.

Reports From the Field:
Describe how computer technology is used in your program.

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