DISKoveries

Computer Software for Special Needs

By Joan Tanenhaus

Click to Read: Citizenship (Marblesoft-Simtech: www.marblesoft.com) This is the fourth in the excellent Click to Read Series for Mac and Windows. There are four stories for early readers using SymbolStix picture communication symbols (color coded by parts of speech). Designed for ages 3-7, this is an excellent program for vocabulary and language development and the development of early literacy. The programs are very age appropriate for older learners as well. The original and motivating stories included in this volume are A Leader Is (what is a leader and different kinds of leaders, such as parents, teachers, principals, coach, other leaders), I Can Help (different ways "I Can Help" at school, in the neighborhood, in the community), My Country (all about the USA, voting, the president, the flag, the 4th of July) and Recycle It (recycling common household objects). Each of the stories has repetitive lines and pages that really reinforce the concepts and make the story content clearer and more focused. The stories build vocabulary through simple text and picture support and increase literacy skills while providing independence and success. Each of the included stories has a reading mode, where the reader listens to the story, sentence by sentence, and becomes familiar with the vocabulary and symbols. Clicking anywhere advances to the next page. The story can then be read in an Interactive mode. In this mode, the learner again sees the text, picture and three symbols for the text. They can then click any symbol to hear its meaning read aloud. When they are finished exploring, they can then click the arrow to advance to the next page. In the Tell The Story mode, there are three levels and children tell the story by arranging the symbols. The first level is errorless – two of the symbols are in place and the third (only symbol below the line) just gets selected to complete the sentence. In the second level, two of the symbols are already in place but there are now three symbols below the line and only one is correct. In the third level, children must arrange

the three symbols in correct order to re-create the sentence. There is a Show What You Know activity for each story, where the players can demonstrate their understanding of the core vocabulary in a practice mode or by playing Bingo or Concentration with the picture symbols. The program works with mouse, touch screen or switches and has many options to change voice (male/female, background, etc.) Along with each program is

Click to Read: Citizenship (www.marblesoft.com)

a "print book," which allows you to print a copy of the story for each student that may be used during guided reading, for independent practice or for home reading. The core vocabulary is also provided on small cards that you can print, laminate and cut apart. The other programs in this series include: Click to Read Life Skills, Click to Read Animal Habitats and Click to Read All About Me. All four of the programs in this series are excellent for literacy and language for learners of all ages – they work extremely well on the SMART Board for small group and classroom interactive lessons.

Koppy Kattz (Marblesoft-Simtech: www.marblesoft.com) This program, for Mac and Windows, contains four activities for one or more players – it's a Simon-type game in which the

program plays a sequence that the user repeats using the keyboard (numbers 1-6), mouse or switches. The more you remember, the longer the sequence becomes. The Cause and Effect activity is designed to familiarize the student with the use of the buttons. The user just plays the buttons without having to follow a sequence. This activity can also be used for evaluating switch-using abilities and for teaching the use of up to six switches. You can also use Cause and Effect as a simple musical instrument by choosing six buttons and setting the feedback prompt to one of the musical instruments (piano, drums, synthesizer). The Monkee See activity teaches the user to play the game. A button will flash a sequence of one to five buttons (you preselect according to training level) and the student then repeats the sequence. After a number of correct answers, the program will add another button to the sequence. After a wrong answer, the sequence is shortened by one. Koppy Cat activity is the traditional Simon game, adding a new button after each correct response. A new sequence is started after the student is unable to repeat the sequence correctly. In Multi-Player activity, two or more players can play against each other. There are many options to customize the program (number of buttons, type of buttons, auditory prompting and reinforcement, language [Spanish, German, French or Dutch] and access [switch, keyboard and mouse]).

Switch Kids (Marblesoft-Simtech: www.marblesoft.com) This is an updated and upgraded version of a classic switch learning activity for Macintosh and Windows and as an app for iPad too (see review below). The program includes three cause and effect switch training activities. In the first, Funny Sounds and Faces, each switch press shows a new face with a new expression and a fun sound. You can choose the number of faces to use and the background color. In Bubble Gum, press the switch to see the face. Each subsequent switch press presents another step in bubble-blowing process, up to the final step when the bubble pops. You can choose the

color of the bubble gum and also select to have random early pops. In Build A Kid, each press presents another part of the "kid" picture – head, ears, hair, eyes, nose, mouth, etc., until a fully dressed "kid" is shown. Choose a single child, twins or triplets and also show their names. If you choose twins or triplets, they can be identical (same sex, same clothes) or random combinations. Great on the SMART Board, too, for young children – great fun for the youngest children and a motivating way to work on facial expression and the body.

Pre-Made Boardmaker Activities are new software programs from Mayer-Johnson (mayer-johnson.com). They are a wide range of fun activities and educational programs that do not need Boardmaker software to run them. Just download, install and play. They can be used for early literacy (pre-school) and all the way up to older students and adults. There are activities for transitional and related skills for functioning in the community. They all read the text aloud (a combination of synthesized and digitized speech) and have scanning options. They can be used at the computer and are really good for group activities using a SMART Board. They are like apps for your computer! You can download and try any of these Boardmaker Activities for a seven-day period. That way you can review the program and determine its appropriateness for your students and class before you purchase. Just go to Mayer-Johnson.com and choose Trials from the menu bar.

Early Literacy Packs There are four programs in this series of Pre-Made Boarmaker Activities, for ages 3-6. Each of the activities includes an online book and three supporting language activities. In Pound, Squish, Roll! children listen to the story read aloud, find animal shapes, listen to and correct silly sentences and find words that begin with "p." In Building with Blocks, children hear a story about building with blocks and play activities, such as identifying colors, listening to silly sentences and finding words that begin with "r." In Becca's Bubbles, there is a story about bubbles and activities to find words that begin with "b," find colors to pop the bubbles and listen to and correct some silly sentences. In Snack Time, there is a story about snacks, an activity to find the snack, silly sentences and finding the words that begin with "c."

Reading Corner Series Each of the four interactive books in these pre-made Board-maker activities tells a narrative story with simple consonant-vowel-consonant target words, which are highlighted in yellow. Each page has an illustration and a short sentence that is read aloud with additional highlighting. Children press the arrow to advance to the next page, using either the mouse, touch screen or single- or two-switch input. The "Symbols" button on each page provides access to symbols for all the target words, so the child can respond to questions about the story. Volume 1 contains Our Biggest Fan, The Campfire, Our New Van and Can You Guess? Volume 2 contains Soccer Rules, On Top of the World, Look Up and Hog Heaven. Volume 3 has Under My Bed, The Picnic, Grandma's Bag and Our Fat Cat. Volume 4 has Yum! Pizza!, Traffic Jam, Spider's Web, and Little Red Fox Cubs.

Beginning Board Games These pre-made Boardmaker activities are virtual board games – spin the dice, follow the directions and drag your token the given number of spaces. One to four players can play together. In Circus Counting, students move forward and then count the number of circus animals, wagons, etc. In Cody's Colorful Crayons, they answer questions about colors. Others in the series include: Rhyming Words, Find The Shapes, Opposites (choose the opposite symbol from the one you land on) and Onset Letters.

Virtual Field Trip Games With this series of pre-made Boardmaker activities, for Grade levels one to three and age-appropriate for older learners, students can take a virtual trip to different places. They will hear a book read aloud with important facts and pictures to illustrate. Presented with well-phrased, clear sentences and interesting photos and illustrations, the different items and situations within each place are explained. Each field trip also includes a Matching Game, a Hidden Picture Game, a "Check It Out" area where the scene is shown with captions that point out other interesting items and a Quiz that requires the student to integrate and think about all the facts they have learned. The different programs in this series include: Planetarium, Washington DC, Baseball, Zoo, Post Office and Hollywood.

Match & Memory Series Each of the programs in these pre-made Boardmaker activities includes a group of mini-games with two levels of difficulty. Users can match picture to goal (with all pictures on screen) or play a concentration-type matching game. Modules available include: Beginning and Ending Letters (match word to the letters it begins or ends with); Consonant Blends (match picture/word to consonant blend or digraph it begins with); Tick, Tock, Time (match digital to analog time for hours, half hours, quarter hours and combinations); Look Closer (match different views of animals, food, nature, extreme close up [part/whole] and combinations. Each time an object is selected, a statement of information about the object is spoken.); Crazy for Color (match object to color, i.e., red wagon to red); and Count Me (match sets of pictures related to categories such as beach, camping, birthday, barnyard, weather and school).

Curriculum Companion This series of pre-made activities is designed to improve reading and writing skills through the use of science and social studies curriculum subjects. The activities within the program are divided into different parts that introduce and teach the subject and also work on reading and writing skills related to the topic. The program is divided into four main areas. In Read, the activities are: Explore (slideshow, characteristics/facts, hidden pictures, symbol explore and teacher tools); Bookshelf (books on topic that are read aloud); Idea map (good for brainstorming the topic); Picture Glossary (pick an icon and get more information) and Flash Cards. In Write, the activities are: Free Writing (write with symbols or keyboard); Structured Writing (using the vocabulary words/symbols to write a sentence); Sentence Building (select the correct word from each column to make a sentence); Errorless Writing (select any word or phrase from each column to make a sentence), Stamping (drag stamps onto a picture to make your own scene); and Word Scramble (select the letters in the correct order to spell the illustrated

My Virtual Field Trip (www.mayer-johnson.com)

word). In Practice, there are multiple choice questions, matching, sorting, labeling, yes-no, true-false and a word search. The Quiz section uses the same activities as above. There is one sheet per topic (i.e. one sorting activity, one labeling activity, etc.). These programs are excellent to use on the SMART Board and there is a large range of topics. Here is a list of some of the current topics available: All about Plants, Being a Good Citizen, Exploring Our Solar System, Money Matters, Healthy Choices, Famous Inventors, Recycling, Changing Seasons, Amazing Animals, Community Faces and Places, How Our Nation Began, It's Alive, Land and Water, Native American History, Nature's Neighborhoods, Our Country, Rocks/Minerals/Soil, What's The Weather, Your Body, and From Here to There. Visit the Mayer-Johnson Web site for a complete list.

Quiz Show Series You can play with one to four players or teams in this Jeopardy-like game series of pre-made Boardmaker activities. Players pick a category and money value for the question (five levels). Then they are presented with a multiple choice question that reads aloud – three choices are presented with symbol and text and are read aloud when cursor is placed on them. Select an answer and if correct, you will hear a fact about the subject, as well as a thumbs-up. If you select the wrong answer, you will hear a buzz and receive the correct answer with some additional information. This is a fun trivia game with lots of interesting information and a fun format to help learning. Quiz Show Series comes in the following topics: Health & Body, Animal Kingdom, Natural Disasters, Music, Music, More Music!, The 50 State Quarters, and Ancient Egypt.

APPLE APPS AND IPAD ACCESSORIES

Cases, Covers and Stands for iPad 2 More suggestions for different solutions to cover, carry and use your new iPad :

Swivel Stand iPad 2 Case (www.boxwave.com) This is a unique and well-designed case that lets you view your iPad in either horizontal or vertical position while also placing it in any one of three pre-formed grooves, in order to find the perfect angle for viewing or typing. It's also an excellent case to have if you are using your iPad with young children who need varying positioning. In addition to its positioning features, the case allows access to all of Apple iPad,2's controls, features and ports on the outside of the case. The case's hidden magnetic activation puts your iPad

to sleep mode to conserve battery when closed – open the cover and the iPad automatically wakes up.

Variable Angle Super Stand (www.RJCooper.com) This is a great stand to use with the iPad, in or out of any case you have, in portrait or landscape view. Made of white plastic, it adjusts to many different angles and, best of all, it folds flat, is very lightweight and is easy to transport. Users just pull apart the two sections and then lift the top edge to find the metal stand and place it in the desired groove to adjust it to different angles. On the stand, RJ has put his Stick & Suck to prevent the iPad from moving around when it is pressed or touched. On the bottom, there are rubber "feet," also covered with Stick & Suck, so the stand stays firmly on the table, wheelchair laptray, etc. Works great for therapy or for just playing games, watching YouTube, videos, reading books, etc. You can also use it for a keyboard for the computer if you need one placed at an angle.

iPad 2 Smart Sleeve (www.boxwave.com) This case is made of thermoplastic polyurethane and was designed to be paired with Apple's Smart Cover. It provides durable protection for the back of the iPad 2. It's thin, flexible and lightweight. It's easy to slip on but stays securely in place and has cut-outs that provide easy access to all of the controls. There's a cut-out section that fits the Smart Cover hinge, allowing the iPad 2 to utilize both cases simultaneously. The Smart Sleeve is available in a variety of colors that are designed to match the Apple Smart Cover color options. The iPad 2 Smart Back Cover is similar in design, but is made from polycarbonate and is a little firmer and rigid in flexibility.

Quilted iPad 2 Carrying Bag (www.boxwave.com) This is a great bag to use to if you want extra protection for your iPad when you are traveling or moving around. It is designed so that your iPad 2 fits inside with a Smart Cover and Smart Sleeve attached The case has thick, soft padding and a front pocket large enough to carry your charger or other small accessories. It has a double zipper design so you can lock your iPad, as well as an integrated and removable carrying handle. If you prefer a slightly smaller case without a handle, SoftSuit with Pocket is a slim but protective carrying case with a double zipper lock design, with soft cushioning and an integrated front pocket with a zipper. It's slightly smaller and thinner in design, but still fits the

Apple iPad 2 with Smart cover and Smart Sleeve attached.

At times, the built-in speaker of the iPad may not be sufficient for AAC purposes or for classroom/group use. These might help:

Rechargeable Mini Speakers (AbleNet: www.ablenetinc.com) This is a great mini-speaker system for the iPad. Just plug them into the headphone jack and turn them on. There are two amplified speakers thatprovide excellent sound. They are rechargeable using the included USB cable – connect to your computer when you see the blue power light dimming. For travel and/or storage, the mini speakers compress and connect to each other with a magnet and get stored in the enclosed draw-string carrying case. They also work with your laptop or any other product with a headphone jack.

iMainGo X Portable Speakers (AbleNet: (www.ablenetinc.com) This speaker system and protective case also works with the iPad, as well as most laptops, portable gaming devices, etc., via a 3.5 mm audio jack. The sound is great and the speakers are easy to carry. You don't need to open the speaker case – just plug into the device and the sound is amplified. There is a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, two headphone jacks, a travel bag with a wrist strap and an adjustable carrying strap. The iMainGo X also features a microphone input that doubles as an auxiliary input. There are dual headphone jacks for two listeners and a jack that lets you use both the headphone jack and the speakers at the same time. One headphone jack plays only through the earphones and disables the external speaker.

Tablet Speaker (www.rjcooper.com) This wireless Bluetooth speaker can be mounted on back of the iPad with the included Velcro or used with its built-in clip. Made by Jabra, it connects (pairs) easily to the iPad and delivers clear speech output, with a built-in volume control and on-off switch. The built-in batteries can be charged through the USB port of your computer.

Ablenet Wireless Speakers (www.ablenetinc.com) If you prefer a speaker that stands nearby on the table or on a laptop tray, this speaker has a mini-stand to keep it positioned. It pairs easily and has a volume control and on-off switch. Its sound is loud and clear. The built-in battery charges through the USB port of your computer and the speaker

can also be connected to an MP3/CD/PSP/Mac with the included 3.5 mm audio cable.

Both wireless speakers can be placed near the iPad or in other parts of the room and the voice and volume remain loud and clear.

APPS FOR LEARNING

Special Words (www.special-iapps.com) This interactive app for vocabulary and sight word recognition has three levels with increasing difficulty to help users learn to recognize written words. It comes with 96 written words and you can easily add more words, pictures

Variable-angle Super-Stand (www.rjcooper.com)

and sounds to increase learning and interest. On the first level, children match a picture to one of four pictures. The name of the picture is spoken when it appears and again when it is matched. When two pictures are matched, they are

Swivel Stand iPad 2 Case (www.boxwave.com)

replaced with the written word. When all four pictures are completed, four more pictures will appear automatically or manually, depending how you set the options. In the second level, words are matched to words and in the third level, the word is printed and spoken and users find the matching picture. Other options include animation speed, playing the word before and/ or after the match and optional reward. You can also use Bluetooth or Wi-Fi to transfer pictures and sounds between copies of Special Words on two devices.

Irregular Verbs (Super Duper: www.superduper-inc)
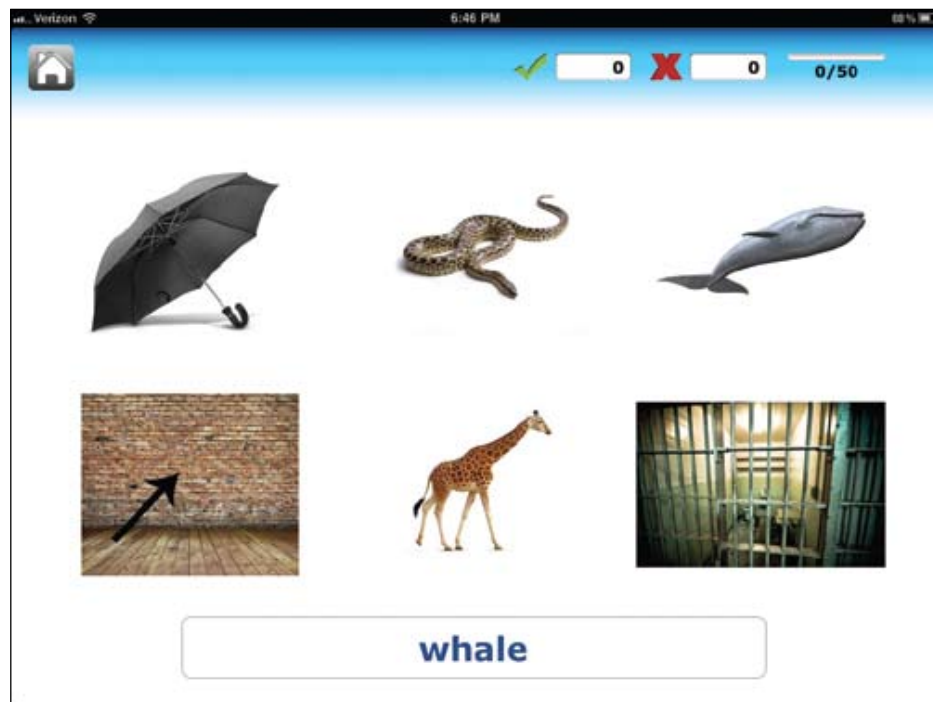
Naming Therappy (www.tactustherapy.com)

Super Duper Apps: (www.superduperinc. com) Super Duper, a well established company that develops excellent learning materials for children with special needs, has developed a series of apps based on their fun deck series. In Irregular Verbs Fun Deck App, students fill in the blank to practice irregular past, present infinitive and future tense verbs. The prompts include statements like "Beth will ---- the race." The student looks at the illustration and either reads the prompt or touches the screen to listen to the prompt and answer choices. In the How? Fun Deck App, students look at an illustration and either read the prompt or touch the screen to listen to the questions, such as "How do you help someone who's hurt?" The student then gives a verbal response. After each answer, tap the green button for correct or red button for incorrect to keep score. In What Would You Do at School If….. App, there are questions with illustrations, such as "What would you do if you forgot your homework?" or "What would you do if your classmate teased you about the shirt you wore?" In What Would You Do at Home If, there are 56 illustrated cards and questions related to home. Others in the series include: How Would You Feel If…. (questions like How would you feel if you forgot to study for your spelling test?" or "How would you feel if your favorite football team lost?"; WH Questions at Home (questions like "Who are your neighbors?" or "Where do you keep your clothes?"); If.. Then ("If it looks like it's going to rain, then…" or "If you spill your drink, then …."; Let's Name… Things ("Let's name things that live in the ocean" or "Let's name things you would take on a trip."; Name That Category Fun Deck App ("A horse, cow and pig are …." or " A sandwich, pizza and French fries are …."; Wh Questions at School (questions like "Who is your principal?" or "When do you eat lunch?"); Fun Deck Following

Directions (student looks at the picture and either reads the prompt or touches the screen to listen to the prompt and then follow the directions. Select the cards you want students to see and have them follow one-step directions like, "Growl like a bear," to help boost their memory, motor, and auditory processing skills. You can even have the students follow multi-step directions by presenting them with more than one card at a time. Other Fun Deck apps are Practicing Pragmatics (social skills questions about Politeness, Solving Problems, Feelings, Giving Information, Requesting, Telephone Skills and Staying on Topic); Understanding Inferences ("Who might live here?" and sentences like, "Bill is sick. His mom is taking him to…"; All About You, All About Me Fun Deck App (essential questions about getting to know someone); "Story Starters"; "What are They Thinking (all the people and animals in these fun cards have thought bubbles above their heads). This is a great series for problem solving, practicing social skills, opening up discussions and improving language skills. All apps let you select all cards or just the ones you want, can manually or automatically advance to the next card, present cards randomly or in order and track results for up to five users for each app. Super Duper also has a free app – the Super Duper Age Calculator. More Super Duper apps are coming and will be reviewed in next DISKoveries.

Spot the Dot (Ruckus: www.ruckusmedia-group.com) This fun and well designed app was created by David A. Carter, best known for his Bugs in a Box series (excellent books and software programs that entertain and teach). This app is an excellent way for young children to learn and practice colors, while at the same time, it helps them with attention, focus and visual perceptual skills. There are 10 different activities – spot the red dot (or the blue, yellow, green, etc.) in all different screens – it's an I Spy type of search and find game that really engages children. Each color has a different activity. For example, when looking for the orange dot, players use a finger to move a spotlight around a dark screen until they find the correct dot. In another, shapes "pop" and are transformed into different shapes. When looking for the purple dot, you have to touch all the pieces of the sliced-up purple dot and they will merge to form a completed purple dot. The dots' locations are randomized so that the app can be played over and over again with each game being different.

Switch Kids (Marblesoft-Simtech: www. marblesoft.com) This is a fun app with three cause and effect activities that can be used just by touching the screen or with a switch, connected by either the AbleNet Bluetooth switch interface or the RJ Cooper Bluetooth switch interface. Just like the computer program, Funny Sounds and Faces, each touch or switch press shows a new face, with a new expression and a fun sound. You can choose the number of faces to use and the background color. In Bubble Gum, press the switch or touch to see the face. Each subsequent switch press presents another step in the bubble-blowing process, up to the final step ,when the bubble pops. You can choose the color of the bubble gum and also select to have random early pops. In Build A Kid, each press/touch presents another part of the "kid" picture – head, ears, hair,

eyes, nose, mouth, etc., until a fully dressed "kid" is shown. Choose a single child, twins or triplets and also show their names. If you choose twins or triplets, they can be identical (same sex, same clothes) or random combinations.

A Present for Milo (Ruckus: www.ruckusmediagroup.com) This is a fun, interactive digital storybook with over 80 animated hotspots to touch and explore. All text is read aloud and repeats when tapped. The story is simple and full of excellent illustrations, especially of prepositions – under the sofa, across the piano, up and down the stairs, through the kitchen and lots of others. Great for language learning. Another book by Ruckus is Tonka Chuck & Friends: Friends for the Long Haul, an interactive reading adventure with games, video and story book. There are matching activities, touch and reveal spelling activities that encourage letter recognition, picture/word association and basic problem solving. Players can read along, play along and record their voice telling the story.

TherAppy Apps (www.tactustherapy.com) This is an excellent series of three apps specifically designed for adults with aphasia and other acquired language disabilities, but extremely useful with adults with developmental disabilities, as well as older students working on receptive and expressive language and literacy issues. Comprehension TherAppy has over 500 nouns in 10 semantic categories, such as animals, foods, objects, concepts, places, people, body parts and more. There are three modes: Listen (listen to the spoken word and select the picture that matches); Read (match the printed word to the picture; and Listen & Read (match the spoken word to the written word. Users can select from two, three, four or six photos on the screen or use the Auto feature that automatically adjusts the field size based on performance. Three levels of difficulty adjust the relatedness of foils (semantic and phonemic). Naming TherAppy, for single word confrontation, naming and circumlocution practice, has over 400 pictures (nouns) and four modes. In the first mode, which is Naming Practice, there is a cueing hierarchy, including Description (a short definition for a semantic cue); First Letter (the first letter appears either with or without the number of letters in the word indicated); Whole Word (printed word appears on screen); Phrase Completion (a common phrase is heard that ends in the target word, i.e. Sew with a needle and …); First Sound (initial phonemes are heard for a phonemic cue) and Repetition (word is spoken). The second mode is Describe – there are over 480 pictures with four to six question prompts for semantic feature analysis, and the third mode is Naming Test. There is also Flashcard mode where all 500 pictures are shown – just touch to hear the spoken word. Writing TherAppy provides copying, writing and fill-in-the-blank activities for single words. There are four modes (Fill-in-the-Blank, Copy, Naming (spell what you see) and Dictation (spell what you hear). In the Fill-in-the Blank activity, there are three levels of difficulty, with options, such as one missing letter, two missing letters, all letters displayed, small set of letters displayed, etc. When a student is having difficulty, they can press the hint button and these options are available. In Copy, the word is displayed along with the entire alphabet. Just drag the letters to the boxes to spell. Again, the hint button is available to make the task easier. You can also select the maximum number of letters in the words displayed (from three to ten). Since these apps were designed for adults, they include words and pictures that might not be appropriate for young children – so for use with younger children, turn on the Child-Friendly Mode to eliminate these pictures (such as cigarettes). All three programs have automatic scoring, they track success and progress on-screen and results can be e-mailed in table and report-ready format. These apps are well-designed, with excellent pictures and voice quality, and the hierarchy of hints and prompts make them extremely helpful for both adults and children.

Preposition Builder (Mobile Education Store: http://mobile-education-store.com) This app is designed to help school-aged children learn the correct use of prepositions and how prepositions change the meaning of a sentence. A picture is presented and the student drags the correct preposition (printed word) from a group of three to complete a sentence. As the preposition is being dragged, the word is spoken. If correct, the sentence is read aloud and the student has the opportunity to record the sentence if they would like. If they select the wrong preposition, the image and scene change to show the student the proper use of the word they chose. In this way, they actually get to see how the sentence meaning is changed by the use of different prepositions. They then return to the original picture and are given the opportunity to try again. This is a very powerful way to help students understand the meaning of a preposition and to actually see how different prepositions impact the meaning of what they are saying. There

are nine different groups of prepositions to use (in-on-under, down-up-off, above-below-at-by, behind-between-beside, etc.) with about 20 sentences in each module. The stats page displays the student's statistics for each module, showing how many attempts it took to find the correct answer. This summary can be e-mailed. Excellent app to also use with older students struggling with preposition use.

Sentence Builder Teen (Mobile Education Store: http://mobile-educationstore.com) This new app is designed to help teenagers and older students learn how to build grammatically correct sentences. It is designed the same way as Sentence Builder (reviewed in February 2011 DISKoveries) but has 100 teenage-themed pictures, including a Teen Boy and a Teen
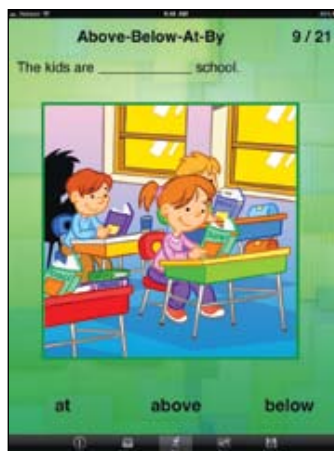
Preposition Builder (www.mobile-educationstore.com)

Sentence Builder Teen (www.mobile-educationstore.com)

Girl game pack, to build the sentences around. A multi-wheel picker appears with one to five words. The student is asked to build a sentence that describes the displayed picture. There is only one correct combination. In Level 1, both the subject and adjective of each sentence is fixed. The student chooses the modifier and the verb. In Level 2, the student chooses the modifier, verb and adjective. The student will be given two, three or five choices on each wheel. In Level 3, the student must also correctly choose the modifier, verb and adjective, but will have five choices in each picker wheel. The app also tracks student progress. Great app!

Conversation Builder Deluxe (Mobile Education Tools: www.mobile-educationstore.com) This app is designed to help students learn how to have multi-exchange conversations in a variety of settings. It is identical to Conversation Builder (reviewed previously) but it contains all the add-on modules in addition to the original game pack (Animals, Friends Around Town, Holidays, Playground and Water). The user is presented with a picture and asked "How would you start this conversation?" It presents three choices. If the user reads and touches the correct choice, they can then record their answer and play it back. When they click Next, there is a response to their question and then another choice on how to continue the conversation. There are four levels of exchange: one with one to four exchanges, one with one to eight exchanges, Group - four exchanges and Group - eight exchanges. The Conversation Initiator can be a student (the user), a peer (the iPad) or you can alternate between both. Conversations can be saved. Student name, age, primary interest and city of residence are used in the conversations to personalize play. The 160 distinct conversations can be archived and e-mailed.

Language Builder Deluxe (Mobile Education Tools: www.mobile-educationstore.com) This app is identical to the original Language Builder, but also include all the add-on modules (Hobbies, Inside Playtime, Medical, Pets, Places, Playground and School) in a stand-alone version. It is designed to build receptive and expressive language skills, as well as sentence formulation. The program displays a picture and the app prompts the user to "make a sentence about the picture". Users are then able to record their sentence or skip the picture and get a new one. There are three levels of hints – Level 1 presents a text entry on top with a sentence cue (i.e. The girl is building a _____at the _____.) Level 2 presents a shorter text hint (i.e. The girl ……) and Level 3 presents a spoken hint (Use the words girl and sandcastle in your sentence.). Sentences can be saved and e-mailed too. There are 250 distinct images to create sentences from.

Touch Tutorial (Touch Autism: www.touchautism.com) This app teaches gestures commonly used with the iPad and other mobile devices. This includes touching, tapping, holding or sliding your finger along the screen, zooming in, swiping, etc. Different symbols are used to prompt the different gestures. This is a good app for those who are having difficulty with understanding the touch requirements of the iPad.

PhonoPix Full (www.rinnapps.com) PhonoPix is a companion app to ArtikPix, which was reviewed in DISKoveries in February 2011. It differs in that it has decks of minimal pairs of phonological processes instead of decks of articulation cards by sounds. There are 10 decks with 40 minimal pairs in each for the following phonological processes: prevocalic voicing, word final devoicing, final consonant deletion, fronting, marked blend reduction, unmarked blend reduction, gliding, stopping, backing, and initial consonant deletion. There are two activities – flash card and matching for each deck. Children view the minimal pairs in double-sided flashcards by flicking through the album and tapping an "around" button to see the other side. In the matching activity, users match the minimal pairs in three different levels: easy with three pairs, medium with six pairs and hard with 10 pairs. During both activities, users can practice by listening to the recorded audio, recording their voices to self-monitor and collecting data. Practicing with minimal pairs enables children to learn the difference in meaning between their production and the correct production. Great app for speech therapy practice.

SpellBoard (Palaware: www.palasoftware.com) SpellBoard allows you to create any spelling quiz in any language. You enter the words, the grade level and the spoken word (recorded through the built-in microphone). You can also add a written and/or a spoke phrase if you want. With that done, users are ready to use the app to study the word list and be quizzed on it. You can also share your quiz with other SpellBoard users, via e-mail, Bluetooth, or iTunes File Sharing. There is also a study mode where you can take a quiz, seeing and hearing the word and phrase. You can also practice writing the word on the virtual white board or connect to the Internet to get the word's definition. (SpellBoard is also available for the Mac.) MathBoard is a great app for teaching addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pick operator types (addition, subtraction, etc., number of problems, vertical or horizontal presentation, answer style (multiple choice-fill in the blank-keypad) number range and digit limit. The app provides random problem generation and there is an area on-screen to write the problem and work it out.

Preposition Remix (Smarty Ears: www.Smartyearsapps.com): This app provides drill and practice flashcards with 20 common prepositions in English, including above, behind, below, beside, between, closest to, furthest, in, in front of, in the middle, inside, near, next to, on, on top of, out, outside, to the left, to the right and under. There are 10 flashcard screens for each preposition. Users can go to the settings options and select any or all of the above prepositions, with or without written cues. Other options allow you to randomize, repeat question and choose the app's response when wrong (keep going, no response or buzz.) When playing, the user is presented with a screen with one or two pictures – the app will then speak the direction, i.e. "Touch the car inside the circle," "Touch the heart near the balloon," etc. The app will track the responses, including prepositions worked on, overall accuracy and accuracy for each preposition.

House of Learning (Smarty Ears: www.Smartyearsapps.com): In this app, there are 12 background scenes – users pick a scene and are

My First AAC (www.injini.net)

then presented with groups of items related to the scene (i.e. bedroom, bed, dresser, chair, pillow, etc.). They can add these to their scene, add people, change their poses, etc. (Pinch gestures can be used to resize people). Since language is learned best when interacting with an adult partner to guide their learning, parents/therapists are encouraged to guide the child by playing with them and giving them directions that will enhance their language (i.e. following directions, vocabulary development, etc.). Smarty Ears has indicated that other scenes will be added to the program in future updates. Other apps by Smarty Ears include: That's How I Feel (There are three rows of Smarty symbols on screen – green for positive feelings, yellow and red for negative feelings. There are a total of 39 feelings/symbols. Children press to hear "I feel ….." (happy, awesome, upset, lonely, etc. It is designed to teach students vocabulary for feelings, as well as an alternative communication application.) Caseload Tracker (designed for special education teachers and speech-language pathologists, this app provides a way to track IEP meetings, due dates, evaluation due dates and eligibility due dates. The app is password protected to protect confidential information.) Other apps from Smarty Ears include the SLP Goal Bank, designed to present a very general framework for treatment goals to help speech-language therapists write IEP goals. The app allows for adding goals but not adding or removing disorder type/area of need (i.e., AAC, Fluency, Literacy) or editing existing goals.

EBooks from Oceanhouse Media (Oceanhousemedia.com) This company continues to be a leader in bringing classic children's books to the iPad. All the books are presented with three ways to read. In Read to Me, the story is read aloud, page by page, with word highlighting. Readers listen and interact by touching pictures to hear their names, by swiping to turn the pages, by pressing words to hear them spoken individually or by touching and holding the text to hear it read over again. In Read It Myself mode, all the same options are available, but the story is not read automatically. If the user wants a word or a page read, they can just press and hold. In Auto Play mode, the story will read in entirety without the user having to swipe to hear the whole story. Some of the new stories they have created recently include: There's a Wocket in My Pocket (another imaginative rhyming story from Dr. Seuss about a boy aand all the creatures he shares his house with); Oh Say Can You Say? (a Dr. Seuss book of tongue twisters); The Bippolo Seed

and Other Lost Stories (seven lost Dr. Seuss stories originally published in magazines in the 1950s); The Berenstain Bears Go on a Ghost Walk (a new Halloween story about the Berenstain Bears); Elmer and the Lost Teddy (the story of the special bond between babies and their teddy bears … excellent narration, enlarged artwork, pan and zoom features and picture/word association – words zoom up and are spoken when pictures are touched); and Elmer and Rose (learning about being different and fitting in for young children).

There's No Place Like Space (Oceanhousemedia.com) This new storybook from Oceanhouse kicks off a new series of The Cat in the Hat's Learning Library. Children follow along on a trip through the solar system, visiting each planet and learning fun facts along the way. Users can tap stars in the sky to reveal constellations, learn the order of the planets, search the night sky using a telescope, find hidden information cards and access word definitions by tapping on special highlighted words. They can also touch pictures to see their names zoom up and be spoken and interact with animated objects and move them around. The Berenstain Bears Trim the Tree is designed like a lift-the-flap book. Children interact with each scene by tapping on special pictures that reveal hidden surprises. Lots of interactive fun and the children participate in the story. Dr. Seuss Band is a musical instrument game – your iPad becomes a musical instrument. As the music plays, press the buttons to make your own music or match the falling colors by pressing the colored buttons that match. The faster you match, the faster they come down. You can purchase additional songs, horns and effects.

Injini: Child Development Game Suite (NCsoft: www.injini.net) This excellent early learning app has nine learning games for children with special needs that are good for fine motor, cause and effect, spatial awareness, memory, visual processing, sequencing and more. The activities include: Balloons (pop balloons of varying colors and shapes to practice fine motor skills and follow auditory and visual directions); Farm (eight mini games – feed the horses, interact with hatching chicks, grow plants, bathe muddy pigs and more); Find It (follow instructions to find everyday objects and drag them to destination – great for listening skills and learning to drag on the iPad); Frog (use finger to draw a line between the insects and the frog – good for prewriting skills); Patterns; Puzzles; Squares (concentration-type game); Tracing and Matching. Great app that will really engage and teach young children.

My First AAC (NCsoft: www.injini.net) This app is specifically designed for toddlers, 18 months and up. Icons are organized into 22 different categories that are basic and natural for young children (i.e., greetings, food, feelings, questions, places, animals, clothes, weather, etc.) and contain over 250 related words and phrases. Each is represented by a colorful icon that speaks in a child's voice (girl or boy) when touched. There are also animated icons with sign language for words like "more" and "all done." Several icons allow you to record personal information, such as name, address, phone, birthday, etc. The screen can be customized to display between two and eight icons per category. You can also create a new screen with your choice of icons from the library and create customized icons using your own images.

QuestionIt (Language Learning Apps: www.languagelearningapps.com) QuestionIt is designed to teach learners how to understand and answer WH questions. It uses a color-coding system (i.e. who words are yellow, what doing words are green, where words purple, when words blue). There are four activities, each with two to three levels. In the first, students identify which words answer which type of question. They learn to sort words into the categories of who, what doing, when and where, with color support that is gradually faded in the other levels. In the second activity, which is Sentences, a picture sentence with color coding is shown and read aloud (i.e., the girls are drawing in class today). They are then shown a color coded symbol and asked "Where are the girls?" In progressive levels, the color coding is phased out. There is also an Advanced Sentence level and a Paragraph level (three sentences). There is data management and data reports can be e-mailed from the app. This is an excellent app for students of all ages who are struggling with the process of understanding WH words.

IntelliPad (www.intellipadapp.com) This is an exciting new app that combines the functionality of a word processor with word prediction, text-to-speech and the ability to customize the keyboard. It lets the student use writing tools on all levels. The keyboard editor gives you the ability to create an unlimited selection of keyboards to best suit your students' needs. You can have a full qwerty keyboard or you can merge individual letters cells to form larger keys for phrases and/or sentences. You can select fonts, size of letters, colors, etc. that can be applied to the whole keyboard or to select

keys. You can also create audio recordings that are played when the key is pressed. There are shared IntelliPad layouts available free for download and you can share your own with others. Text created within the program can be e-mailed, printed or copied to the clipboard.

Apps from Portegno (www.portegno-apps.com) This company has produced a fun collection of educational apps for pre-schoolers. They contain a variety of fun and educational activities that will entertain, as well as teach. They have an excellent KidsMag, which is currently available in two different issues. Each one has multiple activities (over 20 pages) with things like Learn More About Farm Animals, Meet the FireFighters, Dress Up

QuestionIt (www.languagelearningapps.com)

the FireFighter, Puzzles, What Does Not Belong, Stories, Learn How to Brush Your Teeth, Counting and Letter games, I Spy-type games, Spot the Difference, Spanish games and so much more. KidsMag Issue 2 has activities related to going into space, the human body and the circus. All the activities in each magazine revolve around the main themes. Great fun. There is also a series of iWash programs (dog, cat, horse, etc.) -– soap them up, rinse, dry, brush – watch as dog goes from dirty to beautiful, with lots of fine-motor activity for young ones. Princess Activity Cards contains a combination of different games for girls; there are coloring pages, puzzles, find-it games and fun activities to create your own princess and decorate scenes with stickers.

Apps from Goatella (www.Goatella.com) Beginning Blends Word Builder is designed to help children learn about the beginning consonant blends, bl, cl, cr, dr, fr, gr,pl, pr, sn and tr. There are two modes. In Builder Mode, for each beginning sound, there is a list of ending sounds. After picking a beginning blend and ending sound and clicking the Read button, the word and an image will appear and the word is spoken. The

IntelliPad (www.intellipadapp.com)
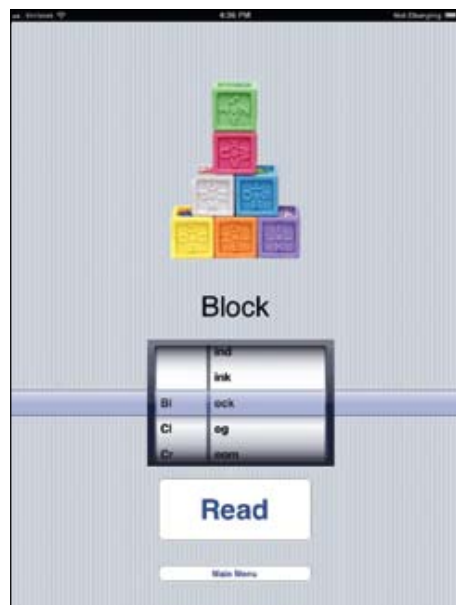
Beginning Blends Word Builder (www.Goatella. com)

app contains 100 different word combinations. In Quiz Mode, students are shown a picture and Read button (to speak the name) and a choice of three possible beginning blends. Ending Blends features the blends ft, ll, nt, st, nd, sk,rn, ck, mp and lk and also has a word building and a quiz mode. These are well done apps and excellent for working on blends and word families. Touch Switch is a cause and effect program – press the green switch and see graphics and hear music. Options allow you to put text on the button, select the duration of the video display (seven to 60 seconds) and rotate the button. iSpeak Button is a single message talker and works well as a single communication button. Record your message and enter text, too, if you wish, change the color of the button too. User just has to press the button to have the message spoken aloud. Goatella also has a Coin Calculator app – it works like a calculator, except that all of the inputs are actual US coins and a dollar bill – a fun way to learn about money and coin values.

Talking Cards (Timagine: www.timagine. se) This is a really nice app that can be used for helping young children in the early stages of developing language and communication skills. It can assist AAC, as well as be used as a language therapy tool for receptive/expressive language, categorization, etc. When the app opens, it shows the albums (sets of cards) that you have. Tap an album to open it – tap an image to hear the word spoken. It is easy to add new albums and images from the built-in library (with text and sound) or from your own photos. If you have an iPad2, you can add pictures directly into the app with the built-in camera. There are many options – size and number of pictures on screen at one time, background color and language (American English or Swedish). There are over 450 illustrations included. Take a look at the Web site and video that shows the app in detail. Good choice.

Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) This is an amazing productivity app that lets you share files, photos, documents, etc. with your computer, your iPad, and with others also. Just download to your iPad (it's free, with 2 GB of memory) and to your computer. Drop files into Dropbox on your computer and they will appear on your iPad. Lets you have all your files with you whenever you need them. If you want to share with someone else, just have them download the app, create a share folder with them and, then, whatever you put in that folder will appear on their iPad. You can share photos and videos this way too.

Some new and noteworthy free apps: Grasshopper Apps (a great collection of children's books designed to help reading, literacy and language skills); Sai Services (free spelling apps); Preschool University Apps (15 different free apps for reading, phonics, spelling, Spanish, etc.); Lakeshore (Sound Sorting, Tic Tac Toe Phonics, and Letter of the Day); Laz Readers from Language Technologies, Inc. (a large group of Leveled Readers), Innovative Net Learning Limited (Phonics Fun, Vocabulary Builder, Vocabulary Catcher and many more), Alligator Apps, MyFirstApp.com (My Profession, Memo Game, Matrix Basic and others) GiggleUp Pty Ltd (excellent simple jigsaw puzzles); and individual apps, such as Phonics Silly Sentences, iTouchNoteFree, VisTimerFree, Spot the Difference, ABC Mysteriez:

Hidden Letters, HoopsFree, 25-in-1 Free Education Games, What's That Sound, I Can Write, Bluster, Find Odd Quiz (what does not belong), Color by Shape, Social Skill Builder and Audio Sight Words.

INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS

I've been asked for information on being able to record directly from Interactive Entertainment/ Gaming Systems to create recordings and burn to DVD, to create recordings to be played on game systems, and to make videos and tutorials for parents, teacher training and YouTube. Here's a video recorder that will let you do that:

HD PVR (Hauppauge Computer Works: www. hauppauge.com) The HD PVR is a high definition video recorder for Windows that lets you record video from your Sony Playstation3, your XBox 360 and your Wii to either your television or your computer. You can then transfer these recordings to standard DVD-R and DVD+R or Blu-Ray to play on a television, on a DVD player, or on a Smart-Board. Playback on your computer screen is full HD. You can also record your video game play, upload to YouTube and/or share with parents, classmates, or use for instructional purposes. HD PVR captures videos in HD in the H.264 format. It uses component video, S-Video or composite video and will record at resolutions from standard definition (480i) up to high definition (1080i). In addition , you can make your own library of videos from television. For example, if there is something special on television that you want to share with a class or families or other staff, you can easily do that also. You can also record from a video camera, a VCR or from DVRs. The included software lets you edit as well. Also included are one set of component video cables, an audio cable and a USB cable.

Some new and motivating game programs for players who use gaming systems for recreation, socialization and family/peer interaction:

Just Dance 3 for Kinect Xbox 360 (Ubisoft: www.ubisoft.com) This dance program has over 40 tracks from multiple genres and popular artists. It allows up to four dancers to play, with each one getting their own "moment of fame." Watch the background change as you perform. There's a Just Sweat mode with workout plans and playlists. All tracks provide song lyrics on-screen for singing along. Create and record your own dances and challenge your friend to dance along. You can also upload and share. This dance program is a lot of fun! Also from Ubisoft is Your Shape: Fitness Evolved 2010, which contains fitness activities for everyone – workout routines, fun games like jump rope, "Run the World" which lets players run throughout the streets of New York or London and enjoy the sights. There are floor exercises, dance classes and over 90 hours of workouts.

The Adventures of Tintin The Game (Ubisoft: www.ubisoft.com) Based on the new movie, this game combines action-adventure platforming, flight, swordplay and puzzle-solving gameplay. You can play as different characters – Tintin, Snowy, Captain Haddock and three others, each with their own personality and skills, solo or in two-player co-op mode (playing together with friends to help solve the mysteries). Pilot a plane through a rumbling tempest, drive a sidecar in desert canyons, swim through underwater

caves and participate in a sword fight with a 17th century knight! Other fun programs rated E for Everyone (10 and up) include Rayman Origins (an all-new four-player co-op comic adventure, set in a lush, 2-D world, teeming with unexpected secrets and outlandish enemies) Power Up Heroes (the player is the superhero and, with the universe in peril, it's up to him to annihilate the forces of evil.)

Portal2 (Electronic Arts/Valve: www.Valvesoftware.com) Portal 2 is a unique action-puzzle game that challenges the players to think and act creatively. They use the game's wormhole-creating portal gun to create their own paths through otherwise sealed surfaces and across open spaces. The goal is to make your way through the game levels by creating temporary passages through solid surfaces, allowing for creative platforming and multiple possible means of clearing a level. The game also requires the player to solve puzzles to clear sections of levels. Portal 2 also contains a two-player co-op mode, playable both locally and online, with split screen functionality. Portal 2 really has it all. The characters are likable, the story line is engaging and intriguing, and the game play requires you to use your brain. Rated E for Everyone, it is available for Xbox, Playstation3, Windows and Macintosh.

Sports and fitness programs are great favorites of the teen and older population to play and interact with on entertainment systems like the Xbox, PlayStation and Wii. Here are some of the new and favorites:

Madden NFL 12 (EA Sports: www.ea.com) Another addition to the Madden football series that continues to be enjoyed by football fans. It features all 32 teams, stadiums and the favorite players in the league. Users have full control of the players, from tacking to blocking, with over 100 new tackle animations, advanced defensive plays and custom playbooks. New visual improvements include new player equipment, helmet stickers, player degradation system that affects uniforms and helmets based on weather and field surface and new player-specific animations that showcase the personalities of each NFL player. Available for Xbox, Wii, Playstation3 and PSP.

NHL 12 (EA Sports: www.ea.com) This annual hockey video game lets users experience the skill and aggression of hockey while taking control of their favorite team and guiding them to victory. Track every event and view replays. You can now play as select legends on whatever team you want. You can also play as a female in Be a Pro. You can play as "legends" such as Wayne Gretzky, Mario Lemieux, Steve Yzerman, Chris Chelios, Gordie Howe, Ray Bourque, Patrick Roy, Jeremy Roenick and Borj Salming. Available for Xbox and Playstation3.

MLB 2K11 (2K Sports: www.2Ksports.com) This is a multiplayer baseball game that puts you in the jerseys of your favorite big league players as you take the mound, swing the bat and play at every position. The new game features include analog pitching and hitting controls, dynamic player ratings, a revamped fielding system, improved play modes and new player

models. In My Player Mode, you can guide your player through the Minor Leagues and into the history books. With MLB Today, you can stay up to date on the latest happenings in Major League Baseball, with timely play-by-play commentary and stat overlays pulled from real life news and box scores. Available for Xbox, Playstation3, Wii, Nintendo DS, PSP and Windows.

MotionSports Adrenaline (Ubisoft: www.ubisoft.com) This program for Kinect with Xbox 360 has a wide selection of extreme events, including mountain biking, rock climbing, kayaking, kite surfing, XTRM skiing and wing suit diving. There are six locations where you can play solo, multiplayer or compete in online challenges against athletes from around the world. Great fun!

Your Shape: Fitness Evolved 2010 (Ubisoft: www.ubisoft.com) This program contains fitness activities for everyone – you can design a workout based on your fitness level, your goals and your preferences. The Kinect Sensor for Xbox 360 allows you to experience controller-free game-play, utilizing revolutionary full-body tracking to put you at the center of the fun.

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