

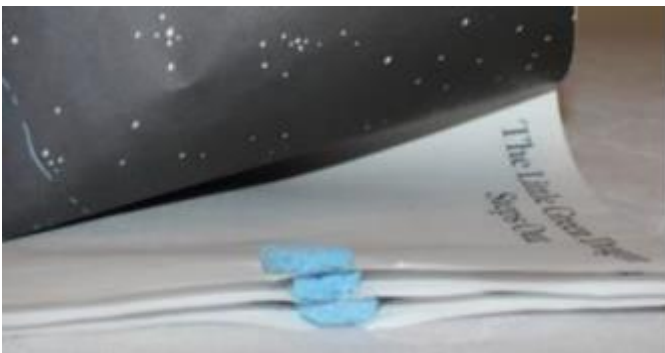
Coleman, M. B. (2012). Technology spotlight: Page Fluffers. *Newsletter of the Division for Physical and Health Disabilities* (Summer ed., Vol. 29(1) pp. 10-12). Arlington, VA: Division for Physical and Health Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children.



Technology Spotlight: Page Fluffers

by Mari Beth Coleman

Students with limited fine motor abilities often have difficulty turning pages in a book one at a time. There are many ways to adapt books to make them accessible. A few newsletters ago, I discussed a high-tech solution for making books accessible with PowerPoint software. Now, I am going to give you a few ideas for making page turning accessible with page fluffers. Turning pages in a book requires the ability to move the fingers in a manner that pinches or otherwise moves one page apart from the pages behind it. Many individuals with poor fine motor control have difficulty with this skill. Page fluffers are any items made from lightweight material that are placed between pages in a book, thus allowing a reader to put his or her finger between the pages.



Example of page fluffers made from pieces of sponge.

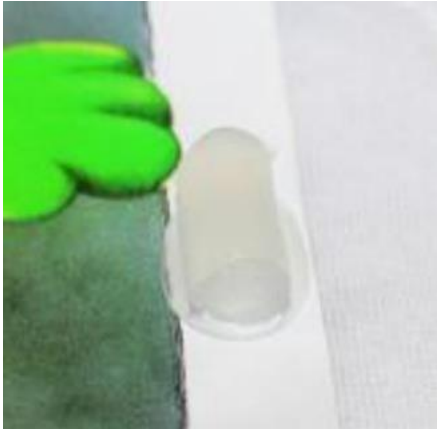
Although page turning still requires a gross arm movement, placement of page fluffers eliminates the need to use more than one finger to turn book pages. Some types of page fluffers can be beneficial to individuals who need to turn pages using a foot, headstick, or mouthstick. For many students, but especially those accessing books with

alternate body parts, Page fluffers may be more beneficial when the book is placed on a slanted surface. Common materials from which page fluffers are made include weather stripping (foam that goes around doors or windows and can be purchased at home improvement stores), small beads, Velcro (one side only), craft foam, or thick paper.



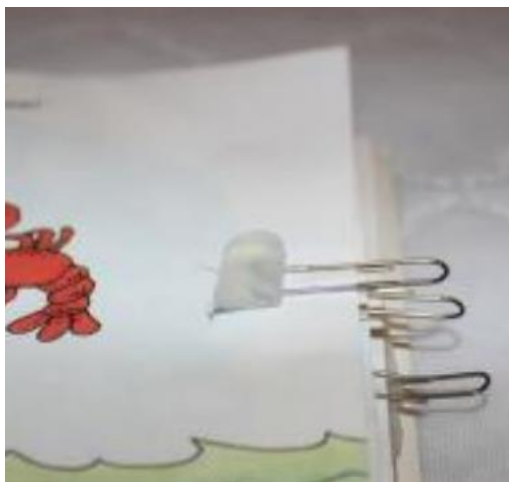
Page fluffers made from pieces of index cards glued to the book.

Page fluffers that work for one student may not work well for another. You should consider specific physical or sensory needs of the student when deciding what material to use for page fluffers. During my years teaching P-12 children, I had several students for whom soft, spongy page fluffers made from weather stripping worked great. However, one of my students with severe spastic cerebral palsy flattened that type of page fluffers or accidentally ripped the foam because of the way she had to handle a book to access it. Page fluffers made from little pieces of hot glue (see example below) were a better solution for her.



Page fluffer made of hot glue strip glued into book.

Page fluffers can be added permanently to a book or can be made so that they are removable. When I worked providing consultation to general education teachers who served students with physical disabilities, I met a 2nd grader who really wanted to turn pages in books instead of having the paraprofessional help him. We could not adapt the books in that classroom, so I made page fluffers for him consisting of hot glue on paper clips. The paraprofessional would set up the weekly story with page fluffers and he was able to access the book by inserting his finger between pages or getting his finger under a paper clip to turn pages.



Removable page fluffers made from paper clips and hot glue.

These page fluffers worked well for that student and allowed him to have more independence in accessing materials in his general education class. For some students, easily removable paper clips, owl clips, or binder clips can be used as page fluffers. Other materials could be attached to paperclips to make page fluffers specific to a student's needs.



Page fluffers made with paper clips, owl clips, or binder clips. These are taped in because I use this book for demonstration, but these can be used without tape to make them easily removable.

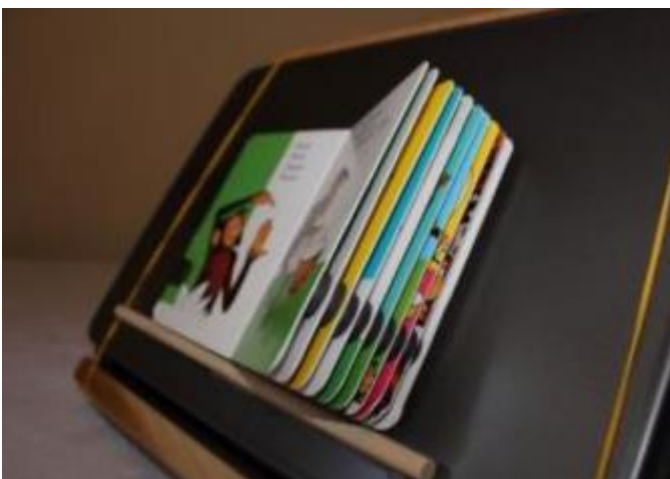
Now, I teach college-level students in a teacher preparation program. One of the assignments in my assistive technology class requires students to create a low technology device. Sometimes, I am wowed by the projects created by these future special educators! I want to share a few of the outstanding projects donated to me by students over the past couple of years (used with permission). These three student-created adaptations make board books accessible for young children with very limited fine motor skills. Board books are great because they are durable and easier to access without adaptations for some students; however, most board books are available only for books geared at very young children. Thus, older children with motor impairments need page fluffers that will work on paper pages.

The following books could be used for teaching independent page turning to young children with motor limitations. Pompom balls and popsicle sticks provide large spaces between pages and large surfaces for gripping. This idea might work for books made from thick paper – especially if smaller popsicle sticks were used:



Book adapted by University of Tennessee student, Carrie Thatcher, Summer 2011

Sometimes, board books will not stay open. The book and baking sheet below are a possible solution. Magnets placed between pages allow students to insert a finger for easy page turning. The book is held by the magnets to a baking sheet which has a dowel hot glued on the bottom to steady the book. When the page is opened, the magnet on the previous page holds that page open. This adaptation would take a bit more strength than the previous adaptation (pompoms) because the magnets must be separated. However, this is a great way to provide access to a book through the book being secured to the surface and the pages remaining open.



Book adapted by UT student, Tiffany Huff, Summer 2011

The last idea I will share is an example of an interactive board book made accessible with items that otherwise would have gone in the trashcan! This book is adapted with pieces of children's clothes hangers. The book has flaps that reveal pictures and text when lifted. This would prove problematic for many children with physical limitations. The book has small pompoms inserted under the flaps and plastic hanger pieces glued and taped under each flap. A hanger can be lifted to open the flap or it can be used to turn the page.



Book adapted by UT student, Jowahir Ahmed, Summer 2009

In conclusion, page fluffers are a simple way to make books accessible to students with fine motor limitations. Most of the time, they are quick and easy to install and can be made from materials that are inexpensive and readily available. Although very simple, page fluffers can make a big difference to students with fine motor limitations by allowing them to have increased independent access to books.

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