

# Establishing the Efficacy of Using iPads/tablets to Increase Literacy in Special Education By Means of Grants

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## Introduction

The use of technology in special education classrooms has become the norm in many school sites today. The advances in technology shaped the way students with disabilities access their education.

Literacy skills consist of the ability to read and write as well as the capacity to listen and speak effectively. Students with disabilities often exhibit difficulties in one or more elements in the areas of literacy (Thompson, Bakken & Fulk, 2004).



## Purpose

The purpose of this project is to write a grant to obtain iPads/tablets and examine their effectiveness on literacy in special education classrooms. Closing the literacy gap in special education is vitally important especially with the authorization of the new Common Core standards. The following research question will be examined: How effective are iPads/tablets in increasing literacy with students with moderate to severe disabilities?



## Literacy

Developing literacy skills is an important ability for all individuals, particularly for children with moderate to severe disabilities. Literacy includes skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. These skills enable students with disabilities to communicate with others better, to have enhanced vocational opportunities, to gain a better understanding of their environments while allowing for educational assessment and learning, and most importantly, to gain an overall better quality of life that promotes self expression and facilitates independent living (Akcin, 2013).

Students with moderate to severe disabilities face a number of challenges. Typically, students with disabilities have difficulties with attention, lack of motivation, problems with word decoding and phonemic awareness (Vacca, 2007).

## Technology

- ❖ **Video Modeling** - a technique where students watch a video clip that models a target behavior. It is a “process to change existing behavior, or teach new behavior with a non-living model and sample which are recorded on video” (Avcioğlu, 2013).
- ❖ **Interactive Whiteboards** - are instructional tools connected to a computer and projected onto a white board on the wall (Ting, 2014). The projected images on the board can then be manipulated by students and instructors.
- ❖ **Computers** - an electronic device for storing and processing data, typically in binary form, according to instructions given to it in a variable program.
- ❖ **iPads/Tablets** - is a mobile computer with a touchscreen display, circuitry, and battery in a single device.

## Methodology

The primary focus of this project is the acquisition of iPads/tablets through grants. Grant proposals vary based on the requirements of each grant. The researcher elected to propose a study to support the need for the technology in the classroom. The proposed study will function as a subsidiary means of supporting the need for the grant. The study involves helping four students with moderate to severe disabilities increase literacy skills using iPads/tablets in conjunction with evidence based strategies such as Constant Time Delay (CTD), Stimulus Fading (SF), Spontaneous Prompting (SP) and Discrete Trial Training (DTT).

## Online Resources

Website	Amount
The NEA Foundation www.neafoundation.org	Varies
Teach Make a Difference www.teach.com	\$700-\$10,000
Educators of America www.educatorsusa.org	Varies
Philanthropic Ventures Foundation www.venturesfoundation.org	\$500
Donors Choose www.donorschoose.org	Varies

## Evidence Based Strategies

- ❖ **Constant Time Delay (CTD)** - an approach that involves the delivery of a stimulus or instructional cue, such as holding up a printed word, followed by the presentation of a controlling prompt. Providing a correct answer after an instructional cue is an example of a controlling prompt.
- ❖ **Stimulus Fading (SF)** - a procedure where the stimulus prompts are gradually reduced in size or intensity.
- ❖ **Spontaneous Prompting (SP)** - the consistent delivery of a controlling prompt immediately following the presentation of the discriminative stimulus or cue.
- ❖ **Discrete Trial Training (DTT)** - a method where instructions are structured into five basic steps.

## Implications

Based on accessibility of the technology, all students in both general and special education will be able to get their needs met by tailoring the technology on individual need. This will allow instructors the flexibility to teach with different instructional tools. Students with Individual Education Program (IEP) will be able to receive instruction based on their individual need.

## Conclusion

This project was created to help support students with disabilities gain more literacy. Through the use of iPads/tablets, students will explore ways to increase reading, writing, listening and speaking. Acquisition of the technology will be achieved through various grants.

## Literature cited

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Images are courtesy of Advanced Google Image Search.

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## For further information

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