Assistive Technology (AT) Forward October Update
Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members! The AT Forward Update is a monthly publication, which provides information about the AT Forward Project, highlights the upcoming AT Forward Community of Practice (CoP) meetings, and includes additional AT resources and tips.

Exciting News: Introducing Micro-Credentials for Assistive Technology!
The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward is excited to provide free supported micro-credentials and macro-credentials assistive technology learning opportunities for the 2021-22 school year, which will launch the week of October 11, 2021. Micro-credentialing is an opportunity for educators to learn on their own time, pace, and place. Through this process, you can earn a total of twelve badges for each completed micro-credentials. If you earn seven badges, you will qualify for a macro-credential. The courses are self-paced and coaching support sessions are available to provide guidance and to answer questions. There are many topics from which you can choose and customize your own learning, including assessment, AAC, vision, transition, etc. An additional micro-credential update will be shared with CoP members the week of October 11, 2021.

When is the next AT Forward CoP meeting?
The next AT Forward CoP meeting, *Who Makes Up the AT Team? Identification of Team Roles to Support Student Needs,* is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 5, 2021 from 4:00pm-5:00pm**. This hour-long, virtual meeting will provide attendees with an introduction on how to create an effective Assistive Technology Team. Presenters will share resources on AT strategies and tools to support team collaboration. Please utilize this link for [registration.](#) For the complete 2021-22 CoP meeting schedule, please scroll to the end of this document.

What is the Quality Indicator Spotlight for October?
Each month will highlight a Quality Indicator for Assistive Technology, which can easily be utilized to provide training for district staff. For October, the spotlight is **[Indicator 1: AT Consideration of Assistive Technology Needs.](#)**

1. Assistive technology devices and services are *considered for all students with disabilities* regardless of type or severity of disability. Intent: Consideration of assistive technology

need is required by IDEA and is based on the unique educational needs of the student. Students are not excluded from consideration of AT for any reason. (e.g., type of disability, age, administrative concerns)

What is the Assessing Student's Needs for Assistive Technology (ASNAT)?
ASNAT is the acronym for the manual and process of assessment in the area of Assistive Technology. If your school district would benefit from a step-by-step AT assessment guide, this is the manual for you. This link will take you to the entire manual, but we suggest that you break it down into manageable sections. This month we will continue on Chapter 1, where we will focus more on roles and responsibilities of providing AT services as well as action steps.

What is the Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC)?
The Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC) is a lending library of high-end Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) equipment for trial purposes. Please follow this link for more information and registration. This month we are

highlighting the Accent 1400 made by PRC / Saltillo.
The number 1400 refers to the size of the device; this one has a fourteen-inch display. The larger device may not be the best option for a younger or smaller stature child. The vocabulary set can be customized in many ways, including changing the grid size from 4-144 locations. If you choose the Words For Life (WFL) vocabulary set, words are only stored in one place regardless of their use (verb, adjective or noun). For some students, this is a necessity to reduce motor movements; for others, it can be difficult for them to use the words unless it is context specific. Other language sets are available, such as Unity, which uses an activity row. Understanding the symbol set is essential when trialing various AAC devices. Like many AAC devices, the Accent 1400 can be accessed through direct selection, eye gaze, joystick, or switches.

Where can I turn if I have an Assistive Technology question?
The QIAT Community is a free AT resource, which includes a searchable question and answer support tool. If you are interested in learning about support, you can subscribe here. Recently someone wrote in and asked a question about note taking, *"I have a second-grade student with ADHD, when taking notes he has a difficult time with his writing*

being legible. Is there an assistive technology resource that can provide practice in writing?"
Responses from the group....*" I think you need to separate the skill of learning to write legibly from the skill of taking notes. Writing legibly involves lots of complex skills such as knowing what words you want to write, knowing how to spell those words, knowing how to form those letters and words, and motorically generating those letters and words in the space on the page. Taking notes requires attending to the activity or instruction, knowing what is significant in what you are hearing, thinking about exactly what you will write, and how you will organize those messages. Note taking is even more difficult because the teacher generally keeps going, so the student has to stop listening while they are writing their own notes. Students who have mastered how to listen and attend and write can manage this, but students who are still learning these skills will really struggle.*

Years ago, Karen Erickson provided a "red task/green task" framework to think about this. Red tasks require all the student's concentration and are very effortful. When a student is doing a red task, we need to take away the other red task demands. They can only do one red task at a time. Green tasks can be done automatically and with very little effort. Students can do multiple green tasks at a time. They can do green tasks while also doing a red task. As students get good at a skill, it becomes a yellow task (medium effort) and then a green task."

"There are many apps to work on handwriting such as iTrace, Letter School, Cursive Writing Wizard (I believe there is a manuscript version as well). But would having an outline of the notes where he just fills in a few key words be a better accommodation?"

Book Study Suggestions:
Are you looking for a fun way to build knowledge and empathy around Assistive Technology? Why not start a book study? October's book of the month is entitled, *Haben: The DeafBlind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law,* by Haben Girma.

> "Haben Girma grew up in Eritrea, and much of her childhood included absorbing the trauma of her parents' experiences living through the country's 30-year war with Ethiopia. It was their refugee story that inspired her to seek out a life of knowledge and learning."
> [Haben Girma: How did a deafblind woman conquer Harvard Law? | The Stream](#)

Accessibility and advocacy for all resonates throughout this book. Her journey and contributions to the world of technology make this book a must read.

Resource of the Month

The resource of the month is the Communication Matrix. This free resource assists teams, parents, and other stakeholders with the complex task of rooting out where a child's communication strengths and deficits lie. This resource is online and offers teachers and parents a wonderful visual chart that can be used to show growth and give the team ideas on possible future goals.

October is International Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Month

"Just because someone cannot speak does not mean they don't have anything to share."
"Encourage communication without requiring it."   ~Karen Erickson

October is International AAC Awareness Month and the theme for this year is "Get out, Speak up, and Break Through the Screen in a Recovering World". Learn more about AAC this month by going to the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) web site. ISAAC has a list of awareness month resources as well as several webinars scheduled in October, including "Getting Families on Board via Tele-AAC with Avaz" and "Relationships and AAC". In addition, you can also learn more about AAC by watching the AAC webinar video series on the Wisconsin DPI Assistive Technology modules web page or visiting the Building AAC Web site. You are also encouraged to sign up Wisconsin's free Assistive Technology Forward Community of Practice.

Where can I find additional Assistive Technology resources?

If you are looking for general Assistive Technology information, please refer to the resources found on the DPI Website.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Virtual Conference: October 7-8, 2021

The UDL Forward! project's 2nd annual UDL Virtual Conference centers the theme of UDL as a "principled approach to educational justice" with guest keynoters Mirko Chardin (Novak Consulting) and David Rose, co-founder of UDL. Mirko is co-author of *Equity by Design: Delivering on the Power and Promise of UDL*. David Rose will give his first talk on the neuroscience of bias for Wisconsin (coming out of retirement!), from recent research, and explain how UDL can help us recognize and dismantle the barriers we may be creating subconsciously. Registration is open, and all are invited to engage in UDL presentations from CAST and from Wisconsin educators October 7-8! Register for the UDL Virtual Conference today!

What is the 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 Assistive Technology (AT) Forward provides a statewide Community of Practice (CoP), and by joining this CoP, members can attend [AT Forward CoP meetings,](#) learn from experts in the field of AT, participate in micro-credential learning opportunities, and receive monthly email updates with AT information and resources. From AT beginner to expert, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge level backgrounds to [join the AT Forward CoP](#)!

Where can I find additional information about upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings?
For additional AT CoP meeting registration information, links to last year's AT Forward CoP presentations, and for a preview of the 2021-22 meetings, please visit our [AT Forward website.](#) All AT Forward meetings will be held in a virtual format and will run from 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m. on their respective dates. In addition, all of the meetings will be recorded and published on the AT Forward website.

Upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings:
October 20, 2021: Building a Coaching Model for AAC Support
November 8, 2021: An Introduction to Assistive Technology for Students and Families
November 16, 2021: Sensory Supports To Assist Students with Learning through Technology
December 1, 2021: Behavior as Communication
December 16, 2021: Universal Design for Learning: Using Technology that Promotes Student Engagement for All
January 10, 2022: AT in the IEP: Using Data to Document Assistive Technology
January 18, 2022: How to Determine the Need for Technology Versus the Benefit
February 2, 2022: Accessing Grade Level Content
February 17, 2022: Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Resources: Accessible Electronic Texts for Students with Visual Impairments or Print Disabilities
March 7, 2022: Low and No Cost Resources to Support Assistive Technology
April 26, 2022: Finding Tools to Fit the Needs of Today's Students
May 11, 2022: Non-Academic Activities: Engaging Students in Social and Leisure Activities
May 19, 2022: Supporting Students with Medical Complexities

Let's move AT Forward together this year!

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.