## Using PixWriter with Totally Blind Students with Complex Learning Needs

Bruce McClanahan, Assistive Technology Specialist

[mcclanahan.bruce@gmail.com](mailto:mcclanahan.bruce@gmail.com)

January 2025

Version 1.3

PixWriter is a software program that is sold by the Attainment Company. This program is available in iOS and Windows, but only the iOS version is accessible for totally blind students. PixWriter is a word processor that helps writers compose documents without needing to master phonics, spelling, or the alphabet.

Word banks can be created that can be accessed with two switches and speech output. This program is accessible for totally blind students with complex needs, and it is also very useful for CVI students who are in Phase 1, who frequently access information through the auditory channel. PixWriter is a switch accessible application with speech output.

Attainment Company, Inc.

1158 Clarity Street, PO Box 930160

Verona, WI 53593-0160

## Setup

1. Create a user without any access methods. Lessons cannot be developed with the access strategies turned on. I have labeled this user Staff.
2. Create a new file. Select the Grid icon in the lower left-hand corner.
3. Select the Settings icon in the upper right-hand corner.
4. Go to Word Bank size and select 64 buttons, this will give the file 4 rows.
5. Click on the first row and enter your sentence beginning.
6. In the same row select 4 or 5 sentence ending. The text will be very small in the grids, but these lessons are developed for students who are accessing the material auditorily with switch access turned on.

## Using PixWriter

1. Connect a Bluetooth switch to the iPad. Key content for Switch 1 needs to be set to Spacebar and Switch 2 needs to be set to Enter.
2. Open PixWriter and add a student.
3. Go to the student’s Options, then Settings.
4. Go to System and select Scanning, Double Switch.
5. Auditory cue, select Speech.
6. The Listen button can be navigated to with switch access, but it is time consuming. I would suggest placing an APH Feel ‘n Peel sticker on the Listen button.
7. Select one of the files that were created when using the Staff user.
8. I am strongly advocating with Attainment for more improvements for totally blind students. To the best of my knowledge PixWriter is the only program that is accessible for errorless writing activities for totally blind students with complex learning needs.