ESC Spotlight: Ohio Valley ESC

OVESC, the governing board and staff, is clearly dedicated to providing innovative services that value and enhance continuous learning for students in their communities. The mission of OVESC is to, “…serve our partners, provide leadership, build connections, develop relationships, leverage resources, and enhance learning.”

Therefore, it’s not surprising the OVESC is leading the way, in partnership with its member districts, to remove barriers to learning, to ensure students are college and career ready, and to support students and families from preschool to the workforce.

“Be Aware”. One such program is the “Be Aware” campaign and Interactive Education Trailer, which is a mobile education tool targeting adults to inform them of the “not-so-easily” identifiable signs of drug use and abuse in their communities. This is a collaborative effort of the Alcohol and Drug Services of Guernsey County, Guernsey County Sheriff’s Office, Guernsey Noble Safety Council, Guernsey County Juvenile Court, Guernsey County Health Department, the OVESC and several community sponsors. Together they are seeking to reduce drug
and alcohol abuse, support families, and enhance productivity of the workforce.

**Student Readiness Collaborative.** The ESC is also heading up a student readiness collaborative. The OVESC Student Readiness Collaborative includes 13 School Districts (including 15 High Schools and one Career Center), two Career Center districts and six Institutions of Higher Education. The mission of the Collaborative is to work to create a culture of collaboration to ensure seamless educational opportunities for students from PreK-12 through post-secondary and into the workforce. The Collaborative’s three primary goals are to:

1. Reduce the number of students who need college remediation by increasing the number of students who are college ready.
2. Create a culture of seamless collaboration between educators of high school and higher education.
3. Provide high-quality professional development for educators to increase the number of students who are college ready.

**Career Pathways.** Placing a high priority on building the workforce and economy in Southeast Ohio through partnership with business and industry, and preparing students for college and career, the OVESC has also employed a Career Pathways Specialist. This unique position is working to provide and coordinate career development services to students, teachers, administrators and staff of partner school districts served by OVESC. The Career Pathways Specialist also connects business and industry partners and education to decrease the percentage of students who are not workforce or career ready. To learn more about how OVESC is connecting students and schools with business and industry, visit them on social media via Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/OVESC) or Twitter (https://twitter.com/OhioValleyESC).

Like many ESCs, the Ohio Valley ESC is a leading partner in providing technical assistance and support to students, educators and schools in its region. Partnering with community agencies, business, education and parents, the OVESC is driving change in Southeast Ohio that will impact the community for generations to come.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

About the Ohio Valley ESC check out their shared Services report online at:

http://www.ovesc.k12.oh.us/SharedServicesReportSSR.aspx

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**Western Ohio Service Collaborative**

By Carl Jones, Coordinator

With all the discussion and debate about whether we need larger or smaller Educational Service Centers to best serve schools, the ESCs in west central Ohio have taken a completely different perspective on serving the region – collaboration! The goal of the Western Ohio Service Collaborative is to share the strengths of each of our member ESCs to the benefit of students, parents, and educators.

The six counties currently involved in this collaborative are Clark, Darke, Greene, Miami, Montgomery, and Preble Counties. This encompasses the urban areas of Dayton and Springfield, and a host of suburban and rural schools. Collaboration at this level can be a challenge because the structure and organization of each ESC can be vastly different. There has to be a great deal of understanding, patience, compromise, and communication to make a venture like this successful. Fortunately the superintendents, administrators, and curriculum leaders in this region have worked, shared, and met with one another for years. This new venture just raises the effectiveness of collaboration to a whole new level.

Although we are looking into a variety of areas for cooperative services we have begun the collaboration focusing on professional development planning and services. We have started the process of assessing the needs of our districts and schools and also identifying the experts that work across the region that can fulfill those needs. Not only do we seek the expertise of ESC staffs in each of our counties but also district curriculum leaders and even classroom teachers.

It was important for us to have each ESC retain the programs and its way of doing business for the member schools. The member schools in each county see little or no change in the services or relationships established with the local ESC. However, across the region we can improve the number and quality of services that can help educators improve learning for students.

We have established a single point of contact for services, a standard price structure for services, an ever-expanding database of experts in a wide variety of professional development topics, and a better communication network across the region. Some of the benefits we see happening are:

- When districts are planning an all-day in-service, they have a much larger network of experts available to serve the needs of the district.
- When a district has an immediate professional development need, there is a single person to contact and that person’s job is to solve the problem with the resources available.
- The regional advisory board can
locate and support a variety of presentations and offerings that individual districts or ESCs may not be able to support.

- The regional advisory board can use its expertise to see valuable initiatives, impactful research, and critical issues that are coming so it can be proactive in addressing the topic and preparing our educators.
- Our collaborative effort provides opportunities for local teachers to share their expertise with others. This provides a level of professionalism that is typically not available to classroom teachers.
- The collaborative can more effectively implement initiatives from the Ohio Department of Education by streamlining the application process, training regional facilitators, and coordinating facilities in the region.

This is the first year for this collaborative effort in professional development. Just like a giant flywheel, at first things moved very slowly and took a lot of effort. Lately, however, we see momentum increasing as we continue to communicate, plan, and implement valuable services to all our stakeholders. We are confident that as we move forward we will continue to find effective ways to share our resources, strengths, and services across the region.

Fairfield County ESC’s Math Matters Grant Brings JiJi to Nine Districts in Central Ohio

By Victoria Hartley, Director of Innovation, Fairfield County ESC

Abstract

Through a Straight A Grant awarded to Fairfield County ESC, nine school districts in Central Ohio are using ST Math, a game based, virtual manipulative approach to math concepts that initially uses no abstract symbols (+) or words.

Thanks to a Straight A Grant awarded to Fairfield County ESC, students in 9 districts in and near Fairfield County are reaping the benefits of using a unique approach to math practice. ST Math is a series of online math programs primarily for grades K to 6 but it includes programming for 7th grade to high school. They are also piloting a Pre-K version in the Educational Service Center’s preschools in Fairfield County and in Pickerington Local Schools preschool classes. The program’s distinguishing selling point centers on the “ST” in its name, an abbreviation for the “spatial-temporal” reasoning that the program uses to teach math concepts. All lessons are first taught visually, without the use of language, numbers or symbols. The program later adds language, numbers and symbols when students’ conceptual understanding is cemented and transition to more abstract conceptualization is appropriate.

What is ST Math?

Dr. Matthew Peterson, ST Math’s developer, wrote the initial visual game software to test out how well young children could do visual problem solving. His findings were that children were surprisingly good at visual problem solving; it was a universal skill and it was trainable. MIND Research, ST Math’s parent company, then set about providing a way for students to understand mathematics through solving visual “puzzles” via software and animating math concepts with interactive visual manipulatives. Because MIND’s programs are non-language based, they use less working memory on non-mathematical abstractions such as symbols (like “+”) or math vocabulary (like “fraction”) or even any English words at all making this the most simple, direct and rigorous way to introduce math concepts. Students become very engaged with computer games, of course, but the difference here is that they are engaged directly with solving a math puzzle—the game IS the math. The math is not an interruption to the game. Also, the math puzzles become progressively more difficult such that they are multi-step thinking exercises.

How does ST Math Work?

ST Math programs include pre-test and post-test assessments to test student’s mastery of the concepts taught. At each level, students are asked about their confidence with the topic that was covered. The in-game reporting system tracks how the students progress through the different levels, and teachers have access to real-time data on their dashboard. Teachers can analyze performance on various levels and can even drill down to see how many times a student has attempted a certain lesson. The reporting dashboard flags which students repeatedly fail a lesson and prompt teachers to intervene. ST Math is recommended as a supplementary program used in conjunction with traditional classroom teaching. The company recommends that the program be used for at least 90 minutes a week (two 45-minute sessions), with 60 sessions for the entire school year.

Teachers see some of their more challenging students engaged with JiJi, the little penguin who wants to get across the screen. They see students making progress and productively learning math. Classrooms and schools begin to develop
a “JiJi Culture” where math becomes a competitive and fun focus. Teachers and students believe that they can all “win” at math, and JiJi the penguin starts showing up everywhere. The JiJi games are designed to go sequentially through levels of difficulty, so students start at level one of the particular concept, not level one of the game. So students working on higher level concepts and students working on earlier mathematical concepts begin at level 1 and “win” when the concept is mastered.

Who are the Straight A Grant Partners?
The Fairfield County ESC’s partnership with Lancaster City Schools, Liberty Union-Thurston Local Schools, Walnut Township Local Schools, Pickerington Local Schools, Columbus City Schools, Gahanna-Jefferson City Schools, Hilliard City Schools, Worthington City Schools and Hamilton Local Schools has impacted 26,531 students through the end of the 2014-2015 school year and is on pace to have nearly 28,000 students actively using ST Math by the end of the 2015-2016 school year. To date, Amanda Clearcreek Local Schools, Pickerington Local Schools and the Fairfield County ESC have either added or expanded the use of ST Math through local funds. The Fairfield County ESC and Pickerington Local Schools are piloting the pre-school ST Math program for Mind Research. As of July 2015, over 90 buildings have implemented ST Math either directly or indirectly through the Math Matters Straight A Grant and nearly 1,300 teachers have received professional development on how to implement ST Math as a part of their classroom instruction. ST Math Syllabus Progress as compared to STAR Math gains indicates a positive correlation showing that the higher the percentage of syllabus progress, the higher the gains are on STAR Math. The Fairfield County ESC will be working with partner districts throughout the rest of the 2015-2016 school year to link ST Math progress to outcomes on statewide assessments.

How can I get ST Math for my students?
ST Math is only available for schools. The company has regional sales teams, most in metropolitan areas, which sell to school districts and individual schools. The program is sold through licenses for a building or district. The ST Math license includes professional development both face to face and through webcasts.

Through the Fairfield County ESC’s Math Matters Straight A Grant, Twana Young, Education Services Specialist, provides our grant schools with ongoing professional development. Ms. Young works closely with our districts to provide customized support to each district. The company estimates that ST Math costs approximately $24 to $29 per student. If a school is unable to afford this price, the company will often work to find philanthropic partners to help defray the cost.

Victoria Hartley is the Director of Innovation, Learning and Leadership Development for Fairfield County Educational Service Center in Lancaster, Ohio.
to Develop Growth Models) and their impact on teaching and learning and to use the trends to transform teaching and learning in their districts. By the April, 2016 each district team will have an innovation plan for implementing at least one trend in their district, with goals, timelines, action steps and evaluative data identified to be used to measure success. Each plan will be reviewed and supported by Dr. Daggett and his ICLE team. The plan must be fully implemented, sustainable and able to be evaluated over time.

North Point ESC is committed to providing each participating ETN team with additional guidance and professional learning needed to effectively implement each districts’ innovation plan over the next 3 – 5 years. The ETN process is a way to transform traditional school systems into ones that better support teachers and more fully prepare every student for college, careers and citizenship. North Point ESC, in partnerships with its districts, is proud to sponsor this dynamic network.

NORT2H Continues to Lead the Way for Technology in Education

By the Educational Service Center of Lorain County

Representing more than 70 school buildings based out the Educational Service Center of Lorain County (ESCLC) and working with ESC’s across northeast Ohio, the Northern Ohio Research and Training Technology Hub (NORT2H) provides training and resources to K-12 institutes and higher education partners. NORT2H specializes in assisting districts in the selection of technologies that impact teaching and learning, which improves student engagement. Given the extensive research that NORT2H conducts around emerging technologies, we provide consulting services to schools as technologies are deployed, as well as district professional development.

NORT2H, is offering a free “Innovators in Education” series to schools across the United States. These interactive sessions will be broadcast live and recorded for later viewing from the green screen NORT2H studio. Participants may ask questions via Todaysmeet.com and/or Twitter. This year, the series will highlight innovators in education who are impacting teaching and learning. Previous sessions, now achieved, are available for viewing on our website, nort2h.org.

Upcoming sessions include:

- March 16 at 3:30 p.m., “Code & The Future Job Market @ 80k+ by Code.org” featuring Jenna Garcia.
- April 6 at 3:30 p.m., “Implementing a Computer Science/Coding Class” featuring Vicki Turner.

Additional programming is coming throughout the year. For more information, log on to tinyurl.com/InnovatorsInEd16.

NORT2H is currently looking for additional innovators to feature in upcoming sessions. If your ESC knows of someone who would like to be interviewed for the series, contact Dave Miller, NORT2H senior director of technology and innovation at 440-324-3172.

Members of NORT2H also have access to a state-of-the-art virtual studio housed in the ESCLC. The green screen studio uses advanced tricaster technology, fused with the ability to connect with high definition video conferencing software (323 systems, Google Handouts, etc.) to give users the ability to create a myriad of content. Whether you are creating flipped lessons and want the ability to “place yourself in the content,” need to create a “welcome video” for your school website or maybe you just want to have a virtual recital with your music students, NORT2H can make it happen.

“We have the ability to live stream videos, as well as interact live through Skype,” said Miller. “Our interactive video conferencing capabilities enables others to see the live event from any device on the day of an event. Videos can also be recorded for use at a later date. Our studio has 25 virtual sets that key the green paint out that’s on our walls in our studio replacing it with a virtual environment. It also includes superimposed televisions. Inside these televisions, we can display PowerPoint presentations, videos, still
images and our remote interviewee via Skype. We also have several stationary cameras throughout the studio. Using the studio software, we can virtually zoom in and out as if we had a camera crew.

The use of the green screen studio is free to NORT2H members (available for a nominal fee to others).

“This is a venue to really share innovations in education,” continued Miller. “This is about interviewing educators in the classroom as they use technology. We welcome the opportunity to share this technology with our schools and ESC community.

A snapshot of additional NORT2H services include:

**Consultations** - meetings with clients to help them make informed decisions as technologies for the classroom are selected.

**Professional development** - Large and small group professional development for educators.

**Meeting** - Working with clients and ESC staff to provide high quality services.

**Projects** - Higher time-intensive events for educators and students (Green screen video productions, EdCamp Cleveland, Techno Math Mania, etc.).

NORT2H is based on the philosophy that meaningful technology integration is measured by increased student learning, engagement with curriculum, thus leaving positive digital footprints. Membership to NORT2H means never making decisions alone. Staff members constantly read, review and explore emerging technologies and methodologies.

The technology possibilities are endless.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Log on to: [nort2h.org](http://nort2h.org)

Or call: 440-324-3172

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**Intra-District School Programming Reveals Promising Outcomes for Middle-School Age Students**

**By Douglas T. Hiscox, Mahoning County ESC and Karen H. Larwin, Youngstown State University**

In an effort to slow the rate of the outward migration of students from the Youngstown City School District, an intra-district choice program was offered to 3rd to 8th grade students beginning in the 2013/2014 academic year. The Youngstown City School District, which once served well over 20,000 students, now serves just over 5,000 students. In the last decade, the school district has been through two fiscal emergencies, leaving the district with a shell of the original institution's support systems for both the general and academic operations of the district. After several consecutive years of not meeting the prescribed average yearly student progress found in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act that was signed into federal law January 8, 2002, the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) progressive action was to create an Academic Distress Commission under the guidelines of Ohio Revised Code 3302.01(ORC, 2005).

The Youngstown City School District, with oversight from the Commission, faced 2010 by analyzing a very complex but dysfunctional institutional structure, to determine a course of action that would result in higher levels of student performance. The district's mission was to create choice opportunities that would do more than create pockets of success in the district. As one aspect of the district's transformation, the expanded choice programs would need to raise the academic tide of the entire district if the Youngstown City School District was ever going to improve its standing among parents, in hopes of stopping the continued exit of students.

The following presents the impact of the Youngstown City School District's Discovery choice program on student achievement. The Discovery program was unique in that students from any attendance area in the district could choose to apply to attend the program. Transportation was provided and the student data remained with the sending-building. The only requirement for admittance was that parents complete an application. Previous academic performance was not used as criteria to determine admittance. In the first year, there were a limited number of seats.
Few studies have examined the effects of intra-district choice programs on student achievement in inner-city public schools, despite the fact that the second most popular form of school choice is intra-district (Cullen, Jacobs, & Levitt, 2005). Betebenner, Howe, and Foster (2005) investigated the impact of choice in an intra-district, open enrollment system on student achievement and patterns of student enrollment. Students in the district they studied were assigned neighborhood schools, but were able to attend schools other than their neighborhood school on a space-available condition. Betebenner et al. (2005) failed to find support for the contention that the achievement of students participating in choice within an intra-district open enrollment system would be helped. Specifically, reading achievement of the students who opted out of the home school did not benefit, and math achievement showed benefit only for the lowest achieving students in the group.

In another study, Cullen et al. (2005) examined open enrollment among high school students in Chicago Public Schools. The open enrollment system was quite robust in that approximately half of all high school students in Chicago Public Schools opted for schools outside of their neighborhood. At the time of his study, few restrictions were placed on students’ choices within Chicago Public Schools. Students were guaranteed slots in neighborhood schools, but were free to apply to other schools. While this study concluded little academic benefit to the school choice program, the investigation found a drop in disciplinary issues for the participants.

This investigation is examining specifically the academic outcomes of the intra-district school choice programming since the design of the Discovery program was intended to impact students academically. The Discovery program sought to incorporate three components: (1) 21st century skills moving student experiences beyond the basics of reading, writing, and math to include critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation; (2) a technology-supported curriculum; and (3) a focus on school climate that supports and encourages parents to be involved in their children’s education. Unique to the Discovery program teacher selection was not tied to district seniority. Eighty-five percent of the instructional staff was hired as first year teachers in the district. All staff participated in professional development that was specifically designed to support constructivist instruction in both the discovery and general curriculum classes.

Two research groups, treatment and control, were identified for the purpose of this research. The control group included students that elected to remain at their home school from the fall of 2012 through the spring of 2014. This control group represented 1,844 students, or 80% of the third through eighth grade students, in the district. The treatment group represented 320 students, or 20% of the same population, that chose to attended the Discovery program starting in the fall of 2013.

Data from student scores on the Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA) reading, math and science was used as a baseline and a post intervention measure for students in grades three through eight. The data for the research was collected from the Ohio Department of Education’s Education Management Information System (EMIS). Initially, pre- and post-intervention means for the treatment and control groups were examined across the dependent variables of Spring Testing Scores. For this assessment, only students who were present during the spring of 2012-2013 and spring of 2013-2014 were included in the analysis, irrespective of group membership. These values are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Testing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAA Reading Scale Score</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAA Math Scaled Score</td>
<td>398.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAA Science Scaled Score</td>
<td>393.42</td>
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</table>

MANOVA analyses conducted on this data reveals a significant interaction for group (treatment or control) by term testing period (2012-2013 or 2013-2014), F(3,940) = 5.28, p = .001. This indicates that when examined simultaneously, the three dependent variables of the spring assessment period reveal a significant effect for group membership across the pre- to post-data collection. Specifically, treatment student test scores revealed substantial gains from pre- to post-intervention, relative to control group student score’s on the same measures.

Additional analysis of the data revealed no differences across group membership for SES, disability status, race or gender. However, grade level change scores revealed some interesting findings that are presented below.
As indicated above, the change scores across all grade groups are significantly larger for the treatment group relative to the control group beginning in grade 6, demonstrating that grade was a significant moderator for both reading and mathematics.

The results of this investigation indicated significant measurable student reading and math achievement gains for the treatment group in comparison to the control group. The findings provide some promising results for the potential success of overall student achievement when studying the impact of an intra-district choice program with a specific, intra-district choice program design. What this research demonstrates is that, when choice includes an instructional design like that of the Discovery program, significant gains can be observed, regardless of traditional beliefs about barriers affecting inner city students.

This investigation measured student test scores revealing substantial gains from pre- to post-intervention, relative to control group student scores during the same term. The Discovery program had no academic entry requirement; therefore, any Discovery student overall performance gains should not be attributed to an exiting of the higher achieving students from the control group to the treatment group. On the contrary, the control group pre-intervention achievement scores were higher than the treatment group pre-intervention data across all three content areas or dependent variables. This observation included third through eighth grade students in both groups, allowing an examination of whether gains are distributed equally across all grades, or, whether gains are grade specific. It was found that the greatest gains were observed in grade sixth through eighth.

There are a number of potential explanations for the gains observed in the sixth through eighth grade students in this investigation. Students in the Discovery program were provided with a new approach to learning and discovery through the problem based curriculum. Potentially, the impact that was revealed was due to a novelty effect. Students who were underperforming their control group peers were presented with a technology imbedded curriculum that was more engaging and provided them with choices. Recent research suggests that providing urban middle school students with choices regarding their learning (specifically in mathematics) is shown to increase and maintain the students’ interest in their studies, encourage an increased sense of value of the academic content, and help to develop an lasting personal interest in learning. There is a significant correlation between the choice to engage in learning and the long-term impact of the Discovery program, but these first year results suggest that discovery might be a key to capturing the attention and interest of this i-Generation of students.

This is the first known study to utilize state achievement assessment scaled scores as the measure of overall student achievement when studying the impact of an intra-district choice plan with a defined instructional framework that includes conceptual learning, school climate, and 21st Learning Skills. This study, although representing student data from one historically low performing, inner city school district, has implications that can affect how inner city school transformation efforts may be approached in the future.

Full study details are available upon request.

References

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<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
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New Online Videos Help Parents Support the Third Grade Reading Guarantee

By INFOhio

Have you seen the three new videos to help parents help their children practice reading? Reading on the Go, Reading for a Purpose, and Reading on the Screen, all less than three minutes, give parents concrete, easy tips to help their children become stronger readers and meet the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. They are perfect for sharing during parent nights and come with a collection of companion flyers with even more tips for parents. Find them all on INFOhio’s Third Grade Reading Guarantee page.

The flyers and videos were developed by INFOhio, the State Library of Ohio, Ohio Educational Library Media Association, and the Ohio PTA. They are available to all Ohioans for free download.

For more information and easy ways to communicate with your parents about the videos, go to the Online Video announcement on the INFOhio website.

OCALI Is Linking Research to Real Life: The Autism Internet Modules (AIM)

By Sheila Smith, OCALI Assistant Director; Laura Maddox, Program Director Online Learning; Wendy Szakacs, Regional Consultant; Simon Buehrer, Conference/Events Manager; Hal Hixson, Web Design/Publication Specialist

OCALI (Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence) is a project of the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO)

Abstract
AIM is designed to provide high-quality information and professional development for anyone who supports and instructs someone with autism. Each module guides you through case studies, instructional videos, pre- and post-assessments, a glossary, and much more.

Why Autism?
In Ohio as of the 2013-14 school year, Ohio Department of Education child count data shows that the number of students identified with Autism as a primary disability was 17,700. The Centers for Disease Control reports the rate of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at 1 in 68 (retrieved http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html). It is reasonable to assume that every educator will have the opportunity to teach an individual with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It is critical that supports in the home, school, work and community setting match each individual’s unique preferences, strengths and challenges.

Education professionals are constantly searching for accurate and comprehensive information about ASD. While our understanding of evidence-based practices for individuals with ASD has grown significantly in the last decade, translating research into practice has proven a slow process. The Autism Internet Modules were developed to address the discrepancy between research and practice—and to put information directly into the hands of practitioners.

What is AIM?
AIM is designed to provide high-quality information and professional development for adult-learners who support, instruct, work with, or live with someone with autism. With over 213,000 users (as of 2/9/16), the Autism Internet Modules provide educators with information about practices and strategies that can be used in any environment with individuals with ASD. Each module guides the user through content information, case studies, instructional videos, pre- and post-assessments, a glossary, and much more. AIM modules are available at no cost, although if users would like to receive credit for time on AIM, certificate and credit options are available for a fee. (For detailed information on certificate and credit options, create an account and go to the Dashboard or Help.)

AIM topics include assessment, characteristics, and strategies. In assessment, two of the modules are Assessment for Identification and Screening Across the Lifespan. Several characteristic areas are included, such as Cognitive Differences and Overview of Social Skills Functioning and Programming. Under the category Autism in the Classroom, modules consist of evidence-based strategies such as Reinforcement, Social Narratives, and Video Modeling. There are currently 45 AIMs available.

Content within AIM is enhanced with pictures, charts and videos. Case examples help
the user envision how others have used a strategy and how it might apply to the individual with whom they work or teach. All of these aspects provide adults with the opportunity to “learn today” and “use tomorrow.” A glossary of key terms is provided to ensure users develop an understanding of the terminology associated with ASD. Discussion questions and activities are designed to extend the learning, providing options outside the online environment to facilitate discussion and application of the online content.

Modules cover characteristics, assessment and interventions for this diverse population. By using AIM, professionals can gain an understanding of ASD, and learn ways to support individuals with ASD in the home, school, work and community setting.

When used as the no cost option, AIM is different from the typical online course that requires the user to take modules in a specific sequence, completing the required content from beginning to end before moving on to the next module. AIM is flexible. The user can enter any module that interests them. They can choose any topic. Once inside the module, they can proceed sequentially from beginning to end, but if they have limited time, the user can also choose to focus on just one aspect of the module, such as “Visual Schedules”, and just view the information on that topic.

Who can benefit from AIM?
Any adult who is involved in the life of an individual with ASD can benefit from AIM. In schools, these learners can include teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, counselors, psychologists, paraeducators, vocational instructors, job coaches, parent mentors, and certified school staff. If your school or classroom is interested in supporting learning for families of individuals with ASD, then the modules provide an opportunity for parents, grandparents, extended family, caregivers, family/caregiver support groups, and parent mentors

How can an ESC use AIM?
An ESC can use AIM modules by having employees complete modules independently, by using modules during staff trainings, as part of professional learning communities, with ASD study groups, within ASD district or building teams, by educational team to improve services for specific students, learning for families, and/or as part of certification/license renewal.

How can AIM be accessed?
The modules may be accessed through the AIM website, hosted by OCALI, at http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/. In order to log in and view the modules, a user must first establish an account by completing a registration form. Once this form is submitted, the user will be logged in. The Module Navigator on the AIM Dashboard allows users to navigate the various modules that are available. If you have questions or comments, please email aim_info@ocali.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact: Laura Maddox, Program Director – Online Learning
614.410.0321
Laura_maddox@ocali.org

Join the ICoach Team!

By INFOhio

For the fourth year, INFOhio is looking for energetic individuals employed within Ohio school buildings and districts to join our 244 member INFOhio District/Building ICoach team. This team supports the teaching and learning of INFOhio resources while strengthening the technology skills of students, teachers, and staff. Individuals accepted to be part of the 2016-2017 INFOhio District/Building ICoach team will be trained at no charge to help their peers incorporate INFOhio resources and other digital tools successfully in the classroom. D/B ICoach training also counts as required professional development hours in most districts.

Here's what one of last year's D/B ICoaches had to say about the program:
"I am so thankful for the chance to serve as a Building Coach. It was exciting to see teachers at other buildings learn what INFOhio could do to help them in their day to day classroom!”

You can nominate teachers and librarians who might be interested in becoming a 2016-2017 INFOhio District/Building ICoach or complete the application yourself. Find the program guidelines and application at https://www.infohio.org/goto/icouch_fy17.

We will be accepting applications through April 15, 2016. Notification of acceptance into the District/Building ICoach program will be confirmed by April 29, 2016. Training for the District/Building ICoach is through an online course and allows flexibility for the trainee. The course will be open from May through August 2016.

Please contact us at central@infohio.org if you have any questions. We appreciate your consideration to help us as we work diligently to increase statewide training opportunities for INFOhio’s digital learning resources.
5 Helpful Hints for Driving in Winter Weather
By Liberty Mutual, OESCA Strategic Partner

With cold weather comes the need to be extra careful on the road. Snow and ice on roads and reduced visibility from winter precipitation make driving potentially hazardous. Brush up on these winter driving safety tips to avoid trouble.

1. **Watch the weather.** One way that drivers can limit their winter travel risk is to plan trips for relatively good weather. Stay up to date on changing weather and traffic reports to anticipate and avoid stormy roadways.

2. **Slow down.** A little more caution makes a big difference when roads are slick. Slowing down by 5 mph or more will help limit your potential for damage in a collision. Keeping more car lengths between vehicles gives you more time for any sudden stops, too.

3. **Know your extra features.** The biggest example is anti-lock brakes. Where tapping brakes works for controlling skid in traditional braking, pumping ABS can be dangerous. Road safety experts advise that anti-lock brakes and other features are no substitute for safe stopping distances and reasonable speeds. Some experts also warn against using cruise control on slick roads.

4. **Condition your vehicle for winter.** If your state allows it, install tire chains or tire studs to add traction. No matter what state you're in, it's a good idea to keep tires at proper inflation. Also, be sure to remove troublesome ice from your windshield and windows, and big drifts of snow from the hood and roof.

5. **Stock a winter emergency kit.** In case you have to pull over during a storm, be prepared with a winter emergency kit. Recommended items include: flashlight and batteries, hand-warmers, blankets, drinking water, shovel and ice scraper, jumper cables, and emergency lights or flares.

These helpful tips can assist drivers in keeping themselves and others safe this winter.

To learn more about Liberty Mutual Auto and Home Insurance or get a free, no-obligation quote, call 800-981-2372 or visit LibertyMutual.com/OESCA.

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IWonder
By INFOhio

IWonder (iwonder.infohio.org), a collection of safe, reliable websites handpicked by Ohio school librarians to support student exploration and Ohio’s Learning Standards in grades 3-9, is now available to all Ohio schools courtesy of INFOhio, Ohio’s PreK-12 digital library.

IWonder encourages students to pick a question—for example, **Do You Have a Math Problem to Solve** or **Do You Want to Explore Your Creativity** or **Do You Want to Learn More About Money**—and then leads them to a series of engaging sites to help them find answers and practice their skills. New sites will be added regularly. Students, teachers, and parents are encouraged to submit their favorite sites using the **Suggest a Site** link on the IWonder home page.

Learn more with this IWonder video tutorial (2:30) or take a minute to explore on your own at http://iwonder.infohio.org. Please send any other questions or suggestions to support@infohio.org.
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Client # 110346
At the 2015 30th Annual OESCA Capital Conference Awards ceremony, Lowell Howard (above center) received the OESCA Lifetime Achievement Award. Nominated by Superintendent Sandy Mers (above left) and presented by OESCA President Superintendent Brian Bon Tempo (above right), the Lifetime Achievement Award is the Association’s highest award, recognizing individuals that embody the goals and philosophies of educational service centers for their outstanding accomplishments and innovative practices.

With over 40 years in education, Lowell has always been the “go to person” for any questions, problem, or advice. As an ESC Superintendent, Lowell created a collaborative environment in which districts benefit from innovative practices. He helped establish and maintain a cooperative unit for the county districts’ special education needs. Lowell is described as the epitome of educational service, which is evident in his countless hours of helping and serving others even in retirement. Congratulations, Lowell!

**IMPORTANT DEADLINES!**

Registration for the ESC Progress Network: March 28, 2016

**Deadline for the Progress Network extended to March 30, 2016**

Registration for the OESCA Spring Conference: March 18, 2016

**Deadline for the Spring Conference Extended to March 30, 2015**

Registration for the Franklin B. Walter Awards Luncheon: March 21, 2016

**Deadline for FBW extended to March 28, 2016**

(Click on the above links to register!)
Inside OESCA Article Submission Guidelines

- Article maximum length is 1500 words. Exceptions can be granted at the discretion of the editor.
- Write about a timely and relevant topic of interest to Ohio ESCs and the Ohio education community (e.g., Leadership, Organizational Management, Child Nutrition, Governance, Accountability, Curriculum & Instruction, Standards and Assessment, Gifted Education, Special Education, Shared Services, etc.)
- Include a brief abstract (approximately 40 words) and a bio (approximately 20 words) with the article.
- Attach any related electronic pictures, charts or diagrams if possible and desired.
- Use headings and subheadings.
- Include an introduction and concluding paragraph.
- Format any relevant citations according to APA Style

Inside OESCA Advertisement Guidelines

- Size: Max – 4.25" high by 3.75" wide.
- In .JPG, .GIF, .BMP, or .PDF format.

Publication Dates and Deadlines for Submission

- Inside OESCA is published in September, December, March, and June of each year.
- Submission deadlines are August 15, November 15, February 15, and May 15.

Send articles and advertisements to membersupport@oesca.org prior to the deadlines outlined above.