

“Recognizing experience as expertise”:

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

Tracy Rackensperger, David Chapple, Lance McLemore, & David McNaughton





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Tracy Rackensperger  
(Ph.D)

- Co-Leader of Training and Dissemination Team for the RERC on AAC
- President-Elect of USSAAC
- Next Generation AAC - AI Grant

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

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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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## Patient-Provider Communication (2022)



### Supporting Patient-Provider Communication

The AAC Learning Center Module provides free evidence-based content on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for pre-service teachers and early-career paraprofessionals. Students will complete activities on-line, and then download a Certificate of Completion as documentation of their activities. Students also will be able to print and complete a [guided notes](#) activity that summarizes the key content of the module.

Below please find an outline of the content for Supporting Patient-Provider Communication. Please click on [Supporting Patient-Provider Communication](#) to view the materials at the AAC Learning Center Module.

Update - April 2022  
 - over 320 students and faculty at 10 colleges and universities have completed the module since it was made available in August, 2021  
 - over 96% of students would recommend the use of this module to others with an interest in this to

Effective communication between patients and healthcare providers is essential for positive outcomes. Learn the PACT strategy (Burns, Baylor, & Yorkston, 2016), which includes 9 action steps to help support interactions for persons with complex communication needs.

You will see how PACT can be used to support positive outcomes for

**Dave**, an adult with cerebral palsy, a co-leader of the RERC on AAC author of this module. Dave will describe his development of a communication outcomes.



## Teleconferencing (2023)



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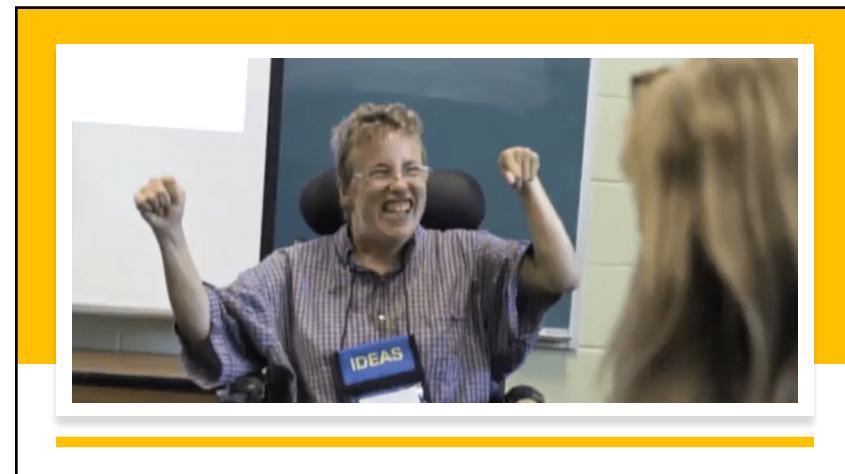


AAC Consumer Forum

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

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**Recruitment**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Presentations

**RERC on AAC**

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 helping to prepare the next generation of communication, education, and medical professionals. The results of this research will help to inform the development of AAC training for the Pre-Service AAC at ISAAC 2023, and will be used to improve participation and support AAC technology development for persons who rely on AAC.

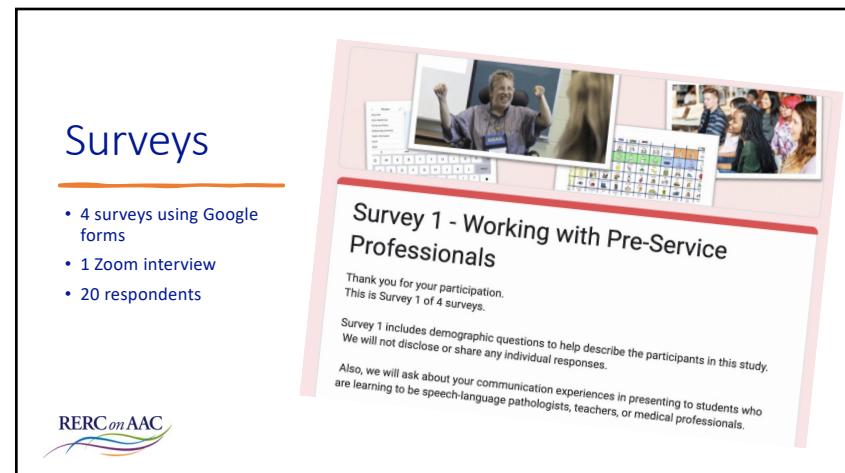
Who can participate?

We would like to learn from persons who rely on AAC technology to communicate. This could include the use of:

- Dedicated AAC devices (e.g., PRC Access, Saltillo NovoChat, Tobii Dynavox | Series, Attainment GoTalk)
- Specialized AAC apps or programs on laptops or tablets (e.g., AttainmentProseo on an iPad or Laptop)

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

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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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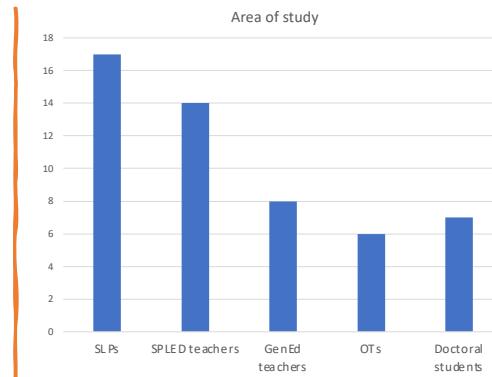
## 20 participants

- **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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## 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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### 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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## Anthony Arnold

### Four key goals of adult life: The role of AAC in supporting self-determination

November 29, 2021 by David McNaughton



Four key goals of adult life:  
The role of AAC  
in supporting  
self-determination

Anthony Arnold

- Emma M - How should teachers approach conversations about mental health with students who may have access to only a limited vocabulary?

Anthony : This is a good question, and one that I have been thinking about for some time for my own research / analyzing. I had emotional outbursts periodically, but nothing too alarming. They did send me to therapy, and then I was in therapy again a few years back.

- From looking back on various components, I have to say they weren't schooled enough to deal with mental health. Sure, they have been prepared at a greater level since I was in school, but everyone knows there's more work in this department.

Back when I was in therapy, I used to write letters to the therapist beforehand, which was beneficial for both the therapist and myself. Once in the therapy session, we reviewed what I wrote, and the conversation evolved from there.

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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 powerpoint while operating AAC
- Share screen of AAC device with audience

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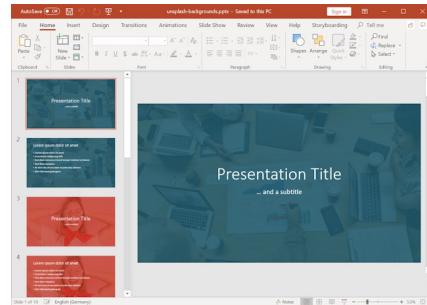
### Support for chat: Current challenges

- 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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## Control powerpoint presentation while using AAC



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## Sharing the screen on your AAC Device

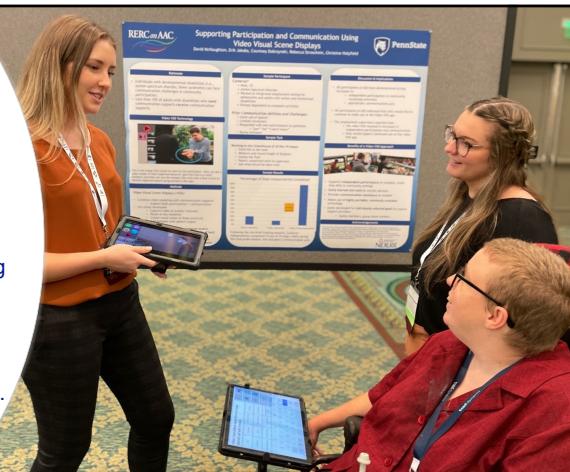


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### Why is it important: Tracy

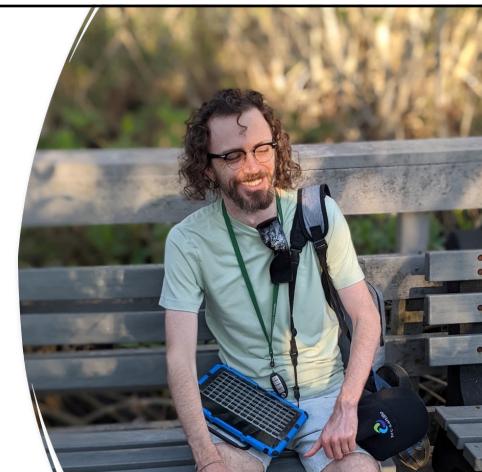
- "Nothing about us without us."
- Transitioning from doing things "for us" to "with us."
- Importance of incorporating lived experience into classes.



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### Why it is important: Lance McLemore

- 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:  
David Chapple**

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



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**Why is it important:  
David McNaughton**

- 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!
- 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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<https://speaker.ussaac.org/>

**AAC Speaker Connection**  
People who use AAC deserve to have their voices heard and be reimbursed for their unique contributions. UUSSAAC's AAC Speaker Connection is here to connect people who use AAC, of all ages with universities and schools, conference organizers, media outlets, festivals, industry leaders, and more. AAC users who use AAC can now more easily share their remarkable stories, skills, knowledge, and insights. UUSSAAC's AAC Speaker Connection makes it easier for people 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

Megan Hunsaker  
MOUNT VERNON, KY

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

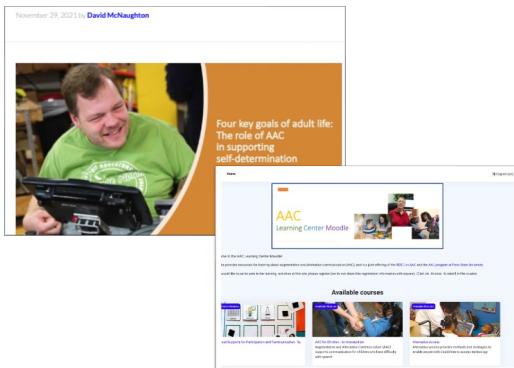
Part of Amplifying Voices campaign.

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

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<https://aac-learning-center.psu.edu/>

- 34 webcasts
- 8 learning modules
- Used by over 10,000 students at over 100 colleges and universities



The screenshot shows a blog post by David McNaughton from November 29, 2021. The post features a video of a man in a green shirt using a computer. Below the video, there is text about the four key goals of adult life: The role of AAC in supporting self-determination. The website also displays the AAC Learning Center Moodle and a list of available courses.



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For the AAC users in the audience.....

- have you presented to college and university students?
- what went well?
- what were challenges?
- What is the most important message you want to communicate to them?



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For the AAC faculty in the audience....

- Do you include AAC users as presenters?
- What are the challenges?
- What are the benefits?
- What do you think is the most important information your students learn from these experiences?



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Thank you!

<https://speaker.ussaac.org/>

<https://aac-learning-center.psu.edu/>



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

