

Assistive Technology Newsletter

Assistive Technology Centre SSRCE Publication



AAC Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Augmentative and alternative **communication** (AAC) is an umbrella term that encompasses the **communication** methods used to supplement or replace speech or writing for those with impairments in the production or comprehension of spoken or written language.

1

ASSESS & TRAIN

Appropriate assessment of student is critical, as is team training!

2

MODEL, MODEL, MODEL

You're teaching a new language!

3

USE MINIMUM 20X PER HOUR

Communication is ongoing, don't limit use.



Low Tech AAC
PODD systems
(binders, paper AAC products etc)



Mid Tech AAC
Example: Go Talk range of products



Example:
Proloquo2go App for iPad

AAC in the SSRCE - CLT!

Our Assistive Technology Staff and Speech Language Pathologists are working together in our Collaborative Learning Team this year. Enhancing effective use of AAC with our students who are non verbal and their teams is our focus. We have recently written a PDAF grant entitled *“Developing Interactive Augmentative and Alternative Communication Implementation Kits for Students who have Severe Expressive Language Delays”*. With this grant we hopefully will be able to design, develop and provide motivating and engaging activity kits that enhance language and use of AAC like Proloquo2go with our students and their teams using this Assistive Technology.

In the meantime we have provided multiple team trainings with Teacher Assistants, LC and RTs on using AAC effectively, modelling use of the device in any environment for any purpose, and providing interesting tips and tricks you can do with P2go to enhance motivation and engagement for the student.

We also recently provided one day of training which brought **all** our SLPs in our region together with the Learning Centre teachers of students using AAC. The Autism Teacher Specialist, Program Planning Consultant and Consultant for Complex Needs also attended and helped out with the training. Feedback was tremendous and we are receiving many good news stories about using this Assistive Technology back in the school setting with our students who are non verbal and more modelling by our Teacher Assistants, staff members and other students!

TIPS and TRICKS WITH Proloquo2go



Proloquo2go + Hey Siri = AAC Fun!

Make communication buttons in **Proloquo2go** to communicate with **Siri** hands free on another device! Now our students who are non verbal can ask Hey Siri to tell a joke, ask about the weather, find certain videos or images of high interest topics, ask Siri to tell a story and even take a selfie!! Motivating, engaging and yet another way to use Proloquo2go to enhance use of the device and learning!

Don't forget to train "Hey Siri" with your Proloquo2go ahead of time. Make a Set up Siri folder in P2go with these messages:

Hey Siri

Hey Siri, How's the weather?

Hey Siri, It's me

Turn on the other device. Go to Settings/ Siri & Search / Listen for "Hey Siri" and use P2go to train Siri to your P2go commands.

Have Fun!!!

iOS8 and up

CASE STUDY

"A" is a young girl who utilizes P2go for enhancing communication in her grade 3 classroom and beyond. The team has been trained to plan, program and model use of the device with "A". All school personnel, including students, know how to model the use of the AAC device with "A". As a result she wants to use it now to interact and engage with students and adults in her environment. She is verbalizing more and behaviours are reduced. "A" is also using P2go to send text messages to family and staff. This is meeting a motivational literacy goal and offering "A" a way to demonstrate her knowledge and novel ideas.



Assistive Technology Centre SSRCE 2018/19

Barbara Welsford (AT Specialist) and Anita Kingdon (AT Facilitator) have been busy this school year responding to the extensive AT and UDL needs in the SSRCE. We have received 176 referrals for AT assessments since September; made over 100 school visits to date and offered 2-3 AT team trainings per month in the Assistive Technology Centre based on those assessments.

In response to the recommendations made for students Assistive Technology provided to students and teachers this year include iPads, adapted cases, over 200 different specialized Apps, Chromebooks, extensions for Chromebooks, mounting systems for enhanced wheelchair access to iPhones & iPads, active seating solutions like hokki stools and move n' sit cushions, low tech sensory tools and fidget toys, powerlinks and switches, various AAC devices like Talking Brix and Step by Steps, adapted pencil grips and much more.

In September we were major players in the design and implementation of Teaching and Learning Above the Line: Access for All international conference. The conference focussed on Assistive Technology, Universal Design and SAMR Technology Integration in the classroom and beyond. Feedback indicated the Friday Inservice (including all our teachers in SSRCE) and Friday night and Saturday conference were highly successful. **Thanks to all attendees and presenters.**

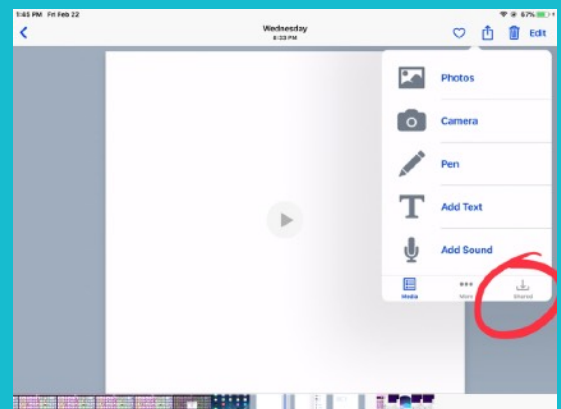
A HUGE SHOUT OUT to other conference planning team members including Jane Berrigan, Andrea Conrad, Stacy Kosiba, Elizabeth Burrige, Connie Bird, Karen Friskney, Darren Haley, Jeff DeWolfe and Jim Dexter. We should do it again sometime! 😊

TIPS and TRICKS WITH Proloquo2go

Send text from the Sentence Window in Proloquo2go to another device via Airdrop, iMessage, email, Google Classroom, Send to Showbie, Book Creator, Notes etc.



Send text to Book Creator from
Proloquo2go
[Click here for video description](#)



New Assistive Technology in SSRCE



Coming soon! A small and rechargeable, 12 message, AAC device for convenient support throughout the day

Product Features:

- Records and stores 12 messages in three levels, on four buttons
- Attaches to lanyard or clip as a wearable communication device
- Fits in a pocket for easy transport
- Provides high-quality speaker
- Rechargeable via USB

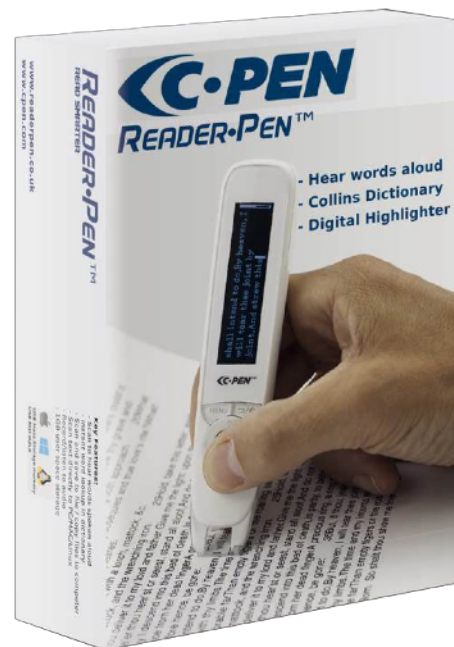
We are trialing a number of C-Pen products in the ATC enhancing access to text for students with LD

Totally portable, pocket-sized device that reads text out aloud with an English human-like digital voice. Simply pass the nib across a word and it instantly displays the definition and reads the word aloud (even when not connected to a computer).

It is also a scanner for capturing lines of text and uploading to a PC or Mac into most applications. 2GB of storage, download to computer via USB with no additional software required.

Collins 10th Edition Dictionary onboard; look up scanned words. Includes a voice recorder with playback onboard.

Package includes reader pen, carry case, USB cable, instruction manual, and earbuds.



NS AT/UDL Lead Team

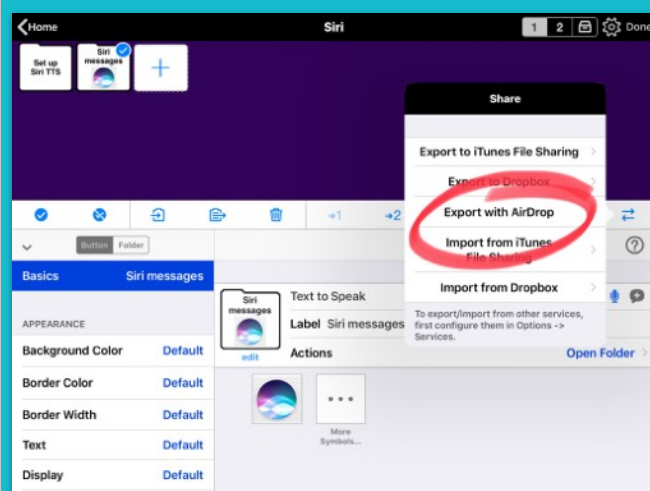
AT Staff in SSRCE are active members of the Nova Scotia Assistive Technology & Universal Design for Learning Lead Team. We meet regularly with other Assistive Technology Specialists from across the province from all Centres for Education, CSAP, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, Dept. of Education representatives and APSEA, NSCC and MSVU. Meetings cover lively discussions of the broad range of Assistive Technology used across the province with a wide variety of students. We discuss and act on effective use AT & UDL implementation strategies, identify need for training and we recently contributed to the development of the Expanded Documented Adaptations Available for Provincial Assessments in Nova Scotia. Meetings occur six times per year, 4 virtually through Zoom and we meet twice face to face.

The NS AT/UDL team began in 2015. Among the many discussions and actions we take on include:

- sharing and demonstrating new Assistive Technology on the market
- effective implementation processes for AT and Universal Design practices
- different Assistive Technology Service Delivery Models
- Assistive Technology on the Book Bureau
- NS Accessibility Legislation and AT
- we contributed to the NS Commission on Inclusive Education
- continue to review AT/UDL in the MTSS model
- we are planning to revise and update the AT Manual for NS and AT Fact sheet
- identifying AT and UDL training needs across the province
- the process of purchasing AT, funding sources, purchasing Apps via VPP Apple Canada, apps and extension purchases via the Chrome webstore

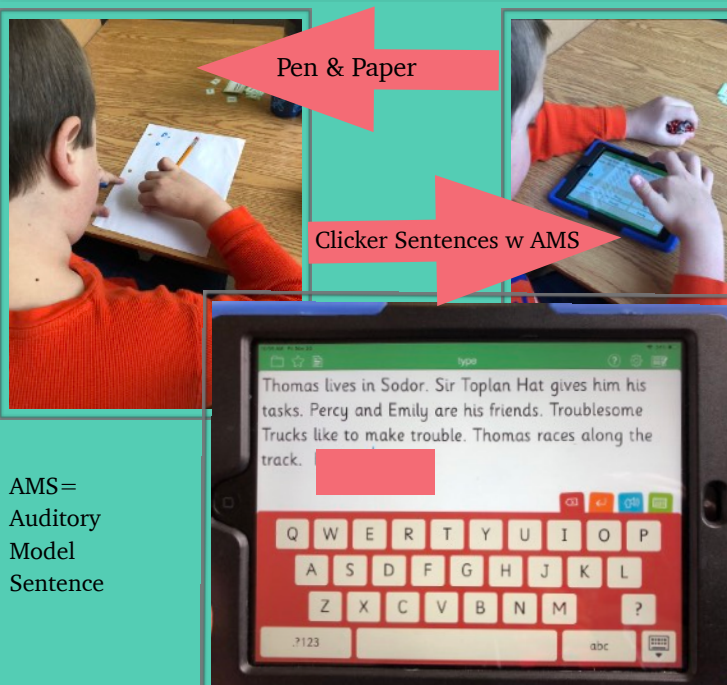
TIPS and TRICKS WITH Proloquo2go

Share a P2go folder with another device running P2go



- how to get accessible apps/extension approved for purchase, approving AT subscriptions (i.e. Readtopia, CoWriter Universal etc)
- We also have an active listserv allowing us to communicate effectively with each other across the province

Impact of AT: Writing



AMS=
Auditory
Model
Sentence

AT News Provincial Assessments: Expanded Documented Adaptations

Expanded Documented Adaptations Available for NS Provincial Assessments February 2019

Students may use a wider range of documented adaptations on provincial assessments beginning in May 2019 to reflect a broader interpretation of reading and writing that more closely mirrors students' classroom assessment experience.

Verbatim Reading and Read-aloud Adaptations for Provincial Assessments

Students with regularly used, documented adaptations may use a "Verbatim Reading – Human Reader" or "Assistive Technology – Read-aloud" adaptation on provincial assessments of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics/Mathématiques. Although the verbatim reading adaptation has always been available for Mathematics/Mathématiques and Writing components on provincial assessments, the following new changes will also be available for Reading components as of May 2019:

"Verbatim Reading – Human Reader" or "Assistive Technology – Read-aloud" adaptations will be available for all components of the following Nova Scotia Assessments:

- Literacy and Mathematics in Grade 3/Mathématiques in Grade 3
- Reading, Writing, and Mathematics/Mathématiques in Grade 6
- Reading, Writing, and Mathematics/Mathématiques in Grade 8

The purpose of a documented adaptation is to provide students with equitable access to instruction and assessment opportunities. These adaptations allow greater access to assessments for students with documented adaptations in the area of reading. As such, students may be able to more readily demonstrate their overall reading comprehension on provincial assessments.

Although decoding is an integral part the reading process, decoding is not the focus of provincial reading assessments; it is best assessed through individual conferences and reading records by the classroom teacher. Provincial assessments provide important information around students' analysis of text and overall reading comprehension.

When selecting the adaptation format for a provincial assessment (either a human reader or technology read-aloud), program planning teams should consider the individual student's technological comfort level and preference. The adaptation format used during regular classroom assessments should be the format used during provincial assessments. Assistive Technology – Read-aloud adaptations will be provided to schools upon request. (Additional information about this process will follow in March 2019.)

Assistive Technology for Writing Adaptation for Provincial Assessments

Although the "Assistive Technology" adaptation has always been available to students with documented adaptations for Writing components on provincial assessments, grammar/spell check, word prediction, thesauri, definition features may be used beginning in May 2019. This change will allow students who have a regularly used, documented adaptation for assistive technology for writing to use the same format they use on a regular basis for classroom assessments on provincial assessments. Even when students use this adaptation, they must still independently apply their understanding of all areas of the rubric (Ideas, Organization, Language Use, and Conventions) when they proofread and edit their work during the assessment.