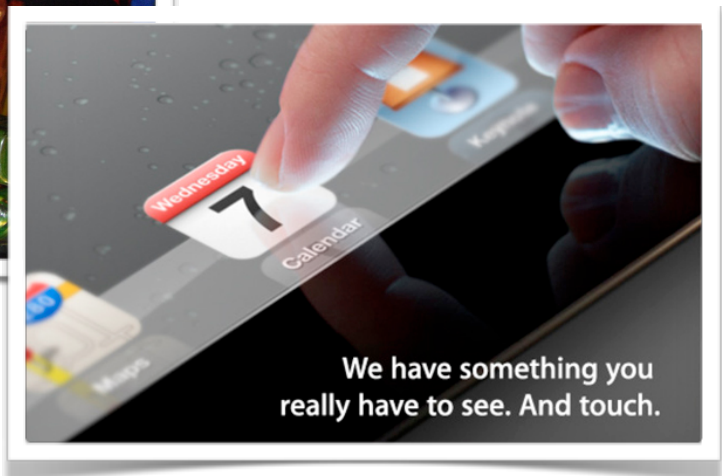# My favourite Apps

For special learners-part 3

Flo Longhorn

1 May 2012

Introduction

This is my third list of apps for ipads that should be useful for everyone, but in particular, for special learners. The ipad is the most inclusive piece of technology, so easy to use it even comes without a manual of instructions! It can be accessed by a fluttering finger, a nose, toes or a stylus pen to enable writing on the screen.

Apps that are used on the ipad come from the iTunes store and are strictly controlled by Apple. This means the user can be confident in using them without fear of inappropriate materials. If one does slip through the net, then the user has the option to report it and it will be removed if necessary.
There also many android apps out there to use on android tablets, such as Samsung Galaxy, but no supervision as yet.

You will need an iPad, iPod touch or iPhone to access the following apps.

The apps I have listed (May 2012) are all free/lite or about 69p
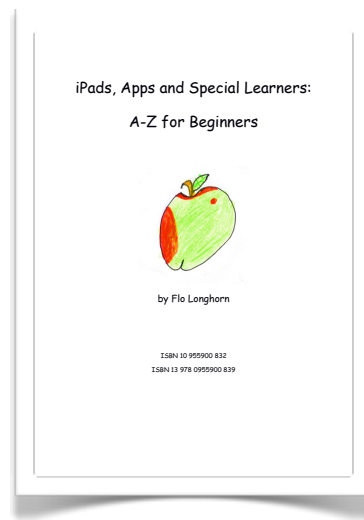Try, and if suitable, buy!

A reminder of how to find an app

Go to the iTunes store and click on 'apps' (at top of the screen) and then type in the title you wish to view or purchase. You need to have an account with iTunes so when you want buy an app, it is paid for through the account.

www.iTunes.com

Handy hints for the uninitiated

☑ You need to be online to go to the iTunes store.
☑ iTunes store should be listed in the left hand column on the screen of your device.
☑ Click on and then look along the top of the page to find applications store, click.
☑ Type in a search word or the app name you want to find out more about.
☑ If the app is free, you still have to 'buy' it for free to download it.
☑ Look for the free apps section and check out what is there, many new apps are free for the first few weeks, so snap them up.
☑ Always play with the apps and find out what they can do (or ask a child to do this whilst you watch!)they do so much more than you think.
☑ Make sure that if it is a free app, it does not pop up with free offers or annoying adverts every time you use it. Not worth the trouble. Delete. If it is a good introduction to the app, go ahead and buy the full version.
☑ Sometimes names or icons change for an app so you have to chase and find them.

iPads, Apps and Special Learners:

A-Z for Beginners

by Flo Longhorn

'Ipads, Apps and Special Learners: A-Z for Beginners' 2012

The chapters include:

- ☑ A brief introduction to iPads and apps with handy hints
- ☑ Visual apps
- ☑ Touch apps including hand movements for using a screen
- ☑ Sound and music
- ☑ Movement and sports
- ☑ Faces and emotions
- ☑ Literacy includingABC, books, stories, writing and mark making
- ☑ Art and creativity
- ☑ Numeracy, emergent shape colour and numbers
- ☑ Early learning through simple games
- ☑ Introduction to topic work using apps
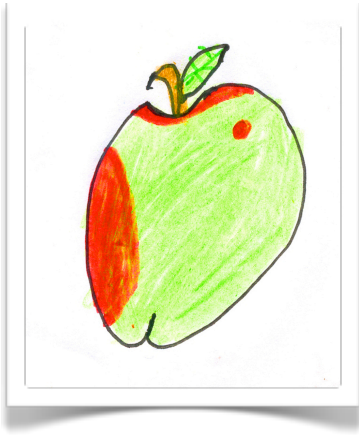- ☑ Resources, websites and blogs
- ☑ A-Z of all the apps in the book

If you would like a copy of my new book

'Ipads, apps and special learners: A-Z for Beginners'
By Flo Longhorn (2012)

It can be purchased online at amazon.co.uk
or
From Flo Publications Ltd
Contact patcerl@aol.com

If you do not have a copy of my 2 apps lists circulated in 2011, please send me an email and I will send them with pleasure, by pdf.
flocatalyst@aol.com

'Apple' by Ellie Mae

Apps for May 2012

Here is a list the latest apps to use for creative and engaging encounters of the active kind. Most are lite or free, so they can be tried before buying a full version. They are deliberately in no particular order, developmental levels or age bands. This is to ensure all learners have a chance to sample regardless of an adults preconceptions of what they need!

They are all very sensory and loads of fascinating fun for everybody!
Enjoy!

Don't forget iPads and apps are tools not a curriculum, get those sensory wow experiences up and running too.............

General apps

Little story maker free
This app creates basic ibooks very easily especially for students, who will be very pleased to see themselves in a personalised book.

Story Buddy lite
A similar book maker as the one above to try, very easy to use.

Camper weather free,
This was made by the Spanish shoe company (I have at least 3 pairs!) A lovely funny, artistic way of finding out about the weather.

Somantics
A free UK app that is a suite of applications using touch, gesture and the camera (built into the iPad) to promote 'greater self awareness, confidence and independence.' It is a most creative and exciting concept, I love it.
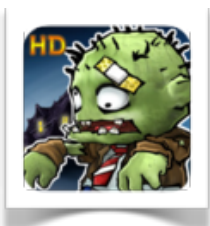It was devised for those with autism, but hey, we can all use them too.
Lots of research and documentation from the guru Dr.Wendy Keay-Bright, find out more on the website somantics.org   ~well worth a visit.

Reactickles Magic
Free UK app. This links closely to somantics (above) and is excellent.

Harrys House attack of the monsters
Lots of ghouls and spooky music in this simple game. A boy (the user) hides behind a barricade with a very handy catapult. From the top of the screen, ghoulish monsters march towards him and he has to shoot them down.

Rag doll blaster 2 lite

This is a good app for students who need to practice eye hand coordination. Rather violent, with a canon that shoots out rag dolls at a target. A laser pointer helps with the shooting of the canon. I have scored nil so far but am enjoying the canon!

Olim pictures

An app that contains lovely drawings of Olympic athletes by Nicola Russo. It was free but has suddenly got a price-wonder why......

The following group of apps are early levels of access apps

3D shape sorter

(free)This is 3D so has great depth for the field of vision. It is a shape sorter cube that can be rotated on the screen.There are shapes (animals or Xmas shapes) that fit into the sorters, placed at the side. Drag a shape over and insert. If it is the correct place the shape will change into the animal and make a noise.The colour of the cube can be changed, and the music can be switched off. Very powerful, two levels of play, choose between a nappy or a trousers icon!
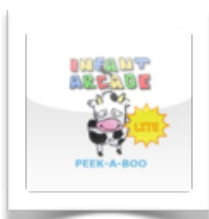
Random

Anything you do on the screen makes a random set of moving images and sounds erupt everywhere~ and that is it, the simplest cause and effect app going.

Tiny genius lite

This has a gallery of vivid abstract patterns. There is a choice of languages to use to identify the shapes. Colours can be changed as the page is swiped~the real pictures turn to a cartoon caricature when touched.There are also a set of animals which make appropriate noises.

Peekaboo lite

`From the Infant Arcade' developers. A simple to understand app the animal hides, find him, then he scurries and hides somewhere else, usually fairly obvious!

Baby disco

Again, ignore the baby word and you have a really zany disco with objects such as little animals bouncing around, even a set of motor bikes roar and whirling around the screen. Sounds are very loud and authentic.

Move fingers across the screen, like a dancer on a disco floor, touch on the 6 buttons, each playing a different sound. Every time a sound is played pictures of what the sound represents, emerge and fly. Shake the tablet and it makes a rattle sound. A quick intense shake and the level changes so that new sounds are loaded into the buttons on the virtual disco floor. Love it!

Peke plus lite

A drawing app with an unusual twist. As colours and marks are made on the screen, a noise accompanies them. It changes when the colour or marks are changed. Try keeping a finger on the screen and hear the noise that emerges.Terrific.

Sleepy moon

An interactive lullaby story with quiet sounds and a humming voice. Good for tracking as a sheep walks slowly across the screen from right to left. Touch the sheep and it makes a noise. Look in the bushes and find little animals hiding, tap them and a simple game plays.
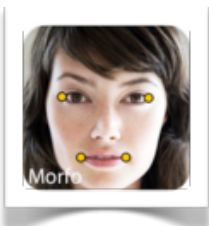
Seuss band

Lovely Dr. Seuss nonsense with clear sounds and a zany instrument to play in the lite version.Well worth buying for the full story.

Baby view lite

Clear striking images against a plain background, linked to strong sounds. High contrast as well as b/w images ~see the ladybirds click their wings as they move around, easy to track and follow. Tap on the square image and it turns into large contrasting shapes with ploppy sounds, to accompany the growing shapes.

More General Apps

Morfo (free)
This is a fascinating app with faces that can be morphed, changed and decorated realistically. Ideal for learners who need to improve their awareness of facial emotions. Use Morfo to turn a face into a talking, dancing, crazy 3D character! There are also 6 ready made characters to use already up and running in the app.
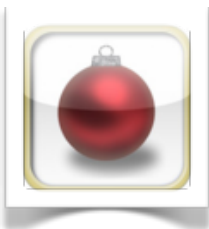
Toca kitchen monsters

A new app from the Toca Boca people, really crazy and fun. The graphics are clear and modern. The monsters choose ingredients for their meals from the fridge door. I have just microwaved a sausage for one of them, taken it out of the oven and carefully inserted it in his mouth!

Jiggle balls HD lite

This is one of a series of apps to do with balls of all descriptions. It works simply, tap the screen and a ball appears. The more taps, the more balls appear.Tilt and shake the iPad and the balls move, jiggle and make clear jiggle sounds as they bump together. Very addictive. Try to fill the whole screen with balls! Change the colour, speed and size of the balls to extend the app. Try the other versions below:
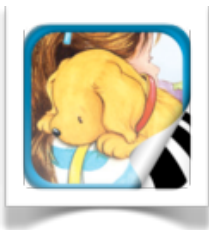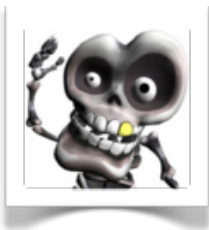
Jiggle Christmas

Jiggle balls studio

Jiggle balls spike

Meet Biscuit

Biscuit is a little yellow puppy and the story is about how he got his name. There is a hidden ball on every page, access to a colouring book, stickers, memory games and puzzles. The story is simple, readable with clear, attractive drawings with a girls's voice for auto play. A favourite for younger readers.
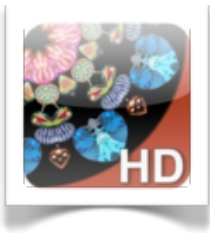
Talking skeleton

Another app that has a talking character, this time a rather wicked skeleton who reacts very realistically. He dances when tossed a bone or eats a pumpkin thrown at him. He talks back if you so wish! I love his gold tooth!

Ice age village

This follows the squirrel with the acorn, famous in the first Ice Age movie for creating an avalanche of snow. The story line has games to play along the way, I cannot quite follow it yet, but love the snowy, icy backgrounds that can be pinched to enlarge. The story follows a sloth who is looking for a new home.......
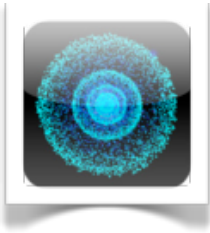
Tumble vision

What a treat, this is a kaleidoscope that uses natural images such as butterflies and fish to create beautiful moving images.There are different kaleidoscopes including Angelica (angels) and glacial (ice). This app would project well onto a screen. Choose music from your own music stored on iTunes to match the moving images. More images can be bought at iTunes.

Particlescape

This app consists of abstract particles which are fluorescent in hue. The hue, movement and gravitational strength (mmmm, I wonder what that means) can all be altered. It is up market as it enables 2 simultaneous touches on the screen, interactions rule okay.

A few new communication apps of interest

I have held back on recommending communication apps and their usefulness until I have more info from the workers at the coalface (you!) as to what will suit special learners. Communication apps will be reviewed in depth, in the first edition of Info Exchange, my new online multi sensory and apps magazine. Out in September 2012.

Say hi! AAC

This is a free communication and has potential for the most special of learners. It was developed by the Gwendolyn Strong Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to opening the world through technology for those with spinal muscular atrophy and other physically challenging conditions.

Visit www.theGSF.org for more information.

The developer says:

'Say Hi! AAC is an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and navigation iPad application that brings the world of basic communication to people with severe physical disabilities, limited movement, and/or challenged dexterity.

'Install Say Hi! AAC on your iPad and create pages with groups of words or phrase boxes. A page can contain up to nine boxes and a box can have any combination of words, phrases, pictures, or recorded sounds. It is custom fit to suit specific needs or situations.

The next step is to install Say Hi! AAC on two additional iPod Touch or iPhone devices. One device will act as the "mover" allowing the user to move between boxes. The other device will function as the "selector" allowing the user to select the desired box and "say" the associated word or phrase.

Launch Say Hi! AAC on your iPad and as long as all three devices -- the iPad, the mover, and the selector, are on the same wireless network The app will then pair them by prompting you to select which device will act as the mover and selector.

Grid Player

A free AAC communication app recently launched for a UK market. It is initially free but there are upgrades for which you have to pay. The free version contains 3 complete grid sets, capela speech (text to speech) and wonderful widget. Have a look at the manual found at www.sensorysoftware.com/gridplayer
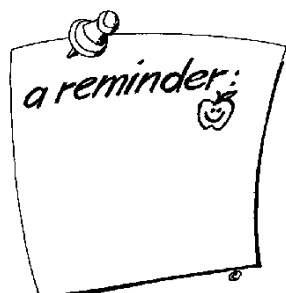

Choiceboard maker (used to be called 'picture card maker')

A picture/sound maker that is so simple and easy to use. It took me about 2 minutes to do a 4 box page.

Some communication apps that are new this year, take a dip....

☑ Point to pictures

☑ VAST autism 1

☑ Ispeak button

☑ Answers yes no HD

☑ Click n talk

☑ Yes-no

☑ Functional communication system lite

A reminder~ Ian Bean and myself are running a series of workshops on

'IPads, apps and special learners'

This year, around the UK.

Comment from a delegate at a recent workshop:

' My idea of Christmas is Ian and Flo rolled into one giant workshop'

This is the workshop!

Further details contact patcerl@aol.com

Visual apps article expanded from an article written for the magazine   'Eye Contact'(April 2012, RNIB)

'Learning to look, listen, play and have fun!

IPads (and iPhones)are the most trendy and desirable piece of technology for any youngster to use, no matter what special needs they have. Having an ipad makes anyone the trendiest kid on the block. Use it anywhere, anytime, hold it as close to your eyes as you wish, move it to the angle you see best, choose and enjoy the latest visual games such as Crazy Birds or Uzu. Because of its sensitive touch screen, even an unintentional swipe gives an instant reaction with a flash of dazzling light or a raucous noise, for example.

 The ipad itself has built-in adaptations to aid vision such as magnification, white-on-black page reversal, closed-caption reader and zooms up to 5 times normal size.Go to settings to find out more

Before you think it, for the user who may throw the expensive ipad,there are indestructible cases designed for the SAS available, that limit damage!

 For the wobbly or frail hand, the X-band attaches to the ipad for a hand to slide through and hold the ipad with ease, whist bringing it close to the eyes.

Apps are programmes that can be downloaded from the internet for use on an iPad from the iTunes store. Androids apps for an android tablet ca be downloaded from sites such as Google or Amazon. Three billion apps were downloaded onto iPads in 2011, wow!

> There are ranges of apps that are visually compelling for practicing early, visual, developmental stages of 'learning to look'.These apps incorporate movement, fluorescence, vivid high contrast and interesting and attractive images. Most importantly, the visual aspects of apps link closely to a multi sensory approach with excellent sound, movement, balance and touch included.

For evaluating suitable visual apps, do include your wonderful teacher for the visually impaired learner, they are the experts!

Also remember what you are looking for in contrast sensitivity for an individual:

- Acuity and colour, seen with the centre of the eye.
- Contrast, seen on the periphery or the edges of seeing.
- Field of vision, the entire area that is seen when eyes are fixed in one position.

The following apps are samples, usually free to download, of what is on offer to incorporate in visual programmes for 'learning to look.' Ignore descriptors such as 'tot' or 'baby,' they are usually abstract in content and okay for older viewers.
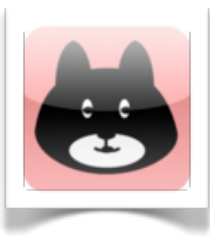
Visual attention

Clear black and white moving images capture visual attention. Here are some to attract and delight.

Last fish lite
This is for students who need black and white moving images but in a simple game form. Tilt the little white fish around the grey sea to eat food to gain health. Watch out for balls of black goo which are toxic and should not be touched. There are also corrupted fish which might just catch the fish too. Atmospheric sound track

Baby see
This app offers a series of contrasting b/w gently moving images the speed of movement can be changed. Developed by parents and psychotherapists.
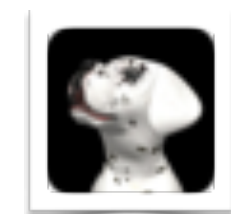
Baby look faces
High contrast patterns and shapes from a UK developer.

The 'Baby Look! 'Series covers simply drawn faces which giggle and move when swiped. There are also apps in the series with black/white spots, patterns, tickles and peekaboo.
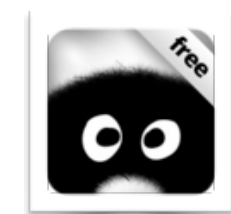 Go to their website www.meandthegiants.com to see them all.

Sound Drop is an eye catching app with a range of tinkly sounds and a dropper which creates small balls, that drop from the top of the screen. The user touches the screen to draw lines to catch the balls and create a tinkly tune.

Piano Pups
 Is free, simple and engaging with a keyboard composed of spotty dogs who bark out a tune as the user taps on them. Each bark is very distinct.

Gravity maze
Another student game in which little fluffy space blobs try to find fuel for their space ship to go home .Just tilt the screen to and fro.
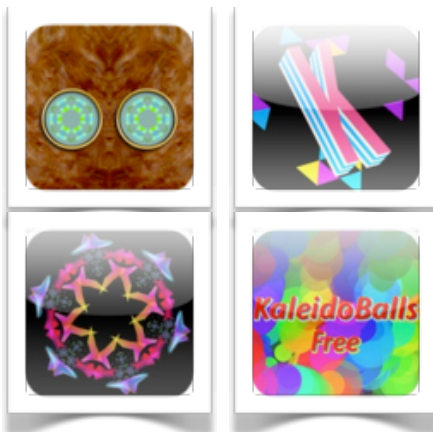
A quickie~have a look at 'light switch'(from the South Bank London) so simple just click on and off........on, off, on, off, on, off great for the obsessive compulsive or the artist ......

High visual discrimination backgrounds

Abstract, vivid, moving colours in an app, offer a startling intensity of colour to the early visual learner. They demand visual attention and scanning to get the full visual effect. Here are several to download.

Search on the iTunes store for 'kaleidoscopes' which are intense in colours, movements and very attention grabbing.
Here are a few titles to start the hunt.

Kaleidoscope stereoscope-3D effect
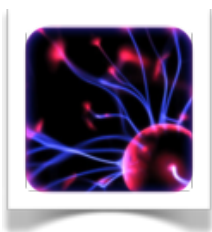Kale-transforms the camera images into kaleidoscopes

Kaleidic lite-fabulous!
Kaleidoballs free-uvl balls to move and then they become a brilliant kaleidoscope.

Fluidity
 This app has freeform flowing fluorescent colours controlled with finger tips. It is just like a lava lamp with intense neon shades.

Balls
Balls has harp sounds linked to luminous, moving, balls that move and duplicate when dragged with a finger-or a nose! As they collide or bounce they create music.

Plasma globe
This is an interactive master piece, with electrical fluorescent bolts that crackle and glow, whilst following fingertips.

Visual tracking and scanning

For the learner who needs to learn how to track in many directions,with their eyes, there are several pertinent apps for tracking bright lights linked to touch. Here are three that are bright, moving and creative:

'Free Candle' flickers as you blow the candle. Blow until the flame flickers out. Then swipe the screen to see a different type of candle to extinguish.There is a choice of candles, very realistic, you can almost smell the candle smoke!

Neon Draw
This art app has intense fluorescent colours and offers the user the opportunity to create their own lines and track at their own pace. It is strikingly vivid with choices of lines, colours and brush size.
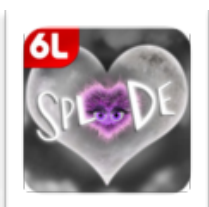
Paint Sparkles Draw
This app links tracking to marks made by the user. It produces a perky sound and shimmery, glittery sparkles that burst from the marks as they are made. Quite gripping. The colour is announced as it is chosen, on screen.
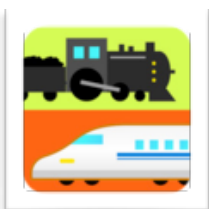
Motivating the learner

Early stages of 'learning to look' include the motivation of the learner to WANT to look and then begin to engage and understand what they seeing. Games found on the ipad are powerful and addictive, with stages of interaction to compel the viewer to engage think and learn.
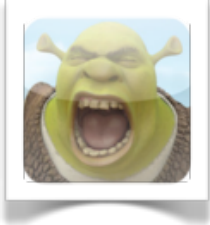Here are several games with a wow factor but also practice visual tracking.

Splode
Splode has little, furry splodes falling out of the sky, try to pop them before they reach the ground. Spooky music and exploding pop sounds encourage the user. There are different levels of play.

'Let's Play With The Trains' works with the user tracing a line with a finger. The line then changes to a track and a loud noisy steam train follows the track. Draw more tracks and different trains emerge. Watch out for crashes!
Great for Thomas the Tank addicts........

'Do The Roar' is the famous Shrek who will roar for you only after many taps that make him angrier and angrier until he ROARS! Clean up the screen afterwards!

Light, touch and sound together-a multi sensory view
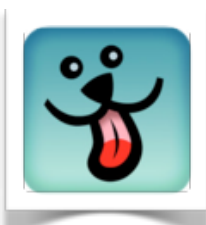
Smart tot rattle
Quite abstract so can be used with older humans. Very clear distinct moving objects and sharp noises as they are moved around the screen. Display times can be changed or sounds stopped.
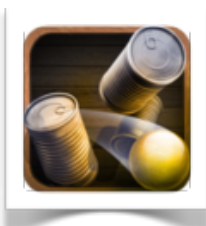
Doodle sounds for ipad

Mind blowing sounds as marks and shapes are drawn or tapped on the screen which has a black background. Change colours, shapes and line thickness as well. Tremendous cause and effect and visually so clear.

Free at the moment but with ads on the screen that detract from the effect.To buy ad free (I have just bought it!) put in 'peke paint plus for ipad' at the iTunes store.

Clean my screen lite

Sheer fun as the screen is rather blurry until Peppi the dog or Orson the cat starts to lick the screen and reveal themselves! The full version has 11 cleaners including a manta ray!

Can knock down

This is the classic fairground game of throwing a ball to knock down tin cans. Visual concentration is needed to aim the ball at the tin cans.The ball rolls out at the bottom of the screen and fingers can flick it at the t cans. The noise effects sound like the game is being played in the local bar. An onscreen finger helps when you miss the cans, by pointing the right direction to aim the ball. Simple but addictive.

Abby robots maker

Let your creativity run wild and create your very visual Robots to play with and share with friends. Customized robots react to your finger motion by dancing and making funny sounds.Create robot avatars by choosing from a range of clearly patterned robot heads, arms, bodies and change the scenery. The noises are really spaced out. Save or share the finished robot online.