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INTRODUCING UPAR
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     >> SHELBY KAPPLER: Okay. I think we'll go ahead and get started here. So thanks for joining this afternoon. My name is Shelby Kappler. I'm an Assistive Technology Program Specialist with the Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources as well as a Project Coordinator for the Wyoming Accessible Educational Materials Clearinghouse Project.
     So we are pleased today to be discussing the universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading, or uPAR.
     So I'll jump right in. So what is the uPAR? So this is a tool designed to help educators to assess students with reading difficulties to determine what the most appropriate alternate format might be. More specifically, whether or not their students would benefit from a read-aloud accommodation.
     The uPAR provides data on -- after the students have completed the protocol. Educators can go back in and review the student data, which helps to better inform whether or not the student will benefit from a reading accommodation or not. As well as allows educators to track or monitor their students' progress over time.
     This software or this program is available on all major platforms. So Google, Safari, Firefox, and also several different school platforms like Schoology or Canvas. You'll probably work on those as well.
     This is a Don Johnston product that was developed by Dr.

Denise DeCoste and Linda Bastiani Wilson.

So the uPAR will benefit a number of people. Both students and educators. For students to benefit the students, students will be able to access grade level or even higher than grade-level text. Students should be able to increase their comprehension skills. Maybe help to increase student participation in class. Because they may be feeling more independent or confident with reading. Then in school activities more broadly.

The uPAR can benefit educators because this tool is pretty easy to use and can certainly help educators to -- oops -- to determine reading accommodations for their students. With the statistics and the data that is provided by the program, it would help to support accommodation requests or testing accommodations and can also be put on the IEP to support IEP goals or specific accommodations.

Once a need for a reading accommodation is identified, it's going it be a lot easier for educators to determine the best tools to support that reading accommodation.

So how does the uPAR work? So to start using the uPAR, the educator or the admin would go to universalpar.com. This is the home page where educators can sign up. They can add and manage their students. They can view reports from their students' activity and data. And they can also add additional educators. So a lot of this is from my view as an administrator of an account. But I'll also show you what a student view might look like.

Listed under the main three buttons here, which are Manage Students, View Reports, and Manage Educators, there's a list here of other don Johnston products which may be useful after students have completed the protocol.

So in order to add students, it's probably the first step that you'd want to do as an educator. You would click on the Manage Students button. And you'll be prompted to add students. So there's a couple ways that you can do this. In order to add students, you can add them individually using their district email address is probably what's recommended. You can also add them through a Google or Microsoft email address account.

You can also upload several students through a CSV file. If you want to add multiple students at once, you can enter in each email address. And then would click Next. Or if you just want to add a single student at one time, you can go ahead and click That's All For Now.

So in my practice and to help myself learn the program a bit better, I created a profile with my own account. You'll see my name throughout a lot of the demonstration. So once the student email has been added, they'll show up in your Managed Students roster. Where you'll have a list of your students' user names, their emails, and then on the far right-hand side of that list, you'll have a little i icon for information as well as a

Delete button.

Students are not going to receive an email invite, but they will have to go to a separate website to begin the protocol.

Once you have student profiles created, if you click on the little i, that information symbol on right-hand side, it will bring up a popup window that's titled Taking uPAR. And this describes the steps for administering the protocol. So you'll have your student go to startpar.com. Then they're going to sign in with their Google account or Microsoft account or school district email. And then they will be able to start the protocol.

So Assessing Students. This is where we're going to switch to what the student side would look like and go through what the protocol actually is and what it does.

So when a student signs into startpar.com, like I said, they're going to log in with whatever log-in is their preference. The Google, Microsoft, or their district school email. And the protocol will automatically begin right away. The student is going to be asked to choose their grade level. And then they'll be walked through the process of the protocol. So they're going to get a number of reading passages. Some will have human voice. Some will have a computer voice. And a couple of them, a student will be asked to read silently and independently. So the student can choose from grade levels 1 through 12. They'll need to choose their current grade level that they're in. And this will help serve as a baseline throughout the protocol.

Then the student will get an instructions page or directions which talks about how it's going to help the student find the best way that they like to read. And basically like I just said, it will describe that they're going to get passages with human readers, computer readers, and be asked to read silently.

The student will click Next. And they'll be brought to a list of titles of reading passages. So it will have anywhere from maybe 8 to 12 different reading passages that they can choose from which is one of the cool things is that the students have some sort of say in what they get to read.

Students will be able to choose from a variety of topics. And many of these stories are going to include life lessons. Maybe some trivia or some kind of a historical component. And on each of the titles, there's a little speaker or an audio button. And so students can click on those and have each of the titles read aloud to them.

Once they've chosen the topic, they'll go into that reading passage and that will be the start of the actual protocol. So they're going to have a pretty easy-to-read page. It's not going to have too many distractions or things going on. And it's just a standard font, black text on a white background. The passage, if it's got a human or computer voice reading it, will have a

progress bar at the top which is blue. Which shows the student how far they've read. The student can follow along visually or listen as they prefer.

There is a pause and then, again, a start button over on the left-hand side of that progress bar. And the student has the ability to choose their reading speed from slow, medium, and fast.

Each of the reading passages will be one to two minutes. Really pretty short reading passages.

At the end of each reading passage, the student will be asked a number of comprehension questions. And I believe that these comprehension questions, the number of questions will adjust based on how the student is doing. These questions range from questions such as this story is about where the student just has to choose the main idea. All the way up to vocabulary questions. There should be at least one vocab question. So in this example, what does the word, fatigue, mean in this story? These questions are all multiple choice. Or fill in the blank. As in the question on the left here. And the student will always be able to choose one of these. The questions will present one at a time. So it's pretty easy for the student. And then they can -- once they make a selection, a Next button will pop up.

>> PEG MONTEITH: Shelby, can I ask a quick question?

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Yes, please.

>> PEG MONTEITH: This is Peg. Does the student start at grade level then it adjusts from there? Is that how that works or?

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Yeah.

>> PEG MONTEITH: Okay.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Yeah, we'll talk about that kind of as we go.

>> PEG MONTEITH: Okay, great.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: The student will start and read all of the passages at their current grade level.

>> PEG MONTEITH: Okay.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: If they're doing well, they'll ask -- they can increase or decrease as needed.

>> PEG MONTEITH: Okay. It does adjust as they go along.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Right, there will be a re-check that comes up.

>> PEG MONTEITH: Okay. Great. Thank you.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Sure. So when the student has completed the first initial several passages, probably four to six, they'll get a complete popup window that says what the protocol found. In this case for my student profile, I'm able too read at a 6th grade level when it is a read aloud. So I'm pretty proud of that.

So re-checks. This is kind of what we were talking about here, Peg. So the initial protocol, those four to six passages, are going to be all at grade level just to assess where the

student's at. Then the student can sign in again. It could be immediately. It could be couple weeks or couple months later to do a recheck. So, again, the student would sign back into that startpar.com log-in. And they should be immediately prompted to do a recheck. So they can do a quick check. It will be just a couple of passages. Or they can do a complete do-over.

      >> PEG MONTEITH: Okay.

      >> SHELBY KAPPLER: Go ahead, did you have a question?

      >> PEG MONTEITH: No, I just -- that makes sense. Thanks.

      >> SHELBY KAPPLER: Sure. So it is recommended to do re-checks. Or to do a completely new protocol every so often. So whatever the team decides that should be, it could be quarterly. Maybe half a year. Maybe beginning and end of the school year. Just to kind of check and see if the student has progressed or their reading ability has changed.

So this is examples of after a re-check. So the student does have the ability to choose whether or not they would like to keep going. In this case, on the left-hand side, the student received a popup window that said You've made reading progress. Would you like to see if you can read at an even higher reading level when text is read aloud?

So as long as the student keeps doing well, then they will continue to get higher levels of passages until they stop making progress. In this case, on the right-hand side, the student was able to read through grade levels higher when text is read aloud. So with this re-check, it's only the read-aloud accommodation. So the human and the digital voice readers. Students will not be asked to read independently.

So are there any other questions at this moment about the protocol, itself?

All right. So the View Reports is kind of the next section we want to talk about. I think this is really cool. It's a really valuable tool for educators.

So back on our Educator dashboard, the second button down says View Reports. This is where you go to see your student results. It will bring up your list of students in the Manage Students menu. And you can click on the students' user name in order to bring up their specific results.

So I have a variety of results that we're going to go through here. These are all sample students. So it's okay to share all of their data.

So the results chart looks like a table. Across the top, you have one row with multiple columns, which are each grade levels 1 through 12. And the left-hand side, the columns you have initial test, so in this case was March of 2022. So the top row is going to be independent reading score, and the bottom row also tested on the same date is going to be with an accommodation. So with those read-aloud options.

On the right-hand side of the table, it gives a key. So this little face is the student's current grade level. It gives

an icon of the book. That is the recommended text level for the student to read at. And then the chart boxes will fill in with either a green, yellow, or red box. Green means that the student answered the comprehension questions with 75% or higher accuracy. Yellow is that the student answered with 26% to 74% accuracy. And red is 0% to 25% accuracy.

There's a gray box for incomplete if the student was unable to complete the protocol.

So for this particular student, according to this chart, they are a 6th grade student. When they practiced reading independently without any accommodation, they answered 52% of the comprehension questions correctly. So it falls into the yellow range. However, if we look at their accuracy with the reading accommodation, it is 100%. So it looks like the student was able to read at grade level with an accommodation. The student was asked to try reading at a 7th grade level. But they were only able to achieve 22% accuracy. With a reading accommodation. So there wasn't -- it does not help improve the student's reading to read at a higher grade level, but it does bring them up to meet grade level. So that's how you would read that.

So we'll look at a couple other examples here. Also at the top of each chart, it does give the specific recommendation. It describes the story type. So in this second example, it's an informational passage. And it also gives the total time spent reading at grade 6 independent passage. And the total time spent reading grade 6 passages with a read-aloud accommodation. So those times can also help you to make a decision as to whether or not a reading accommodation would be helpful.

So the second example we have, again, a 6th grade student who is reading at 22% accuracy. Independently. So really not too great at grade level. But they were able to come up to 100% accuracy with a read-aloud accommodation at the 6th grade level. They were also at 100% at the 7th grade level. 92% at the 8th grade. And 100% at the 9th grade level. It looks like that's about where the student stopped and that would be their recommended text level is that 9th grade text level. So in this case, the student was able to read at and exceed their grade level.

This next example shows that a student is a 6th grade student. And when reading with an accommodation still only answered 29% of the questions correctly at the 6th grade level. So they went down to a 5th grade level and did a little bit better at 33%. Down to a 4th grade level, still at 33%. And then down to a 2nd grade level, they were able to achieve 90% accuracy with a reading accommodation. And 90% accuracy with the independent reading.

So in this case, the student does not benefit from a reading accommodation because they were able to read at the same reading level both independently and with an accommodation.

They're just at a lower reading level. 2nd grade. Excuse me, 3rd grade reading level.

So I have another example here where the result is no accommodation is necessary. This 6th grade student reads 100% accuracy independently as well as 100% accuracy with an accommodation. They read at 92% accuracy with an accommodation. All the way to up 9th grade. And then in 10th grade, they drop to about a 72% accuracy at 10th grade. So they recommended reading level as 9th grade. However, there isn't a whole lot of difference between the silent reading and the reading accommodation. So in this case, the student wouldn't necessarily need an accommodation.

And then this last example I have of the student reports is a re-check report. And so this is the same student as the previous example where they were able to read at the 6th grade level and up to the 9th grade level with near 100% accuracy. This student was tested in March of 2022 and then re-tested with the reading accommodation in November of 2022. So when they were re-tested, their initial reading score in the 10th grade level at 72% came up to 92%. And they were also able to read at 11th and 12th grade level at 100%. So this student's recommended text level jumped up from 9th grade all the way to 12th grade over a period of about eight months. So that's a great benefit of re-checking a student to kind of monitor and track their reading progress.

Any questions about the reports?

>> PEG MONTEITH: Just a quick -- Shelby, I know that district staff look at ways to progress monitor. And this is really more for making sure that the student has appropriate accommodations. So that they can read the text and things at grade level that they may be having to read regardless of their reading level. Correct? But it's really not a monitoring tool.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Right. Not an overall monitoring tool. They'll be able to see the reading progress, but, yeah, it's pretty specific.

>> PEG MONTEITH: Okay.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: So the uPAR is, like I said, the universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading. And that's the online version. And it does have a subscription fee or fee per seat for students to use. And so a question on this slide is is there a free version? The answer to that is yes. There is a downloadable and printable PDF version. So this is just the Protocol for Accommodation for Reading. No U on that one. It can be found on the Don Johnston website. It's relatively easy to administer. It has three sections. Just like the universal Protocol. In this case, the student will read a passage out loud and that's comparable to the silent reading that they do on the computer. And this will help to establish a baseline for the student's reading speed, their fluency, and their independent reading level.

The next stage would be to have an adult reader. So it could be the student's teacher, librarian, paraeducator or someone else in the school that the student can listen to. And then they can check their comprehension level after that adult reader.

Similarly, the third stage of this protocol would be finding a text reader. It could be something that the student is already familiar with, if it's something that they are currently using. Or any sort of text-to-speech generator on a computer or a tablet. Along those lines.

So how can districts try this in Wyoming? And so the Wyoming Accessible Educational Materials Clearinghouse did purchase a number of uPAR seats that are available to pass out for free to Wyoming educators for districts to try and see if this is a tool that's going to work well for them. And if it does, that can be something that they could look into purchasing.

I would be able to add educators with their district email. Educators will not receive an email invite, but they are -- they would have to go into universalpar.com and log in with their email or Google, Microsoft, accounts. So should be pretty easy to disperse those seats.

I was told by the Don Johnston representatives that for trial purposes, educators can create student profiles, use them, go through the protocol, then delete those students again and that would free up a seat for those educators and they could try it with a few different students. So this would not be a permanent solution. Districts would not be able to just purchase one seat and erase all of their students. But for trial purposes, this would be allowed.

So if the uPAR sounds like something that districts in Wyoming would be interested in trying, I'd be happy to share a couple of seats with you guys. Please reach out to the Wyoming AEM Clearinghouse. I can be reached directly at 307-766-5770. Or you can send us an email at aem@uwyo.edu. Also if you're interested in learning a bit more about the Wyoming AEM Clearinghouse, our website is uwyo.edu/wind/aem.

So with that, I can open it up if there are any other questions.

>> PEGGY BRITAIN: Hi, Shelby, this is Peggy Britain from uPAR 6. We've been using the uPAR for quite a while. They've reconfigured it. This version. Are you familiar with the older version versus the old version?

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: I am not. I'm relatively new to uPAR. And so I was using the older version when I first started. But then I was having some technical difficulties and reached out and they told me that I was using the older version. So they would definitely prefer that you use the new version, even though the old version still sort of works.

>> PEGGY BRITAIN: One of the reasons we started using it is

to help identify not only if a student needed an oral reading accommodation but would they do better with a human reader or text reader? It no longer breaks out the human reader versus text reader in the reports. I didn't know if that was anything you knew anything about. How we determine that now on our -- which is the best reader.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: It's not something that I know about, but I'm certainly happy to reach out. That's a question that I would love to know as well.

>> PEGGY BRITAIN: Okay. The downfall of their reconfiguration is it did not break that out any longer.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Right.

>> PEGGY BRITAIN: Okay. I'll pass on this information to our people tomorrow.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Sure. Thank you for joining.

>> PEGGY BRITAIN: Thank you.

>> GISELE KNOPF: Shelby, I went ahead and put a link in the chat for the survey. So if everyone could complete the survey, we'd appreciate it. Thank you.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Yes, thank you. Are there any other questions?

>> PEG MONTEITH: Thanks for walking through that, Shelby. That's an interesting program. I've seen a lot of Don Johnston's programs over the years and this one was new to me. But it sounds like it's been out there a while. And I think it's a good way to help.

I would think, too, it would be a good way for teams to explain to parents how they came up with those accommodations because parents can -- don't always understand what's allowable and what's not. In terms of how kids are, you know, accountability with testing and things like that. And so I think that might be also helpful for parents to understand how that accommodation works for the reading passages. That's a tough one, especially as kids get into middle and high school. The demands of their ability to read and comprehend are so much greater and move so much more quickly. That's a tough one for kids who struggle or maybe non-readers. And so I think that would be really -- it would be really interesting to see the difference between how a student with some not so major struggles walked through that uPAR and one of the same grade level that really does struggle. A student with dyslexia or something like that would be interesting to see how those turn out. That's cool.

>> SHELBY KAPPLER: Right. I think it would be really interesting, too, to see not only students with, you know, like you said, a known disability but even just students who benefit from, you know, they're auditory learners. You know, maybe we can't figure out why they're struggling with reading and there's not a dyslexia diagnosis. Not other things going on. But, you know, just knowing those sorts of things. So I think it could

certainly be beneficial to, you know, test almost every student. It's quick and pretty easy. Just find out what type of learner, style of learners students are.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: Absolutely. And I think about students that I've known over the years who can sit through class and pick things up. Maybe pick things up auditorily but then being able to translate that into taking notes then going back and reading a passage in a book may be really difficult. So kind of untangling some of those sorts of learners who have multiple issues with accessing text.

    >> SHELBY KAPPLER: Okay.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: So, yeah. Cool. Very interesting. I like that.

    >> SHELBY KAPPLER: Great.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: Do you have people right now who are accessing, who are reaching out and accessing some of those free seats?

    >> SHELBY KAPPLER: We do not at the moment.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: Okay.

    >> SHELBY KAPPLER: But if you know of anyone who might be interested, please feel free to pass that information along.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: Okay. Yep. I will do that. Sounds great.

    >> SHELBY KAPPLER: Great.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: Uh-huh. Thanks.

    >> SHELBY KAPPLER: All right. Thanks, everyone, for joining. Have a great afternoon.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: Thank you.

    >> JENNIFER D'ALESSANDRO: Thank you, great information.

    >> PEG MONTEITH: It was great information. Take care, everybody. Tomorrow's Friday. See you in the morning.