

S P I C E

special people in catholic education



St. Catharine Parish

Spring 2014 Issue XIII

Assistive Technology and Inclusion Lead to Success!

Research, in addition to our own experience at St. Catharine School, has demonstrated that most special needs students benefit from inclusion, as much as possible, in the general education classroom. Assistive technology is a means of supporting the success of these students. SPICE funds make it possible for St. Catharine School to provide the necessary assistive technology for inclusion success.

While the term assistive technology (AT) can mean iPads and laptops, it can also be as low tech and simple as a pencil grip, color overlay, or raised lined paper. For years, the St. Catharine teachers have used AT to help each child focus on their strengths and provide support for their weaknesses. In more recent years, through the use of SPICE funds, we have been able to offer more high tech solutions.

To design and plan the accommodations that help remove barriers to learning, it is important to understand the neurological developmental functions that inhibit learning. Stated simply, there are three basic categories: inputting, processing, and outputting information.

Inputting refers to the ability to receive and understand information. Kindles allow students access to text at their grade/interest level, perhaps well above their reading level, which promotes vocabulary development and a richer literary experience that is enjoyed by their peers. Ipad applications, such as Notability and Evernote offer students the opportunity to download notes to annotate and/or add audio during lessons that provides a better opportunity for the student's understanding of the information presented.

Processing refers to the ability to memorize, organize, comprehend, and make connections. One application that is helpful is Explain Everything. It is an interactive tool that a teacher can use to create an individualized lesson with visual and auditory support features. The lessons created with this application facilitate the student's ability to focus on key points, organize the new information, and make connections to previous knowledge. An Explain Everything lesson can be shared with the student prior to the classroom lesson as a preview, during the lesson so the student can add additional notations/recordings or after the lesson to help review and solidify the knowledge.

Thanks for all of your support, prayers and for sharing our vision. SPICE has been bringing an awareness to St. Catharine and beyond for over fourteen years, and we thank you for putting SPICE in your life!

Donations listed below reflect contributions made from May 1, 2013 to April 30, 2014.

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There is SPICE in Sugarland!



Pictured above are Bob and Mary Ginn Ryan and Debra Haney, Principal of St. Laurence.

St. Laurence Parish in Sugarland, Texas has put SPICE in their lives! St. Laurence is a Parish of over 5000 families and more than 750 students in the parish school.

St. Laurence started a SPICE program two years ago. Bob and Mary Ginn Ryan, Co- Founders of SPICE were invited to St. Laurence to speak at their annual SPICE luncheon this past February.

(Assistive Technology, continued from page 1)

Khan Academy, Aleks, and Core5 are examples of software or applications that provide explicit instructional opportunities for students who have difficulty with processing. Offering the instruction/information in a different format, via the ipad or a computer, provides the student with additional exposure, immediate feedback, and a better chance of gaining deeper understanding of the material.

Finally, outputting refers to the ability of the student to demonstrate mastery of a concept. TestTalker, iReadWrite and Dragon Dictation all provide alternatives to traditional paper pencil assessments and can be used completely independently by the student. In Test Talker, the student can listen to the test question and type his response. iReadWrite has text prediction, spell check, and a text reading feature. Dragon Dictation offers the opportunity for students to simply dictate their responses and instantly see the text.

Assistive Technology enables special needs students access to the general curriculum. These technologies also allow the teacher to provide individualized instruction while giving more time to the entire class. Funding from SPICE has made many of the assistive technology accommodations possible. Reaching the needs of a variety of learning styles is supported by assistive technology and provides teachers with a more in-depth understanding of the barriers and assistance for learning. Much of the AT that began as an accommodation has since been incorporated into the classroom for the benefit of all students.



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This year was another full house with plenty of great people, great food, and great entertainment! What a great night for SPICE, St. Catharine Parish, and everyone who attended! A "Hundred Thousand Thank You's" go out to Jim and Peggy Mackessy for Chairing the event, to Chef Gary O'Allwein and his team of Leprechauns for all the delicious food and to the Committee Chairs and people who helped make this event another great night. "Cead Mile Failte".

