



Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members . Below you will find the February Update for the [Wisconsin Assistive Technology \(AT\) Forward Project](#). Through exciting learning opportunities, the AT Forward Project continues to move Wisconsin forward in the area of Assistive Technology!

New to AT Forward or Want to Browse Past Email Updates?

Go to the Wisconsin DPI [AT Forward webpage](#) and click on [Previous AT Forward Monthly Updates](#).

What is AT Forward?

The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project works with educators, practitioners, caregivers, and families to increase student autonomy in utilizing Assistive Technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning. The AT Forward Project provides a variety of resources and learning opportunities, including [Community of Practice \(CoP\) meetings](#), [micro-credentialing](#), and monthly email updates. Please help us grow our AT community in Wisconsin and refer others to the [AT Forward CoP](#), by visiting the [AT Forward Registration page](#).

From AT beginner to expert, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge level backgrounds!

Upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming February CoP meetings:

February 7, 2023, 4:00pm.-5:00pm.: [How to Use Assistive Technology to Support High School Students with Significant Needs](#) with Jenny Sikora and Angie Kirkpatrick. This one-hour fast paced session will highlight many different types of the technology, curriculum software, and apps that are utilized all day in classrooms with students with significant needs.

March 1, 2023, 4:00pm.-5:00p.m. Providing Accessible Educational Materials; How to monitor progress using AEM? This is the final session of the four-part AEM series and will focus on how to collect and utilize data to support AEM progress monitoring.

March 7, 2023, 4:00pm-5:00pm. : Executive Function Skills and the Impact on Behavior in the Classroom presented by Paige Buckingham. Do you want to help your students organize their materials, regulate behavior, or follow classroom routines? Then this training is for you. We will look at different Executive Function Skills, the impact in the classroom, and how you can adjust daily activities to model these to aid in your students learning skills for life. A variety of AT Tools will be discussed.

The table of contents below is designed so you can quickly jump to various sections of this update. You can also search this document using the command “Control F,” with a keyword to search for specific information. All monthly [AT Forward Updates](#) are stored electronically as resources on the AT Forward website.

Other AT Professional Learning Events

Statewide Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting

WisTech is overseen by the Statewide Assistive Technology Advisory Council. This council meets on a quarterly basis and the next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 16, 2023 from 9am until 12pm. Meetings are open to the public and this meeting will be held virtually using Zoom. To join the meeting please use the following link and meeting ID.

Meeting URL: <https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1610739296>

Meeting ID: 161 073 9296

For any questions please email DHSWistech@dhs.wisconsin.gov

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Micro-Credentials: The AT Forward is excited to provide free supported micro-credentials and macro-credentials for assistive technology learning opportunities. Micro-credentialing is an opportunity for educators to learn on their own time, pace, and place. Learning is structured in an online platform and is supported with email and video conference communication to enable clarity and success. As participants complete their micro-credentials, they receive feedback to assist in clarifying their goals and earn a digital badge. Digital badges can be added to your email signature to show others your commitment to assistive technology. For the 2022-23 school year, we are excited to announce new learning opportunities around Accessible Educational Materials (AEM), Early Childhood, and AT for Administrators .

Micro Credential status:

We are pleased to announce the following celebrations:

187 badges have been awarded to date.

10% of the badges earned have been in the area of Independent Living.

Congratulations to the following people who have earned one or more micro-credentials in Assistive Technology:

Tiffany Hacker Manitowoc School District 1 badge

Randi Hultman University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh 2 badges

Jen Rohrbaugh Muskego-Norway School District 1 badge

Holly Dart University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh 1 badge

Heather Gross Oshkosh Area School District 2 badges

Emily Block Green Bay Area Public Schools 2 badges

Hope Swanson Northwood 2 badges
Elizabeth Pearson University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh 1 badge
Terri Oliver School District of Milton 6 badges
Jenna Nowicki University of Wisconsin Oshkosh 2 badges
Kurt Williamsen Winnebago Mental health Institute 2 badges
Ronald Basler University of Wisconsin Oshkosh 1 badge
Alison Vlietstra DC Everest School District 1 badge
Alicia Frank Edgerton Hospital and Health Services 1 badge

Resource Suggestion:

When working with children with limited literacy skills it is helpful to have access to materials that support a task with pictures. The [Accessible Chef](#) is a site that does just that. This free site was designed as a Girl scout project to help the founder's brother who has Down Syndrome. The site uses clear digital pictures to give the user the ingredients, steps and tools needed to complete the task. The site is searchable and has pages of recipes. Some recipes are for non-edible things like crafts, and sensory play items. If you are looking for more scholarly information on the how and why of providing literacy to people with disabilities see this article on [Developing Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) and Literacy Interventions in a Supported Employment Setting](#).

Sometimes All We Need To Do Is Start A Conversation....

February 1-7th is [White Cane Week](#). Take a moment and consider what tools might benefit your students with visual impairments. Have you ever thought about how your everyday use of GPS could assist someone who is visually impaired? Take a minute and think about the physical configuration of your classroom. Are there items around your classroom that students with limited vision might trip over?

Knowing how to talk to someone who might be physically or sensory different than you can be a huge challenge. It is a difficult landscape to navigate when attempting to “help” another person. The [United Spinal](#)

Association has put together video's and a printed pamphlet to help everyone start this conversation. This pamphlet is appropriate for adults and children to start conversation on how to treat people who have disabilities. The quote on the last page says it all: "People with disabilities are individuals with families, jobs, hobbies, likes and dislikes, and problems and joys. While the disability is an integral part of who they are, it alone does not define them. Don't make them into disability heroes or victims. Treat them as individuals."

Looking to attend a conference but can't travel? Try a virtual conference. Inclusive Classroom Virtual Conference is being offered at no cost on Feb. 15th from 8-4 (CST). "The conference will feature sessions and strategies to help educators utilize individualized instruction that empowers every student to become an expert at learning. Technology and instructional interventions can be designed to support students with disabilities. These practices provide a pathway for designing inclusive, equitable and accessible educational experiences that meet the needs of every learner."

AAC Corner

As a reminder, the Assistive Technology Lending Center(ATLC) library website has been changed to <https://wisconsinat4all.com/>. After you are registered, login and click on Speech Communication; the program field should fill in as ATLC. All devices will show up or you can search for a specific device. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Hudson at CESA 2 donna.hutson@cesa2.org or call 262.473.1449.

AAC

In case you missed our live presentation on January 11th 2023 Kellie Bews from Tobii Dynavox gave a great presentation titled " Supporting Language with Integration of Core." Our speaker Kellie Bews helped participants make the connection between literacy, communication skills and language development. In her presentation research from Koppenhaver, Hendrix & Williams 2007 was shared. They stated that:

- Approximately 70% to 90% of students using AAC lag significantly behind same age, nondisabled peers in measures of reading
- More than 74% of adults using AAC score at the lowest levels of literacy achievement
- 90% of individuals with complex communication needs never develop literacy skills beyond a 1st grade level

Kellie Bews went on to discuss the links between emergency literacy skills and pre-reading skills. She stated that as educators we need to continually look at a comprehensive literacy instruction approach, that includes, alphabet and phonemic awareness, shared reading experiences, self-selected and independent reading, emergent writing activities, and independent writing with access to the full alphabet. Her presentation really emphasized the need for continual literacy skills development no matter the cognitive level of the student or age of the person.

Other resources shared were:

- [The Communication Matrix](#)
- [Software and Apps from Tobii Dynavox](#)
- [Karen Erickson's book Literacy for All](#)
- [Early Literacy Skills Checklist](#)

All CoP meetings are recorded and sectioned in 3 smaller parts to assist you with finding information quickly. This presentation on Supporting Language with Integration of Core and others can be found on the [AT Forward website](#).

QIAT Question

Have you ever wished there was a place where you could ask a question and get real people who use technology to answer you? Then [Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology](#) (qiat.org) is the place for you! QIAT is a nationwide organization of parents, users, and professionals in the field of Assistive Technology. It is a free to join organization that is always accepting new members.

Question: I am looking for a math program for a student with poor handwriting.

QIAT community, help me out!

Answers from the group:

Try <https://www.kiwiwrite.com>. This application runs on desktops, and chromebooks. It allows for various levels of math including high school and beyond math symbols. The program even allows for importing worksheets. A simple non-cluttered screen that allows students to concentrate on the process of math by removing the writing of math.

What is a feature match?

Feature matching occurs when you look systematically at what a student needs and the features of various programs. Below is an example of feature matching as it relates to students with physical disabilities and computer access.

When completing an evaluation, it is important to look at the student's disability-related educational needs. To further assist with this process, explore this resource on the DPI site that looks at the six areas of academic and functional skill. "Specifically, they are intended to serve as a guide for developing, reflecting on, and organizing developmentally and educationally relevant questions when planning and conducting a comprehensive special education evaluation aimed at accurately identifying a student's pattern of strengths and disability-related needs." *Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation: Six Areas of Academic and Functional Skill | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*. (2022). Dpi.Wi.Gov.

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/ccr-ieps/comp-eval/six-areas>

Feature matching occurs when you look systematically at what a student needs and the features of various programs. Below is an example of feature matching as it relates to students with print disabilities. Specifically addressing features in Bookshare, Learning Ally and different file types.

When conducting an IEP and having the conversation about “whether the student needs assistive technology services or devices,” consider asking these types of questions listed in the chart below as well as referencing the decision tree for [AEM](#). Does my student have....?

Area of Student Concern- Physical Access to a Computer	Potential Solution Feature Match
Student has difficulties visually tracking text.	Consider BookShare . If you download the file in WORD format, you can easily adjust the spacing between words, lines and paragraphs to allow for ease of reading.
Student finds it difficult to look at a white page.	Consider a trial with various color backgrounds or inverse of colors. It can assist a student with how they perceive and understand text. Link to color chart for web page design can assist teachers in understanding why color is important.
Student has a hearing impairment that affects the ability to understand audio at different pitch rates.	Bookshare , and programs like Read&Write , or Snap&Read have the abilities to change the pitch of the voice and type of voice.
Student has difficulties listening to computerized text to speech.	Consider trying a human read audio file. Learning Ally is designed to provide the user with human record speech. Bookshare is beginning to incorporate some audio files. Also, libraries often have devices called Playaways . These devices are single books on an MP3 player.

Student has difficulties turning pages in a book.	Consider Bookshare, iBooks or other electronic books. A simple single click switch can be used to turn the page, or use a touch tablet to allow for a simple swipe to turn the page. Design or setup a “ recipe ” that sends the task of turn the page to the iPad with a gesture, or single switch.
Student has difficulties with following speech either recorded or digitized at a “normal” rate.	Consider, Bookshare , and programs like Read&Write , or Snap&Read which have the abilities to change the rate at which text is read to a student.

Student has difficulties finding their place on the screen.	Consider programs that track the text as it is read to the student. Read&Write , or Snap&Read have these features built in .
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Potential resources/suggestions to assist students with reading:

Adjusting setting in [Bookshare for braille readers.](#)

Adjusting setting in [Bookshare for size, color and navigation of the book.](#)

[Quick start Guide to Reading Ally](#)

Article from the Scottsdale Schools [“A.T. for Leaders Handout.”](#)

If you have any questions or comments about the AT Forward Project, please contact Kathy White at Kathy.White@CESA2.org or Stacy Duffy at stacy.duffy@cesa2.org.

Together we can move AT Forward!!