



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

### ***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 November CoP meetings:

November 1, 2022, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: Assistive Technology for Administration with Dr. Penny Reed.

November 17, 2022, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: Literacy for Students with Significant Disabilities with Kelly Fonner.

November 30, 2022, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) in Wisconsin; Are You Ready?

The table of contents 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 Assistive Technology (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:

142 badges have been awarded to date.

8 educators have earned macro credentials (7+ Badges)

Over 50 educators have participated in the program from over 30 districts/organizations

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

Mike Hipple WI AAC Network

Jacklyne Ramirez Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

**Resource Suggestion:**

Podcasts provide great and convenient learning opportunities, especially when time is limited.

Looking for great UDL information? UDL in 15 minutes podcast has incredible speakers and guests including such people as Temple Grandin. At the present time there are over 85 sessions to choose from.

Transition is an essential area that all of us need to know about. Stacy Duffy and Brian Kenney host a wonderful podcast all about transition called WI Transition Talks Podcasts.

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



November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month. When we think about Epilepsy we don't often think about Assistive Technology, but it can greatly improve the independence of a person with epilepsy. For example, wearable technology like smart watches can assist others with knowing if a person has taken a hard fall. Other wearable devices can alert people to daily life events such as when to take your medication or other memory aids. Often people with epilepsy can have a lapse time that can be assisted by various Smart Technologies. Home technology can be added to allow cameras to watch for episodes. Those who suffer from nocturnal seizures might benefit from a mattress type device that alerts others to abnormal moments. When working on computers, screen filters can assist users to reduce stimulus that could induce a seizure. Take a minute or two to learn more about epilepsy and how technology can assist with increased independence and reduction in caregivers stress levels.

### **AAC Corner**

As a reminder, the ATLC library website has been changed to <https://wisconsinat4all.com/>.

Please go to this website to register. After you are registered, login and click on Speech Communication, (the Program field should fill in as ATLC (AT Lending Center). All devices will show up or you can search for a specific device. If you have any questions or problems please contact Donna Hudson at CESA 2 [donna.hutson@cesa2.org](mailto:donna.hutson@cesa2.org) or call 262.473.1449.

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## **AAC and Diversity**

Whenever we work with families and children we need to be cognizant of cultural factors. This includes such things as choosing the correct voice for an AAC device. Recently more and more attention has been considered when it comes to choosing a voice and or symbol set that matches the user's ethnicity. As AT professionals, we all want to reduce the abandonment of devices and increase family acceptance. One way to do this is to look at the symbols sets and match the skin tones to that of your user. CoughDrop, GoTalk Now, Grid for iPad, Proloquo2Go, Talk Suite Pro, TD Snap, TouchChat with WordPower all offer ways to change the symbol set to a variety of skin tones.

Another consideration is to match the voice to your user. In April of 2022, Darius (the new African American male voice from Acapela) was released. Knowledge of diversity and how we can support students helps us all. The Darius voice is available on Proloquo2Go and Proloquo4Text. When looking at a device for a student it is important to take into account everything about the student that is relevant (S in SETT- Student). There are many AAC systems on the market that also offer bilingual systems. AssistiveWare, Tobii Dynavox, Nova Chat, PRC devices and many others all have the ability to be bilingual. There are many articles on the web about this important topic. Here are a few to further your learning: [AAC and English as a Second Language](#), [How I Do It: Supporting Spanish-speaking AAC Learners](#), and [Bilingual AAC Intervention a Case Study](#).

## **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 have a complex situation that I need help with!

Student Info:

1. 5 year old girl born without arms

2. has a leg length discrepancy (requires orthotic to walk independently, which so far requires adult to put on).
3. She uses her feet for everything (she really is super awesome)

Environment is a typical Kindergarten classroom (and cafeteria, art room, etc)

### Tasks

I feel like we have a decent start for writing (she can actually write her name using her feet once a marker is placed in a position she can access (including taking the cap of the marker). She can even type on a keyboard and swipe on a touch screen. I feel like the typical "classroom" types of things are already well taken care of (but open to new ideas here too). She really is amazing!!

However, I'm thinking 15 years down the road with post school transitions for independent work, self-care, living, etc. I'm worried about independent toileting, dressing, etc. I have no idea where to start on these parts.

### **QIAT community, help me out!**

#### *Answers from the group:*

So.....start from the beginning. Take a look at age appropriate self-care and self-advocacy skills and build in supports for her to begin to build those skills....things like:

1. Asking for help appropriately
2. Do a task analysis of the self-care routines and think about what pieces we want age similar peers to be doing more independently...does she need adaptive equipment to do that....auto soap dispenser, stack of paper towels instead of the dispenser...
3. Yes it's important to keep the long term vision, but ultimately I would be finding ways to incorporate early speech to text use to reduce keystrokes needed now and slowly build....outside the need for a personal signature which is sounds like would be with her feet....
4. Are there grade level tasks she is not able to do as independently as she'd want?

A few things that have been useful in my experience.

1. Use of mounted hooks, brushes, showering/hair washing brushes to help with dressing, bathing, etc. However, people adapt so well that it's better to see how they are inclined to do it and then support it with adaptations as needed. If you would like I can send you some examples of this our team has done in the past.

2. Commercially available seat bidets with remote controls have become very affordable and are highly effective. The ones with power (heated water and heated fan) work well and allow a great deal of independence. I consulted with a colleague in the school setting that had the school purchase one and set it up in the nurse's office for the student.

There are some amazing content creators on TikTok who share tutorials on getting stuff done with limb differences. Various wall hooks and dressing sticks feature prominently and ingeniously in some about dressing. One off the top of my head is Emily Rowley “no arms no worries” who did 100 days of tutorials.

### ***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 writing disabilities.

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>*

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.

<b>Area of Student Concern for Writing Difficulties</b>	<b>Potential Solution Feature Match</b>
Student has trouble with a blank page	<u>Mind maps</u> or outlines, or, timelines sentence starters
Student has weak vocabulary skills or difficulties learning new vocabulary	Word prediction with topic dictionaries, picture supports, word banks
Student who is an English Learner needs assists learning new vocabulary	Translation software
Student has weak stamina for writing ( physical disability or cognitive )	Voice to text, word banks, word prediction
Student has difficulties with transitions to paragraphs	Word banks, word lists of specific types of words like verbs, adjectives or transition words
Student has difficulties with spelling	Spell check, word prediction or voice to text programs
Student has difficulties with formulating ideas	Pre made outlines, sentence starters, Mind Mapping software

Student has difficulties with editing	Auditory word processor to listen to their writing, programs such as Grammarly
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Student has difficulties with holding a pencil or other writing instrument	Pencil grip, markers, computer or tablet to type instead of write
Student has only one hand or partial use of a hand	<u>Sticky keys</u> or stylis, keyboard guard

**Potential resources/suggestions to assist students with reading disabilities or needs:**

Co-Writer - Co-writer is a word prediction program that also supports phonic spellers, grammar needs, translation needs and more.

Grammarly - Parts of this web based program are free and others have a small fee. This program checks for plagiarism, clarity of message and grammar errors.

Built in features like voice to text (Google Docs) or Dragon Naturally Speaking

Read&Write App that assists students with reading, writing and research related tasks.

Snap&Read App that assists students with reading, writing and research related tasks.

Apple IOS Built-In features iPads and other IOS devices have many built in free resources that will read text.

### **Assistive Technology Survey from WisTech**

WisTech, Wisconsin's Assistive Technology Act program is seeking input on the topics for the 2023 trainings that the program hosts. Please share your training needs through the following link. The deadline is 5pm on November 23rd. Take the Survey.

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.