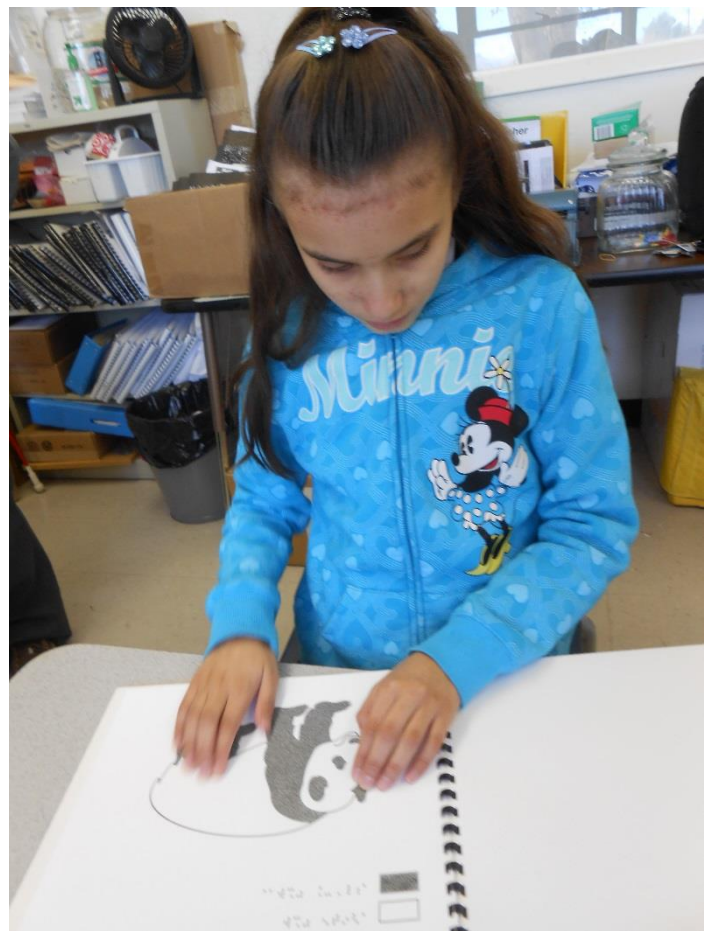


AnimalWatch Vi Suite Project is Out in the Schools

L. Penny Rosenblum

Did you know that a polar bear can smell a seal up to 1 mile away? I didn't until I became the Project Director for AnimalWatch Vi Suite (www.awvis.org) at The University of Arizona. Jane Erin and I teamed up with Dr. Carole Beal, an educational psychologist interested in technology-based learning. Fifteen years ago she developed a computer-based teaching program called Animal World. It was so long ago that the program didn't even use the Internet! Now, 15 years later, here we are developing an iPad app and accessible graphics to help youth build their pre-algebra readiness skills while learning about endangered species.

Jane, Carole and I have assembled a phenomenal team to support us in the development of our materials. Students using AnimalWatch Vi Suite complete units of word problems that contain authentic science content about endangered species. We currently are conducting usability testing in Tucson and Phoenix. **THANK YOU TO THE TVIS AND STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN PART OF OUR USABILITY TESTING!** We're observing how youth use the iPad, how they locate materials in the graphics (e.g., tables, charts, maps), and what tools they use to complete their computation. Jane is taking some videos of students exploring tactile graphics and will develop a scheme to analyze these so we all can better understand how tactile readers gather information. We're encouraging the youth to tell us what they think works well in the app and what changes they would like to see. We're also gathering their input on the braille materials and graphics (tactile and print).



Continued:

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During the 2013-2014 school year we will be doing a pilot study in Arizona before we go national the following year. We will be recruiting students whose math skills are at the 5th-9th grade level. Please visit our web site at www.awvis.org to learn more about our project, become our friend on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. Look for more information in future newsletters or through the listserv so that you and your students can be involved with our project next school year. Please email me at rosenblu@u.arizona.edu or call me at 520-621-1223 to discuss anything related to this project.

