Charting the Cs Conference 2025:

To Literacy and Beyond

Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

Growing Two Trees with One Seed: Creatively Building Capacity in Assistive Technology (AT) Across One District

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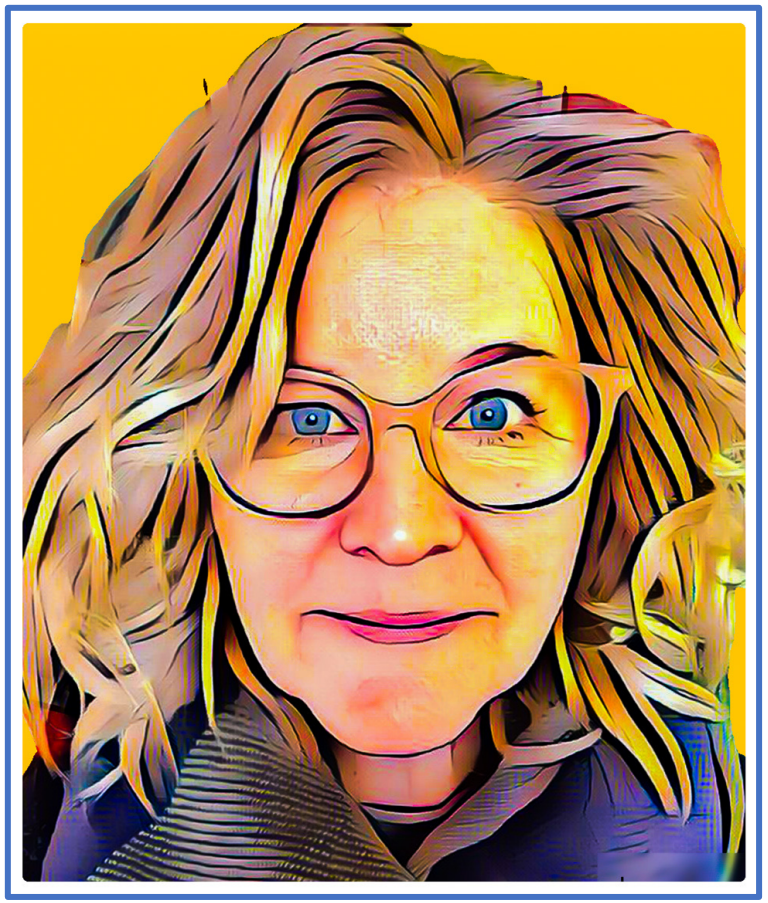
(School District 197)

About Me

West St. Paul- Mendota Heights- Eagan Area Schools Assistive Technology Specialist and Occupational Therapy Lead

Artist, builder, upcycler



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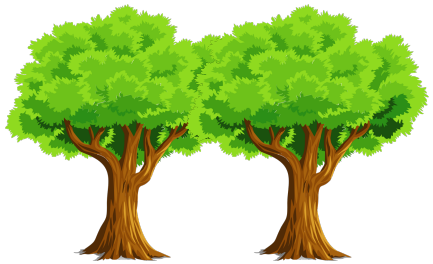
Learning Objectives

1. Recognize the needs assessment results that led to this work site initiative
2. Identify the work experience design and activities promoting district-wide AT consideration while developing student employment preparation
3. Analyze this initiative and design for broader application in other environments



What Led to this Program?

The Problems

- Lack of AT consideration, implementation, and documentation
- More work site opportunities needed for transition program students

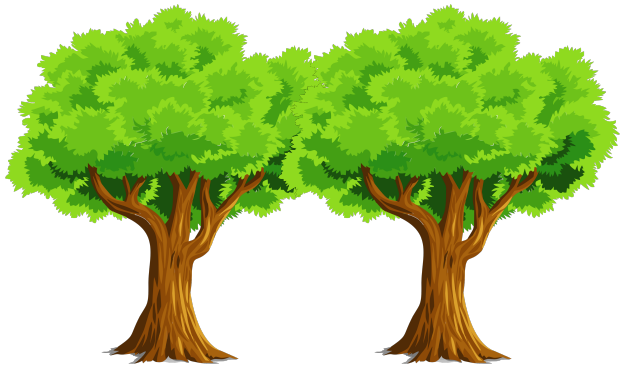
The Solution

The Solution

The Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC)
Work Experience Program

Because I Love an Analogy…

The ATRC Work Experience



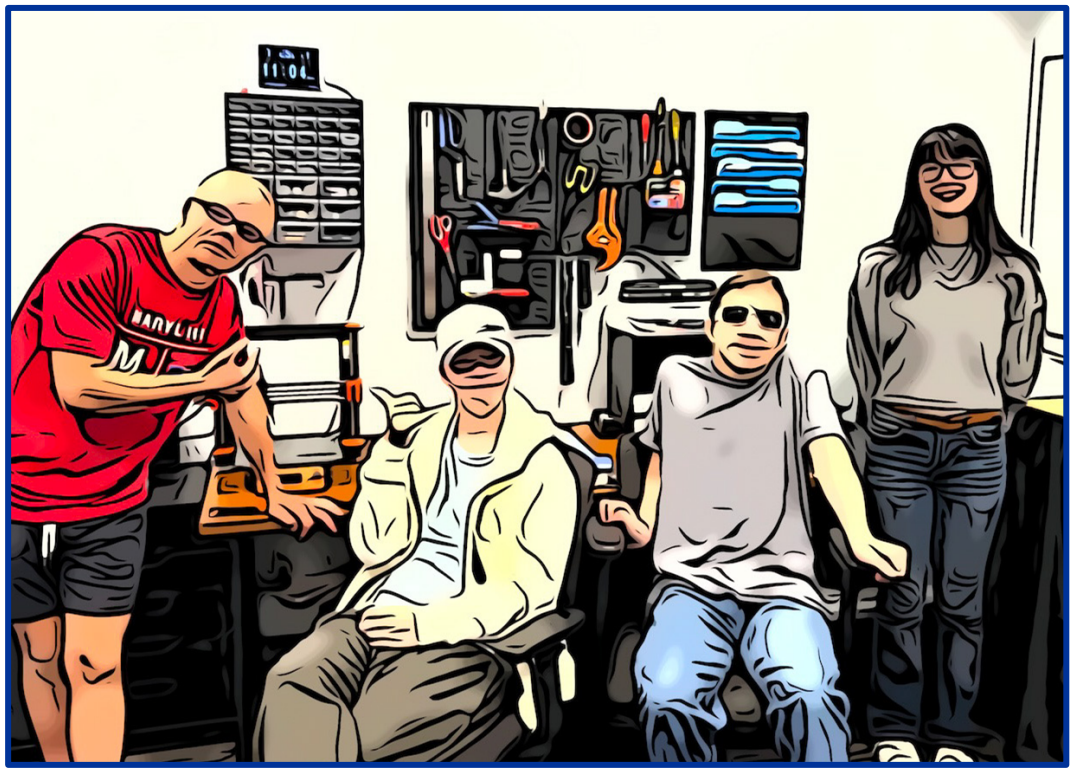
Vocational Skill Building for Transition Program Students AND AT Capacity Building

Assistive Technology Resource Center Work Experience

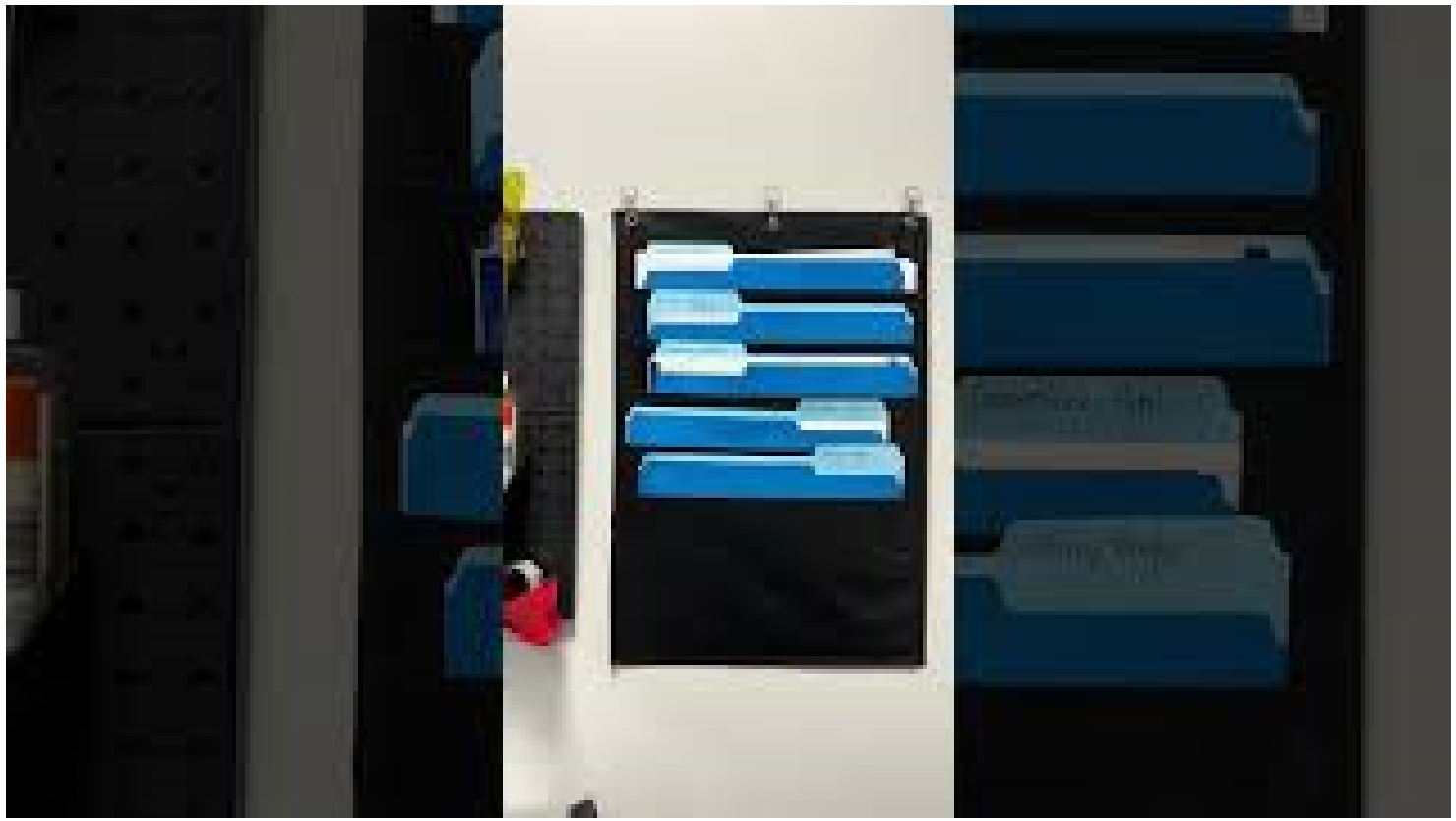
- Students
- Environment
- Tasks

Students

- Typically 1st-year students
- Unclear AT needs
- Wide variety of skills

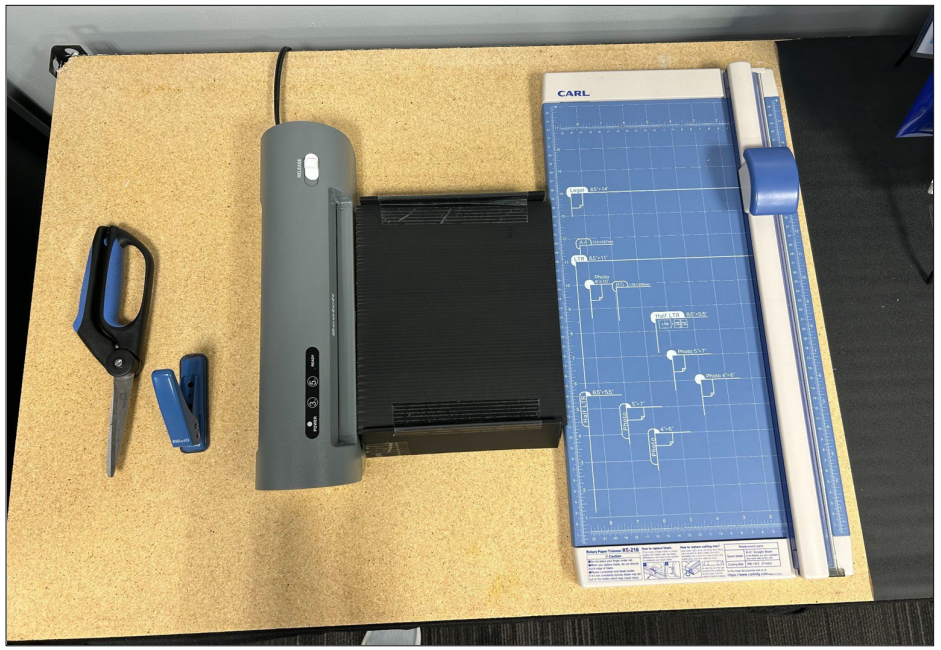


Environment - Video



Environmental Modifications and Supports

Tools and Equipment



- Self-opening scissors
- Lever hole punch
- Laminator tray
- Adapted cutting board

Tape runner

Label maker

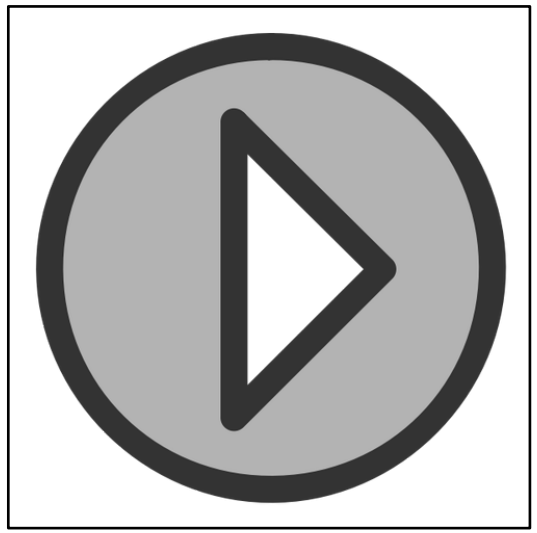
Environmental Modifications and Supports Cont.

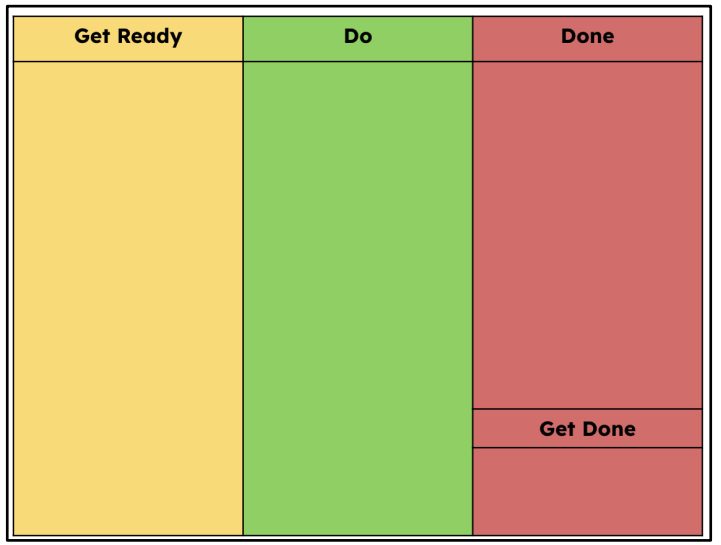
Training and Instructions

- Visual schedules
- Written task steps
- Video modeling (within apps or QR code to You-Tube)
- Get Ready, Do, Done, Get Done visual planning template

More Environmental Modifications and Supports

Training and Instructions Examples

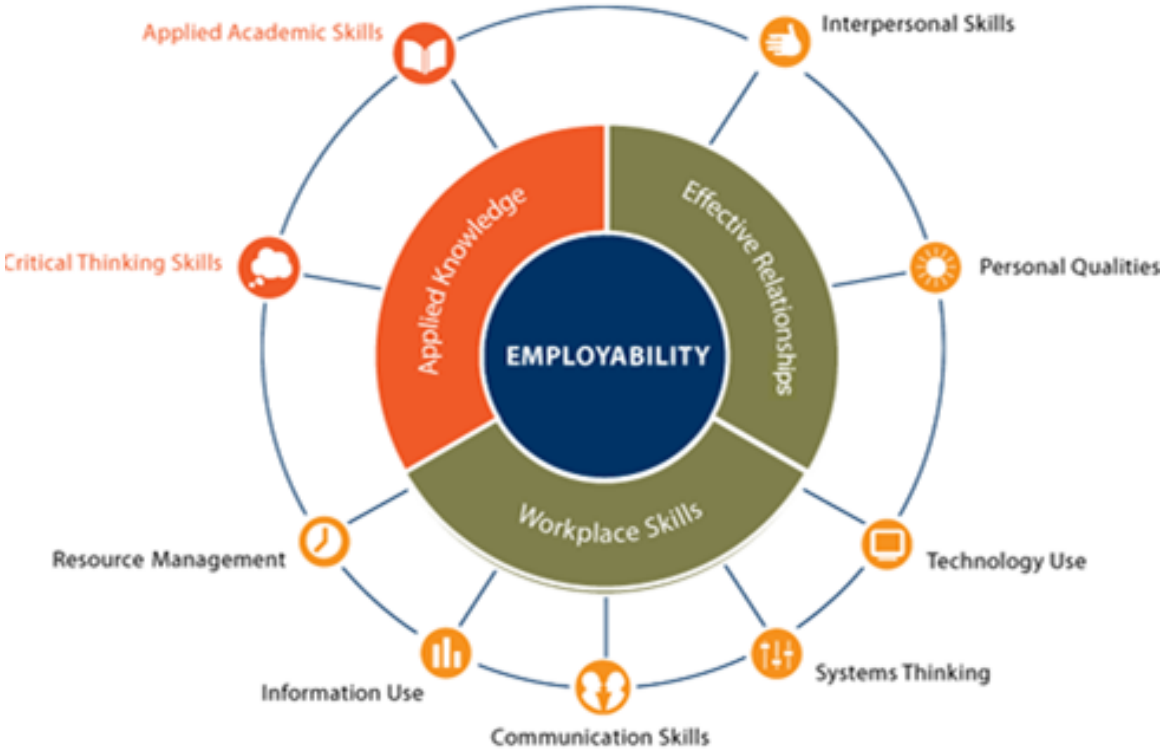




Link to examples

Tasks

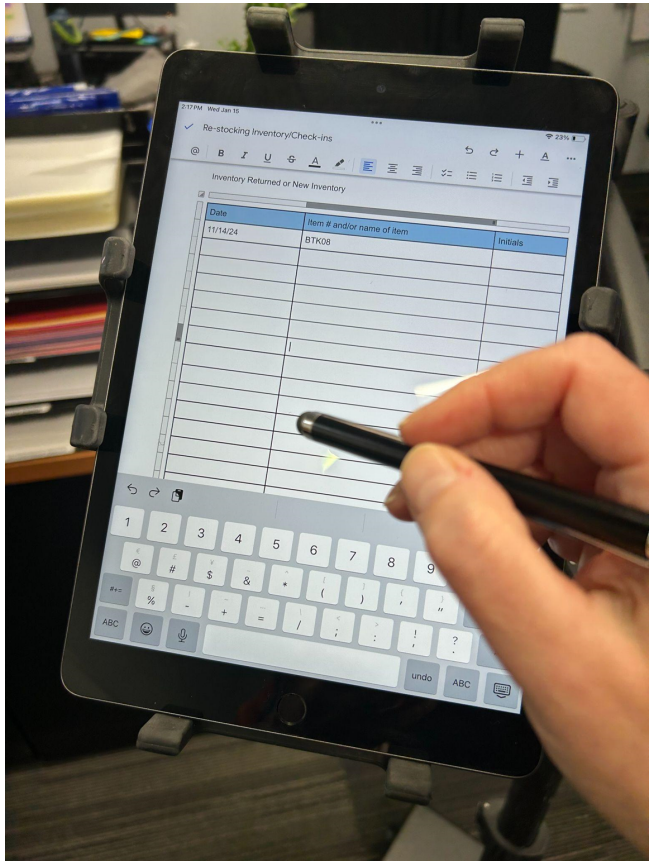
Work completed in the ATRC directly aligns to the U.S. Department of Education's Employability Skills Framework Workplace Skills



[Link to Employability Skills Framework]

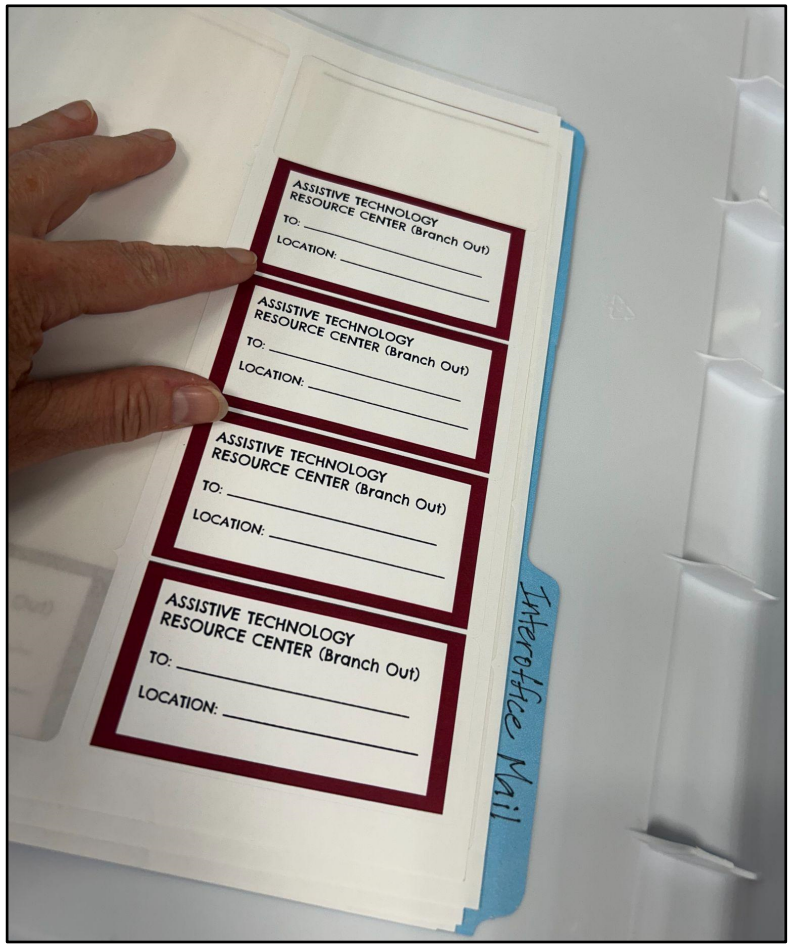
AT Lending Library Work

- Data entry
- Cleaning
- Return to storage
- Email communications



Shipping and Receiving Work

- Assemble packages
- Fill out shipping labels
- Unpack new inventory
- Check functionality of new items
- Apply inventory label
- Photograph and email



Visual Production Work

- Visual schedules
- Duration charts
- Bound social stories
- Visual scales
- Spinners
- First/Then boards
- Token boards

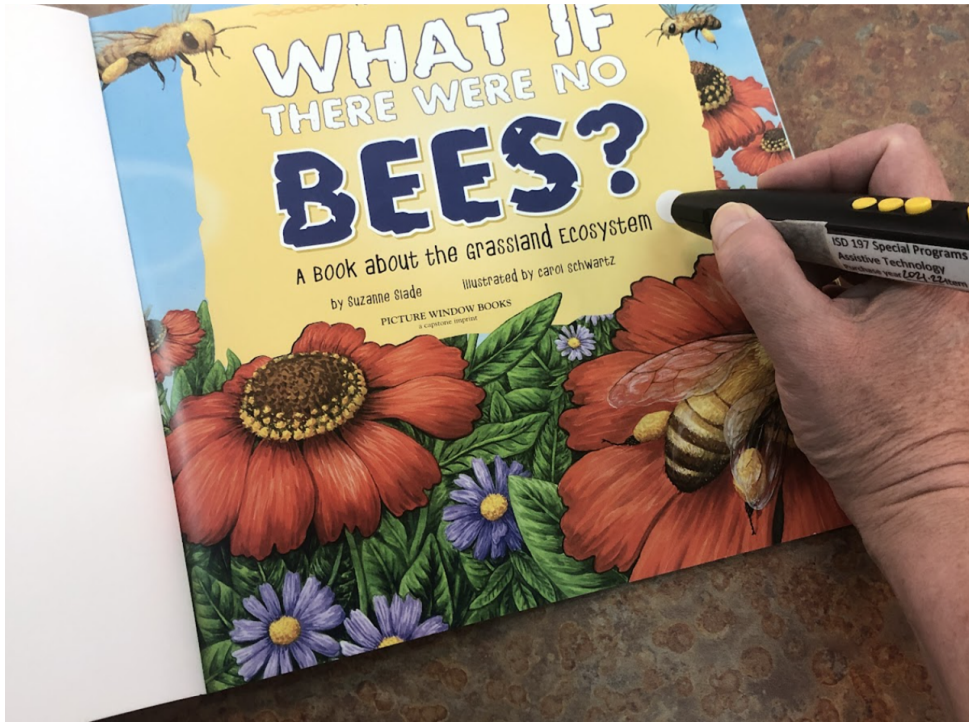
- File folder games
- Custom orders

Low-Tech Fabrication Work

- Weighted pencils
- PVC grasping tools
- PVC switch positioning devices
- Pencil grips (3D printed)
- Sensory supports (fidgets, weighted lap pads, shoulder wraps, and baby dolls)

Audio Production Work

- Penfriend sticker recording
- Chapter books MP3s



ATRC Google Site

- Link to ATRC Google Site

Barriers

- Lack of collaboration time
- Unpredictability of my schedule

Successes

1. Growth in work skills
2. Adaptive strategies and AT identified
3. More implementation of low tech AT throughout district
4. Less money spent on items we now fabricate within district

What I’ve Learned Along the Way

1. Grants are helpful
2. Illustrate the value of the work
3. Collect student thoughts

What's Next / Future Planning?

General goals for the future involve the creation of tools and resources to support literacy across the district.
Expand into "Production Center"

Tools and Materials to Support Literacy

- Phoneme grapheme mapping tools
- Visual tracking tools
- Decodable books with Penfriend recorded supports

Think Tank (or Forestation Planning)

QR Code to Padlet

Link to Padlet

Charting the Cs

Thank you!

Jennifer Veenendall, OTD, OTR/L, ATP

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