Assistive Technology (AT) Forward May

Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members!
On behalf of Wisconsin DPI and CESA 2, we want to thank you for your participation in the Assistive Technology Community of Practice.
We are excited to announce that we will continue the AT Forward Project in 2022-2023! This means we will continue to have our monthly Community of Practice Meetings, AT Forward Update monthly publication, as well as Micro Credential Project!

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On behalf of Wisconsin DPI and CESA 2, we want to thank you for your participation in the Assistive Technology Community of Practice.

We are excited to announce that we will continue the AT Forward Community of Practice in 2022-2023!

We need your help in planning for 2022-2023 by taking the following survey link below.

[Assistive Technology Forward End of Year Survey](#)

Your feedback will help us with planning to continue our support of the AT Forward CoP meetings, micro-credential program, Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC), Wisconsin Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center, and maintaining the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Resource Map, and will also assist us with planning some additional projects in 2022-2023 to coordinate AT lending libraries available to public schools, develop additional guidance on AT assessment, IEP documentation, and implementation, as well as support Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) professional learning for educators. We also want to continue to expand our CoP membership to include members from all WI school districts, and increase our collaboration with self-advocates, families, educators, institutions of higher education, cooperative educational service agencies, independent living centers, and other county, regional, and state agencies and organizations.

Thank you in advance to anyone who has taken the survey.

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. **We are now over 765 Members representing 222 school districts and growing!**

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2022 WisTech Virtual Training Sessions

WisTech Trainings are announced, and registration is open for all four. The website is: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/atac/wistech-assistive-technology-trainings.htm

All trainings are two hours in length and both Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor hours (CRCs) are provided. These trainings are free but do require registration.

- Training #1 May 17, 2022: You Said What?! Exploring AAC Access to Profanity, Swearing, and Slang [Registration Link (link is external)](#)

- Training #2 August 2, 2022: Introduction to Adaptive Gaming Equipment [Registration Link (link is external)](#)

- Training #3 August 23, 2022: Ethical Considerations in Smart Home Technology Provision [Registration Link (link is external)](#)

- Training #4 September 27, 2022: Accessible Event Planning [Registration Link](#)

WisTech will be holding public hearings for the 2021-2023 State Plan for Assistive Technology. These will be held both in person and virtually on June 2, 6, and 7 in three locations (Menomonie, Milwaukee, and Green Bay). Full details on how to provide public comment are found on the State Plan for AT web page: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/atac/state-assistive-tecnology-plan.htm

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. **We are excited to announce that the Micro Credentialing program will not only continue next year, but also, we have / will add new badges. Our newest badge is a Transition II badge. This badge will include AT for Workplace Accommodations, AT for Driving and Transportation, AT Implementation for Adults and AAC Implementation: Adults with DD**.

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. If you would like to register for a micro-credential learning opportunity and join an AT learning community from across the state, please visit the AT Forward Micro-Credentials Home Page. Thank you to the 220 plus people who have started their journey towards earning their Micro- Credentials, and to date, 80 badges have been awarded,

Congratulations to the following individuals for earning their AT Badges:
Claire Habeck from the Oshkosh Area School District earned her Marco Credentials!
Julia Delvaux from Syble Hopp School earned 2 badges!
Erin Lampada from McFarland earned 5 badges!
Dongmei San from Fond Du Lac School District earned 2 badges!
Mary Houser from the School District of Menomonee Falls earned 1 badge!
Jesse Galvan from the WI DOC earned 2 badges!
Laura Arbuckle from Plymouth Joint School District has earned 2 badges!
Devin Wonser from UW-Oshkosh earned 2 badges!

Taylor Dear from West De Pere High School earned 2 badges!
Anna Vierck from Mount Horeb Area School District earned 2 badges!
Jennifer Kraynik from UW- Oshkosh and Manitowoc Public Schools earned 2 badges!
Pascal Ishingwa from UW- Oshkosh and Manitowoc Public Schools earned 1 badge!
AnnaRohde from the UW-Oshkosh earned 2 badges!
Laura Arbuckle from Plymouth Joint School District earned 2 badges!
Taylor Dear from West De Pere High School earned 2 badges!

May AT Forward Project CoP Meeting

May 11, 2022: 4:00pm-5:00pm: Non-Academic Activities: Engaging Students in Social and Leisure Activities. This one hour session will focus on the activities that occur throughout a student's school day that are not academic-specific. Presenters will share resources for engaging students in social activities and tools for leisure times during the school day.

May 19, 2022: 4:00pm-5:00pm: Supporting Students with Medical Complexities. In this presentation, a school nurse and parent from Madison Metropolitan School District will discuss how a student with medical complexities has engaged in classroom learning without the use of regular homebound teachers. Discussions around what collaborative processes worked well and where the teams can improve will be shared. A 1st grade student will provide a personal snapshot of how she learns via a robot while living with a complex medical diagnosis.

What is the Quality Indicator Spotlight for May?

Each month will highlight a Quality Indicator for Assistive Technology, which can easily be utilized to provide training for district staff. For May, the spotlight is Indicator 6. Indicator 6 is the **AT in Transition.**

"Transition plans for students who use assistive technology address the ways the student's use of assistive technology devices and services are transferred from one setting to another. Assistive technology transition involves people from different classrooms, programs, buildings, or agencies working together to ensure continuity. Self-advocacy, advocacy and implementation are critical issues for transition planning."
Indicator 6: ***AT in Transition.*** **(2022). Qiat.Org.** https://qiat.org/indicators/indicator-6-at-in-transition/

We spend years with our students all in preparation for graduation, but Assistive Technology services often need to continue beyond graduation day. For more information on the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation services, please the see April 21, 2021 CoP video entitled, "Assistive technology and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation."

Common Errors with Assessing Needs for AT (QIAT)

The following pitfalls can result in students not receiving the equipment or services they may need to be employed, attend school, or live as independently as possible.

1. "Lack of self-determination, self-awareness, and self-advocacy on part of the individual with a disability (and/or advocate)." When a student leaves the school system it is important that they be able to advocate for themselves and have a good understanding of their abilities and needs.
2. "Lack of adequate long-range planning on part of sending and receiving agencies (timelines)."
3. "Inadequate communication and coordination."
4. "Failure to address funding responsibility." Funding can come from many sources such as, but not limited to: the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid , or be provided through ADA (Americans with Disability Act.
5. "Inadequate evaluation (documentation, data, communication, valued across settings) process." This free website offers assistance with searching for various accommodations in the work setting.
6. "Philosophical differences between sending and receiving agencies." Everyone involved with the future employee needs to list goals, so everyone is on the same page.
7. "Lack of understanding of the law and of their responsibilities." If you are unsure about what rights a student has visit the pdf "A guide to adult services."

Are you looking for more information on transition? Join Stacy Duffy, the CESA 2 Transition & Identification Specialist, and Brian Kenney, the Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) Southern Regional Coordinator, for the exciting podcast series, "Wisconsin Transition Talks with Brian and Stacy." Each episode features a guest interviewee and focuses on transition topics related to improving postsecondary outcomes for students with IEPs.

Family Connections

Summer is right around the corner and as a parent you may have many concerns and questions about the summer. [The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#) has a page to assist you with complexities of summer and summer school.

AAC Corner

Thank you to [Jennifer Schubring](#) for contributing to this section of the May Update!

During our [October 2021 Community of Practice Meeting](#), our guest speaker and AAC user, Lydia Dawley, discussed the importance of literacy skills and the significance of having adults in her life who read to her. Another AAC user, Mike Hipple, stated that he did not learn how to read until he was a young adult. In the book, *Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write*, the authors share some staggering statistics about literacy skills. Did you know that only one in 10 individuals with severe communication and physical disabilities is able to read at the same levels as same-age peers without disabilities (Koppenhaver & Yoder, 1992 as cited in Erickson and Koppenhaver, 2020) and that more than 80% can read only basic sight words or are emergent in their understanding of print (Towles-Reves et al., 2009 as cited in Erickson and Koppenhaver, 2020)? Furthermore, there is a lasting impact on the students we work with as less than 5% of individuals with complex communication needs are employed even part-time, due to a lack of effective and efficient communication and a lack of functional literacy skills (McNaughton & Bryen, 2002). When we are working with students with complex communication needs we MUST presume competence and understanding. Waiting until a student can express their knowledge in conventional forms, puts students at a disadvantage. Emergent literacy skills such as shared reading will provide students with opportunities to hear and learn language, increase engagement, and provide opportunities for interaction, all skills that are needed for a robust communication system.

In addition to teaching literacy skills, we also need to provide access to a communication system with a wide variety of vocabulary. A student cannot participate in shared reading, which is the interaction that occurs with an adult while reading a book or learn

the alphabet without having some form of communication. A robust communication system, light tech or high tech, that provides access to a variety of words, not just nouns, will give communication partners more opportunities to model language in a variety of contexts and settings. For example, a few years ago a young student participated in a shared reading opportunity about an individual who used a guide dog. The words "guide dog" were not in the student's device, however, this young student had a communication system with a robust vocabulary that allowed him to describe the words "guide dog" using a practice called descriptive teaching.   He said, "dog, not pet, help, see" which allowed the student to demonstrate his knowledge of the new vocabulary and communicate about a "guide dog" without having access to that specific word that may not have been used often.

The Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC) has many high-tech communication devices from a variety of manufacturers that give students access to large and robust vocabularies. The ATLC provides high tech AAC equipment to Wisconsin LEA public school licensed professional educators for trial with children ages 3 to 18 who have IEPs and are enrolled in public schools or students age 19-21 who are enrolled in a Wisconsin LEA school program and have an IEP. For support developing a robust light/low tech communication system, Project Core (http://www.project-core.com/) has many learning modules and communication boards available.

For more resources on Literacy Skill development check out:
- Early Literacy Lessons
- AAC and Literacy
- Reading Comprehension in AAC
- A Year of Core Words
- Karen Erickson "Literacy for All"
- Erin Sheldon's presentation on Descriptive Teaching at AAC in the Cloud 2018

References:
Erickson, Karen & Koppenhaver, David. (2020). Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write.

McNaughton D, Bryen DN. Enhancing participation in employment through AAC technologies. Assist Technol. 2002 Summer;14(1):58-70.

Where can I turn if I have an Assistive Technology question? Join the [QIAT Listserv](#)

The QIAT Listserv is a place where anyone - user, educator, parent, caregiver, anyone, can post a question concerning Assistive Technology. Join the list and participate in the conversations. Together we can all make a difference.

Recently this question was posted:
"I would appreciate input from others with a new but increasing request we are seeing in our large Maryland school district. The request is from parents and advocates for more than one of the SAME AAC devices. This group of parents all have students that attend one of two outside AT Clinics regularly. The parents all state that the clinic staff tells them that the classroom staff and the school based SLP should each have the same device the student is using.

I have addressed this request with both sets of parents and discussed training opportunities, online resources that are available, and the use of the student's personalized device to provide Aided Language Stimulation but they continue to insist more than one device be provided. Have any of you experienced this new request? If so, how have you handled this?"

Answers:
"This became a discussion at an IEP meeting and there was no improved access to a FAPE for the student that could be justified. It will be interesting to hear from others."
"And just another consideration. If a student's services in school are reimbursed by Medicaid, there can be pushback about duplication of services if Medicaid is also paying for outside services and the services overlap."
"SLP's are often given access to the apps for free. ProLoQuo2Go, TouchChat, and LAMP WFL definitely do this. They can be used on an iPad. Modeling is so very important for the student buying into the process of using AAC as well as learning more effectively!
2 things we have come across as issues are when SLP's work with multiple students, they have to load different profiles for some programs, and for those programs that stay the same, when using alternative devices or variations of the app, there are significant enough differences, that it may be worth getting them an extra device. It is beneficial to the

student's learning. If it is possible to share a device between therapists, aides and the like, that is a more cost-effective way to do this, but it's worth doing."

Resource of the Month

The Power of Correct Alt Text

- **What is Alt Text?** A short-written description of an image or picture to improve accessibility most often associated with persons with visual impairments who use screen readers to read web pages.
- **Why is it important ?** Accessibility is important to everyone. Without descriptions so much of the meaning of an image is lost.

Read this article on the case for describing race in Alt text.
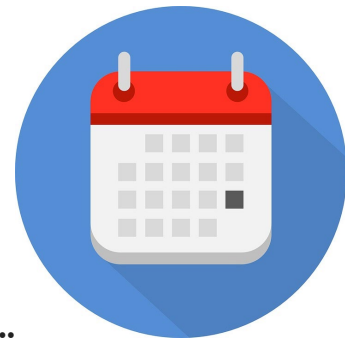
Sometimes all we need to do is start a conversation....

May is Better Speech and Hearing Month. It is important that all students have a voice and can also hear what is being said!

May is Apraxia Awareness. Everyone deserves a voice.

May 19th Global Accessibility Awareness Day. It's all about digital access and inclusion.

Let's move AT Forward together!

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.