

Experience as expertise:

Supporting the participation of people who use AAC
in pre-service training for SLPs and teachers
using video teleconference technology


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David Chapple


- Co-Leader of Training and Dissemination Team for the RERC on AAC
- Vice-President of Accessible Housing (Austin, Texas)
- Employee of "Training 4 Transformation"




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AAC Consumer and Technology Forums

- Four consumer-led research projects to identify challenges and solutions to communication
 - Community participation
 - Access to healthcare
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Independent living
- Focus group and survey methods
 - current barriers
 - needed features of AAC technology solutions




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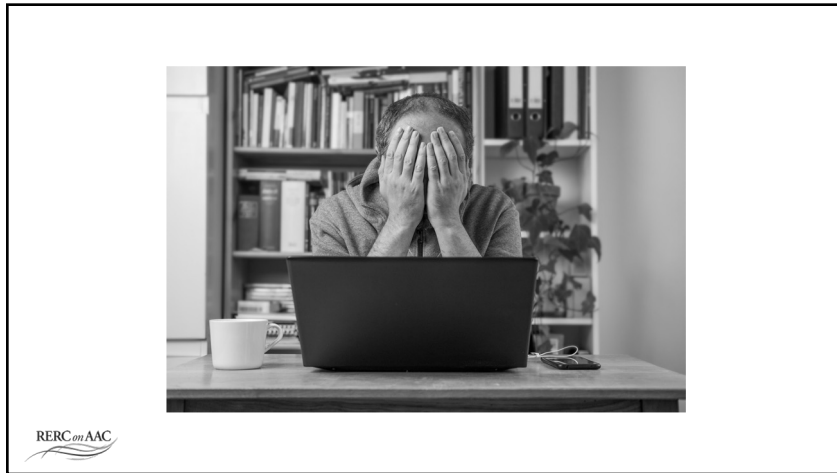
PWU AAC Online Chats

Engaging topics & diverse views from PWU AAC

<https://www.isaac-online.org/english/news/pwu-aac-online-chats/>



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- For more information, **please visit our website at rerc-aac.psu.edu**

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Learning Objectives

- Describe three benefits of the use of videoconferencing technology for people with complex communication needs
- Describe three challenges to the use of videoconferencing technology for people with complex communication needs
- Describe one proposed AAC technology innovation to improve the use of videoconferencing technology for people with complex communication needs
- Describe three benefits of "raising the voices" of people who use AAC in the pre-service instruction of communication professionals

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AAC Consumer Forum

- What have been your experiences using video teleconference technology?
- Why is it important for people who use AAC to present to pre-service professionals?



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Tracy Rackensperger
(Ph.D)

- Co-Leader of Training and Dissemination Team for the RERC on AAC
- University of Georgia

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- Guest presentations
- Teaching classes
- Research meetings
- Volunteer and community-building activities
 - USSAAC

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Recruitment

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Presentations



New research project: The participation of people who rely on AAC in the pre-service preparation of communication, education, and medical professionals

We are interested in learning more about the experiences of people who rely on AAC, and who are looking to prepare the next generation of communication, education, and medical professionals. The results of this research will be discussed at the AAC Conference and Technology Forum at ATIA 2023, and will be used to improve practice and support AAC technology development for persons who rely on AAC.

Who can participate?
We would like to collect data from persons who rely on AAC technology for communication. This could include (but is not limited to):

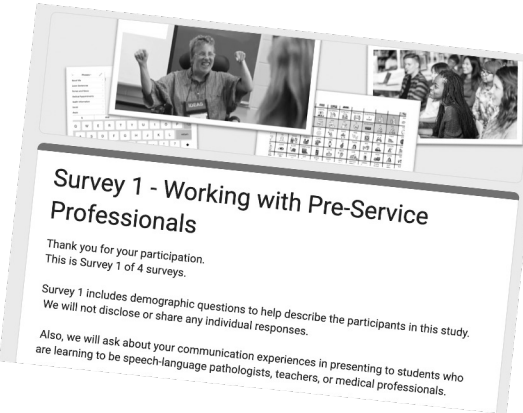
- Identified AAC devices (e.g., PRC, Access, Switch, Prox, etc., DynaVox, Symbolix, Attainment, etc.)
- Speech and AAC apps or programs on laptops or tablets (e.g., Proloquo2Go, Proloquo4Text, etc.)

Please note, we are interested in learning from individuals who make use of AAC for the primary purpose of their communication, as well as individuals who make combined use of speech (e.g., with family partners) and AAC (e.g., with familiar partners).

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Surveys

- 4 surveys using Google forms
- 1 Zoom interview
- 20 respondents



Survey 1 - Working with Pre-Service Professionals

Thank you for your participation. This is Survey 1 of 4 surveys.


Survey 1 includes demographic questions to help describe the participants in this study. We will not disclose or share any individual responses.

Also, we will ask about your communication experiences in presenting to students who are learning to be speech-language pathologists, teachers, or medical professionals.

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20 participants

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language in home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 English • 3 Spanish • 2 other (e.g., Swedish, Hebrew) • Disability status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 CP • 3 ASD • 6 other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 men • 8 women • 4 nonbinary • Sexual orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 straight/heterosexual • 2 gay • 2 asexual • 1 prefer not to answer
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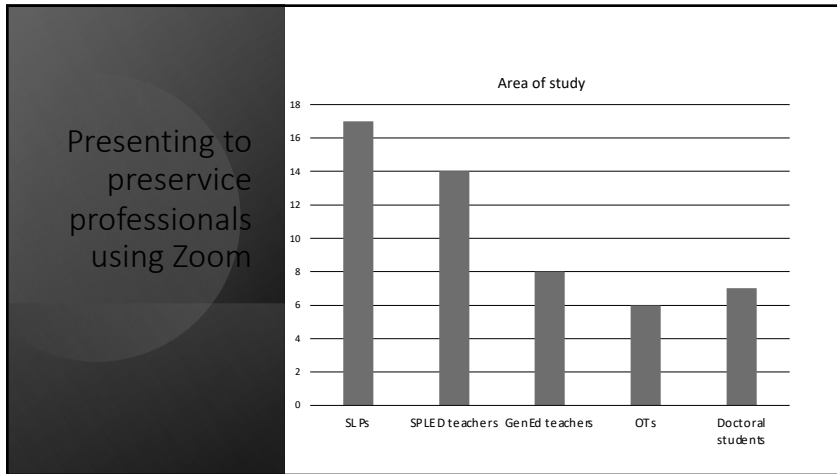
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Lance McLemore

- Graduated University of Alabama in Huntsville with a BA in studio art and philosophy.
- Works as an ambassador for PRC-Salttillo and the Center for AAC and Autism.
- Speaks at state, national, and international conferences.
- Paid member of the Training and Dissemination Team for the RERC on AAC



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Most frequently discussed topics

- Benefits of AAC (90%)
- Challenges of AAC (90%)
- Life story (80%)
- AAC at school (80%)
- AAC at college (80%)
- Funding (10%)

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Key messages: AAC for everyone

- *All autistics should be candidates for AAC; you can't tell from simply observing our speech skills whether we want/need AAC.*
 - FO-N-P
- *It is very important to give children who need it their AAC as early in their lives as possible.*
 - Qb-N-B

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Key messages: Be an advocate

- *Always be optimistic through the evaluation stage and really advocate for the person*
 - LS-O-U
- *Believe in your students*
 - NM-N-X

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Key messages: Diversity and Empowerment


- *Think beyond just race or gender when thinking diversity*
 - JO-N-N
- *AAC communicators experience ableism*
 - Tu-E-D
- *Including AAC users means AAC users can have all the roles, including [whatever the 'authority' roles are in this context, usually teacher, therapist, or researcher]*
 - Bm-M-S



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Your experiences?

- AAC for everyone
- Be an advocate
- Diversity and Empowerment



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Factors that contribute to the most positive experience

- I had spoken with the class instructor about possible topics before class
- Class instructor demonstrated respect for me and my content
- Students asked lots of questions
- Class had already learned BASIC info about AAC

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How can Faculty best prepare

- Students should
 - Send questions in advance (80%)
 - Read something you have written (40%)
- Faculty should
 - Read something you have written (45%)
 - Watch a video (45%)

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Supports for video teleconferencing

- Good sound environment (quiet)
- Let audience see your face and your AAC system
 - Eye contact
- Good visual environment
 - Good lighting
 - No bright lights behind you



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Technology recommendations for video teleconferencing

- Support for chat
- Control ppt while operating AAC
- Share screen



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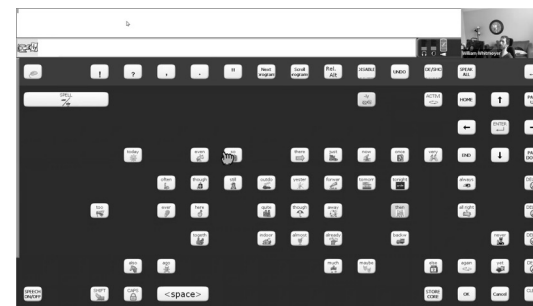
Support for chat

- Challenge of
 - Letting audience know a message is being prepared
 - “...” feature in iMessages
 - Show text composition on screen
 - Letting audience know a message is ready
 - Alert (bell? Visual?)
 - Chat “disabled” in some situations
 - Keeping comments “in time” with the interaction
 - Show prior comment to “contextualize” post



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Sharing the screen on your AAC Device

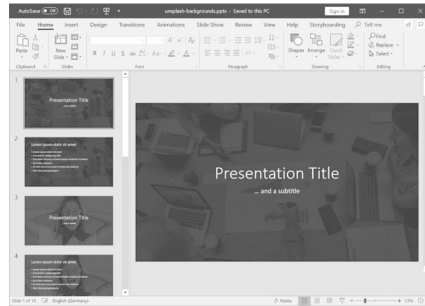


So now you are seeing my communication device’s screen, and I think you can also see myself.



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Controlling ppt while using AAC



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Other technology challenges?

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Why it is important: Lance

- AAC users help bring abstract theories into the realm of the practical.
- We provide necessary feedback to AAC professionals.
- AAC professionals need to have their ideas challenged.

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Why is it important: Tracy

- "Nothing about us without us."
- Transitioning from doing things "for us" to "with us."
- Importance of incorporating lived experience into classes.

RERC on AAC

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Why is it important: David C

- Opportunities for employment
 - Conference presentations
 - Support groups
 - Network across the country
- Social Connections
 - Family



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Why is it important: David M

- Compliment
- Co-Exist
- Confront/Challenge



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Why is it important

- I present to professionals and seriously so many say that they have never actually interacted with someone who uses AAC except for their clients!
- head>desk.
- I can't imagine trying to teach people to, I don't know, play the piano, if I'd never seen someone decent at playing piano before. And that metaphor doesn't begin to account for all the cultural nuance and ableism factoring in.



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Why is it important

I'm not sure I care that much that the presentations are live. But I do care that pre-service professionals see AAC users treated as people who have actual expertise and knowledge worth listening to. We know our AAC systems better than most professionals will ever have to, because we're

- able to focus our time/energy on the tools we actually use,
- have more riding on the consistent functionality of at least some of our tools, and
- spend more time using them for actual stand-alone communication, comparatively speaking.



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Why is it important

AAC users and professionals who don't use AAC have different perspectives -- we ask different questions, prioritize different things. Also professionals who don't use AAC need to see that success **exists** in terms of communicating with AAC, and pre-service professionals who **do** use AAC deserve to hear from a presenter like themselves in school



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USSAAC Speaker Connection

United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (USSAAC) has a Speaker Connection.

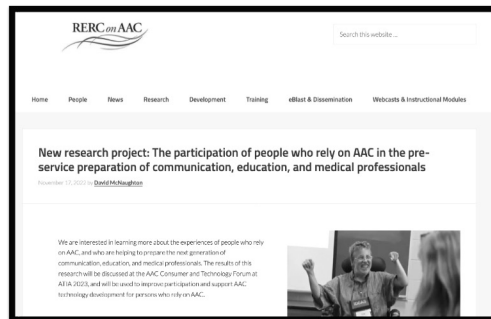
Part of Amplifying Voices campaign.

Searchable database of users of AAC available to speak to classes and conferences. (Fees vary)



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Thank you!



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