



Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members . Below you will find the January 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!

January is a month for reflection. With that in mind, we wanted to reflect on our AT Forward Celebrations. As of December 2022, membership in the AT Forward Community of Practice has grown to over 1000 participants! Our monthly video learning opportunities also continue to grow with as many as 170 registered participants for a single webinar. Thank you to all of you for helping us to move Assistive Technology Forward in the state of Wisconsin! Together, we are having deeper, richer conversations around AT which in turn is helping our community of students achieve greater independence in their learning opportunities.

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. To become a member of the [AT Forward CoP](#), please visit the [AT Forward Registration page](#). From AT beginner to expert, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge level backgrounds!

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming January CoP meetings:

January 11, 2023, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: [Supporting Language with Integration of Core in AAC](#) with Kellie Bews from Tobii Dynavox . In this session, we will discuss the importance of literacy and past myths and challenges in providing literacy instruction to our AAC communicators. We will also look at the role of core vocabulary and other comprehensive emergent literacy instructional tools to support literacy skill building.

January 26, 2023, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: [Sharing & Exploring AT Apps](#) with Kathy White and Stacy Duffy. It is impossible for anyone to know everything, so this CoP meeting will be all about sharing! As a Community of Practice, we would like attendees to share their favorite apps and/or extensions. We will divide the session into apps for reading, communication, writing, sensory, and executive functioning. Together we will create a wonderful resource list to assist us all!

January 31, 2023, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m : [Providing Accessible Educational Materials; How do you acquire and use materials in your system?](#) This is the third session in the four-part AEM series and will focus on acquiring and utilizing AEM in your system.

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

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.

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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:

159 badges have been awarded to date.

46% of the badges earned have been in the area of AAC.

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

Kiersten Hunt (Waushara County): 2 badges

Jeanna Rupnow (Plymouth Joint School District): 3 badges

Mysie Sabin (Muskego Norway School District): 2 badges

Terri Oliver (Milton School District): 3 badges

Resource Suggestion:

The new year often brings with it a desire to learn something new or set a new goal. Have you ever considered learning sign language? [Fingerspelling.xyz](https://fingerspelling.xyz) uses the camera built into your device to help you learn the correct hand placement for finger spelling. Research has shown that learning a language is great for the brain. Artificial intelligence is used to assist learners with the process of learning sign language. The company **Hello Monday** created this technology to “ address language deprivation and help bridge the communication barrier between the deaf and the hearing. We partnered with the American Society for Deaf Children to create Fingerspelling.xyz. Fingerspelling uses AI (artificial intelligence) and machine vision to teach visitors the ASL alphabet.”

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

Have you heard about the Curb Cut Effect? If you have ever walked on a sidewalk with a curb cut, you have received the benefit of the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#). When we all look towards inclusive environments, we think more deeply about how environments are created. Take a minute to walk around your school or community and think how we all benefit from the curb cut effect.

January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month and January 4th World Braille Day. Take a moment and consider what tools might benefit your students with visual impairments. The [statistics](#) on visual impairment are staggering. When considering assistive technology, take a minute to think about how you are displaying information to your students. [Consider reading this article on how to design accessibility into your presentations.](#)

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

On December 15th, the CoP presentation was from Abby Marx. MS. CC- SLP. Abby Marx is part of the wonderful team at the [Waisman Center](#). “The Waisman Center is dedicated to advancing knowledge about human development, developmental disabilities, and neurodegenerative diseases through: research, training, services and outreach.” The presentation, “AAC Funding & Tips for AAC Users” relayed information that is required when a request for a dedicated speech generating device. In one section of the

presentation, it was stated that in order to demonstrate medical necessity, there are 7 criteria that need to be met.

1. Formal evaluation completed by a Speech and Language Pathologist.
2. The student must have a medical condition that results in a severe expressive speech impairment.
3. The students' speaking needs cannot be met using natural communication methods.
4. The team has considered other forms of treatment and they have been ruled out.
5. The students' speech impairment will benefit from the recommended device.
6. A copy of the speech report has been sent to the students treating practitioner (doctor) and they agree with SLP's written evaluation and recommendation.
7. The recommending SLP may not be employed by or have a financial relationship with the supplier of the Speech generating device (SGD.)

All CoP meetings are recorded and sectioned in 3 smaller parts to assist you with finding information quickly. This presentation on Funding 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: The need is for the student with low-vision to see what the teacher projects on their computer during instruction to a student's computer. Sharing the screen through Zoom, etc is one option but are there better alternatives that don't require setting up Zooms, sending invite links, etc?

QIAT community, help me out!

Answers from the group:

“Try these apps: Splash top - screen sharing, Appear.in , Join.me, or Screenleap.

We use whatever the district is using for virtual meetings and share screens and you can set-up recurring meeting times with students so it's easier to connect with multiple teachers for students in middle or high school. The teacher and student open their app (laptop or iPad) and clicks on the recurring meeting. It is some more work upfront, but pays off in the long-run. [Attached are directions for Google Meets](#) to set up recurring meetings. Teams and Zoom work similarly. I found that districts in our area are not allowing us to use apps or programs like [join.me](#), splashtop, etc. because of security reasons.”

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 physical disabilities and computer access. A special thank you to Anna Cliff M.S., OTR/L, ATP, for her suggestions and additions to this month's feature match.

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. Does my student have....?

Area of Student Concern- Physical Access to a Computer	Potential Solution Feature Match
Student has difficulties visually tracking a mouse	Consider built in accessible feature to enlarge the cursor, change the cursors shape, or give it a visual “tail” Windows Chrome
Student finds it easier to touch the screen than use a mouse type device	Consider a trial with a touchscreen device and or use gestures for access Windows iPad Chrome
Student has only one hand or missing digits	Sticky keys or keyboard guard or a stylus, or reduce key strikes with predictive text, or an alternative keyboard such as a mini keyboard, or consider a keyboard with the number pad off to the side if not used frequently
Student has difficulties with a trackpad	Consider trying a variety of different types of mice or trackballs . Some mice are designed to reduce the amount of movement a person makes and therefore reduce the

	physical contact stress. A normal mouse relies on your hand to move a sensor over a static area like a desk or mousepad. A trackball mouse relies on your fingers to move a ball over a static sensor. Trackballs can be setup to reduce stress on other parts of the arm or forearm. Checkout the Microsoft Sculpt or vertical mice
Student has difficulties completing the force of a mouse click	Consider an external switch as a mouse click or another alternative mouse like device
Student has difficulties completing a right mouse click	Consider the keyboard shortcut , voice recognition, or multi function mouse with buttons for click or change the built-in mouse settings
Student has difficulties perceiving they have pushed the mouse	Consider a mouse with auditory feedback. Link to article on auditory, tactile mouse type devices

Student has difficulties finding their place on the screen	Consider changing the thickness, and or color of the mouse pointer (Custom Cursor for Chrome)
Student has no ability to use their hands for mouse access	Consider alternative keyboard access through eye gaze , switch access , or morse code, or alternative body parts like head, knees or foot.

Potential resources/suggestions to assist students with physical disabilities in terms of computer or iPad access:

[Switch RoadMap from AbleNet](#) - When working with students with significant physical challenges, it is important to have a roadmap, a process of progression from a single switch with cause and effect software to multiple switches for more complex tasks, like row column scanning.

[Switch access on an iPad...](#) YES, it is possible. Students who use iPads can access the device with the built in camera, a gesture or an external switch.

[How do I teach switch access?](#) Linda Burkart published an article outlining the “why” and the “how” of teaching students with significant challenges to access computers and control items in their world.

Together we can move AT Forward!!

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.