

## 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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**PWUAAC Online Chats**

**Engaging topics & diverse views from PWUAAC**

<https://www isaac-online org/english/news/pwuaac-online-chats/>



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## Financial disclosure

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- For more information, **please visit our website at [rerc-aac.psu.edu](http://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

## Recruitment

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Presentations

The screenshot shows a website for the RERC on AAC. The header includes the logo and navigation links: Home, People, News, Research, Development, Training, Dissemination & Dissemination, and Webcasts & Instructional Modules. A search bar is at the top right. The main content is an announcement for a research project titled "New research project: The participation of people who rely on AAC in the pre-service preparation of communication, education, and medical professionals". It includes a photo of two individuals, a brief description of the research, and a link to the survey. The footer contains a "Who can participate?" section and a note about survey length.

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## Surveys

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

The screenshot shows a survey titled "Survey 1 - Working with Pre-Service Professionals". It includes a photo of a group of people, a thank you message, and a note about survey length. The survey content is visible, including demographic questions and a statement about learning communication experiences.

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## 20 participants

- **Language in home**
  - 19 English
  - 3 Spanish
  - 2 other (e.g., Swedish, Hebrew)
- **Disability status**
  - 11 CP
  - 3 ASD
  - 6 other
- **Gender identity**
  - 8 men
  - 8 women
  - 4 nonbinary
- **Sexual orientation**
  - 15 straight/heterosexual
  - 2 gay
  - 2 asexual
  - 1 prefer not to answer



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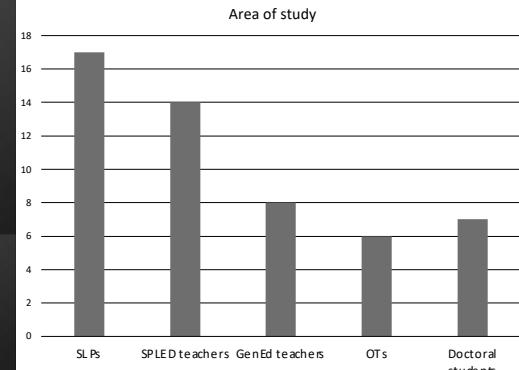
## Lance McLemore

- Graduated University of Alabama in Huntsville with a BA in studio art and philosophy.
- Works as an ambassador for PRC-Saltillo 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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Presenting to preservice professionals using Zoom



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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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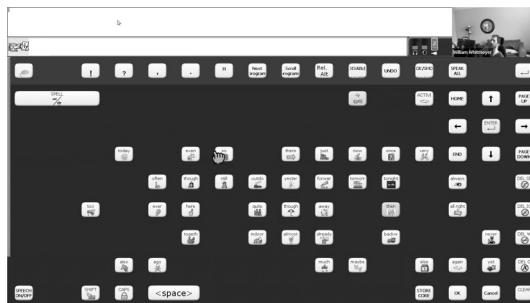
## Support for chat

- 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

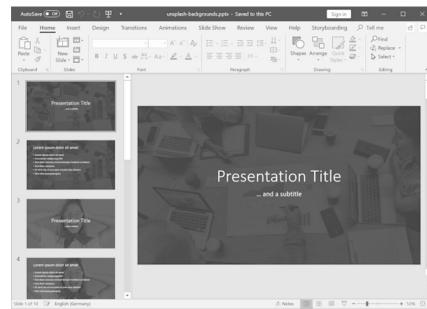


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So now you are seeing my communication device's screen, and I think you can also see myself.

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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.



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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 themself 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)

### AAC Speaker Connection

People who use AAC deserve to have their voices heard and to be reimbursed for their unique contributions. USSAAC's AAC Speaker Connection is here to connect people who use AAC of all ages with universities and schools, conference organizers, media outlets, families, industry and advocates across the United States. People who use AAC can now more easily share their remarkable stories, skills, knowledge and insights. USSAAC's AAC Speaker Connection makes it easier to amplify the voices of AAC.

BROWSE SPEAKERS HOW TO START REGISTER AS A SPEAKER MY ACCOUNT

#### Browse Speakers



Anthony Arnold  
SANTAN VALLEY AZ

Courtney Johnson  
JOHNSON CITY TN

Maggie Husnaik  
MOUNT VERNON KY

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Thank you!



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