



S.E.A. side News

April
2011

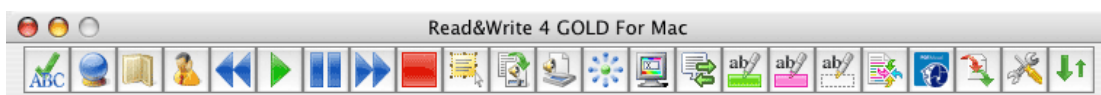


SEA—Special Equipment Amount

This issue:

- Read & Write 4 Gold For Mac
- AT and Provincial Testing
- March Break Parent Training Sessions
- Tips and Tricks
- RWG Testimonials
- Demonstration Classroom
- Literacy and Basic Skills Program
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Read & Write 4 Gold For Mac is Now Available!



Special Education is proud to announce that Read & Write 4 Gold For Mac is now available.

To request Read & Write 4 Gold For Mac please use:



http://myehd/Software_Request.aspx

Read & Write 4 Gold For Mac Minimum System Requirements:

1. Computers must be running 10.4 (Tiger) or above.
2. Computers must be Intel Based. PowerPC Apple computers are not supported (i.e. eMac, Powerbook, iBook, G3, G4, G5).



[For additional information on this software, printed resources, tip sheets and videos click on this link](#)

or visit our website at

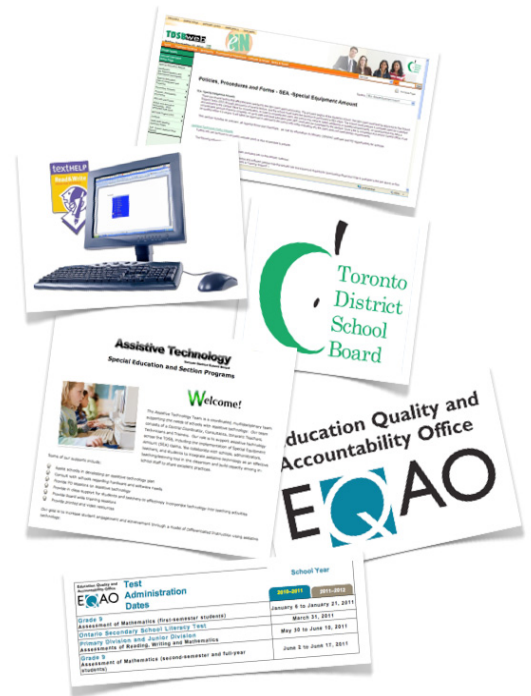
<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/specialeducation/tech>

Assistive Technology and Provincial Testing

To support our teachers, Special Education and Section Programs hosted information sessions on the EQAO guidelines for student accommodations. Sessions provided staff members with information on proper procedures when administering the OSSLT exam and EQAO testing for students who are using assistive technology as an accommodation.

For information on EQAO including; guide for accommodation, policies and procedures and student assessment booklets, please visit the website www.eqao.com

For TDSB staff members, EQAO and OSSLT information is now updated for 2011. Check it out on the Special Education website / EQAO and Assistive Technology.



Tips on Using a Document Camera

You can keep students engaged by easily creating interactive learning opportunities in your classroom by using a document camera. Imagine the convenience of viewing a science experiment in real time with your entire class or displaying a book as you highlight key sections. It's also easy to let students share objects or schoolwork with the class by using a document camera.

Use a document camera to:

- demonstrate important step by step instructions and help students understand an activity or lesson
- focus on the details of information being projected
- enlarge text, images, and objects being projected



March Break Training for Read & Write



Special Education and Section Programs (SEA) offered free parent training sessions on Read & Write Gold over the March Break. The sessions were a great success!

Here are some comments from the parents:

"I liked the interactive nature of the session."

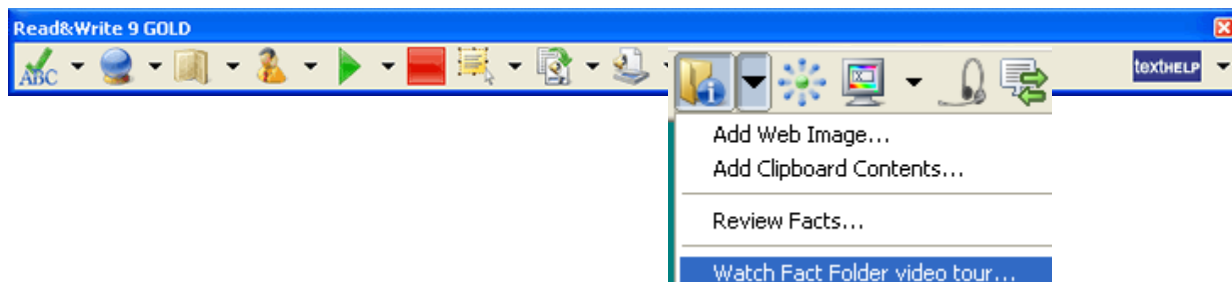
"Positive staff were willing to help with any questions. Lots of great information. Thanks."

Read & Write Gold Featured Spotlight

Video Guided Tours demonstrate the individual features of Read & Write Gold for Windows. These video tours are great for new users as well as those who just need a quick refresher!

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/specialeducation/tech>

Tours are also available directly from the Read & Write Gold toolbar.





Read & Write Gold



Success With Assistive Technology Teacher Perspective

There is nothing better in a teacher's life than to see her students take on new challenges and tasks with confidence, independence, and most of all, a big smile on their face. This has been happening more and more in the Home School Program at Elizabeth Simcoe and we all have assistive technology, especially Read & Write Gold, to thank.

Students are using this software to have books, questions and assignments read to them while they follow along in their text. They are using word prediction and text-to-speech to write and to hear words what they have written in order to self edit and improve their work. The best part is that their frustration levels are at a minimum--no more worries about having to write on paper; no more worries about not being able to spell the words properly; no more worries about the written text not making any sense. In addition, a steady improvement in reading levels has been taking place. The boost to their confidence and self-esteem has been remarkable.

Here is what some students have to say about Read & Write Gold:

" I like Read & Write Gold because it is fun. It is also a better way for me to learn because writing by hand is hard and I don't want to do it. Using the computer doesn't hurt my hand. I can see the proper way to spell words and I can listen to the words even if I can't read them."

"Read & Write Gold helps me to do better in language. When writing on a piece of paper, I get confused. The text-to-speech helps read my words back to me so that I can understand. The word prediction helps me with my spelling. I don't mind writing anymore."

Teacher





Read & Write Gold



Success With Assistive Technology Parent Perspective

My husband and I have three boys that go to the same TDSB school. Our oldest child has had no significant issues with school and has always been a solid, well rounded student. This year, in grade 7, his teachers chose him as one of 15 students to become peer trainers for Read & Write Gold. He has had the opportunity to work with several children to train them on using the program successfully. As a result, he has chosen to use the program himself to help him edit his own papers and for the research tools. His own writing has improved from B- to A- in one term.

Our younger two children are both hearing impaired. They have near normal hearing when wearing hearing aids. We decided to give French Immersion a try since their older brother had the opportunity. Currently, they are in grades 5 and 2. A new language has certainly added another dimension of challenges. In an ideal setting, the boys still need to fill in gaps from their hearing with their understanding of the context. Since they have a limited vocabulary in French, context clues are not always available to them. Our middle child struggled through the primary grades receiving D's and R's in Language. Our youngest has managed to receive mostly D's.

This year, they both learned to use Read & Write and Smart Ideas. We use it at home and they use it at school. It has helped to have a resident trainer living with us! They are allowed to listen to text, edit their writing, organize their thoughts and create projects. We have also found great web tools such as The Toronto Public Library's Tumblebooks link. The kids love having books read to them and this has helped to increase their listening skills.

We received the report cards this week and we were very pleased to see that our grade 5 child has improved from D's and R's to straight B's in all but Writing (which improved to a C). Our grade 2 child has jumped from D's to mostly B's. The technology piece has been so beneficial because it has provided them with more opportunities to express themselves and to receive information. They also enjoy reading and writing more when they can do it on the computer.

Parent

Demonstration Class

The Assistive Technology Team hosted a Demonstration Classroom for Special Education and Assistive Technology (AT) at Annette Street P.S. on January 19, 2011. Angela Tucci-Browne (MART/Junior HSP) was our host teacher for the day. Angela demonstrated to visiting teachers how she uses Read & Write Gold to support students with reading and the research process. Participants also observed a math lesson utilizing the interactive whiteboard to help further her students' understanding of equivalent fractions. During our debriefing and planning time, teachers were able to review the AT programs and investigate how they could use AT to support their own students. **We would like to thank Angela for sharing her expertise, knowledge and challenges with our visiting teachers.** We look forward to hosting another successful demonstration classroom at Annette P.S. on April 7, 2011.



Looking for another opportunity to visit a demonstration classroom? Visit [Key to Learn](#) for additional information.

Literacy and Basic Skills Program Now Accessing Read & Write Gold

The TDSB Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program is thrilled that Read & Write Gold has been made available to us by the Special Education Department—SEA Team.

The LBS program offers non-credit upgrading in reading, writing and numeracy to adults who have less than high-school education and is funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Many of our learners experience challenges in their learning and have had limited and less-than-positive experiences with earlier education. We offer them the opportunity to work towards their goals of further training and education, employment or greater personal independence in a supported, learner-centered environment. We anticipate Read & Write Gold will help to reduce the barriers our learners face and enhance their learning experiences and chances of success.

We're looking forward to sharing our learners' successes with you!

*Carol Visser
Program Coordinator
Literacy and Basic Skills*

Assistive Technology Web Resources



Follow SMART Friends on Facebook



Follow SMART on Twitter



Watch SMART on Teacher tube

<http://www.teachertube.com>

Web Links



eWorkshop

<http://www.eworkshop.on.ca>

This website is an online resource developed for elementary teachers by the Ontario Ministry of Education. It includes modules on Literacy and Numeracy.

SymbolWorld

www.symbolworld.org

SymbolWorld is a website created by **Widgit Software**, dedicated to people who use symbols. It has material for all ages and includes personal contributions, stories and learning materials.

E-Learning

<http://elearning.autism.net/visuals/main.php>

This is the Geneva Center website. This link will take you to the E-Learning visuals section.