

Opening Doors Newsletter

A publication to promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities within AmeriCorps programs.

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Assistive Technology to Improve Writing Skills

According to the National Commission on Writing, whose study *Writing: A Ticket to Work...Or a Ticket Out: A Survey of Business Leaders* reported that “two-thirds of salaried employees in large American companies have some writing responsibility, perhaps through email, letters, or memos” (National Commission on Writing, 2008.) The National Institute for Literacy (2008) *Facts and Statistics of Workforce Education* reported proficient writing ability tops the list of important work skills, and writing deficit is the number one reason why employers in manufacturing and production withhold job offers.

People with learning disabilities such as dysgraphia - deficiency in writing thoughts or graphing, expressive language disorders and dyslexia may find the product “Whitesmoke” particularly useful. Whitesmoke, a new software program, goes beyond the traditional word-processing edit tools and can

Accommodations in service environments are nothing new. Determination of what type of accommodation should be made with both employer and employee identifying the limitation imposed by the disability.

Assistive Technology for Cognitive Aids

Low – Tech devices; watches, note pads, calendars and day planners are used

for task-sequencing and organization. Challenges arise in writing the information and then finding it readily available. With the development of personal computers individuals with traumatic brain injuries, learning disabilities and stroke rehabilitation needs are given opportunities through the use of PDA’s (Palm Pilot Device Aids) as reminder systems and task – sequencing coaches. PSA’s are easily accessible and assist in daily organizational routines. Devices range from basic functional aids to higher end capabilities. Visit the following links for a complete listing of electronic cognitive aids and in depth information on brain injury partnerships and available services. www.biausa.org , www.vcu/partnerships/pda , www.colemaninstitute.org.



Service Day Project with Montana Conservation Corps, Special Friends and Flathead Industries.

Thank you for your efforts toward promoting disability inclusion. Call or email with any questions or concerns; 406- 444-5547 or kbean@mt.gov.