

Literacy & Instructional Design for Students with Significant Disabilities

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They often have access to complex technologies...



How does access to literacy and learning differ for students with significant disabilities?



Adults are often present...



mediating interactions.



Notice a difference?



Content is dramatically different



The ways students with more significant disabilities interact with the technology & access information is often very different from their peers.



We make assumptions
about what will help.

Text-to-Speech Solutions

Focus of a great deal of attention

- National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards

Necessary but insufficient way to support many students with disabilities

From: Reading and Assistive Technology: Why the Reader's Profile Matters, *Perspectives on Language and Literacy Fall 2013*

TABLE 4. Number of Years below Grade Level in the Components of the WTP

	Word Identification	Listening Comprehension	Silent Reading Comprehension
At or above grade level	2 (3.9%)	33 (64.7%)	21 (41.2%)
1 grade level below	8 (15.7%)	10 (19.6%)	10 (19.6%)
2 grade levels below	23 (45.1%)	6 (11.8%)	17 (33.4%)
3 or more grade levels below	18 (35.3%)	2 (4.0%)	3 (5.9%)
Mean (standard deviation)	2.29 (1.08)	-.1176* (1.72)	.8088 (1.21)

*note: the group listens with comprehension slightly above grade level.

Making text accessible requires knowing the student's level of comprehension

- Determine the listening comprehension level of the student.
- Text must be targeted at that level or lower.
- For students with significant disabilities, that means text must be EASY!

Hatchet, Chapter 10

Brian sleeps in his shelter at night.



He is safe from bears and skunks because of his fire.



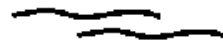
He cuts lots of wood to make sure he always has a fire.



The smoke from the fire keeps the mosquitoes away.



One morning he wakes up and sees animal tracks.



He follows the tracks to the lake and finds turtle eggs.



This is a common example of simplified, picture-supported text.

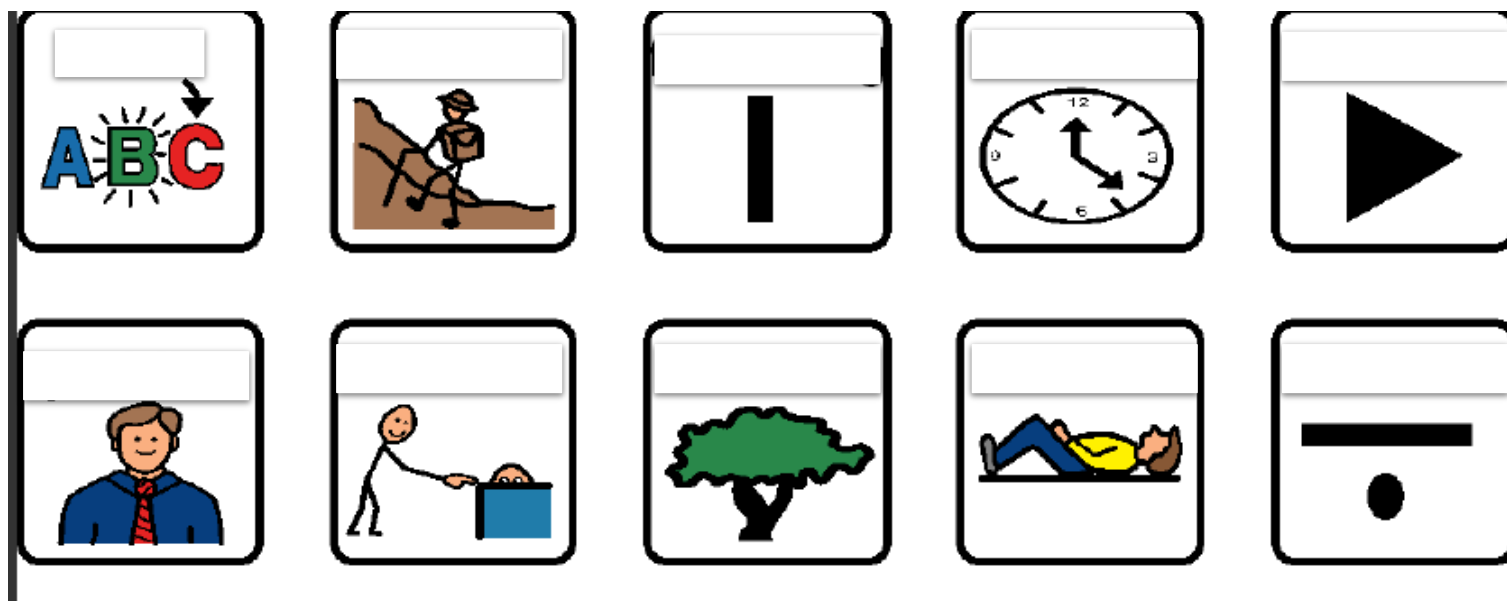
Does it work?

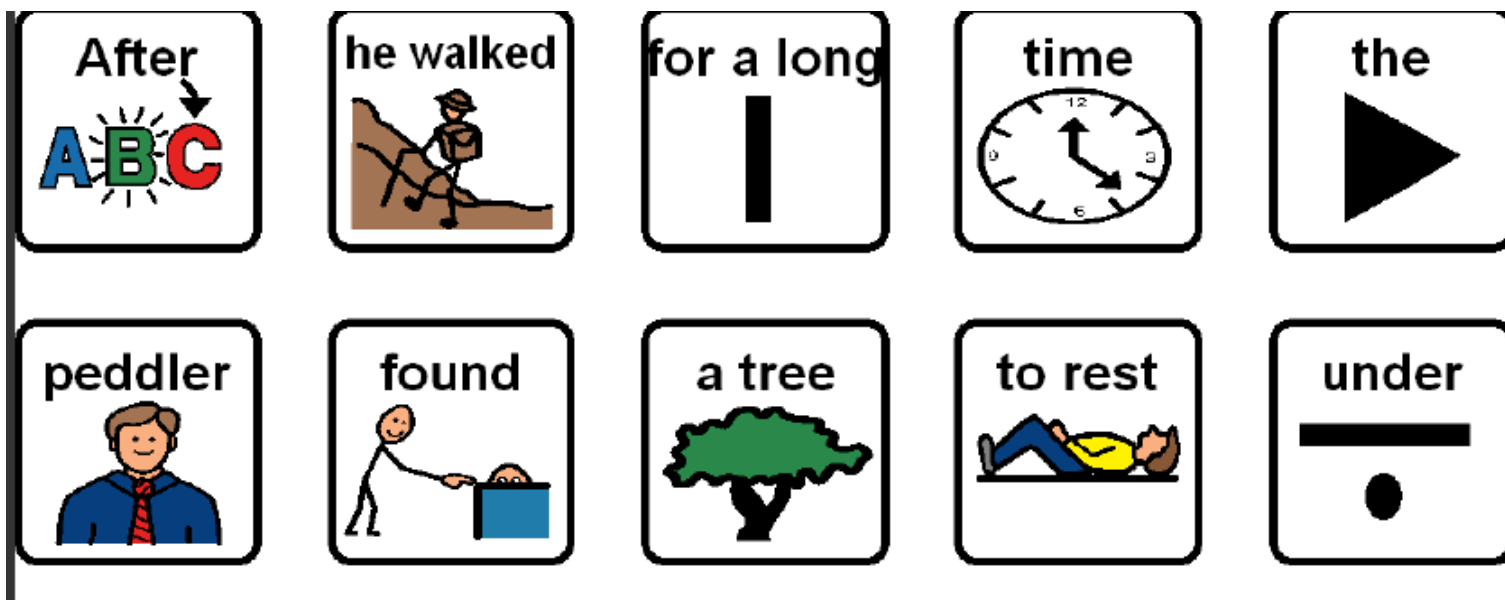


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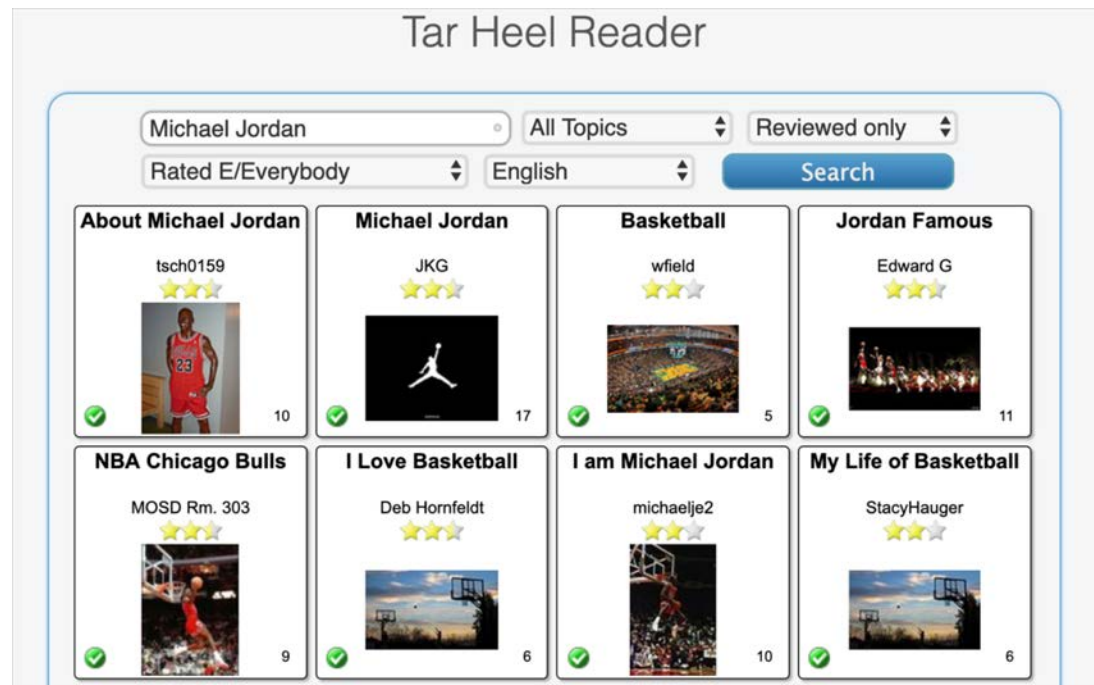




Things to Remember

- Technology and technology-based solutions don't always deliver what they promise
- Sometimes features actually get in the way of learning.
- Understand the learner's profile
- Remember what makes learners without disabilities want to engage with literacy and technology
- Keep it simple

Tar Heel Reader



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