



**Apps for Very Special Learners-Part 2  
Flo Longhorn**

**June 2011**

**[flocatalyst@aol.com](mailto:flocatalyst@aol.com)**



Hello again!

Here is another set of fun apps for use by very special learners. They are in no particular order, so you will have to browse - you may find something you like even better as you flip through! Remember they should be embedded in a glorious sensory world - a tool, not a curriculum.

Don't forget that most apps are currently produced in the USA, we await British input with interest. Apps also change in price or simply disappear so some I recommend may have vanished or are not free any more!



## **IPad 2**

When you buy this iPad2, get the biggest memory available (64GB) so you never run out of space - like I did with my first 16GB iPad!

The new iPad 2 has built in cameras and can also now be viewed on an interactive whiteboard. You need a VGA connector to do this, available from the Apple store or Amazon. With this, you can view what is happening on the iPad on the whiteboard, but you cannot control it. In reality, the iPad should be seen as a personalised learning tool with exciting folders for each learner and the interactive whiteboard as a different engaging tool for learning.

### **A reminder of how to get apps**

**You will need an iPod Touch,iphone or an iPad.**

**The apps for very special learners that I have listed are all free or about 59p. The 'lite' or free ones give you an idea of what they are like before purchasing.**

### **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 buy an app it is paid for through the account, without hassle. The invoice turns up in your email box, the next day.

**[www.iTunes.com](http://www.iTunes.com)**



### Handy hints for the uninitiated

- You need to be online to go to the iTunes store.
- The iTunes store should be listed in the left hand column on the screen of your device. Click on this and then look along the top of the page to find applications.
- Put the app title you want in the search box and when details appear, click on to 'buy', If it is free, you still need to click 'buy'.
- Always play with the apps and find out what they can do (or ask a child to do this while you watch!). They do so much more than you think. It gets the little grey cells working.
- 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 or buy the full app if you like what you see. Most free apps have a full version available to buy.



[www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com)

Google now has an extensive website for apps which is worth looking at. There is an education section which sounds like it has great potential. They call it 'building your 21<sup>st</sup> century school'. It will "help your students acquire skills that will make them soar in their education and out in the world". Sounds good to me.

As I promised, I have a full book coming out in September 2011!

### **"Apps, the iPad and Very Special Learners: A-Z for Beginners"**

The book is for the educator and the very special learner alike, ~beginning together.

- ✓ loads of carefully selected apps, all with clear descriptions,
- ✓ carefully selected apps described at early developmental levels,
- ✓ useful sources for finding apps on the web,
- ✓ communication apps especially for the beginner communicator,
- ✓ apps for those with autism (and everyone else too),
- ✓ references for specific YouTube clips showing apps being used by special learners,
- ✓ apps for including in multi sensory work and curricula,
- ✓ how to set clear targets with apps built in,
- ✓ one-sheet checklist for building up functional skills to use on an iPad,
- ✓ a section for the educator on work related apps,
- ✓ and aids for the iPad, such as an indestructible case designed for the SAS!

**Details out in September 2011**

**Now for some of my new favourite apps for very special learners!**

## Fluidity (free)



This is fabulous and I bought the full app. It is an interactive fluid dynamics simulation. You control the fluid flow and stunning fluorescent colours with the tips of your fingers. It is just like a lava lamp. The full purchase enables audio, and video out using VGA component or Composite cable.

(Sheer fun and creativity, finger tip use, relaxation, colours and blending colours in art!)

## Choo-choo Train (well worth buying)



I love these train journeys and activities - very relaxing! Become the greatest train controller as you juggle trains, flip railroad switches, navigate train crossings and collect coal to keep your steam engines stoked. The simplest level is choosing a train journey on which you take a leisurely ride and watch the scenery pass by, quite hypnotic. This is fabulous on the interactive board, really quite 3D. You can also go on to more complex levels (paradise for those with 'Thomas Tank disorder'). Chug along picking up passengers in over fifty beautiful landscapes, build your own train tracks, and manage your passenger pickups as everyone has a train to catch and won't wait.

(Storytelling with lots of different stories, trains and mechanics, building sequences, following a schedule, creating your own train set!)

## Piano Pups (free)



Very easy piano playing for anyone. It is very visually attractive with two rows of dogs, one black row and one row of spotty dogs. Play the dogs like a piano and there will be a different range of barks from each row. (Look for videos on YouTube)

(This has nice clear cause and effect, maths with spots, b/w and 'lots', literacy with the link to '101 Dalmatians' and biology with dogs!)

## Shrek Do The Roar (free) based on the movie



Do The Roar allows anyone to annoy Shrek, and cause him to bellow out his enormous Ogre roar. Use Butterpants to help you annoy Shrek - just keep punching the button, or shaking your iPad, and the little boy will badger the big ogre. Finally, Shrek will let loose with his famous ROAR. Be careful, you may need to clean your iPad afterwards!

(See videos about Shrek on YouTube and also apps of books about Shrek.)

(Experience and engage in loud sounds, interaction, storytelling, anticipation, dramatic interactions and modern cinema!)

## Dramatic Music



This is excellent and well worth 59p! A super range of dramatic music, sound or instrument clips for use in drama, poetry or just to enjoy. They range from cheers, to moans, to wedding music, boo, heavenly, a kazoo, salsa, waltzes, hip hop ... just click on the icon you want - very clear and easy to see and use.

(Great for music, drama, dancing, storytelling, sequences of sounds, emotions!)

## How to Train Your Dragon (free) based on the Dreamworks movie



ONLY THE STRONG CAN BELONG! Take to the skies as Toothless, the sleek, stealthy, fire-breathing dragon. He has his new friend, Hiccup, the Viking teenager who doesn't exactly fit in with his tribe's longstanding tradition of heroic dragon slayers. Explore the Viking home Island of Berk. Plunge from the vast heavens above to the depths of subterranean caves.

Apply lessons from Dragon Training as dragon and rider form a unique bond together and master the art of flying. (Look for videos on YouTube)

(Storytelling, fantasy, drama, sequences, experience of game playing, modern cinema!)

## Dr Seuss Books

Most of the classic Dr Seuss books have been successfully transferred to apps.



There are three ways to read these books:

- ▲ "Read to Me" — listen to the narrated story with words highlighted as they are read.
- ▲ "Read it Myself" — read the book in its traditional form.
- ▲ "Auto Play" — plays like a movie, automatically reading and turning pages.

## Dr Seuss ABC Lite (free-first 10 pages)



This app combines the original text and art work of Dr Seuss. From Aunt Annie riding an Alligator to the Zizzer-Zazzer-Zuzz, Dr. Seuss teaches the reader the ABC's through hilarious words and pictures, guaranteed to entertain anyone. Features available in this book include professional narration, background audio and enlarged artwork for each scene. To promote reading, individual words are highlighted as the story is read and words zoom up when pictures are touched. (And look for videos on YouTube).

(Use for storytelling, rhythm and rhyme, humour, poetry interactive, exposure to written words!)

## Photospeak - 3D Talking Photo



Photospeak is a cool app which lets a user choose a face portrait from a photo file and, through some kind of magic, speech is also recorded at the same time. Then, Abracadabra!, the photo begins to move and blink - and speak! In addition to the face and mouth movements, a swipe on the screen causes the head in the picture to move. And the eyes seem to follow you, just like the Mona Lisa...really eerie.

(Target art, imagination, interaction, faces, facial features, sequences of speech!)

## Megamind - free (based on the movie)

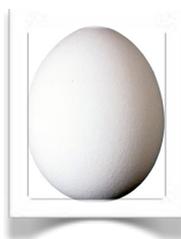


There are a couple of free 'Megamind' movie apps such as 'Megamind stress buster' and 'Megamind genius disguise generator'. Prepare yourself for the Megamind Genius Disguise Generator! Use this amazing application to disguise yourself for top-secret mega-missions. Once you have the disguise you want, save it, send it to a friend, or create a cool slider puzzle. There is also a story book app on iTunes

based on the Megamind film and look for videos on YouTube.

(Straight into experiencing theory of the mind, storytelling, drama and imagination, modern cinema!)

## Hatch (Free) and Hatchplus



Just tap the chosen egg and it cracks open to reveal a range of different characters as the shell cracks open.

- ▲ Fun, friendly animation and graphics.
- ▲ Easy to use for fingers and hands just tap, tap, tap.
- ▲ Different images appear when the egg is cracked open.
- ▲ Letters and numbers available as egg prizes.

(Egg-y science and where do chickens come from? Cause and effect, one, two, three..., literacy!)

## Butterflies Lite (free, but the full version is excellent)



One of my favourites. Turn it on; choose a beautiful background and the butterflies of your choice. Then watch the butterflies fly, place your finger on the screen and they land on it with fluttering delicate wing beats, magic. Lift your finger and the butterfly will fly back into the scene. Touch the white butterfly button in the corner to choose your favourite butterflies or a different background.

(Target hand eye coordination, choice, science, beauty, in nature, relaxation!)

### **Fart Cushion (free)**

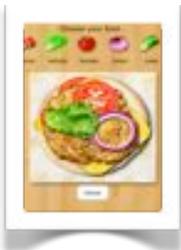


Make sure you have a real fart cushion for a scientific test comparison! Go to [www.hawkin.com](http://www.hawkin.com). The app provides:

- ✓Fart drums!
  - ✓Simon says-fart!
  - ✓Timed farts and movement detection.
  - ✓Thirty different farts - the mind boggles!
- (To see the video on YouTube, just put in the title)

(Extreme rude fun, sequences, different variations on body sounds, anatomy!)

### **More Burger (free)**



This is definitely not a 'healthy eating' app, but great for those who like hamburgers, especially for teenagers. You build up your hamburger, choosing what you want to eat. Crazy about hamburger? Never satisfied with the size of hamburger the fast food shop offers? Then now is the time to devise your own. With the help of Hamburger, you can serve yourself the biggest, tastiest hamburger in the world! It has a few fresh veggies included as well! Then make your own real one with real ingredients.

(Setting targets with a healthy eating debate, numeracy with sequences, choice between 'many', cookery!)

### **Skyburger (free)**



Now try Skyburger - where you have to catch the ingredients as they fall out of the sky! Skyburger puts you to work stacking burgers to order! Catch the right ingredients as they fall from the sky, and don't forget that top bun when you're done! Build over fifty unique burger orders that grow taller and taller the more orders you complete. Complete enough orders in a row and build an unlimited SkyBurger!

(Work experience, numeracy with counting, bigger and bigger, storytelling, imagination, cookery, experiencing a game!)

### **Sounddrop (free)**



Gorgeous sound and simple animations, easy on the eyes (black and white) and captivating movements of spots and lines. This is musical geometry! Draw lines and watch as Sounddrop uses them to create music! Listen with headphones for the full effect. Tap and drag to draw a line which may catch some of the spots or redirect them.

(Target some geometry, science, music, optical effects!)

### Plasma Globe (free)



This visual interactive masterpiece takes full advantage of the retina display in order to bring beautiful and crisp graphics - with addictive lighting effects and sounds! This is as exciting as using a real electrical plasma globe you can buy online from [www.hawkin.com](http://www.hawkin.com). Just touch the screen for exciting visual, crackling electricity. Absolutely amazing, beautiful, fun! Just touch the screen and watch when "electric bolts" of glowing light follow your fingers! You can play simple games of shooting the lightning at electrical bolts.

(Go for science, finger dexterity, awe and wonder, cause and effect!)

### Vocal Zoo (free)



Displays clear, explicit animal photos. Swipe with your hand to move to the next image. The word is at the bottom of the screen, although in capital lettering.

Tap on the picture for the sound of the animal, and on the word for the word to be spoken.

(Science is involved, with animals, words and sounds are encountered, literacy!)

### Pocket Bugs



Sorry everyone, most kids like to pretend to kill things, at least the bugs are not human. I like the gory splatter at the end, and I am a great granny! Would you like squashing bugs with zillions of different weapons? Would you like shooting at pictures of your friends? Would you like trying out lots of different crazy guns? Then this is the game for you.

- ^ Experiment with explosives, bugs, bomber airplanes, gun towers, bricks, machine guns, lasers, buzz saws, missiles, poison traps, explosive cookies....
- ^ Automatic Tesla, mini-gun and flamethrower towers!
- ^ Build your own traps - lay minefields and lure the silly bugs with candy sticks... which explode, too!
- ^ Thirteen types of silly victims... er, bugs!

(Targeting life and death, imaginative bugs, fun sequences, planning an activity!)

## MiniSquadron Special Edition (free)



Another zap-em app for teenagers. MiniSquadron Special Edition is the sequel to the award winning MiniSquadron - a frantic shooter, involving lots of little colourful planes all vying for supremacy of the skies! They can do a range of flying stunts as they try to destroy invaders of the sky. This version provides two free levels. Each level is beautifully drawn and accompanied by a classical music track, helicopters which hover, weapons such as fireballs and animals to shoot down including Jellyfish, Vampires and Hamsters!

(Lots of fun, competition, eye-hand coordination, planning and plotting, flight!)

## Baby Shapes and Animals HD (free)



'Baby Shapes' and 'Animals' help identify shapes in animal puzzles. The simple shapes have high contrast images. This is an introduction to simple game play and also an interactive learning experience at early developmental levels. The free version offers eight animals, one environment and one song. Both apps were developed by Baby Cortex (American), a company with expertise in 'edutainment' apps.

The full version features over fifty animals, seven environments and seven tunes. (To see video on YouTube, just put in the title).

(This is an introduction to simple game play and also an interactive learning experience at every early developmental level.)

## Peekaboo - a series of peekaboo apps (some free)



**Peekaboo Barn Lite** is free. Go inside a little bouncing barn where you will find friendly farm animals are waiting to pop out and surprise you. Try and guess who they are, tap the doors to find out! There are three animals in this version. The full version of Peekaboo Barn has thirteen animals, a barn party, a night sequence, audio options, and a Spanish version. If you like Peekaboo Barn, check out the sequels, **Peekaboo Forest** and **Peekaboo Wild**.

(These apps are good for animal names and noises, 'cause and effect' and anticipation, for the younger learner!)

**Sparkabilities 1 HD for iPad** (covers developmentally 3 to 18 months)  
**Sparkabilities Babies 2 for iPad** (covers developmentally 8-24 months)



Sparkabilities is based on the American 'PlayWisely' developmental system (so perhaps a 'pinch of salt' in their descriptions). The app is more than pretty pictures set to classical music. Sparkabilities is intended to entertain the learner and develop essential learning skills. It includes engaging movies from the Sparkabilities DVD series. Eight sets of interactive flash cards correspond to the movies. The educator can use flashcards with the learner, or the learner can use cards independently.

(Target to the developmental level of the learner (be careful for it being too babyish) and see what happens, all the pre requisites to learning will be encountered too!)

**Touchy Books HD for readers**

(first book is free - you can have a sneak preview of the first five pages of other books)



These are well worth exploring for a mixed group of learners. They contain original creations and classic fairytales. The books are available in four languages. Each book is adapted for children of different ages. There is a game play for the stories which includes lots of funny animations and the reader can interact with the sounds.

(Experience literacy, storytelling, touch and create, classic stories!)

**Sock Puppets (free)**



Sock Puppets lets you create your own lip-synched videos. Add Puppets, props, scenery, and backgrounds and start creating. Hit the record button and the puppets automatically lip-synch to your voice.

(Good for drama, craft, storytelling, imagination, acting& creating artistic sets!)

**Talking Roby Celik (free)**



Roby is a talking hip-hop dancing robot. He is similar to 'Talking Tom' but you can type in words for him to speak or talk to him. The voice is very weird - full of echoes and metallic sounds. Poke or pet Roby to see his reactions. Press buttons to see Roby dance three different dances (dances available as an app purchase). (To see video on YouTube, put in the title).

(Target drama, different voices, interaction, experience of words and commands!)



## Adam's Game



Adam's Game is a game for early levels of development. The game shows three pictures and asks the learner to touch one of them ("Touch the cow!"). When the right item is chosen, the game cheers. If an incorrect picture is chosen, the game says "Uh-Oh" and flashes the right picture. After several turns, the game rewards with music and a group of objects floating across the screen. Adam's Game also allows you to add your own pictures and voices to the game. To customize Adam's Game with your own flash cards, simply drag your finger in a large circle anytime during game play. At this point, you can add pictures. Users can provide their own voice-over for items.

(Literacy, sequences, choice, maths with choice of one out of three, flash cards!)

## Touch Spray



Especially for teenagers, so get out your spray cans and start painting some graffiti! Create your own art using realistic spray cans in all different colours and sizes. Touch Spray lets you choose your colour, your size, a background to spray on, and then go to work leaving your mark on the wall (without a chance of getting arrested). Have hours of fun making your mark and sharing it with your friends.

(Mark making, art, literacy, creativity!)

## 'Disney' (free)



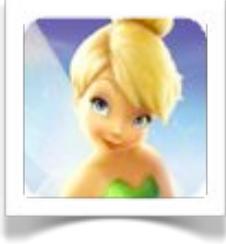
Need I say any more except it is a brand that all learners seem to know about! There is gorgeous imagery and cartoons ....



## Yes No

Simplicity rules okay! YesNo was designed with one purpose in mind~ to provide an easy to use, affordable way for a nonverbal child with autism and motor planning issues to communicate with those around him. The application is straightforward. It has two, large, colour coordinated buttons...one for yes, and one for no. Press either, and you will hear a voice read your choice of yes or no. There is a choice of voices, man, woman, cartoon, boy or girl. Respectful of gender. Love it ..... just swipe and have power over your world!

## Disney's Fairies Fly Lite (free)



This is the app based on the Disney film 'Fairies', which I enjoyed with my granddaughters (no boys allowed - very girly, blow the sexism) - loved the fairy dust - and will buy the movie for their birthday!

Fly with the fairies and discover a world of adventure and fun. This magical game captures the excitement of the changing seasons in the

heart of Never Land, in a place called Pixie Hollow.

Fly with the water-talent Fairy, Silvermist, in the cool waters above Spring Valley. Iridessa, the light-talent Fairy, could use some help to light fireflies in the Summer Glade. Help catch flower petals as they flutter in the breeze of the Autumn Forest with Rosetta, the garden-talent Fairy. Soar over the Winter Woods with Fawn, the animal-talent Fairy, as she gathers nuts and berries for all the animals preparing for winter. And let's not forget Tinker Bell! Fly with Tinker Bell to find lost things at the Beach Cove.

Simply tilt your iPad to guide your Fairy. As you fly, try to pick up items and collect Pixie Dust to score points and unlock new surprises. Watch out for birds, thistles and other hazards that might slow you down. With dazzling graphics and a beautiful orchestral score direct from the creators of the Disney Fairies movies (To see videos on YouTube, just put in the title). Need I say any more!

**Magic dust and fairies - girls only!**

**That's all for now! Watch out for the book this autumn!**

### You Tube and ipad clips

Go to the website [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and use the following instructions to find some really interesting clips. If you want to download the clip (to impress the powers that be into buying an ipad) then use [www.zamzar.com](http://www.zamzar.com), I use this without a problem so you can too!

For film clips on You Tube about the use of ipads, for particular special needs, then try a general search by putting in a phrase such as 'ipad autism' or 'ipad disability' to find ones to suit you. The clips are all American at the moment, the ipad was released months before the UK. I hope some British ones hit the ipad soon!

### Richard Hirstwood

Innovations wizard Richard, has great clips on how to use the ipad and also brilliant apps that he has found useful, some of which are mentioned above. Go to [www.sensology.org](http://www.sensology.org) look for 'sensory ideas' and the clips will be there along with other useful ideas.

[Flocatalyst@aol.com](mailto:Flocatalyst@aol.com) June 2011

