

Interface National Newsletter



**Centre for
Augmentative and
Alternative
Communication**

University of Pretoria

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**Interface promotes
communication for
people with complex
communication needs
by supplementing
existing communication
with gestures,
communication boards
and assistive
technology (thus,
augmentative &
alternative
communication)**

Individual Highlights

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Editorial

The best kept secret!

2006 is well on its way, and I trust everyone has made a really good start to the new year!

Recently at one of the CAAC's open days I had the pleasure of meeting a family who had come in search of a solution to their son's communication challenges. This family touched me in several ways. I was touched by their openness, their commitment towards their children and their interest in promoting not only their own child's rights, but also the rights of all persons with disabilities. It made me realise again the importance of the principle "united we stand, divided we fall". If we want to make a positive impact, individuals fighting their individual battles might work for that moment, but it does not contribute to a long-term impact and thus long-term change.

I was also reminded again, of the challenges and pressures parents of a child with a disability face; for example, emotional, financial, lack of resources and support, ignorance of society towards the needs of someone with a disability (*i.e. no ramp access*

to buildings, able bodied people parking in the disabled parking etc.) and family pressures.

What was also most troubling to me is it took almost ten years for this family to find out about the existence of AAC and to get help! It begs the question, why? Why after about 20 years existence of Interface and the CAAC, hundreds of CAAC graduates and countless trainings, workshops, advocacy and awareness campaigns, did it take so long for a family living within 20km of the CAAC, to hear about AAC?

Why is AAC still the best kept secret? Frankly, I don't have the answer to that question.

However what I can say is that meeting this family not only reaffirmed the importance of Interface and the CAAC in South Africa and in Africa, but also inspired me, and I hope you too, to continue the work we do!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for a few minor printing errors in the previous newsletter. This was caused by a problem at the University of Pretoria printers

and was beyond my control. However every effort will be made to try and minimize these in future.

*Martin Pistorius
Editor*

*Send comments &
contributions to*

martin.pistorius@up.ac.za



From Inclusion to Belonging – 2006

Conference: 15, 16 & 17 May

Workshop: 18 & 19 May

Tel: (011) 274 9256

E-mail:

mmaddocks@witshealth.co.za

.....

CAAC – AAC Workshop

Basic: 26 - 30 June

Advanced: 3 - 7 July

Tel: (012) 420 2001

E-mail: liza.human@up.ac.za

.....

ISAAC Biennial Conference

Düsseldorf, Germany

July 29 – 5 August

www.isaac-online.org

.....

Research Symposium on Intervention & Positive Functioning

27 - 29 September

E-mail: kitty.uys@up.ac.za

Chairman's report

A quarter of 2006 has already flown by and during the past few months we have had two successful internet Interface National Coordinating Committee meetings. We utilise a messenger program, and despite a few minor teething problems it has proved to be highly effective.



Everyone, including the AAC users on the committee, are able to participate on an equal footing. The fact that there is a verbatim record of all the communication that takes place helps a great deal with the preparation of minutes of the meeting.

It has been proposed that we hold our national AGM in KwaZulu Natal because they are currently the most dynamic branch and have the largest number of active members. Be sure to visit the Interface website for details as they become available www.interface-sa.org.za

Our search for a treasurer has to date, not resulted in us filling the position. Margi Lilienfeld did a wonderful job for us by compiling financial statements for Interface South Africa for the past number of years. Thank you Margi. All that remains is for the statements to be audited. We are currently seeking someone, suitably qualified, to assist us in this matter. To date we have not found anyone to do the necessary auditing at a reasonable cost. If anyone of the readers of the newsletter is able to help or advise us regarding the required auditing please

contact the editor or me. In the meantime the search continues.

I trust that 2006 will be a productive year for us all.

Rodney Pistorius,
Chairman
National Coordinating Committee
Interface South Africa
Cel: 082 8505638 (A/H)
E-mail:
rodneyp@yebo.co.za

Regional News

Interface KZN:

Interface KZN warmly welcomes Kirsty Nourse, a Speech Language Therapist onto the Interface KZN committee. Kirsty is supervising the academic programmes at Pathways in Westville and we are delighted to have her on the committee. Although we have never been without a Speech Therapist on the committee we are thrilled to have two Speech and Language Therapists onboard.

The year has got off to a busy start with the writing of funding proposals, the referral of several children and adults for communication and related skill evaluations and planning for our awareness meetings and workshops. Four of our members were involved in the orientation programme of the 4th year Health Science students of UKZN for their Community Based Rehabilitation Practicums presentations, including an address by Daniel Ngcobo using "The Grid" AAC software on his laptop.

Alison Osborne, an architect from Westville, kindly took on the task of drawing the draft plans for the proposed AAC Resource and Training centre and Robert Lee offered his

services as a quantity surveyor for the joint project between Interface KZN and KZNCP Association. Our next step is to have the plans drawn for submission to the Ethekweni City Council. The future for Interface KZN looks both exciting and promising!

AGM

Interface KZN held their AGM on 15th March 2006 at the Edgewood Campus of the University of KZN. Ben Jonck welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the Chairman's report for the past year, highlighting the major achievements and events of the past year. Copies of the Treasurer's report were also made available for all present and we thank Marilyn Clark for the professional interim financial statements that were presented. Arthur Douglas of Visionary Accounting and Tax was appointed as the Honorary Auditor. Daniel Ngcobo addressed the meeting sharing his dream of wanting to assist other people with disabilities, the role that Interface and the Fofa training had played in improving his communication capabilities and concluding with an appeal for funding for the AAC training and resource centre. Paul Burdett then gave a moving tribute to the enthusiasm and hard work that Margi puts into Interface KZN. Inga Strydom and Thabisile Sishi both accepted nomination to serve on the executive committee and they join Felicity Jonck, Paul Burdett, Suzanne van Zyl, Elaine Byrne, Di Maitland, Thandi Sibiya, Marilyn Clark, Margi Lilienfeld, Saira Karrim and Kirsty Nourse as the committee for 2006 – 2007. Neeltjie Wasmuth also volunteered to assist the fund raising committee. Ben Jonck, who had decided to stand down due to increased business commitments, was

thanked for his able leadership of the committee during the past two years.

After refreshments had been served the movie "Inside I'm Dancing" was shown. Although the movie caused both laughter and tears, the consensus was that it was a good movie that raised thought provoking issues related to individuals with disabilities including relationships, care facilities and independent living options. Definitely recommended viewing!

AGM of Interface SA

Interface KZN has accepted an invitation by the National Coordinating Committee to host the Interface SA AGM in 2006. The proposed date is Thursday 13th July 2006. A three day AAC seminar will take place on Wednesday 12th, Thursday 13th and Friday the 14th July so plan now to take a winter break in sub-tropical Durban during the July school holidays and join KZN for an exciting seminar and the national AGM.

Our first major fundraising event of the year is a supper theatre evening at the hugely popular Barnyard Theatre at Gateway Shopping centre, Umhlanga. Interface KZN has booked the entire venue for the "Harvest Moon" production for the 3rd May 2006. So if you want to enjoy good music and have a fun evening with friends and at the same time benefit adults and children in KZN who require AAC please contact Suzanne Van Zyl on 084 804 0041.

Thanks to Celeste

Interface KZN would like to thank Celeste Mukheibir of Inclusive Solutions for her very generous donation of a Traxsys Roller Plus joystick to our library of resources. The

Roller Plus was designed specifically to improve computer access for people who have difficulties with a conventional mouse. Special features include a speed control key, latching drag switch and a double click switch etc. A single press of the double click switch executes a double click operation and the switches are set wide apart and accessed through a robust cover plate allowing for greater stability of the user's hand. In addition, the unit came with a switch box so that any switch or switches can be connected to the switch box to take the place of the switches on the unit.

We have installed the joystick onto the Interface KZN computer and the first person to trial its' use will be Paul Burdett. Our grateful thanks to Celeste for assisting us to provide opportunities to individuals in KZN who require AAC.

Margi Lilienfeld

Interface Western Cape:

We ended off 2005 with a wonderful High Tea at Vista Nova School. Martin Pistorius was our guest speaker and entertainment was provided by Lize Beekman and Philip de Villiers. An enjoyable and inspiring morning was had by everyone there and much-needed funds were raised to help us continue supporting persons who use AAC. Thanks again Martin – you are an inspiration to us all!

PECS Project

This year began with a PECS project championed by Nafisa Baboo and Jenny Tully. The pilot project at the Child Care Information Centre of the Child Health Care Unit (UCT), based at the Red

Cross children's hospital kicked off with a few curved balls to keep things 'interesting'!

In February, Nafisa and Jenny, spent a couple of afternoons training the Reddam Interact group in the methods of interviewing parents of children identified to take part in this project. They are a very enthusiastic group of girls; eighteen volunteers between the ages of 14 and 18 years. Val Hoy at the Red Cross Unit, spent time identifying appropriate candidates to participate. Parents were chosen according to their commitment and children according to their need and ability.

The 'Moms' were shown the DVD and told about the project and asked if they were keen to be included. The following week we had a disappointing turn out, however we feel it is important to continue despite the low numbers. Due to transport difficulties, some 'Moms' arrived the following week, so we are yet to see if any of them will participate.

The interviewing was done, and the PECS symbols were printed and laminated using the laminator bought with funds raised on Casual Day 2005. The Reddam Interact team then assisted us in the



making of 10 PECS files, using stick-on Velcro, generously donated to us by a local haberdashery called Mamacos.

We aim to hand over the files on 28 March and have the

Reddam Interact girls to help us with the first training session with the children. Ongoing training is to be given to these 'Moms' as and when they need it. We may even get some publicity out of this and hopefully the Red Cross Speech Therapy Dept will see the benefits and perhaps take on future projects with the assistance of Interface.

Besides a few disappointing obstacles i.e. red tape and unforeseen school commitments, meeting these children and seeing how badly they need some form of communication, makes this seem like a really worthwhile project.

Jenny Tully

Join us!

There are many challenges to face and barriers to overcome, but each small step takes us closer to reaching our dream of enabling every person with limited speech to have the means and opportunity to communicate. If you share this dream, we would love you to join us and help us make the dream a reality.

*Nicky Smit
Western Cape Committee*

Interface Gauteng:

Interface – Gauteng is a non-profit organization which is striving to provide disabled persons with limited or no functional speech, the means to communicate, and therefore to enable them to successfully and independently contribute to the society in which they live.

Interface – Gauteng aims to:
- Empower people who use AAC and their families, by providing support to them.
- Promote public awareness of the communication difficulties and share information about AAC

options.
- Hold workshops for individuals and groups who have AAC needs.
- Develop resources for adults and children with complex communication needs.
- Facilitate recognition for the necessity and benefits of AAC for people with complex communication needs.
- Facilitate the development of resources for adults and children with complex communication needs.
Let us, the speech-disabled with their families make a difference in the way people see us. Your membership will help to make the voice of the speech disabled strong. I therefore urge you to renew your membership or sign new members in to Interface-Gauteng.

*Zach Joubert.
Interface -Gauteng
Chairman*

Nuwe Wending News!

We at Nuwe Wending School are looking forward to an exciting and more fruitful year. The parents of our support-group are determined to move forward to reach another goal, which is to rapidly expand within the group. We therefore invite parents of children who have little or no functional speech (LNFS) to join us on this journey in closing the communication gap between our children with LNFS and those who can independently verbalise their needs.

We also made a great turning point in our intervention strategies at the school. It was decided that the therapist should be actively present in the classes of those kids who use AAC. This resulted in more active participation from the children with LNFS as well as their peers and teachers.
The use of Aided Language

Stimulation (ALS) by the teachers was reinforced from our Junior 1 phase right up to the Pre-vocational phase. For those who have not attempted to use ALS yet, now may be a time to test the waters and experience a breakthrough in communication with those who have LNFS.

Heidi Mapisa
(Speech therapist, Nuwe Wending School)

applause and shouts of joy! Their enthusiasm and pride is contagious and experiencing their excitement reinforces our belief in our Inclusion process.

Through our weekly Strategic Planning Meetings with the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster and heads of the Junior and Senior Departments issues surrounding our Inclusion are highlighted and discussed and very creative plans for implementation are being born! The commitment and dedication of the Mitchell Staff towards the process is heart-warming and once again our belief in Inclusion is reinforced.

A tremendous amount of work, dedication and commitment has gone into our building and our community has been extremely generous with regard to sourcing and supplying a variety of materials. The buildings are beautiful and we are having tremendous fun designing rooms to accommodate our needs and our dreams!

Our children will be attending regular class visits and School assemblies in the new term and will also participate in the Mitchell House "Bush Walk". Our children will also be fitted for official Mitchell House school uniforms in the new term and their excitement cannot be contained....they cannot wait!!!

Each step of the process has been documented and we look forward to presenting our Inclusion Journey at the upcoming Inclusion Conference in Johannesburg in May.

Sue and Ruth and all at Pathways-Polokwane

School News

News from Pathways-Polokwane

It is with a tremendous sense of disbelief mixed with awe that we stand on a building site watching our Inclusion dream become a reality, brick by brick.

Our building on the Mitchell House Preparatory School premises should be completed by mid-May and

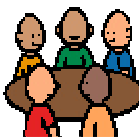


our children will start the third term as fully fledged Mitchell House students!!!! Our children can hardly wait and ask us on a daily basis when we are going to move, as Naldo so eloquently puts it, "wanneer kry ek my nuwe juffrou!"

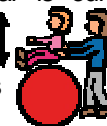
Through our weekly visits our children have seen the building grow and have been involved in the process. The builders are encouraged by our children on our weekly visits to the building site and once again Naldo (our self appointed foreman) enthusiastically encourages the builders with phrases such as, "Julle moet mooibou, ok!" followed by

News from Pathways-Pretoria

Pathways-Pretoria is blessed with a bunch of special children and young adults. We started this year with 50



A first for this year is our sensory integration group that focuses on sensory activities for 3 hours a day as well as a lot of play activities.



Our young adult group also took off. They are involved in life skills training and work preparation.



Our aim is that most of them will have a job in the open labour market and that they will start with job sampling within a few months.



We have also started a tea Garden. The preparation, serving and cleaning up is also part of their training.



They use an adapted PCS menu and the clients have to tick what they would like to eat or drink.

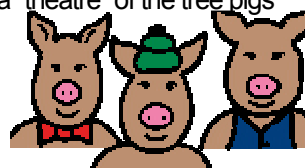


A big highlight is the start of our buddy project with Eersterust Care and Training Centre.

The young adults had their first hamburger braai with their friends and had to prepare everything! They also entertained them with volley ball, tennis and Frisbee.



Our one highlight this term was when the teachers made a "theatre" of the tree pigs



for the children. They used big corri-boards masks and houses. They added SASL

gestures and a carrousel device with PCS symbols. The kids had so much fun that we had to repeat the play for 3 consecutive times!

Danita Nel & the Pathways Team

News from The Key School

The Key Assessment Centre

The Key School has started an Assessment Centre for children with autism and other special needs. The assessments take two hours and children are assessed by a psychologist, a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist and a communication specialist. A feedback meeting is arranged as part of the assessment when parents are briefed and given written reports on our findings. We are able to give advice on a number of aspects such as behaviour management, ideas for communication and toilet training. We also offer home programmes to parents who live too far away from appropriate schooling for their children.

Phone: Jenni Gous (011 726 2445) for more details.

Jenni Gous
Principal Key School

ISAAC/Bridge School Award

Teacher in Training Program

Dr. Vicki Casella, Executive Director of the Bridge School in Hillsborough California and Pegi Young, President of the Board of Directors have announced that Nomhle Veronica Gavu from Cape Town, South Africa is the winner of the ISAAC Bridge School Award for 2006.

The Teacher in Training

Program is a collaborative project between ISAAC and the Bridge School, initiated in 1998. Veronica is the fifth winner of the award. The program offers the opportunity for an individual from a country where augmentative communication is an emerging entity to live, work and learn with colleagues at the Bridge School. The Bridge School www.bridgeschool.org offers specific training and education for children who rely on AAC to communicate. Both the school and ISAAC provide follow up support after the winner returns home.

offer some time to these worthy candidates.

ISAAC Secretariat

On behalf of all the staff at The Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication we would like to congratulate Veronica Gavu on ISAAC Bridge School Award for 2006

Veronica is a teacher and head of department at Tembaletu Lsen School, a school for children with physical impairments in a disadvantaged area of Cape Town. The school has recently been identified as a resource centre in the Western Cape. Many of the children need AAC strategies and the opportunity for Veronica to learn hands-on, practical implementation for the classroom will be invaluable. When she returns it is expected that she will work with the Department of Education to bring AAC to the Western Cape and all of South Africa. Veronica has an Advanced Certificate in Education and is studying for an honours degree.

There were 7 applicants for the Teacher-in-Residence Program from the following countries: Thailand, Malta, Brazil, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and South Africa. ISAAC will be offering support to those who were not selected by helping them develop AAC in their countries and giving free membership of ISAAC for one year. We would be pleased to hear from any members who would like to

Some professionals were fortunate to participate in a Makaton training which was held at Unica School during the week of the 28th March 2006.

The training lasted for five days and was facilitated by the international guests Sarah Norman and Julie Ford from Makaton Vocabulary Development Project.

The training involved the role of Makaton in the facilitation of communication skills, language development and literacy acquisition.

Background

Severe lack of interaction and participation is one of the challenges facing educators, other professionals and all those people who work with learners who have little ability to speak.

Makaton is one of the

systems used in the field of AAC. Like other systems used in this field, it can be used to facilitate interaction with learners who have communication difficulties. It consists of 450 core vocabulary (concepts that are used in daily communication) and an additional 7000 symbol resource vocabulary that are arranged in different topics.

The focus on this program is on a multimodal approach. To implement Makaton, the facilitator uses speech, Makaton symbols and manual signs which can be adopted from South African Sign language.

using the Makaton language program is the functional level of the child. If the child is at a very low functioning level the facilitator should avoid using long phrases. The sentences should be short and easy to be followed.

The use of the Makaton system as one of the AAC strategies can provide all those learners who find it difficult to share their experiences in a natural way. This was a fun workshop which included a lot of practical exercises and different activities

Gloria Madiba

In the Classroom

Using Makaton Language Programme in the Class

Teaching learners the Makaton system

Makaton can be taught formally and informally in a classroom situation. It can be taught / used at three different levels.

Level 1

One sign or symbol can represent the whole sentence.

Example: My brother is kicking the ball.

The only word that is signed or presented with a symbol is **“Kicking”**

Level 2

Key word signing
Three words in the sentence will be signed or presented with symbols.

Example: **Brother – kicking – ball.**

Level 3

Lastly the facilitator can present the symbols or sign all the words in a sentence

Example: **My – brother – is – kicking – the – ball.**

The facilitator must always speak when signing or presenting the Makaton symbol.

The important thing that should be considered when

Autism workshop

Autism South Africa (www.autismsouthafrica.org)

hosted a two day workshop for professionals working with individuals with Autism on the 22nd and 23rd of February. The guest Speakers were Avril Brereton and Bruce Tonge, from Monash University, Australia, both of whom have worked for many years with autistic children and their families in a variety of research, teaching and clinical settings. This article focuses on some of the available low technology aided strategies, discussed during the workshop, together with useful websites to help you construct these strategies.

For individuals with autism, the natural option for intervention strategies is to use visual supports. A variety of reasons exist to support the use of visual strategies and include the following:

- it concretizes communication information as it has to be represented in a visual means
- pictures last longer than speech and so provide extra clues for individuals

who have difficulty processing information

- it decreases anxiety and assists communication partners to understand the speech that the child or adult has.

Firstly, we need to decide which level to start to present the visual symbols on. This can range from objects, photographs, realistic drawings, line drawings to the written words. Objects are very concrete symbols and are a good starting point for young children. Ultimately, we would like to see individuals progress from photographs to more abstract line drawings, and then finally written words.

The following strategies help the individual to learn language

Schedules are a very useful tool to visually represent a planned set of activities. The advantages of using schedules are that they allow the child to understand what is happening next; it facilitates the transition from one activity to another and it helps the child to organise his environment and in so doing facilitates a reduction in their anxiety levels.

Here are the steps to developing a schedule:

1. Divide the day into activities and name the activities.
2. Select an appropriate way to represent the activity (consider photographs, line drawings or written words)
3. Select a layout (on a wall, in ice-cream containers, in shoe dividers).
4. Make the schedule.
5. Let the child open the container before the activity and prompt him to touch the object while telling him what will happen next.
6. Once the activity is completed the lid is put on the box and the next box is

- opened
7. Repeat for as many activities as are listed in the schedule.

Another good example to facilitate language development and help the child to participate in activities is the use of an **activity/play script**.

Here are some pointers to construct an activity or play script:

1. Take photographs of each step of an activity.
2. Place in the correct order on a background (cardboard, a car mat, ply board covered in felt etc.)
3. Complete the activity using the symbols as a visual cue.

The following strategies help the individual to communicate language

Choice boards are useful to encourage control over the environment. It might be best to start off by representing favourite toys and foods by using the visuals that the child is most familiar with (either real objects or photographs). In order to practice choice-making, here are some pointers:

1. Create an opportunity where the child wants a certain activity etc, provide him with the symbol (photograph or line drawing).
2. Request that the child gives the symbol to you and in return you will give him the desired object.
3. Once he knows what the photographs/object represent, let him **choose** between two and later three and more photos/objects to indicate what he wants.
4. The symbols for choice making can be attached using Velcro to a car mat (which are readily available at most supermarkets).
5. Once the child has made the choice, reward him by

supplying what he 'asked' for

6. Continue to incorporate choices as much as possible within the child's routine, e.g. choice of activities, partners, and even choices within activities toys, clothing, videos, etc.

Introducing some **visual symbols** to represent messages such as "more", "help", "finished" and "break" may help to decrease the child's frustration by providing the child with an easy way to communicate very important messages and this will help him to regulate his environment.

Here are some tips for using the cards:

1. The cards must be accessible at all times to prevent the child from becoming increasingly anxious and frustrated.
2. Remember when training the use of the card, prompt them to point to the card before the child reaches their frustration level, and then respond in an appropriate way (i.e. stopping the activity; or providing more).
3. Initially the child's hands can be physically prompted to point to the card.
4. Using a finished box/bag (place the symbols of the activities in here once they are completed) may also assist the child when wanting to convey that s/he has had enough of the activity.

The following websites contain interesting and useful information and downloads regarding symbols and strategies.






- They are:
- www.usevisualstrategies.com
 - www.dotolearn.com/pictu-recards

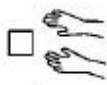



















- <http://room5ideas.com>
- www.setbc.org/projects/vs/default.html
- <http://aac.unl.edu/intervention.html>
- www.aacintervention.com
- www.cesa7.k12.wi.us/sped

Michal Harty

Aided Language Stimulation Corner



| Ingredients |
|--|
| bread  Slai sa brotho |
| margarine  margarine |
| jam  jamo |
| Utensils |
| knife  thipa |
| plate  plaiti |

| Method | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Step 1 | | | | |
| Get  Tsea | 2 | | bread  borotho | |
| Get 2 slices of bread Tsea di slai tse 2 tsa borotho | | | | |
| Step 2 | | | | |
| Put  Lokela | bread  Slai sa borotho | plate  plaiti | | |
| Put bread on plate Bea borotho ka mo plaiting | | | | |
| Step 3 | | | | |
| spread  tlotsa | margarine  margarine | on  godimo | bread  borotho | |
| Spread margarine on the bread Tlotsa margarine godimo ga borotho | | | | |
| Step 4 | | | | |
| spread  tlotsa | jam  jamo | on  godimo | 1 | bread  borotho |
| Spread jam on one slice Tlotsa jamo godimo ga slai se se 1 | | | | |
| Step 5 | | | | |
| 2 | bread  borotho | together  kgomaganya | | |
| Put the 2 slices together Kgomaganya di slia tse 2 | | | | |
| Step 6 | | | | |
| Cut  Sega | bread  borotho | in half  tse 2 | | |
| Step 7 | | | | |
| Eat  Eja | & | | enjoy  iphini | |
| Eat and enjoy Eja o ipshine | | | | |

Hello everybody and welcome to 2006.

Regardless of your religion I am sure you can all identify at the very basic level with the renewed life behind the spirit of Easter represented symbolically by the chocolate Easter eggs. So it is that we are very pleased to announce another new creation and addition to the CAAC family. Shakila Dada and her husband Naushad welcomed their little baby girl, Hadia into the world on the 13th February 2006. She is the cutest little thing and is already the splitting image of her daddy.



Meanwhile in between teaching and onsite weeks of our postgraduate students we are busily preparing for amongst other things the follow-up to our FOFA project in May, the ISAAC conference towards the end of July in Düsseldorf and also the Positive Functioning Conference which we are hosting at the end of September 2006.

A proud moment for all of us at the Centre and the AAC community takes place on the 8th of May 2006; when the editor of this news letter, Martin Pistorius, together with Zach Joubert, both AAC users, will be capped on this day at the University of Pretoria. Martin and Zach will receive the Advanced Certificate in Education with Specialization in Learners with Severe disability. Although he is too shy to tell you all this, Martin will receive the degree Cum Laude!! We are very proud of you Martin! However the excitement

does not stop there. At the same ceremony, The University of Pretoria will also bestow an honorary Doctorate on the "father of AAC" in this country, Prof Lyle Lloyd. This is therefore indeed a remarkable occasion and a landmark event in the history of AAC in this country. What a way to begin a year!!

Alecia Samuels (A.K.A the Cape Crusader)

Research Symposium on Intervention & Positive Functioning

27 – 29 September 2006

University of Pretoria South Africa

Presented by Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC) & Mälardalen University Sweden (CHILD project) from the 27th to the 29th of September 2006 at University of Pretoria South Africa

The focus of this symposium will be positive functioning. Traditionally, intervention has largely focused on the nature of specific disabilities to alleviate difficulties in interaction between children with disabilities and those around them. The disability, not the interaction between the child and the environment was the focus. This narrow focus of intervention on "the disability" or "the problem" often over-shadows the many other aspects of functionality within the child, family and the community. The current focus on positive functioning represents a different perspective from the traditional problem-focused approach in that the emphasis is on participation and the enhancement of functional engagement with a specific context.

This research seminar is supported by various

international speakers from Sweden and USA so if you want to attend you need to register early as there are only 80 places available.

Please visit our website for more information on the research seminar www.caac.up.ac.za or you could contact the coordinator at kitty.uys@up.ac.za or (012) 420 3851.

User Forum

Picture says a thousand words

My husband, Gordon Reynolds, had a massive stroke on 4 November 2004, after a gall bladder operation. He was in ICU for two months and then transferred to Barney Hurwitz Rehabilitation where he received intensive therapy for six weeks. He had a left side cerebral vascular incident, in other words a stroke and his communication centre was damaged, and as a result Gordon is unable to speak.

After nine months of speech therapy, we still had not really achieved an effective way to communicate with each other. I then discovered that I could take him to the University of Pretoria's, Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, for an assessment. We did this in February 2006. The assessment was with Dr Kitty Uys, Alecia Samuels and Martin Pistorius. It was a 2 hour session, which they videoed to make sure they didn't miss anything when writing the report. They put Gordon through various tests to see what sort of communication aid he was able to use. Dr Uys, Alecia and Martin, did a sterling job with the assessment. The result was Gordon needed pictures to communicate; we

CAAC Open Days and consultations

Do you want to find out more about AAC? About devices? About resources for the classroom or for home? Why not come round to an open day at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC), at the University of Pretoria (Lynnwood Road entrance).

Parents, AAC users, educators or therapists can attend a free presentation by the CAAC on services, resources and activities. A demonstration can be given on high and low tech communication aids. Programs are tailored to your special area of interest. Open days take place on a monthly basis, usually on the last Friday of the month, from 9h00 -11h00. If you would like to attend, please confirm with Liza (012 420 2001) in order for us to individualise your program.

Apart from open days to give a basic overview of AAC and the Centre's services, the CAAC also offers consultations to persons with complex communication needs.

In order to schedule a consultation, please contact Alecia Samuels (012 420 4727) or Liza (012 420 2001), Consultations cost R500.00 to be paid on the day of the consultation. We operate on an in-contracted fee, so claims can be made from the medical aid.

chose the low technology to start off with.

I was also referred to Celeste Mukheiber from Inclusive Computer Solutions for BoardMaker Plus software. This software has hundreds of pictures you can choose from and make

communication boards. I then got sponsorship for Gordon and very close friends of ours donated money and we bought the software and a notebook for him. Together we are working on it, he is a bit hesitant to sit on his own, but with me showing him, he is comfortable. I have been told this is a natural reaction but to keep going he will get into it. I have also added to the software that we bought, it's called "Dynamically speaking" and this allows pictures to be chosen and it builds a sentence with pictures and it talks. This is really a lovely product.

Gordon is currently using the pictures for communication, he can say "I Want" and "I am Gordon" which he could not do before. I have also printed pictures and made communication boards. He has now also, of his own accord, taken to walking out with me in the mornings to say goodbye when I go to work, he waves and says "bye". He is showing an interest in the plot again, which is so very nice.

He goes to speech therapy once a week and Agenta, his therapist, works with him using the picture communication. For Gordon, this is working really well!

Linda & Gordon Reynolds

Signs of Communication

Signing with babies and toddlers is beginning to take hold in South Africa as it revolutionizes the way in which parents interact with and view their children. "Signing is a wonderful way to communicate and bond with your child far earlier than waiting for the muscles that facilitate speech to fully develop," says Meredith Bonte, who taught her hearing son Anthony some basic

signs. Parents can expand upon their child's natural gestures and seize the opportunity to teach their babies how to use signs to effectively communicate their wants, needs and observations.

For Meredith the practical benefit of signing was clear when Anthony, at 14 months picked up a virus which had made him rather ill. Upon the doctor's instruction he was being medicated, so when he awoke that night crying bitterly, I assumed that he was in need of some medicine. In an effort to calm him down, I asked, what was meant to be a rhetorical question, "why are you crying, are you sore?". To my husband's and my surprise, he responded by signing "eat". It was then that it occurred to us that he had refused to eat earlier that day since he must have been feeling sick. Now, obviously feeling better, he wanted food and so instead of being needlessly medicated, he received a yoghurt at 2.a.m!

Incorporating signing into our daily routine according to Anthony's interests, added life to activities such as reading. Instead of him passively listening to me tell the story, he was able to give signs for the pictures he saw and direct my attention to the pages in a book that were of interest to him.



Often he signed what was ahead in the book, pre-empting what was to come. It is a wonderful way to relax together and Anthony took such pride in showing me how much he knew or had remembered of a story. It is a great way to build his self-esteem, whilst developing

a love for books and gave me an appreciation for his abilities that I may not have otherwise recognised."

It was comforting to know that research by Doctors such as Acredolo & Goodwyn showed that gestures stimulate the language centre of the brain, thus encouraging speech. We found Anthony was eager to speak, having said his first word at 8 months and found that signing gave him the freedom to communicate effectively whilst learning to pronounce new words correctly. Many of his first words started with the letter "d". In the case where the words "door", "down", "doll" and "drive" were used, all sounded like "dah" and it was then useful for him to pair his word with the sign to clarify what he was trying to say. It also gave us the means to recognize and praise him for these early attempts to speak.

My signing experiences with Anthony have had a profound effect on my parenting style and on my view of pre-verbal children. I have experienced such joy and gained wonderful insight into the mind of my child, that I will forever cherish.

Meredith Bonte

Technology Talk

An inexpensive way to create simple switch activities

Please note that although the techniques explained in this article can produce interesting and effective switch driven activities for Microsoft PowerPoint, it is *not* designed for this purpose. This article also assumes you have a basic knowledge of how to use the aforementioned program.

What you need

- A switch adaptor such as "The JoyCable" from Sensory Software International to connect your switch/es. (This is available from Inclusive Computer Solutions, e-mail: inclusive@telkomsa.net Tel. 011 678 5685)
- One or two switches
- "Switch Driver" Software available free from Sensory Software International
- Microsoft PowerPoint

How do I begin?

1. Download and install the **Switch Driver** software from Sensory Software's website: <http://www.sensorysoftware.com/softwareinfo.html#SwitchDriver>
Note: You may want to download the Switch driver manual while you are at it. To do this, go to the following link: <http://www.sensorysoftware.com/downloads/manuals/SwitchDriver.pdf> and then go to **File > Save As**.
2. Connect the switch adaptor (e.g. The JoyCable or equivalent)
3. Connect your switch/es
4. Once you've installed the Switch Driver software, check that your switches are working. To do this, double click on the Sensory



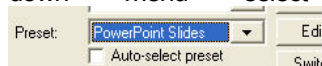
icon in the Task Bar near the clock. (Alternatively you can right click on the icon and select "show Window"). This will open the Switch Driver's window. Press the switch/es to check if they are configured correctly. The number on



the top of the window will change to blue when the switch is pressed. If this does not happen please refer to the Switch

driver manual.

5. Now from the Preset drop down menu select



“PowerPoint Slides” click the “Edit Preset” button. Now click on the “1” and choose “Enter Key” do the same for the “2” except this time choose “Tab Key” and now click on the “Close” button. I also recommend you remove the tick from the “Auto-select preset” check box so you don’t have to select PowerPoint Slides each time you start the Switch Driver software.

Creating the PowerPoint

Key concepts

Adding a sound clip:
In PowerPoint, from the menu select **Insert > Sound from Clip Organizer**. Now choose your sound. You can also browse to any sound on your Hard Drive by selecting **Insert > Sound from file**. When you insert a sound clip you will get a message asking you whether you want the sound to play automatically or when it’s clicked, select “when clicked”.
If you’d like to record a sound, assuming you have a microphone connected to your computer select **Insert > Record sound**.

Adding images:
In PowerPoint, from the menu select **Insert > Picture>Clip Art**. Or **Insert > Picture>From File** you can now browse to any image on your Hard Drive. You can also use the “Drag ‘n Drop” method as well as copy & paste.

Action Buttons:
In PowerPoint, from the menu select **Slide Show>Action Buttons** and choose an appropriate button. (More about this later in the article)

Activities

Single switch activities

Now create a PowerPoint presentation adding images, sounds and animations as your heart desires! However, keep in mind the person you are creating the activity for. Often having a theme is a good idea, for example animals or around the house.

Tip: You will notice when you insert sound clips a speaker icon appears, invariably you don’t want this to show when your slide show is running, so just simply drag it off the slide onto the grey background next to the slide.

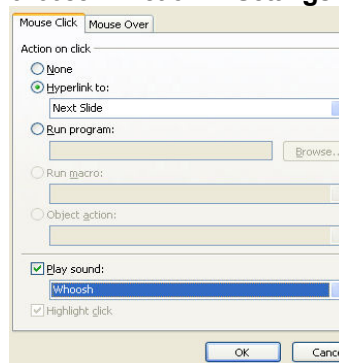
Two switches activities

Note: *At the time of writing this article I have yet to work out how to prevent the user cycling through the slides of a two switch activity by continuously pressing switch 1. Therefore a teacher/facilitator will be required to guide the individual to achieve the desired result of the activity*

When you use two switches, the major difference in the PowerPoint presentations you create is that you will use **Action Buttons** or an image and **Action Settings**. The individual will then use switch 2 to Tab through the Action Buttons and switch 1 to select them. When the individual Tabs through the Action buttons on a slide, a dotted (this can be a little difficult to see) line will appear around the active button. When the enter key, or in this case switch 1 is pressed the button will be selected.

Using Action Buttons you can assign different functions to them such as go to next or previous slide, jump to another presentation, play a sound etc. To do this insert the action button or image you

want, right click on it and choose **Action Settings**.

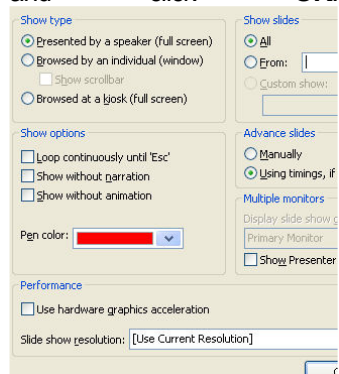


To set it to jump to the next, previous or another presentation in the action settings window under “Mouse click” select the “Hyperlink to” radio button and choose the desired option from the drop down box, then click **OK**.

To play a sound instead, tick the “Play sound” check box and then use the drop down box to select the sound you want. If you want to browse for a sound on your Hard Drive select “Other Sound” from the drop down box.

Looping your presentation

There will be times when you will want your presentation to run continuously until you stop it. To do this from the PowerPoint menu select “Slide Show” > **Set up Show** tick the “loop continuously until ‘Esc’ ” and click **OK**.



When the slide show is running the individual can press the switch continuously without the slide show ending. To end (exit) the slide show press the escape (Esc) key on the keyboard.

Finally, I realize that this article is essentially just an introduction to the basic concepts in using PowerPoint to create switch accessible activities, and due to space limitations doesn’t go into intricate details, my recommendation is to experiment, play around and just have fun!

Martin Pistorius

Relaunch of ISAAC EAN List Serve

The Emerging AAC Nations Committee looks into the needs of countries where AAC is still emerging. One of our aims is to develop better communication networks between individuals in these Emerging Nations. In August 2002 a list serve was established for this purpose. Already, there is a network of individuals from Emerging Countries and the wider ISAAC body who have signed up.

We are now re-launching the list serve and starting from April until the end of the year, we will be hosting monthly discussion topics on this list serve. We invite those that wish to, to participate. To sign up for this list serve, just send an e-mail to me Martin Pistorius martin.pistorius@up.ac.za

For more information visit: http://isaaconline.org/en/about/committee_discussion.html

Martin Pistorius - Technical advisor, ISAAC Emerging AAC Nations (EAN) Committee

Note: I’ve placed a few PowerPoint examples on the CAAC website which you are welcome to download.

<http://www.caac.up.ac.za/pages/resources.html>



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| <i>KwaZulu-Natal</i> | |
| Account Name: Interface Kwazulu-Natal Bank: First National Bank; Branch: Westville Branch Branch Code: 223526. Account Number: 62082948723 | Interface KwaZulu-Natal P.O. Box 1995 Westville 3630 |
| <i>Interface Western Cape</i> | |
| Account Name: Interface Total Communication Bank: Standard Bank, Rondebosch Branch Code: 02-05-09-11 Account No: 071439269 | Private Bag X18/ #39 Rondebosch 7701 Or fax deposit slip to: 086-654 2807 |

Your contribution will assist Interface and the CAAC in helping parents, children and other AAC users to face the great many challenges encountered on a daily basis

Let's work together to make a difference.

YES! Count me in as a supporter of Interface / CAAC in 2006. I would specifically like to support:

- Interface (Awareness raising and AAC devices)
- Centre for AAC (Training in AAC)

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