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UAAACT News

Utah Augmentative Alternative Assistive Communication and Technology Teams

Editor: Lesa Stone Co Editor: Denise K. Adams
UAAACT Web Site: <http://www.uaaact.org>

Evidence-Based Practice Makes a Difference!

Below is an excerpt from the archived discussions section from The Family Center on Technology and Disability Website. Go to <http://www.fctd.info/webboard/archive.php> for lots of great information.

Assistive Technology (AT) Works: Making Evidence-Based Decisions with Dr. Penny Reed and Dr. Katya Hill

Not long ago, determining which assistive technology (AT) devices were best suited to help people with disabilities was a time-consuming and labor-intensive process of trial and error. Today, parents and professionals can benefit from using a new, more effective method called Evidence-Based Practice (EBP). This method emphasizes using evidence and data to guide decision making about what types of AT equipment and services are best suited to meet an individual's needs. Using EBP requires an assessment team to objectively document the individual's use of AT with a variety of observation methods and to collect relevant data to measure the user's performance. While this may be a daunting process, the information gathered will allow the team to select the AT that will be most useful and effective for an individual.

Dr. Reed and Dr. Hill answer some very important questions:

How does EBP help us determine if AT is effective?

What evidence do we have to show its effectiveness?

What variables can be measured? How do we decide what to measure? What are the roles and responsibilities of parents and professionals in this process?

How do user performance measurement tools, including automatic data collection software, affect the process?

How do we analyze and interpret the data to determine success and implement the findings?

Please let us know how your team measures and analyzes outcomes. Email me at denise.adams@granite.k12.ut.us with your information. Thanks.

Teams who use the WATI (developed in part by Penny Reed) have a fabulous start with their students. The UAAACT WATI inservice will be March 9.



Team Highlights.....

The following are some A.T. ideas, conference highlights and updates from UAAACT teams:

- Tobey Fields from the Logan/Cache team reported that the QIAT listserv had a great link to some nice low tech visual strategies. The website and the PowerPoint have great information and are very user friendly. See: www.eup.k12.mi.us/60894632218145/cwp/view.asp?A=3&Q=277175&C=53067
- The Granite/Murray teams have been working hard on follow-ups and decided to try an “Extreme Follow Up” method. This consists of each team member choosing one student or classroom to focus on (in addition to the team’s caseload). This is to help us learn and grow professionally as AT team members along with helping students.
- Gary Steinekert from the Washington County team reported that their team has been using Dragon Naturally Speaking to help a student with a quadrupal amputation. They also have several students with rare genetic disorders and accompanying communication challenges. They are grateful for the support and training provided by Craig and Scott!
- Melanie from Summit County learned about WordQ at ATIA. This word prediction software is a cheaper alternative to Co-Writer and you can add SpeakQ for simple speech recognition. It is easily trained to voices and can help users (especially those with learning disabilities) who cannot use other speech recognition products because of reading demands and complexity. For more info. Or for a free demo, check out www.wordq.com.
- Scott from UCAT discussed some great low tech options that he learned about at ATIA. Please look at www.onionmountaintech.com for a lot of great ideas such as a math ruler or a math line that suctions onto a desk....
- Janalyn from Granite seconds the motion on low tech. While at Closing The Gap this fall, she was reminded about the value of low tech. She also learned how to perform

a trial of a dynamic display device by using Microsoft PowerPoint.

- Julie Brown, team leader on one of the Jordan District UAAACT teams, reported on a proposal they made to district officials. The team suggested that SOLO software from Don Johnston be purchased for each middle school and high school in the district. The proposal was accepted! In order for the school to receive the new software, they must attend three 2-hour training sessions that will be provided by the UAAACT team.
- The Jordan UAAACT team has also purchased Planet Wobble, a reading and writing program that is used in conjunction with Clicker. It is a high interest, low vocabulary tool with great reading and writing activities that can be used right out of the box.

Alternative Financing

Marilyn Hammond of the Utah Assistive Technology Foundation (UATF) reported that the foundation has been in operation since 1991. The UATF provides low interest loans through Zions Bank for the purchase of AT equipment/devices (adapted van lifts, ramps, hearing aids, home modifications, etc.) The UATF also provides small grants (\$250 max. with non federal funds) for low income individuals and families. There is a total of \$1.5 million in current loans through the Foundation. If you are aware of anyone interested, please have them call 800-524-5152 or check their website at www.uatf.org.



Grant Web Site

Technology Grant News has granted your wish for a source that covers technology grants in one place. The K-12 section may be especially interesting to UAAACT members and the schools they support. Check out this informative web site: <http://www.technologygrantnews.com/>

Student Spotlight

Dallin is a 9th grader at Hartvigsen School in Granite District. He has been using sign language since age two and started working with the UAAACT team when he was four. Dallin continues to use sign language and his family is looking into getting him a Chat P.C. When Dallin goes skiing, his ski instructor has a communication board (with 3X3 pics) attached to his ski pole so that Dallin can communicate with his mittened hands! Lesa, Dallin's O.T., reported that when Dallin uses a voice output device, she notices a lot more animation along with laughing, giggling and sign language. Dallin also likes to start conversations, play, perform yoga, play cards and most importantly, have fun. Go Dallin!



Lesla and Dallin having fun with the Enkidu

Looking for UAAACT Conference Keynote Speakers

If you are going to CSUN or have already attended a national conference, you may become aware of an outstanding presenter who should be considered as a keynote speaker for our UAAACT Conference in February of 2007. If you would like to suggest someone as a UAAACT Conference keynote speaker, please email Craig Boogaard at cboogaar@utah.gov by April 15, 2006.

If you read this newsletter and would like a free Stage 5 software program for your UAAACT team, call Lynn Marcoux at The Computer Center to place your request. Lynn's phone number is 801-887-9380.

IntelliTools Player to Disappear Soon

For several years, IntelliTools has provided free players for their commercial software, IntelliPics Studio. The IntelliPics Studio player allows anyone to use the wonderful activities that are posted at the IntelliTools web site. The company has essentially provided FREE software to anyone who wants to use their products. We have been told by a reliable source that IntelliTools will pull the free players off their web site at the end of February 2006. So if you or your colleagues want access to the great IntelliPics Studio activities for free, download the players from the company web site before February 28, 2006.

Go to: www.intellitools.com

Click on Support, downloads, and IntelliTools Classroom Suite Player

"40 for 40" Program from the Prentke Romich Company

To mark our 40th year as a worldwide leader in the field of augmentative and assistive communication (AAC) technology, we are announcing a unique program for 2006 designed to honor the individuals we serve: children and adults with communication-related disabilities. Through the international "40 for 40" program, we will donate 40 of our industry-leading speech-output devices to individuals who lack funding-assistance options and would otherwise not be able to obtain a communication aid such as PRC's SpringBoard™, Vantage™, Vanguard™, and Pathfinder™.

If you know of someone or if you are someone who might qualify to receive one of these 40 devices, please review and complete the application today. See: http://www.prentrom.com/40thlogo/40_for_40_Prog_App.pdf

For more information on our products and services, visit the Prentke Romich Company website www.prentrom.com

The Computer Center for Citizens With Disabilities
1595 West 500 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84104

UAAACT Training Opportunities

Training Activities are at the Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities, 1595 W. 500 S., Salt Lake City. To register for workshops, call the Computer Center at 877-9380 or toll free at 1-888-866-5550. Additional workshops are posted at the web site: www.uaaact.org

Making a PC More Accessible by Scott Baggaley February 16, 2006 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

A WATI Refresher/Orientation by Craig Boogaard March 9, 2006 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 p.m.

Solo Suite Software by Scott Baggaley March 30, 2006 from noon to 3:00 p.m.
Bring your lunch- this will be an intensive 3 hour training.

Transition Planning and AT by Scott Baggaley April 21, 2006 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Advanced Boardmaker/Speaking Dynamically Pro by Craig Boogaard . . . April 27, 2006 from 1-3 pm

Writing Ideas for Students with Disabilities by Craig Boogaard May 5, 2006 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

If you are unable to make it to the scheduled workshops, or if you feel your UAAACT team could benefit from an on-site training, contact Scott or Craig at The Computer Center to request this service. In addition to the workshops listed above, Computer Center staff have conducted recent workshops on making curriculum accessible, specific AT devices, reading software, and the new Boardmaker Plus software.