

# UAAACT News

Utah Augmentative, Alternative, Assistive Communication  
And Technology Teams

UAAACT Web Site: <http://168.178.150.136/uaaact>

**December 2009**

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## Happy Holiday And a Happy New Year

The Leadership Council, Craig, Scott and Lynn would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It is always amazing to see how quickly the months and the season seem to vanish. The world seems to just be picking up speed and "the day waits for no one" rather it passes into yesterday before we can react. Count your successes and dwell on them, not the failures in life. We, on the UAAACT Teams, have such a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in someone's life. The students that we serve depend on us to make a difference in their lives. What a "warming" experience it is to work with people with special needs and to know that we have made a difference in their lives whether it is large or small.

*"Treat people as if they are what they should be and you will help them become what they are capable of being"*

Johann Wolfgang Von-Goethe

We, as the UAAACT Teams for the State of Utah, want to also wish the UAAACT Staff and Jocelyn Taylor a special holiday season and for making it possible to provide services to the special needs population and for each of us to continue to receive such informative training and opportunities.

### Mark your Calendars for Upcoming Training Opportunities

- December 10th Dynavox V Workshop (1:00-3:30 PM)  
Computer Center. Workshop given by: Jeremy Reed  
Free Workshop –  
Register: Jeremy Reed (1-800-344-1778 Ext.7845  
or e-mail: [jeramy.reed@dynavoxtech.com](mailto:jeramy.reed@dynavoxtech.com)
- December 17 New UAAACT Member Orientation (1:00 – 3:00 PM)  
Computer Center. Receive a UAAACT Binder and  
an overview of the UAAACT Project. Workshop  
is free. Register with Lynn, Scott or Craig at  
801-887-9380 or 888-866-5550.

## **Up Coming Events and Training (continued)**

### **UCET Conference**

The 2010 UCET Conference will be held at Murray High School (5440 South State Street, Murray, Utah 84107) on Friday, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>. UAAACT members can register for this conference by calling Lynn at 801-887-9380. UAAACT members will have all of their eligible expenses (Conference registration fee, mileages, meals and hotel) related to attending the UCET Conference paid for by the UAAACT Project. The UCET conference will have a strand on assistive technology as well as many classes on regular education technology too. **Note:** UAAACT members that present at the UCET Conference will receive free registration and a \$500 UAAACT equipment stipend for their team. For more information on the UCET Conference or to submit an online proposal to present, go to: [www.ucet.org](http://www.ucet.org) and click on: "Call for Presenters" link. If you have questions about the UCET Conference, contact Craig at: 801-887-9533 or [cboogaar@utah.gov](mailto:cboogaar@utah.gov).

### **Supporting Language and Communication for Individuals with Autism – by Kristen Whitfield of Dynavox**

Have you ever asked . . .

-Should I use voice output augmentative systems with students with autism?

-As long as she can talk (like repeating lines from movies or imitating speech), she doesn't need AAC, right?

-Now that he has a communication device, what can I do to help him use it effectively?

If so, this workshop is for you.

Kristen will provide this workshop in Provo on **January 19<sup>th</sup>** from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at:

The location is yet to be determined and will be emailed to team leaders.

The same workshop will be repeated in Ogden on

**January 20<sup>th</sup>** from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at:

Weber School District Office

5320 Adams Ave Pkwy

Ogden, UT 84405-6998

**Register for this free workshop by contacting**

Jeremy Reed (1-800-344-1778 Ext.7845 or e-mail:

[jeramy.reed@dynavotech.com](mailto:jeramy.reed@dynavotech.com)

## **New Program Provides Refurbished Mobility Devices for Low Cost**

**A new program for people with disabilities based in Salt Lake City at the Judy Buffmire Building puts affordable mobility devices into the homes of Utahans who need this technology and cannot otherwise afford it. CReATE (Citizens Reutilizing Assistive Technology Equipment) refurbishes mobility devices and provides them at a low cost. Individuals or organizations may also donate unwanted AT mobility devices to CReATE.**

**To date CReATE has saved individuals and organization who have obtained devices over \$120,000.**

**Available mobility devices include:**

- Power wheelchairs
- Manual wheelchairs
- Scooters

**The availability of specific devices is dependent on the current inventory.**

**To find information about what is available and to make arrangements to acquire AT equipment or to donate, call 801-887-9378. Please feel free to pass this information on to anyone that might benefit from AT equipment. CReATE is an initiative of the Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP) at the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University.**

Calendar for the New Year

Due Dates

**Submit presentation proposals - Dec. 15, 2009  
(UCET Conference)**

**Final Equipment orders – March 17, 2010**

**Team Summary Reports – June 11, 2010**

**Documentation of UAAACT Competencies  
June 11,2010**

### **Team Training Opportunity**

**Scott Baggaley will be conducting training on the iPod Touch with Proloquo2Go. If your team is interested in this training contact Scott by phone at: 801-887-9534 to set up a time and date for Scott to come to your district for this training.**

**New UAAACT Web Site Address:**

**<http://168.178.150.136/uaaact/UAAACT>**

## New Low Tech Communication Device

Communication Charm Bracelets are a new product made by Augmentative Resources. When a child needs to communicate, they simply point to the charm on their bracelet with the symbol that reflects their current request or idea. Half inch charms can be added or removed from a child size or adult size rubber bracelet. The company sells a basic bracelet set for \$24.95. Additional plastic charms sets can be purchased for \$9.95. Some of the charm sets offered include social skills, literacy, conversation, school day necessities, inside and outside activities.

The company also sells rubber bracelets with permanent symbols printed on the bracelet for \$4 each. Symbol topics on these inexpensive bracelets include basic needs, feelings, or schedule. For more information or to see additional low tech to mid tech AAC ideas from Augmentative Resources, see:

[www.augresources.com](http://www.augresources.com)



## The Pulse Smartpen

The Smartpen is a new note-taking pen that records everything you hear and links it to what you write. Students can replay an entire classroom lesson or just the important points. The voice recordings are synchronized with the notes taken or pictures drawn. You can use notebooks purchased with the Smartpen or print pages from the company's web site. The Smartpen note books are just slightly more expensive than a traditional spiral notebook.

Notes and audio accompaniment can be played back directly from the pen or uploaded to a computer for permanent storage. Collaboration is easy because information that is uploaded to a computer can be shared with other students on the internet. This new assistive technology tool supports students who cannot listen, take notes and learn information all at the same time. It also provides an accurate and almost instant method of reviewing material. To reserve one of these great new note-taking devices, call Lynn, Scott or Craig (801-887-9380)

The Smartpen can be purchased from LiveScribe. Call 1-877-727-4239 or see web site: <http://www.livescribe.com/>

The 2GB Smartpen is \$169.99 or 4GB is \$199.99



## Wii Coming Soon to UAAACT

Scott Baggaley

The UAAACT Leadership council approved the purchase of 3 Wii video game systems. We will also acquire Wii sports, Wii Fit, and Wii Fit Plus. The reason behind this purchase is twofold. The first is for students with physical mobility issues. The controller for the Wii is very simple and for some games it only requires accessing one button, and with some of the games that have been ordered (once the game is started) it requires none. The Wii Fit programs include some different balance games. Wii Fit provides the user instantaneous feedback on balance as it walks the user through various exercises. In a class given by Judy Sweeny, she described a variety of individuals who may benefit from the feedback provided. She also cites a number of different studies where a Nintendo Wii has been used in rehabilitation settings. The second thing discussed was the social facilitation provided with the presence of a video gaming system. Again, there are a lot of anecdotal reports regarding how a Wii has positively impacted various individuals, including those with Autism.

To see a handout and summary of the different studies assembled by Judy Sweeny, see her website at:

<http://www.onionmountaintech.com/files/Wii%20handout.pdf>



AbleNet Announces  
PowerLink 4

AbleNet has just announced a new version of PowerLink. Not only does the PowerLink4 look much different than the PowerLink of the past, it acts different too. The PowerLink4 allows switch users to control two electrical appliances with single switches and now it will count the number of switch activations (built in data collection). It works with traditional switches or with the wireless Jelly Beamer switches in timed mode, latch mode, direct and two-switch mode.

The introductory price of the PowerLink 4 is \$229. You can also purchase the PowerLink 4 with two Jelly Beamer wireless switches for \$307. until the end of December.

For more information see:

[www.ablenetinc.com/powerlink](http://www.ablenetinc.com/powerlink)



Happy Holiday  
Happy Hanukah  
Merry Christmas  
Happy New Year

The First Regional UAAACT Training  
2009

By: Judy Giordano-Olson

If you were fortunate enough to have attended the first regional training of the 2009-10 year, you are now privy to many of Scott Marfilus' technological reading and writing strategies. If you were not able to attend, the following highlights of Scott's presentation will be of interest to you.

Scott covered a number of reading comprehension strategies. He stressed, first and foremost, that all strategies must be taught very explicitly. Don't assume that what seems second-nature to many will make sense to all. Provide "think alouds" to teach how good readers think about reading comprehension. Scott shared the titles of many books that address teaching reading content, including a few of his favorites: Textbooks and the Student Who Can't Read Them by Jean Ciborowski, and Creating Strategic Readers by Valerie Ellery. More strategies were reviewed to be used before, during and after reading. He suggested that the "before reading" phase is the most important, especially as it pertains to building background knowledge. Ideas were provided to incorporate image and video searches to activate background information. Some resources he shared included: Google images, Yahoo images, Flickr.com, Teacher tube.com, Slideshare.net, GettyImages.com and UEN.org.

Next, Scott discussed various electronic reading supports, stressing the usefulness of introducing text reader programs to reduce the load on comprehension of content. He recommended that each UAAACT member share the website: [www.learningthroughlistening.org](http://www.learningthroughlistening.org) with general educators, to help them understand aspects of listening and to emphasize that electronic reading supports are not a way of cheating – rather they level the playing field. Many electronics supports are readily available for student use. Most educators have Microsoft Power Point software and know how to use it. However, many may not know that you can download a free text to speech program, Powertalk at: [www.fullmeasure.co.uk](http://www.fullmeasure.co.uk) The newest Microsoft Word has many easy to use tools, such as, highlighters, one-click text sizing and spacing, background color and text color adjustments and many more features that can support students' reading skills. A free, talking work processor is available for Word by downloading it at [www.wordtalk.org.uk](http://www.wordtalk.org.uk) Scott stressed that we need to get students to interact with text, not just be passive readers. Other products to be considered include: Start to Finish Books by Don Johnston, Thinking Reader (Scholastic product geared toward middle school students who need comprehension supports). For students of all ages, check out [accessiblebookcollection.org](http://accessiblebookcollection.org) and [bookbuilder.cast.org](http://bookbuilder.cast.org) – the latter allows students to build their own printable books. He demonstrated the use of one type of book reader, the Classmate Reader. Students who need textbooks, or any type of book, in an electronic format are able to easily access such materials by using programs such as [bookshare.org](http://bookshare.org), Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic ([rfd.org](http://rfd.org)) or NIMAS/USIMAC ([usimac.org](http://usimac.org)).

Scott noted that most students with delayed reading have even more significant writing delays. Scott quoted Dr. Mel Levine's assessment of writing: "There is not another academic skill that demands that a child bring together as many different neuro-developmental functions as are required for writing." See: [www.allkindsofminds.org](http://www.allkindsofminds.org) for many intriguing ideas. Scott also suggested that many students get so distracted with the physical task of writing that the cognitive end suffers. If you need handouts from this wonderful workshop contact Craig Boogaard at 801-887-9533 or [cboogaar@utah.gov](mailto:cboogaar@utah.gov)

## **Begged, Borrowed, and Stolen ... A Combination That Works**

**By: Janalyn Biesinger – Granite School District**

**In our district, we are always looking for a better way to provide augmentative services. We always enjoy hearing what other people are doing so we can take full advantage of their knowledge and merge it with ours. Our current procedures for evaluations are a combination of methods we have picked up along the way as we have attended conferences and trainings and have spoken with others in “the biz”, as they say.**

**After a referral is received, the files are sent to a team member who has two days per week set aside for Augmentative purposes. These two days are usually filled with doing preliminary evaluations but can also be used to program devices, deliver equipment or create new communication boards. The preliminary evaluations are extremely important and are usually set up through email. The email explains that the preliminary evaluation will consist of a file review and a short observation of the student. The student will not be worked with directly. During the observation a team member fills out a Student Discrepancy Analysis Form, introduced to us at the 2008 UAAACT Conference by Keri Huddleston and Teru Lansdale and is based on Joy Zaballa’s SETT format. The file review consists of gathering a history of services tried with the student and information regarding his/her disability. The current IEP is reviewed and we see if the AT evaluation will support one of the IEP goals. The most current evaluation is noted. A conference is held with the file holder (case manager) to see if they have something specific in mind. Usually some type of accommodation or intervention is already in place. This is noted on the WATI (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative) form and cover letter that is sent home to the parents.**

**After the preliminary assessment is completed, our assistant will schedule a full UAAACT team evaluation and make the first contact as to when the team will return for the evaluation. She assigns cases to different teams and sends out an agenda, in advance to all team members. Because our district is large we have two teams that are able to complete the evaluations. On evaluation day, we all meet to review team business and to review the cases we will be seeing that day. A contact is made to the school to see if the student is present. The parents are invited to attend, especially for first time evaluations. The format of the evaluations differ, according to the student’s needs. The student is usually met with to be trained on a piece of equipment the team has brought. After working directly with the student, time is made to meet with the teacher and other involved professionals. Sometimes the issue is about the coordination of services between multiple parties. On those days, we do what we call a “BarbATT” – a combination of a technique taught by Steven Barbar and the WATI. We begin by having each person give their part of the story. Notes are made on a white board where everyone can see what has been discussed. During this time a team member enters information on a laptop to record the main parts of the discussion in the form of a report. A discussion is held as to the student’s strengths and weaknesses, strategies that have already been tried for the students needs, and ideas for the interventions are brainstormed. At the end of each evaluation, a signed printed report is given to the school file, parent, principal and the special education coordinator, and anyone else serving the student such as the OT/PT or SLP.**

**Note: We would love to have your district write a newsletter article. Let us know what tricks works for you! Yours might be the idea that we will steal next!**