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Booker; ITEC 7445

Assistive Technology Evaluation

██████████ is a student entering 2nd grade at ██████████. I know him because his mother provides childcare for my daughter through the workweek. I had noticed before that ██████████ is often wearing an eye patch over his right eye when I pick up my daughter through the week, and I had inquired of his mother the purpose for the eye-patch. In explaining his “lazy eye” condition, which she and the doctor hope to improve by training his left eye to work harder by covering his right eye, she also noted that ██████████ is often very reluctant to do any reading at home after school; whether for homework or pleasure, he dislikes reading because his eyes bother him, which often results in a head ache. She does not notice the same hesitancy on the weekends, but the school day seems to tire his eyes to the point that he simply does not want to strain them to read printed words. Although ██████████ does not currently have an Individual Education Plan or a learning disability, she fears that his eyesight may eventually relate to a drop in his reading level. Therefore, she purchased him an iPad with the hopes of using some features on it to interest him in reading and make reading easier. It was decided that I would help ██████████ to learn to use many of the built-in features of the iPad, as well as software apps that would motivate him to read by lessening the strain on his eyes.

My work with ██████████ began with a 30-minute diagnostic session in which ██████████ told me about his vision struggles and showed me what he already knew about operating the iPad. Together, ██████████ and I developed the following goals for our sessions:

1. Learn to use built-in features of the iPad to make reading easier
2. Learn to access mobile apps to make reading easier
3. Increase motivation for reading in the evenings when eyestrain has typically set in

In the first session, I showed Coach how to enlarge the text on the iPad and invert the colors, which he thought might make it easier to read. I also demonstrated how to use the Zoom feature and VoiceOver, Apple's built in text-reader function. He then had the opportunity to practice each feature, including navigating using VoiceOver, controlling the volume, and inputting text (that was then read). I asked [REDACTED] to practice these maneuvers on his own and show me what he could complete during our next session.

At the beginning of the second session, I assessed [REDACTED] progress by having him show me how to complete each of the functions we had learned in the previous session. With very little assistance (he needed help remembering how to control the volume), [REDACTED] was able to complete this task. He was noticeably more excited about our second session and proud to show me what he had learned. We reviewed his goals and then began with our task for the day. We downloaded the Kindle application on his iPad, and then I showed him how to check out e-books from our local library. These e-books are delivered directly to his Kindle app, and he has 2 weeks to read the text. We practiced enlarging the text on the screen, as well as set up the VoiceOver feature to work with the Kindle App. [REDACTED] had the opportunity to practice each of these tasks—he checked out an e-book he was interested in, enlarged the text and read a few sentences, and then used VoiceOver to read a few more sentences. We talked about how to decide when to use the enlarge text and when to use VoiceOver; typically, [REDACTED] will try to read by just enlarging the text, but if his eyes are especially strained, he will use VoiceOver.

To begin the final session, I assessed [REDACTED] progress by observing him complete each of the tasks he had learned. [REDACTED] appeared engaged and excited about the opportunities the iPad presented him, and even replied that he had read several pages in a book the night before. His mother also seemed pleased and reported that [REDACTED] had been much less hesitant to read that evening because he knew he could enlarge the text or use VoiceOver if his eyes got tired. Before continuing with the final session, we reviewed his learning goals. I then spent the final session showing [REDACTED] several interactive storybook apps, including Wonderful Storybooks and Kidztory. These apps have the added incentive of being interactive and offering a bit more “flash” (pictures, music, sound effects) than the books downloaded to the Kindle app. Like before, [REDACTED] practiced using these apps and found a few of his favorite stories with which he read along.

At the end of this session, [REDACTED], his mother, and I evaluated his goals to determine if we met them during the session. We all agreed that [REDACTED] could definitely use features on the iPad—including those built-in features and those connected with apps, to read when his eyes were strained. We also agreed that he was more excited about reading and had asked his mother each night if he could use the iPad to read before going to bed. We talked about continuing to assess his eyestrain to determine if he needed the text enlarged or read aloud, but we all felt that the iPad would definitely prove a beneficial assistive technology for him. She and I agreed to continue to discuss his progress so that we could determine if she needed to get him vision assistance at school. For the time being, she was content to have him use the assistive technology only at home and to continue to read normal sized text while at school.