

UAAACT News

Utah Augmentative, Alternative, Assistive Communication
And Technology Teams

UAAACT Web Site: <http://www.uaaact.org>

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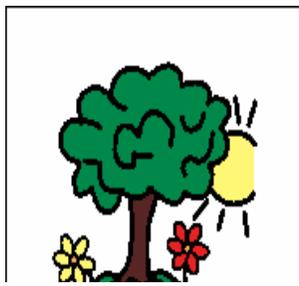
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The End of Another School Year!

It is the end of another school year for the UAAACT Teams. We hope that it has been a successful and productive year for all of our teams. A large group enjoyed attending the CSUN Conference in March. Those of us that attended, found it to be very informative and were able to learn lots of new and exciting information to bring back and share. It is such a great experience to learn what is happening with Technology all over the country, and to see the new products that are available.

The UAAACT Leadership Council met in April and was able to finish up plans for the coming 2008-09 year. We welcomed Janalyn Biesinger (Granite), Bret MacCabe (Provo), and Monique Carlsen (Logan) to the Leadership Council. They will be replacing: Suzanne Anderson (Davis), Tobey Fields (Cache), and Byron Villaverde (Nebo). Special thanks to: Tobey and Byron for their work on the Newsletter and to Suzanne for being Chairman of the Leadership Council for the past year.

Now, before you buy your tickets and pack your bags for some exotic vacation, or make plans to head for the "sand and surf," there are a number of things that need to be completed by your team.

Team Reports & Competencies due June 13th

UAAACT Team reports are due no later than June 13th. All hours spent with team visits, parent contacts, preparation of materials, programming of devices, working with staff and parents, should be reported. Remember that time spent working with a child during service times on an IEP cannot be counted. The hours you report generate the money received by each team for purchasing team equipment. Fill out the "UAAACT Team Member Report of Hours" and send it to your team leader, who will compile the information for your team. Team Leaders should then fill out a "UAAACT Team Summary Report Form" and send it to Dave John (Uintah) (dave.john@uintah.net) in order to have this information considered

in calculating your 2008-09 team equipment budgets. A complete report is then compiled and given to Craig for processing. **PLEASE BE PROMPT WITH THIS REPORT!**

Documentation of UAAACT Competency levels are also due on June 13th. These forms will determine your team training budget for the next year. If you have a team member who is eligible to move up a competency level, please complete the form and mail or fax it to Craig. All forms are in your UAAACT manual and also on line at:

www.uaaact.org.

Team Equipment Orders

Do you have team equipment items you would like to have in place for the beginning of the 2008-09 school year? The UAAACT Leadership Council recently approved a summer equipment order for all teams. We know that every team will have a least \$500 in their 2008-09 equipment budget (most teams will have much more than \$500 based on their report of students served and hours of service that is due on June 13th. Lynn feels that she will have some time during the summer to process equipment orders. With these two ideas in mind, we invite those teams who would like to get a jump start on spending their 2008-09 equipment budgets, to submit their orders to Lynn. You can begin sending in your orders any time, but the last day to submit orders for summer equipment ordering will be: July 1, 2008. Please use the order form on the UAAACT web page. Go to www.uaaact.org, click the link for “UAAACT Team Forms”, and select “UAAACT Team Equipment Order Form”. After it has been filled out, send it to Lynn Marcoux.

Request for Success Information

Jocelyn Taylor has requested information from team members on success that you have had using AT. It can be Low Tech, High Tech, development of programs, or other things that you might think of. She would like to have short write-ups – a paragraph or two. Please do this and send them to Craig.

Jocelyn is our best advocate and it will help her to see all the wonderful things that we are doing. She would like to share them with those that she meets with to discuss the UAAACT project.

Did You Know?

1. When copying a **Boardmaker** picture into a Power Point presentation, you might notice that an annoying dot will appear in the corner of the slide. To get rid of this, send the Boardmaker picture to the paint program first, and then from the paint program to the Power Point presentation and the dot will disappear! (Susan Hamblin)

2. If you have placed an **Alpha Smart** with a student to help with writing needs, you can buy inexpensive typing programs at Office Depot to give the student typing practice at home. This will help their keyboarding skills.

3. When placing “**Writing with Symbols**” strips in books to help a student with literacy, you can buy glue sticks at Staples that will hold the strip in the book, but then can be removed without damage to the book. It is the same glue that is on “sticky notes”.

4. Dome lights found at the Dollar Stores can be wired and used for switches. E-mail Jim West for instructions. jwest@dsdmail.net

5. Watch the sales at Target and K Mart for the “Grandmother brag picture books” that you can record messages on. There are some really nice ones that can be used for your students with messages and digital pictures.

6. Paper can be purchased with Velcro on the back of the entire sheet. This sheet can be used in your printer. Go to www.velcro.com/tips

7. Did you know that Craig and Scott will come to your district to consult with your teams and will demonstrate new programs? Call them.

If you have some ideas to share, send them to: jwest@dsdmail.net or sbanderson@dsdmail.net List your name and team. We will list them in the up-coming newsletters .

--- Never leave a student outside of the “circle”. No matter what their disability is, they can be part of the group and can do “something” ---.

2009 UAAACT Conference

"Implementing Assistive Technology in the Classroom"

The 2009 UAAACT Conference is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Provo Marriott Hotel and Conference Center on February 11-13, 2009. This is the first time we have held the State Conference in Provo and this is the first UAAACT Conference to feature a pre-conference day.

The pre-conference day (Wednesday, February 11th) will be just for UAAACT team members. Presenters will be **Keri Huddleston** and **Teru Langsdale**, who presented at "Closing the Gap" last fall. They will present a full-day workshop entitled: "What if the Teachers Won't Do It?"

The keynote speaker on Thursday will be **Libby Rush**. Libby is an AAC and AT consultant with a wealth of knowledge and practical experience that she will share with us. She will combine her understanding of literacy skills with low tech tools that can be use in almost any environment. On Friday, the keynote speaker will be **Susan Johnston**, from the University of Utah. Many of the UAAACT members have attended Susan's summer workshops on AAC or her sessions at previous UAAACT Conferences and it has been suggested by many that we invite her back for this years Conference.

We are working hard to attract more vendors to our conference. At this time, we have commitments from three new vendors: Attainment, Blink Twice, and Enable Mart.

Make your plans now to clear your schedules so that you can attend our 2009 State Conference. Plan to join with us on February 11-13, 2009 for three terrific days of training.

If you are interested in presenting one of the breakout sessions, a list of possible subjects are listed on the next page. Send an outline of the presentation, including the names of the presenters, along with the title of your presentation to Craig Boogaard

Remember to make plans February 11-13, 2009



Suggested Presentation Titles for the State Conference

- Evaluation process for students with AT needs.
- Data gathering and Baseline information.
- Formalized Evaluation Process (WATI, SETT)
- Soft Data Collection for student with AT needs.
- Parental Involvement.
- Helping the Special Education Staff with Implementation.
- Providing Training, Coaching and/or Modeling for Staff.
- Helping parents to implement materials and equipment in the home.
- Documentation of Service – Best Practices.
- What does adequate yearly progress look like?
- Ways to train Teachers and Staff.
- Creating Communication Opportunities.
- Follow-up procedures after recommendations have been made.
- How Can I Provide Support to Teachers and Parents?
- Adapting materials to fit Curriculum Standards.
- Writing of IEP Goals to fit the Needs of Student who use AT.

Remember that the theme for the Conference will be:
“Implementing Assistive Technology in the Classroom”

Please Note

The Leadership Council voted, during the April meeting to add the following information to the Equipment Policy:

“UAAACT members frequently program AAC devices with, customized student vocabulary. The students name, address, phone number, birthday and other personal information are also included.

To protect student confidentiality, all phrases and programmed messages created during the equipment loan period must be removed before the AAC device is returned to The Computer Center. Please remember to remove all personal student information and set the device back to factory defaults before returning the device. Failure to do so may result in a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).” Craig has added this statement to the Equipment Policy.”

REMEMBER

When returning equipment that you have checked out through to the Computer Center, be sure that all the items for the equipment are also returned. This includes, cords, chargers, instruction booklets, and other items belonging to the equipment. If the equipment has been damaged in any way, discuss this with Craig. The costs of repairs and replacements may be charged against the team budget or your school district may be asked to pay for the costs. See your UAAACT Manual’s Equipment Policy

**What unique things are your
Team doing? What kind of
success have you had?
We would like to know about it
so it can be shared.**

Successful Interventions Unique to the Augmentative Teams

The Augmentative teams in Davis Schools provide a service to students with special needs not available through more conventional means within Special Education. The specialized knowledge of the team members allow for quick response to communication and accessibility issues. The multidisciplinary composition of the team ensures that all aspects of such issues are addressed and providing more complete solutions. The consultative model also allows for better training and mentoring of staff regarding proposed interventions; teachers and related servers generally respond very positively to visits by the team. Several examples of interventions follow.

A student with Cerebral Palsy had difficulty with handwriting, due to fatigue in her hands. The student was very bright and did not need special education. She wanted to consider other options for completing written assignments and task. The team visited with the student and her mother. Use of voice recognition software was proposed. A copy of a commercial software program was provided, along with a headset/microphone, for home use. It was suggested that since this type of technology is not very practical for daily use at school, a digital recorder was also provided. The recorder could also be used for recording lectures and making verbal notes. The digital aspect of the recorder would also allow the student to speak compositions and transfer them to the voice recognition program, to convert to text for printing.

A student with a genetic disorder was unable to speak; she had almost no mouth and required a tracheotomy. Most accommodations can be met with 504 and special education, but the girl's unique communication needs required involvement of the augmentative team. The family had moved to Davis District from a different state and had previously obtained a high end voice output communication aid (VOCA). However, the family had not received support with the implementation of the device. They had been frustrated and taught the girl American Sign Language. Entering Davis schools, the girl required an interpreter for communication. With the involvement of the augmentative team, the family was provided assistance with the device and discussion of alternative devices. The family opted to obtain a new, different, high end VOCA and the girl is learning to communicate. While she was frustrated with trying to use the previous device, she is now excited to use the new device. The need for an interpreter is lessening and the girl can now interact with peers directly with a voice.

A student with sever physical disabilities not only has limited physical access to his instructional environment, but he is unable to speak clearly. The augmentative team provided a simple VOCA, voice recorded and amended it so that the student could physically access it. For instructional responding, use of an eye-gaze frame was proposed. To assist staff with assessment, a specially adapted "Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test," (PPVT) was checked out to the SLP. The test uses an eye-gaze frame and the student merely looks at the chosen response; the tester then watches the direction of the student's gaze and marks the response. This test helped the therapist to become familiar with using gaze as a type of communication. A plain frame can be affixed with instructional stimuli, to check student learning from day to day.

**Jim West – Team Leader A
Davis School District**

Using AT Successfully with Students

A student, with cognitive impairment, cerebral palsy and autism, communicated in the classroom by throwing, screaming and crying. She was introduced to a Picture Exchange program by the staff in her classroom, who anticipated that it would take her months to learn to communicate in this way. Much to our surprise, she was communicating in a week. She could tell us what she wanted to eat when she was hungry and what activity she wanted to perform. She began to follow picture directions and schedules and her tantrums, screaming and throwing things stopped.

Another student in the functional skills class with a classification of autism had the following successes. The classroom staff had been taking this student to inclusive classes, often to the chagrin of his teacher – “why??” We worked with him with some sight reading of survival words and dollar more concepts. His mother took him to a therapist in California who worked with the use of a DynaWrite over the summer of his 8th grade year. When he returned to school, his mother came to tell us how he had used a keyboard to communicate. The school staff procured an Alpha Smart to see if he would use it. We had him take a 9th grade vocabulary test. Remember, he had been included in classes, including English. Using the Alpha Smart to tell us his answers, he was able to score 90%. A funding request for a DynaWrite was made and once it was received, he began using it in regular 9th grade classes. He is now answering English, History and Science questions – “no wonder he was bored with Functional skills survival signs.”

**Judy Upton, Special Education Teacher – Davis School District
Team R**

One of my students uses a Dynamyte to communicate. This is on loan from the Davis UAAACT team. One day, she came to school and began to sob uncontrollably. When we asked her what was wrong, she was able to use her Dynamyte to tell us that she was upset because of a dream she had the night before. Even though some of the words were not programmed into her personalized pages, she was able to use words from the personalized pages in combination with words from the dictionary to describe her dream. After she told us about the dream, she stopped crying and was able to go on with her work. Special programming of the “Reading For All Learners” into her device has been done and now she is reading Book 19 in the series.

I have made several transition binders for students with autism this year. Pictures of the activities they are involved with are made with Boardmaker. These pictures are placed with Velcro on small binders with a pocket in the corner that says, “all done”. Each time the student transitions from one activity to the next, the picture for the activity is presented, and the picture for the activity he/she has completed is then placed in the “all done” pocket. These students have responded well to this AT strategy. In fact, some of the students no longer need to use the binders because they are now able to transition smoothly on their own.

**Susan Hamblin, SLP – Davis School District
Team A**