

# Provincial Software Acquisition Program

This year, British Columbia school districts were eager to participate in the Provincial Software Acquisition Project (PSAP), purchasing software designed to help students with disabilities improve their performance in reading and writing tasks.

PSAP was an opportunity for school districts to access cost savings as well as rich resource and training opportunities. Utilizing SET-BC site licensing and Ministry of Education incentives, school districts obtained copies of Co:Writer 4000 and Kurzweil 3000 B/W scan/read at a substantially discounted price. In total, just over 1000 copies of Co:Writer and 950 copies of Kurzweil 3000 were ordered.

Both Kurzweil 3000 and Co:Writer 4000 empower individuals to take control over their reading and writing disabilities and establish their independence - in the classroom and in their daily lives.

Kurzweil 3000 is a new generation of print-to-speech reading software for persons with reading disabilities. Kurzweil 3000 presents a powerful reading and writing environment with a rich feature set that includes embedded dictionaries, online access to web libraries, highlight/extract text functions, fill-in-the-blank, word prediction, and multilingual capabilities. Users can scan a printed document, display and work within the page just as it appears in the original document (e.g., book, magazine), with all of the colour graphics and pictures intact.

Co:Writer 4000 adds word prediction, grammar and vocabulary support capabilities to any word processor or email program. Students with disabilities produce quality, content-rich writing that exceeds the expectations of teachers, parents and... even themselves. Co:Writer capabilities include speech feedback and topic dictionaries support.

In addition to coordinating the PSAP project, SET-BC developed a "Trainer of Trainers" program designed to support school district implementation of Kurzweil 3000 and Co:Writer 4000 software. The development of the "Trainer of Trainers" program was sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada Foundation.

These intensive two-day courses provide participants with the skills and resources needed to implement their own district training programs on the use of Kurzweil and Co:Writer. The Kurzweil and Co:Writer modules in SET-BC's online Learning Centre include video presentations and slide shows, software demonstrations and tutorials, student lesson plans, and other references and training resources. Teachers can take these self-paced and interactive courses to learn how Kurzweil 3000 and Co:Writer 4000 can be used to support student learning.



"The presentation was organized and well supported with excellent resources. It will be so helpful to have the CDs and binder for future reference and training."