

A photograph of a person with curly hair, seen from the back, sitting at a desk and using a silver laptop. The laptop screen displays a list of words in a grid format. The person's hand is visible on the mouse. The background is slightly blurred, showing a desk with a notebook and a pen.

COMPUWRITE 2009

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PhD Internship
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Camp Organization

Camp Director

Assistive Tech Support

Research Component

Teacher Interns

Students

Parents



Experiences

Training

Planning

Meeting students and parents

Understanding needs

Trying software

Revising plans

Teaching group lessons



Experiences

Integrating software

Planning lessons

Solving problem

Working through tech glitches

Making decisions

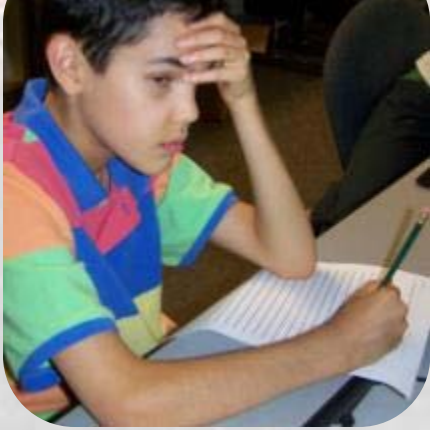
Printing

Publishing

Sharing



Struggling Writers



Writing Difficulties



Mechanics

- Poor handwriting-
 - Following lines on paper
 - Irregular letter size
 - Inconsistent letter spacing
 - Awkward pencil grip
 - Inaccurate visual tracking
- Short & simple sentences
- Poor spelling skills
- Inaccurate grammar & syntax

Writing process

- Erratic organization
- Few details
- Inconsistent verbal & writing skills
- Awkward transference of thoughts to paper

Assistive Technology Integration



Before using with students

- Learn the software features
- Try activities ahead
- Try activities using the actual computers that will be used
- Troubleshoot possible problems
- Respect student skills and enlist help when needed





- Use technology as a tool to demonstrate higher level thinking
- Create authentic products
 - Letters to send
 - Brochures to display
 - Internet projects with professionals
 - Interact with peers and professionals from around the world
 - Use real world information to problem solve

Student Impressions

Favorite things



“I get to write stories.”

“I wrote fun stories!”

“Writing my mystery stories.”



“Awesome teacher!”



“I learned a lot!”



Technology “can help me with writing by figuring out what words I need to put in my stories.”



“It is great to have pictures, great songs, and great sound effects!”

“It was an honor to be at this camp!”

Favorite Software?

- Writer's Companion- "because I could see everything and link ideas"
- StoryBook Weaver, Story Maker, & PixWriter- Adding pictures to stories



- Word Q- choosing words
- Kidspiration- organizing words
- Type to Learn- learning to type
- Clicker 5- using pre-designed projects with writing grids
- Classroom Suite- a little more difficult



Teacher Insights

- This experience was valuable for “learning about the software myself learning what’s out there...utilize in my practice the tech people at school more... knowing that the assistive technology is out there.”
- “...Be more likely to play with the technology like Inspiration”
- “...Feel more comfortable with the technology”
- “I love that word-Q.”



- Camp was helpful by giving us “... access to so much technology to explore it and review it and find what works and what doesn’t”
- “Practical application of working with kids with a diversity of disabilities”
- “Having the opportunity to experiment and matching the right technology to the right needs”
- “I love it!” (technology) “...will be my first resource.”
- I... “Find it very exciting!”



- Helpful- “The variety of programs”
- “A lot of choices we could choose from.”
- “Good to see what other teachers were doing. It gave me ideas of what to do for the later weeks.”
- “Clicker 5 can be useful with already designed projects that the kids who aren’t the best typist can work on the same kind of projects as the kids who can write by hand.”
- “...Liked the Word bar for kids who struggled with typing”



- Helpful- “Practical experience”
- “...Being able to be around the other teachers there were a constant flow of ideas ...
- “Bouncing ideas off each other.”
- “The camp was a great teaching experience being able to individualize according to needs.”
- “...Excited about using technology in the future Now I have a better understanding about what might work in the classroom.”



- Difficulties of camp It "...Was unorganized coming in... first week was really frazzled."
- "Wished I had had more opportunity to explore the software before getting the students."
- "I was given students the first day that I didn't know I was going to have...without being able to look at background."
- "I had lesson plans for the original 3 students" but they didn't work for the 3 new campers that were added.
- "...Had to learn the software on the fly."



- “Saving documents in Classroom Suite was ridiculous.” Every time the computer froze or was turned off documents and data were lost in Classroom Suite, Type to Learn, and Writer’s Companion because of Deep Freeze. The software folders were not in the thaw space and it was difficult or impossible to direct where to save them. Campers had to redo the pretest in Type to Learn daily until it was discovered how to get them beyond it.



- Several teachers felt that the camp's lack of direction was a drawback. One mentioned that when she had her internship in a school "... there's lots of resources and people and curriculum to help you."
- Others felt a need for more ideas and feedback about group and individual lessons taught from a master teacher and other interns.



Teacher Suggestions

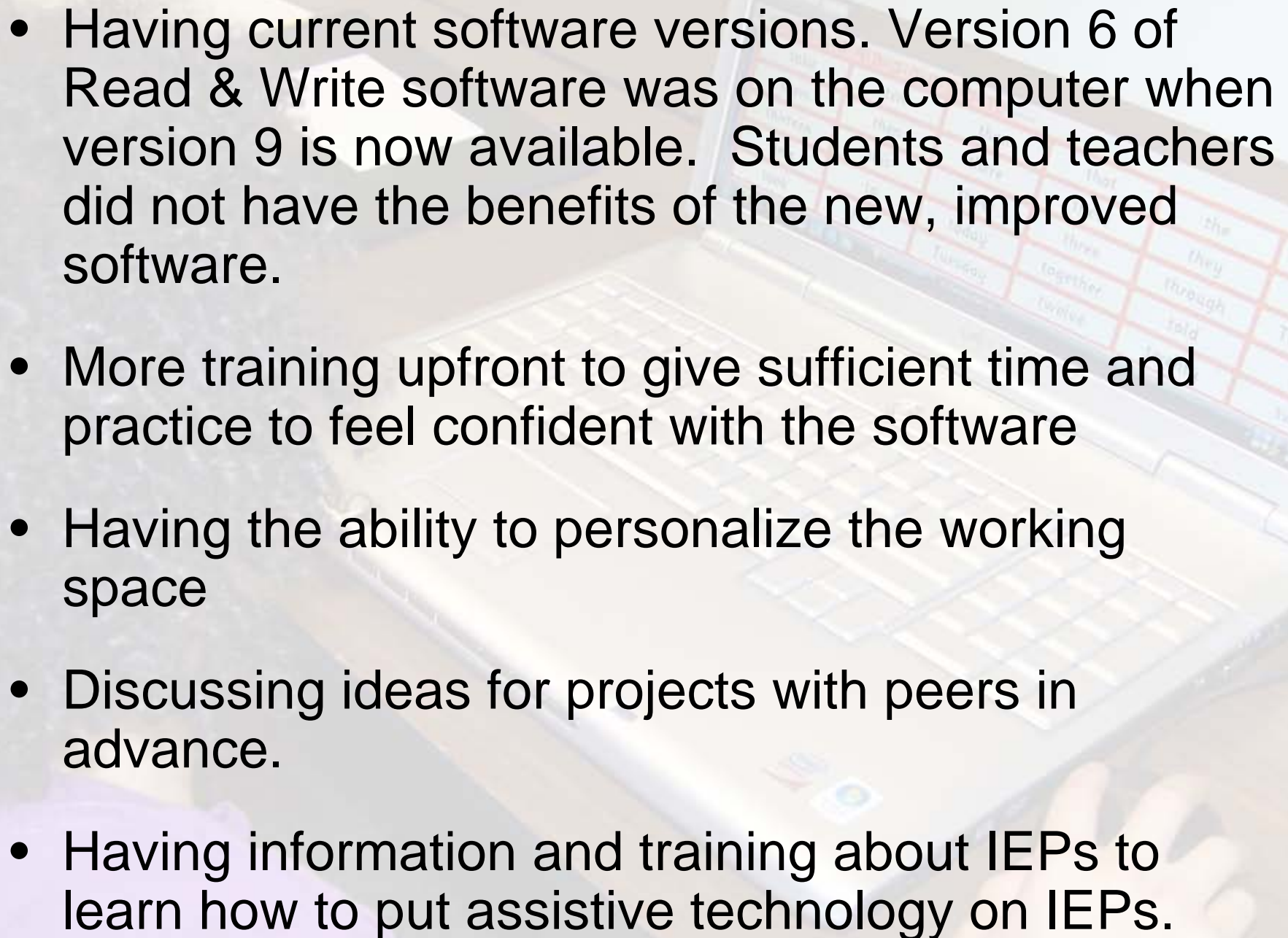
Interns would have benefited by...

- More focused preparation time in the lab
- More training about the software
- Practice using the software the week before camp
- More camp organization and format
- Using the software in the camp environment before the kids arrived. One teacher had difficulty getting Co:Writer to work consistently.



- Knowing which software would actually be available- One teacher made lesson plans for Kreative Komix which was on the disc but it wasn't available on the computers.
- Having appropriate site licenses for the software. An intern planned to use Writer's Companion with her three campers but the license only covered one computer at a time.



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- Having current software versions. Version 6 of Read & Write software was on the computer when version 9 is now available. Students and teachers did not have the benefits of the new, improved software.
 - More training upfront to give sufficient time and practice to feel confident with the software
 - Having the ability to personalize the working space
 - Discussing ideas for projects with peers in advance.
 - Having information and training about IEPs to learn how to put assistive technology on IEPs.

My Research Ideas

- Target Student
 - 7 to 8 years
 - Identified as having writing difficulties in 1st-2nd grade
- Software
 - Pixwriter- with & without pictures
 - Clicker 5- with & without pictures
- Writing Strategy
 - WWW 2 W & 2 H



• Possible Questions

- Will using picture to text software or having a writing grid encourage students to write
- How will these students' writing skill development be affected when using picture to text software or a writing grid?



- Using picture to text software or a writing grid, can these students independently type one or more sentences that express logical thoughts?
- Will the picture to text software or a writing grid help each student expand the average word per sentence?
- Will picture to text software or a writing grid increase the choice to free write when given 2 alternative activities such as free reading and pattern blocks?



- Summer research
- 4 weeks - 1 hour per day
- 6th week - maintenance probe
- 3 - 6 subjects
- Interview with subjects
- Interview with parents

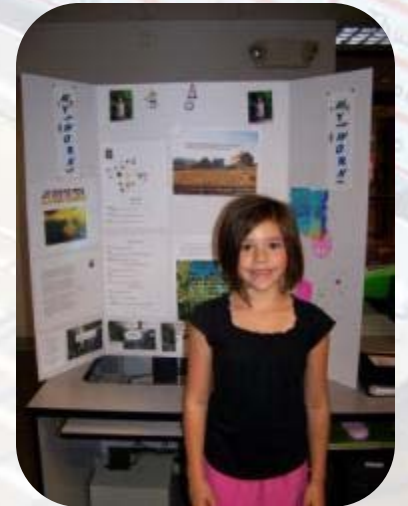
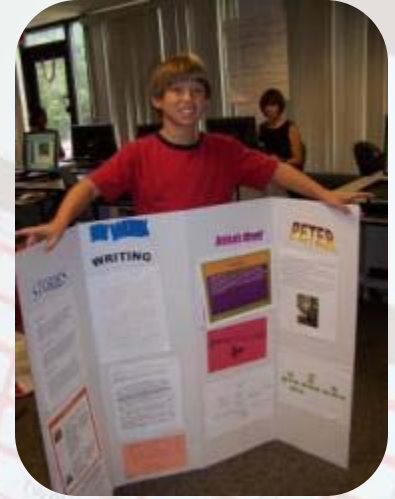


- Single subject design
 - Baseline - 5 probes
 - Introduction of software
 - Practice with software
 - Probes
 - Withdrawal of software
 - Probes
 - Re introduction of software
 - Probes
 - 8th week Maintenance Probe



CompuWrite Experience

- Was valuable
- Allowed observation of a single subject research project in progress
- Provided opportunity to work with Interns integrating assistive technology in writing lessons
- Exposed frustrations that contribute to teacher tendency to abandon technology



- Provided teachers with students who have a variety of disabilities including writing difficulties
- Helped with the selection of a target student for dissertation study
- Narrowed the technology to be included in the dissertation study

