Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members,

Welcome back everyone to the greatest job in the world. One where you are in control of the future. Yes you! As teachers, we are responsible for teaching the next generation of leaders,.... but no pressure.

As you begin the school year, take a minute to think about your why. Why are you teaching? Knowing your why will help you when the days ahead are tough. Yes, there will be tough days as teachers, but there will also be many awe inspiring, lightbulb generating, change the future moments. You see, it doesn't matter if a child can talk with their natural voice, or read a book with their eyes. What matters is how they take the knowledge that you give them and apply it to our future. The AT Forward Project is here to help provide you with resources to assist you in teaching those who need us the most. Here's to many lightbulb awe inspiring moments for you as well as for your students. Let the school year begin!

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Upcoming Assistive Technology CoP Meetings

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming AT Forward CoP meetings:

- Tuesday, September 19 2023 , 4:00pm-5:00pm.

3,2,1....Launch! Welcome Aboard the AT Forward 2023-24 Liftoff to a New and Exciting School Year Journey!

Join us for our first CoP meeting of the 2023-24 school year and learn about exciting new AT Forward learning and networking opportunities, which includes the launch of our AT Forward Community, the redesigned micro-credential website, and the introduction of new micro-credential badges. To join please click on the link to register for the event.

- Tuesday, October 10, 2023 , 4:00pm-5:00pm.

Finding the Right Assistive Technology Fit: How to "Try it On"

This session will connect you with the WisTech's WisconsinAT4ALL online inventory. AT devices available for short term loan, demonstration, and giveaway are listed on WIAT4ALL. During our time together you'll be able to see how the website works and understand how to borrow AT devices from partners around Wisconsin. To join please click on the link to register for the event.

- Thursday, November 9, 2023, 4:00pm-5:00pm.

Executive Function Skills and Augmentative Alternative Communication Connections

Paige Buckingham is back to talk to us about Executive Functioning Skills and AAC. Executive Function skills are necessary to become independent in life and Language is necessary for a person to be able to develop Executive Function skills. What does this look like for a person who uses Augmentative Alternative Communication? We will do a crosswalk by looking at Executive Function checklists and various Communication and Language development checklists to see how these areas fit together. Strategies to support emotional control, sustained attention, and response inhibition will be shared and participants will practice picking vocabulary to support their student. To join please click on the link to register for the event.

- Thursday, November 14, 2023, 4:00pm-5:00pm.

Frequently Asked Questions Around Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)

Do you have questions about determining the need for Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) or how to provide AEM to students ? Then join us as the AEM team answers frequently asked questions from the field around Accessible Educational Materials. The team will consist of CESA 2 and DPI staff. To join please click on the link to register for the event.

WisTech Assistive Technology Trainings

WisTech hosts free assistive technology trainings on a variety of topics. All trainings are recorded and made available on the

WisTech You Tube Channel. You will also find information about the monthly WisTech AT Chit Chat. Visit the WisTech AT Trainings website

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

Looking to increase awareness about AT? See below for a conversation starter! Maybe even have someone create a bulletin board with information on Assistive Technology. Awareness is the first step towards understanding and acceptance.

September is Spinal Cord Awareness Month and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Month. Take a minute to think about all of the hands free technology we now all have access to! It is a huge list from voice to text, to television controls, searching for programs, Alexi and Google Nest devices and powered mobility too. What task can you now perform hands free that you could not do 10 years ago? How has hands free technology changed your life? What technology will we have in the future?

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Corner

With the start of the new school year it is essential that we make good connections with families and help support our students in schools as well as in the community. One to assist families is to provide them with materials to support the student in a variety of settings.

Below is a list of links to get free AAC printable boards for a variety of community activities.

Health and doctor visits

Meal time and or eating out

Topic board

Math Core Board

Bath Time

Cooking Core Board

QIAT Community, Help Me Out!

QIAT is a nationwide grass roots organization that supports the identification, dissemination, and implementation of the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology services in school settings. Posting a question is free. Often the people who are answering the questions are users of AT themselves and or family members. Consider joining QIAT to assist you and your team in learning, and connecting with others who are willing to share and coach others.

Feature Match: Reading and Accessible Educational Materials

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 who display difficulties in the area of Reading.

✓   Area of Student Concern- Reading on a Computer Screen   Potential Solution Feature Match

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with 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.

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with looking 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.

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with hearing impairment that affects the ability to understand audio at different pitch frequencies?   Bookshare, and programs like Read&Write, or Snap&Read have the abilities to change the pitch of the voice, speed of the voice and type of voice.

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with 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. Another possible solution is more exposure to computer generated voices. The more students listen the easier listening can become.

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with 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.

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with 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.

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with difficulties with understanding vocabulary or context of a piece of text.   Consider programs that level text, high interest low vocabulary text to assist with building understanding, or software that provides picture or dictionary supports.

Are there accessible supports in place to assist with 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 .

Micro-Credentials Update

Congratulations to the following people who have earned badge(s) over the summer. We have now awarded 276 badges! We are empowering learners and raising the awareness of Assistive Technology!

Elizabeth Kirsop The Haase House   16 badges! And the Marco Credential too!!

Julie Powers Clinton 1 badge

Sarah Heffentrager Manitowoc 1 badge

Larissa Zompolas CESA 9 badges 3 badges

Correne Martin Prairie Du Chien Area 3 badges

Sarah Witt Osseo-Fairchild 1 badge

Tiffany Hacker Manitowoc 3 badge

Jamie Gaffron CESA2 1 badge

Tara Skildum Milton 1 badge

Lisa Peach Milton 2 badges

Heather Maydak 3 badges

Nicholas Meinel Whitewater 1 badge

Erin Lampada McFarland 5 badges

Candance Hayden 3 badges

Sarah Duncan Eau Claire Area 1 badge

What is AT Forward?

The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project works with self-advocates, 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 free resources and learning opportunities, including Community of Practice (CoP) meetings, micro-credentialing, and monthly email updates. See all past recorded

CoP meetings on the AT Forward CoP Video Resource Library. 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!

Together we can and are moving 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.