



CommunicATor

Winter 2009

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Assistive Technology Partners envisions a world where all persons with cognitive, sensory and/or physical disabilities are engaged in life at home, school, work and play, without barriers and without boundaries.

Dr. Bodine Participates in World Health Organization meeting in Switzerland

In November, 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) hosted a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland to gather together international experts on Physical Medicine Rehabilitation and Spinal Cord Injury. Dr. Cathy Bodine, Associate Professor at the University of Colorado, Denver, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation within the School of Medicine and the Executive Director of Assistive Technology Partners, attended this important meeting with leaders from around the world. The group discussed numerous rehabilitation options for spinal cord injury including assistive technology. One outcome of this international initiative is the publication of a textbook focused on spinal cord injury. The book will include a chapter outlining assistive technology applications for this population to be edited by Dr. Bodine. It is scheduled for publication in early 2010.

The World Health Organization is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical sup-

port to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

Graduates Present Assistive Technology Research Projects

Assistive Technology Partners is in the fourth year of a five-year federal grant that was awarded through the [U.S. Department of Education](#) to provide graduate-level training to address the shortage of personnel trained to provide assistive technology services to children with low-incidence disabilities.

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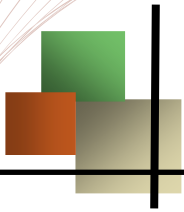


Class of 2008

The 2008 class did a terrific job on their research projects involving a variety of Assistive Technology areas from development to clinical applications. More information on these projects can be found on page 2.

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BREAKING BARRIERS, CHANGING LIVES



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Every Move Counts Clicks and Chats: Jane Korsten Returns to Colorado

“Only when communication is recognized and consistently reinforced will those with severe physical, sensory-motor, communicative and developmental differences find the effort to communicate worthwhile.”

–Jane Korsten

This past fall, nationally renowned trainer Jane Korsten presented the Every Move Counts Clicks and Chats (EMC3) strategies and methods to over 100 participants in Denver and via broadcast to 5 distance learning locations across the state. This training focused on the development of functional communication skills for the most challenging students and individuals with multiple disabilities and complex communication needs.

EMC3 techniques seamlessly integrates research from the disciplines of communication, education and sensory integration thus fostering communication and collaboration among service providers and caregivers. In a follow-up survey, 100% of training participants said they planned to share what they learned with their colleagues and 95% indicated the information and skills obtained would positively impact the achievement of their students or clients.

Assistive Technology teams from across the state are actively implementing EMC3 programs, sharing their knowledge with related service providers, teachers, and families and making a real difference for the individuals they serve. One participant wrote,

“This was a very valuable training for our district. We have been using this approach with a number of our students and gaining valuable info... The framework has been an integral tool in setting up appropriate and effective programming for students with the most significant support needs.” –Barbara Uhmsted.

2008 Students of the Advanced AT Professional Preparation Course

Below is a list of research projects presented by the 2008 class, as well as summaries of two of the presentations.

“Advanced Training in Assistive Technology”

Meg Perkins

“The Effects of Social Networking and Assistive Technology on Cerebral Palsy: A Case Study”

Cindy French and Mandy Hall

“Response Time for an AAC user: A case study”

Sarah Berg

“Improving Reading Skills through Technology in Early Elementary School Children”

Susan Treichler

“Building Local Capacity and Improving Student Achievement by Providing Training to Special Education School Professionals”

Shelly Elfner

“Increasing Computer Access for a Teenage Male with Cerebral Palsy: A Case Report”

Aleaza Goldberg and Christina Perkins

“Service Coordinators' Understanding of Assistive Technology in Early Intervention: A Research Proposal”

Maureen Creswell

“The Role of Technology and Video Avatars in Improving Social Communication for Children with Autism”

Jen Wiedmeier

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“Using Books with Sound Buttons to Promote Literacy Skills in Children with Cerebral Palsy”

Sabrina Hooverson

“The effect of recorded storybooks on time spent with books for 3-4 year old children: A pilot study”

Jer-Aye Gau

“Effects of Counting Books and Manipulatives on Typical 3-Year Olds Numbersense”

Jane Hile

“A Modular Approach to Electronic Aids to Daily Living.”

Gavin Philips

“The Digital Mailbox: Assistive Technology for Improving Home-to-School Communication”.

Heather Lyons

A Case Study of a Teenager with Cerebral Palsy: Social Networking and Assistive Technology
Mandy J. Hall, M.A., CCC-SLP & Cindy French, OTR

Background: A collaborative approach with client based goals, incorporating the use of assistive technology can be a positive change agent for an individual with cerebral palsy.

Objective: The purpose of this study is to describe a multi-disciplinary therapy approach aimed to increase social networking and to discuss methods to establish increased independence for an individual with cerebral palsy with community connections through assistive technology. **Design:** Single case study. **Setting:** Specialized assistive technology clinic. **Participant:** A 15 year old adolescent with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy, limited ambulation abilities and a visual impairment. **Intervention:** A four month client, family and clinicians' goal-based language development outcome; specifically oral narration, socialization, and computer use. Therapists and client met for nine sessions

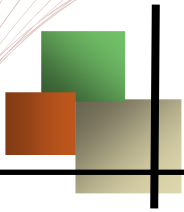
during the four months. A Macintosh computer was used, to initially provide pictures for description, then to use the technology for development of a picture scrapbook. In addition, internet access to Facebook was utilized to initiate social networking. Computer access, use of peripherals, as well as keyboard access were explored.

Outcome Measures: Quantitative measures included clinical data collection of descriptive language samples during sessions and data collection of specific use of an internet site for social interactions. **Results:** Of the six parameters of descriptive language data collected, the client showed increased competence in 3 out of 6 areas, from 18% to 30% gain in 4 sessions. In data collected in social networking, the student made 15 new contacts in a 34 day period. Study results revealed that the increased verbal descriptions are transitioned into conversation for the 15-year-old male student with CP when more details are included in picture descriptions for created slideshows. A combination of occupational and speech-language therapy approaches showed the importance of constructing focused short term objectives and long term goals for the social networking of a high school student with CP. Qualitative analysis also indicated that the client's quality of life is increased by assistive technology intervention and by maintaining and establishing family and community connections. **Conclusion:** The outcome of this case study revealed that the impact of assistive technology intervention for social networking establishes independence and improves communication between the young male with CP and his family and community members.

Service Coordinators' Understanding of Assistive Technology in Early Intervention

Maureen Creswell, MS, CCC-SLP

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) clearly states that assistive technology (AT) must be documented on a child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). States are required to track



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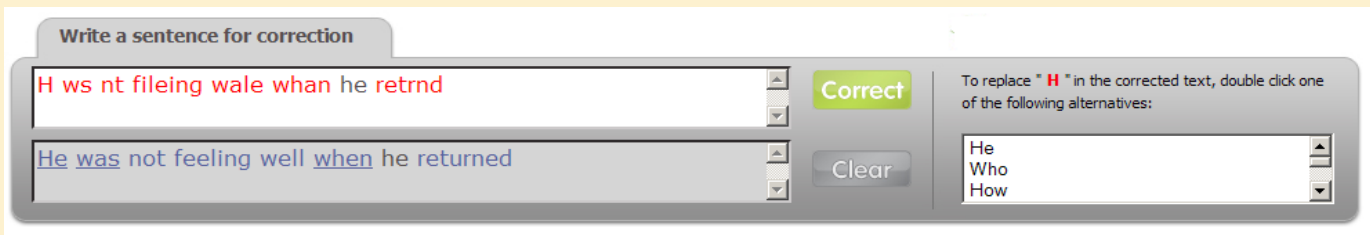
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Ginger Spell: Error Free Spelling for Individuals with Dyslexia

Spelling can pose a daunting challenge for children and adults with specific learning disabilities like Dyslexia. Ginger Spell from Ginger Software addresses this challenge through an innovative new product based on extensive research into natural language processing. Unlike other spell checkers, Ginger actually analyzes each word in the context of the sentence in order to help identify and correct misspellings. This approach improves accuracy significantly over techniques that rely on a dictionary based approach.

Ginger Spell is capable of catching unusual errors such as “ay lik etg fud” (I like eating food). The beta version of this software works by integrating directly within Microsoft Word for Windows (version 2003 or later). To use Ginger simply highlight a sentence and click the “Correct” button.



You can download the beta version of this software free of charge after registering on the Ginger website (<http://www.gingersoftware.com/>). The manufacturer plans to add grammar checking and text-to-speech support to future versions of the software.



the number of children using AT and report these statistics to Congress. The purpose of this study is to make inquiry of the service coordinators representing one Community Center Board (CCB) in the state of Colorado, to determine individual service coordinators’ level of understanding of AT. In Colorado a service coordinator is assigned to each child and his or her family to serve as a point of contact. The service coordinator’s role is to maintain a working relationship with the family and all service providers, and to develop the IFSP, among other tasks. Identifying the service coordinator’s basic understanding of AT and when and how it is to be documented on the IFSP will provide useful information for AT professionals and educators as well as state reporting agencies. A group administered questionnaire will be used to collect data related to the service coordinators’ knowledge of AT as it relates to early intervention. This pilot study has been designed to be reproducible in

other counties across the state.

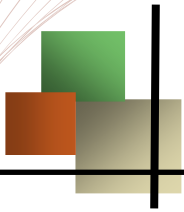
Western Slope Activities

WesTAC (the Western Technical Assistance Satellite Office) was actively involved with AT Awareness Week (October 12-13, 2008). As a result several new collaborations were developed:



Denice Roberts
AT Specialist, WesTAC

An adaptive art class sponsored by Unishape Adaptive Equipment, Inc., was held at The Art Center for clients of Mesa Developmental Services (MDS) It was such a great success that a committee was formed to coordinate offering an art class once a month. Previously an art class was offered 4-5 times a year. The committee consists of participants from MDS, The Art



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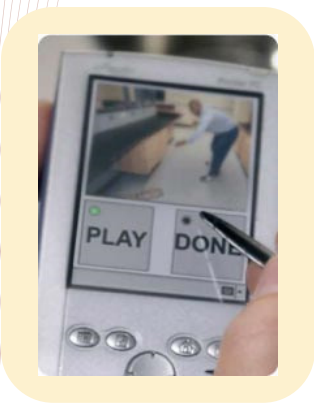
Center, Unishape Adaptive Equipment, Inc. and WesTAC.

Western Colorado Botanical Gardens hosted a display of adaptive gardening equipment. The Operations Manager is very enthusiastic about ensuring that the Gardens are accessible and has asked WesTAC to be on a committee to evaluate the Garden's accessibility. The Mesa County Libraries' Head of Children's Services and staff were excited about the Early Childhood Literacy Backpacks demonstrated during story time. WesTAC has linked the Head of Children's Services with the Denver office to help the Library create Literacy Packs for their usage.

Attendees at the WesTAC open house were surprised and delighted to see the attendees at the open house at the newly opened SETAC in Colorado Springs via an internet video link and learn how it is used as part of our telerehab program.

Don't Miss These Free Learning Opportunities!

Assistive Technology Partners offers FREE Learning Labs on a monthly basis to members of the community interested in learning more about assistive technology. Participants have an opportunity to speak with knowledgeable staff about a variety of assistive technology devices. These labs include device demonstrations with hands-on exploration. Sessions in Denver occur at Assistive Technology Partners located in downtown Denver. Sessions in Grand Junction and Colorado Springs are delivered via distance education at our WesTAC and SETAC offices, respectively.



Here's what coming up in 2009:

AT For Recreation

Denver: Thursday, February 12th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday, March 18th

Access to Computers Using Discover Pro and Switch XS Software Programs

Denver: Thursday, March 12th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday, April 15th

Understanding Access Features of Microsoft Office 2007

Denver: Thursday, April 9th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday, May 20th

How to Use the AT Funding Sources Database

Denver: Thursday, May 14th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday July 15th

Applying Principles of Ergonomics to Office Design and Setup

Denver: Thursday, July 9th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday August 19th

An Overview of Kurzweil 3000 Software

Denver: Thursday, August 13th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday September 16th

Dragon Naturally Speaking: Quick Tips for Success

Denver Thursday, September 10th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday October 21st

Wheelchair Seat Cushions

Denver: Thursday, October 8th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday November 18th

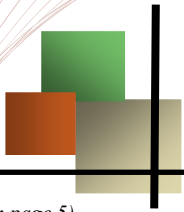
Seating and Positioning Options for Infants and Toddlers

Denver: Thursday, November 12th

WesTAC & SETAC: Wednesday January 20, 2010

Labs are FREE, but you must register to attend due to space limitations. To register or get more information about the location and time of these events, contact our offices at 800.255.3477 or go to our website at www.assistivetechologypartners.org.

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Southeast Technical Assistance Center Opens

In October, 2008 Assistive Technology Partners opened a new satellite center in the Colorado Springs-Pueblo area. On October 14, more than 40 people attended an Open House to view the new site. The Southeast Technical Assistance Center (SETAC) is operated by Assistive Technology Partners, and is housed at the Pikes Peak BOCES. The goal is to provide outreach services to the Pueblo area with a mission to provide better services to the southeast region of the State. The office will provide assistive technology services to people with disabilities and their families, professionals, and paraprofessionals including evaluation and assessment of technology needs for people with disabilities. Heather Lyons, MS, CCC-SLP has accepted the open position in this office.



Computer Access

Contact Assistive Technology Partners

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Satellite Office: Western Slope Technical Assistance Center (WesTAC)

Mesa County Workforce Center
2897 North Avenue, Modular 3A
Grand Junction, CO 81501

MAIN: 970.248.0876
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Satellite Office: Southeast Technical Assistance Center (SETAC)

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