

Application Exercise Questions and Answers

Welcome Application Exercise

For this "Welcome to the ATACP module" application exercise, we are asking you to introduce yourself to the other participants in your class. This way you will begin to know each participant in your class before you meet them at the live session! Please answer the following in your Hypernews response:

Your name, title and organization, your AT experience why you are attending this course and finally your favorite movie or book.

Hello to everyone~

My name is Dave Colburn and I am a computer technician at the Wayne Central School District in Ontario, New York. For the past four years I have been installing and servicing computers and network services in our local school district and supporting the staff and students in their using technology. Recently I was requested to consider taking on a more direct involvement in the development of individualized education plans for special needs students, particularly in relation to the use of assistive technology and that is the reason I have enrolled in the ATACP. This is a great opportunity for me because I really enjoy seeing technology put to good practical use in helping people.

I have been married for thirty-one years, have four sons (two teens still at home), and I love the outdoors (especially boating). My favorite movie is "Message In a Bottle" (I'm a Kevin Costner fan, a hopeless romantic, & I love the water~ ;) and my favorite book is either Undaunted Courage -- by Stephen E. Ambrose or Timeline by Michael Crichton, although Sphere by Crichton was good too; but then The Last Hostage by John J. Nance was exciting and as I think of it Net Force by Tom Clancy was really engaging . . . (Yea, It is hard to pick a favorite isn't it~~ ;)

See y'all in LA!

~~Dave

MODULE 1:

Question 1 Question 1 What do you see as trends in the future delivery of Assistive Technology Services, both positive and negative?

Trends in Assistive Technology: Positive, Negative, Positive:

I'll draw my answer for this question from both my initial research in assistive technology as well as my experience with the prescription and use of assistive technology in my place of employment, the Wayne Central School District in Ontario, New York.

It has become apparent to me as I have watched the prescription, purchase and use of assistive technology within our own public school system that it is a constantly growing trend. I believe this is a positive direction because it demonstrates a number of good developments in the area of AT.

First, I think it indicates a much improved awareness on the part of the public as to the needs of so many people with disabilities. It seems that a variety of efforts in the area of advocacy, communications, etc. have finally succeeded in getting the point across and the awareness and sensitivity of people in general has matured to a level that is now effectively producing positive change in our ability to become informed, address, and provide solutions and support for the people of society that live with disabilities. My own change in responsibilities and

enrollment in this program is a good example of this growing trend (I'll elaborate on this more in my final point).

Negatively I think the current trends in assistive technology might be regarded as the difficulty in meeting the assistive technology needs in the area of finances. I think the emphasis on the concept of consumerism in Module 1 of this program in contrast to the former perspective on assistive technology as being a medical model may be the result of the competition for the financial resources that are available to meet these special needs. There are at least two contributing factors to this area of difficulty. As the awareness, sensitivity, and desire of our society to address these needs increases so does the price of this increased interest. Secondly, as the power of today's available technology has increased and our ability to provide high tech solutions to more sophisticated needs has improved, so has the cost of assistive technology.

The negative trend mentioned above, that of greater competition for the funds made available for assistive technology will eventually lead to a net improvement for both the consumer, those who purchase assistive technology, and those who provide it. I believe the current competition in the marketplace for the available AT funds will foster improvement in the quality of assistive technology solutions and its power or ability to meet even more demanding special needs. Additionally the competition is currently generating greater accountability in the decision making process involved with the provision and purchase of these technologies and services. This improved accountability will spin-off a marked improvement in the whole process of developing the technology, accessing the needs for making application of the available technologies, and providing the best products and services for the most people.

A good illustration of the trends mentioned above would be my own entry into the assistive technology field. Previously our school system has depended on third party services for the assessment and prescription of specific assistive technologies for our students with special needs. Although this worked for a time and even provided a better service than the school district was probably capable of providing in-house, this approach began to develop some limitations and difficulties. The cost of bringing in the outside support has risen while at the same time the need for more thorough support from the outside source has increased, making this approach to the district's assistive technology needs inadequate.

Therefore, the decision has been made to expand the skill level of our own technology people in the area of assistive technology to keep the costs manageable but at the same time maintain or even improve our ability to meet the needs of our student population with special needs. And so even the negative aspects of the current assistive technology environment will influence favorable adjustments leading to a net long-term benefit. The trend is win win!

Question 2 B) Assistive Technology Research:

Develop a list of AT resources and/or services that would benefit consumers of AT services in your community. Report back and post the resources that you have found. Describe the techniques that you used to locate these resources.

This assignment is a perfect fit for me and the assistive technology needs of my community and our local public school system. Over the last two years I have had the opportunity to become more familiar with publishing information to the World Wide Web and seeing it grow as a communication tool within our relatively small community. The website for the school district, along with the newly improved website for the Town of Ontario, New York, is probably the best candidate for the most important website within our community. Recently the two websites have placed links to each other's websites on their own web pages and with that development, coupled with the rapidly increasing use of broadband Internet access I believe the World Wide Web will become a tremendously effective communications tool on the local level.

With that in mind as I began my assistive technology program it occurred to me that I could create a website for assistive technology to be hosted on the local school district's website where I could collect the various

resources that I find in the course of my study in AT. Now I realize that I wouldn't be the first website dedicated to information about assistive technology nor, in view of my significant inexperience and lack of knowledge in this field, would this website be anywhere near the last word on the subject. As was pointed out in Module 1 the greater problem these days is filtering down to the quality information to gain what is helpful and useful. And that is the advantage to posting a locally prominent website. I can assemble what I hope will be useful resources for the community and place them in a well known website (locally).

The current website, which can be found at: <http://wayne.k12.ny.us/dcolburn/at/default.htm>, is in a fairly rough format. Once the time was given to creating the basic website then adding material to it is really quite quick and easy. Additionally, it has been a nice addition to the e-study format that the ATACP is built around. I am fortunate to have broadband Internet access through cable modem at my house and a full-time Internet access on a four year old 10/100 megabit to the desktop Ethernet network at our school. Because of security concerns we have not yet provided true remote access to the users' internal network storage but we have made available network storage through a service provided by the area Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) called DocuShare, a product developed and marketed by the Xerox Corporation. Using DocuShare and these Internet resources I can do my ACATP study completely online from any place with Internet access as well as update my assistive Technology website.

So, if you were to go to the above URL you would find a fledgling information resource for assistive technology that I hope will become increasingly useful and relevant at the local level. Right now the site contains most large resources such as Microsoft and The Center for Universal Design. Because of my newness to this field I am very hopeful that I can draw from the rest of the group in this ATACP class and I would very much Welcome your input and assistance in developing this website as a resource for my community.

Interestingly, as I browsed our regional BOCES website just a few minutes ago I was unable to find any mention of assistive technology on their site~ hmmm~~~~~ ;) Looks like there might just be a place for a tool like this in our communities. The resources that I have listed have come from a variety of sources. One of my fellow technicians had a floppy diskette of resources that she had been given so she turned it over to me when she learned of my new area of responsibility so I have posted that information. Other links came from using the basic search engines and of course some of the information has come from the material for this course. The real goal is to localize the information on this site and that will take dome time and continued attention. I believe there is a loan closet service that is operated by the local volunteer ambulance that I will have to track down. Also I will continue to try and locate local/regional resources by using the Internet. It will be interesting to see how much of this can be done on the web and how much requires the telephone and footwork.

I look forward to your input and attention in continuing to help me develop this project.
Thanks! ~~Dave

MODULE 2:

Question 1 As we discussed in Step 3 of the FAP, there is increased interest in outcomes measurement in the assistive technology field. What are some tools you use in your AT service setting to collect outcomes on consumers you serve?

Because I am just beginning to get involved with the Pupil Personnel Services Department (PPS) in our school district and was not familiar with the various assessment practices or any of the tools used, I decided to request assistance from two of the key people in this department. Unfortunately I have received no response as of yet (four weeks later) and so my answer to this question still has to be given in the 'investigative' format. It's not my intention to criticize the department or its practices but the lack of response or communication leads me to draw some preliminary conclusions about the tools used by our organization; and the fact that this module is about the FAP makes me address that point first.

It would seem that the process used within our school district may not in fact be all that 'fundamental.' By that I mean we seem to work very reactively to the needs of the students. Being a public school in the State of New York we employ the use of the IEP (which I am also just getting to learn about). Additionally, the school system has been employing the services of the BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) and at that, the one from the next county over. In my very brief involvement with the PPS department I've already found a copy of the teacher's IEP for a student that had no information on it about AT that had been prescribed for the student and was being installed and the student instructed in using within the next twenty-four hours. Much more could be said about the deficiencies of this arrangement but in the interest of time it's probably sufficient to simply conclude that the primary problem is actually the lack of a truly fundamental assessment process. The current approach is neither fundamental nor a process (meaning it lacks organization). The collaboration factor is obviously lacking (referring to my failure to receive responses to my requests for information).

The good news is that my increasing involvement with the process will give me the opportunity to help structure the process and employ the tools that I have learned from my ATACP instruction. I see that the SETT framework which was presented in the live training will be a great asset for our organization to start using in the organization of a truly fundamental assessment process within our school district.

Additionally, I see a need to organize the information gained during the assessment process into an accessible database. One difficulty I see with the current approach is that it is difficult to review the progress (or lack of it) that a student experiences after receiving an assistive technology. Our students in this district are located in five different buildings spread across two different townships (actually a fairly typical Upstate New York rural community using a centralized school system between more than one township). The different school buildings are serviced by a centralized special education department (PPS). This design tends to produce a gap in communication and information accessibility between the students' teachers in the classrooms and the administration.

Fortunately our school district has an excellent tool already in place that could (and should) be put to use to streamline communications and improve our ability to keep our assessments (IEP's) more current and to facilitate regular review of the information and the students' changing needs. This tool is called DocuShare. It is an electronic document storage system created by the Xerox Corporation and has been provided to our school as one of the Board of Co-operational Education Services. It provides a secure way to store and share information. Within our district technology department this resource has been placed under my care and leadership so I am well positioned to bring it to bear on our assistive technology growth and improvement. I have already had the opportunity to provide training to the administrators and I have a web site running (<http://www.wayne.k12.ny.us/docushare/>) to facilitate the use of DocuShare within the school district.

DocuShare, similarly to HyperNews, has the ability to host forums or threaded discussions but additionally provides the ability to post digital documents that can be accessed by the various users, post web links (url's), and post calendars. All of this is done on the web so all the material can be accessed from anywhere that Internet access is available. All this information can be made completely private, completely public, or restricted to a specific group of users for a team type collaboration. It is a Really cool tool and I believe it can be used to organize our assessment data and then provide secure access to that data for the people who need to remain engaged and informed throughout the assessment process.

~~Dave

Question 2 B) Assistive Technology Research:

Find resources that would be beneficial for you to increase professional collaboration and share your results with the group. These could be Listservs, Bulletin Boards, Web Sites, local community groups, etc.

I have to say I've found our own Listserv at ftca03-1@csun.edu to be my best resource yet, so I'm going to focus my answer to this question on listservs and bulletin boards because I think the communication tools that are available to us to be used as we develop a network of contacts and resources are going to turn out to be even more important than the endless search for specific software and hardware details. Also, before I forget, I've noticed that a common occurrence with the bulletin boards is the problem of pop ups. There are a number of programs that can be installed that will block pop-ups. One (a free one) that my son put me onto that has worked very well for us is Pop-Up Stopper from Panicware <http://www.panicware.com/> Secondly, a secondary problem that results from the pop-ups is the installation (unknown to the user) of software programs that run in the background and progressively degrade the performance of the user's computer. This can progress to the point that a computer will nearly come to a stop, which leads to my recommendation of a second (free) program called, "Ad-aware" from Lavasoft <http://www.lavasoft.de/> This is a Tremendous program and should be run at least once a week on every computer, especially on computers that are constantly hooked to the Internet such as networked computers with full-time Internet and computers on broadband Internet such as cable modem or DSL. The use of this program has become my most common computer service activity.

Now for the resources:

Bulletin Boards & Chat Rooms:

<http://www.abilityhub.com/general/forums.htm>

http://www.ldonline.org/bulletin_boards/index.html

<http://www.specialednews.com/forums/>

http://e-bility.com/arata/resources_bbs.shtml

http://e-bility.com/arata/resources_list.shtml

http://www.ican.com/channels/resource_links.cfm/Crumb/6,76/

<http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/Spa/6889/dishotlist.htm>

<http://www.arcofkingcounty.org/guide/services/online/chat/>

<http://www.esmerel.org/forums/forum.htm>

<http://www.lookingglass.org/phorums/>

http://www.westmark.pvt.k12.ca.us/add_adhd.html#Newsgroup

<http://www.parentsplace.com/messageboards/> At The ParentsPlace.com

<http://chronus.waisman.wisc.edu/fv/chat/enter.asp> Family Village Chat Rooms

<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/discussion.html> Family Village Discussion Board (bulletin board)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/search?query=disabilities> The main link to the Yahoo Groups related to disabilities

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PeopleWithDisabilities/> Yahoo! Groups People With Disabilities

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChallengedLiving/> Yahoo! Groups ~ Challenged Living

<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/disabledjobseekers> Yahoo! Clubs disabled jobseekers

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TrachyVentList> Yahoo! Groups : Trachy Vent List

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parentsofventdependentandspecialneedskid>

Yahoo! Groups : parentsofventdependentandspecialneedskid

<http://www.makoa.org/chat/index.html> Disability Chat Links

[The Worldwide Virtual Community of the Disabled](#)

<http://neuro-mancer.mgh.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/Ultimate.cgi>

Listservs and Mailing Lists:

<http://www.disabilityresources.org/DRMreg.html> A list of resources Indexed by state

<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/lists/index.html> Family Village listservs

<http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/Diversity/Specific/Disability/Listservs/>

<http://www.state.oh.us/olrs/Listserv.htm>

<http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/Diversity/Specific/Disability/Listservs/dadvocat>

<http://www.nas.com/downsyn/dslistserv.html> Down Syndrome Listserv

Other AT Links:

<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/index.htmlx> Family Village: An absolutely Astounding site!!

<http://www.makoa.org/general.htm> A very good all around information source

<http://forums.weta.org/ldonline/phorum/list.php?f=6&collapse=1>

<http://wayne.k12.ny.us/at/> My own site at Wayne Central School District, Ontario, New York 14519

The presence of the information cited above does not constitute an endorsement of the content, accuracy, nor ease of use of the listed resources. These links have been tested to assure that they are currently active links. I would appreciate feedback concerning their value (or lack thereof).

The resources from this exercise will be compiled, along with other information, into a database (probably an Excel spreadsheet) at the end of this course as part of my course project; and made available to interested users.

~Dave

MODULE 3:

Case Study 1

Question 1 If you were a member of Aiden's team, what words or phrases would you like to see represented on his communication board to ensure that his wants and needs were communicated?

Communication Board Phrase Representations: I would include pictures of:

A toilet ~ "I want to go to the bathroom." Or "It's time to go to the bathroom."

A drink of water (a glass with a clear liquid in it) ~ "I want a glass of water"

A drink of milk (a glass with a white/opaque liquid in it) ~ I want something to drink (other than water), milk
Food on a plate ~ "I'm hungry"

A happy smiley face ~ "I am happy." Or "Are you happy?"

A sad 'smiley' face ~ "I am sad." Or "Are you sad?"

A little male child sleeping in a bed ~ "I'm tired." "I want to go to sleep." Or "You need to take a nap now."
Or "It's time to go to bed." Or "Are you tired?"

Toys next to a toy box ~ "It's time to play now." Or "It's time to pick up your toys now." (possibly two pictures: One with the toys picked up & inside the toy-box and the other picture of the toys on the floor around the toy-box).

Pictures of animals ~ Dog, cat, horse, cow, bird, fish, etc.

Pictures of people ~ Adult male ("Dad") Adult female ("Mom") male & female children to represent siblings, etc.

Picture of the outdoors ~ "I want to go outside." "I want to go for a walk."

Picture of a car ~ "I want to go for a ride." Or "We're going to go for a ride."

Picture of a book ~ "Do you want a story?" "Do you want to read your book?"

Picture of clothes ~ "You need to get dressed."

Question 2 B) Assistive Technology Research: Develop a list of resources that provide information to parents of young children who are recently diagnosed with a disability. (support groups, etc.) Share your results with the group.

<http://www.parentsinc.org/>

<http://www.parenttoparentnys.org/>

<http://www.our-kids.org/okmsgarch.html>

Band-aids and Blackboards: www.faculty.fairfield.edu/fleitas/contents.html

This is a site about growing up with medical problems ...any ole type. Its goal is to help people understand what it's like, from the perspective of the children and teens who are doing just that.

Brave Kids: www.bravekids.org/index.html

Help for children with chronic, life-threatening illnesses or disabilities.

Bridges 4 Kids: www.bridges4kids.org

The goal of this website is "to provide as much timely, useful information as possible to both parents and professionals regarding parenting concerns, child development, children with special needs, disabilities, and those who are at-risk."

Organizations Especially for Parents

Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)

Paul Shew, Executive Director

The Advocacy Center

277 Alexander Street, Suite 500

Rochester, NY 14607

(585) 546-1700; (800) 650-4967 (in NY)

E-mail: info@advocacycenter.com

Web: www.advocacycenter.com

Jill Chaifetz, Executive Director

Advocates for Children of New York (New York City)

151 W. 30th Street, 5th Floor

New York, NY 10001

(212) 947-9779

E-mail: info@advocatesforchildren.org

Web: www.advocatesforchildren.org

Karen Thoreson Schlesinger, Executive Director

Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

116 E. 16th Street, 5th Floor

New York, NY 10003

(212) 677-4650

E-mail: info@resourcesnyc.org

Web: www.resourcesnyc.org

Donald Lash, Executive Director

Sinergia/Metropolitan Parent Center

15 W. 65th Street, 6th Floor

New York, NY 10023

(212) 496-1300

E-mail: Sinergia@panix.com

Web: www.sinergiany.org

Community Parent Resource Center

(Serving Green Point and Williamsburg)

Lourdes Rivera-Putz, Program Director

United We Stand of New York

202 Union Avenue, Suite L

Brooklyn, NY 11211

(718) 302-4313/4314

E-mail: uwsofny@aol.com

Web: www.taalliance.org/ptis/uws/

Partners in Policymaking

Joyce Steel, Program Director
The Advocacy Center
277 Alexander Street, Suite 500
Rochester, NY 14607
(585) 546-1700, ext. 234
E-mail: steel@advocacycenter.com
Web: www.advocacycenter.com

Parent-To-Parent

Janice Fitzgerald, Executive Director
Parent to Parent of New York State
500 Balltown Road
Schenectady, NY 12304
(518) 381-4350; (800) 305-8817
E-mail: info@parenttoparentnys.org
Web: www.parenttoparentnys.org

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Jane Bernhard, President
New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.
One Wembley Square
Albany, NY 12205-3830
(518) 452-8808; (877) 5NYSPTA
E-mail: office@nypta.com

Other Parent Organization

(Information about resources serving children birth to 5 and their families)

John Spadaro, Program Manager
Early Childhood Direction Centers
Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)
One Commerce Plaza, Room 1624
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 486-7462
E-mail: jspadaro@mail.nysed.gov
Web: www.vesid.nysed.gov

Case Study 2

Question 1

A) Question: Select and read an article from the list above. Identify and share strategies that are applicable to consumers and/or existing Assistive Technology devices and services you may work with.

http://www.ldresources.com/articles/alphasmart_ld.html

I chose the article at the url listed above because as I have had a brief opportunity to look over the AlphaSmart keyboard it looks to me to be a device with great potential for use in the classroom and so I hoped to learn more about the AlphaSmart. I can see where these devices could be used for

both assistive technology applications for the learning disabled child as well as a great writing device for the typical classroom setting as an alternative to the more expensive laptop computer.

At about \$250.00 it is about one quarter the price of an economically equipped laptop. The above article mentioned, under the topic of compatibility, the similarity of the AlphaSmart's keyboard to that of a conventional computer. In fact the AlphaSmart's keyboard is very near in size and location of keys to that of a full-size conventional computer keyboard (unlike that of many laptop computers). Additionally, even though the AlphaSmart's keyboard is nearly the same as a conventional desktop computer keyboard, the overall size and weight is much more compact and lighter than a laptop computer.

The article also offered a great idea for using multiple AlphaSmarts with multiple students, and that was the idea of having the group type a while and then pass their device to the next person and have them continue the story line of the previous user. (I 'd kind of like to try that myself ☐) Some other useful suggestions for using the AlphaSmart were:

- Put your daily schedule in one file
- Put a name and address list in another
- Put a to do list in another
- Jot down jokes friends tell you in another
- Keep your assignment list in another
- Put course notes in another

My plan for the use of these devices in our school district (we already have about three in use) is to arrange multiple AlphaSmarts into mobile labs in groups of ten, fifteen, or twenty unit groups. We will also continue to recommend them for use with the Co-Writer software for specific learning disability needs.

Question 2

B) Field Trip:

Visit a local program that serves persons with learning disabilities (i.e. after school tutorial programs, community adult literacy programs). Report back on what technology interventions have been introduced in these programs.

C) Assistive Technology Research:

Locate and identify any statistics of Assistive Technology interventions with relation to learning disabilities in vocational and educational settings.

D) Tech Quest:

Download, install and evaluate the features of one or two of the following applications:

Case Study 3

Question 1 Evaluate your own home for accessibility for a person with a **mobility** impairment, a **sensory** impairment, and a **cognitive** impairment. Describe both the Universal Design features present and obstacles that exist. What steps could you take to eliminate these obstacles?

Whew, is this an interesting question considering the house I live in! We just started to look over those aspects of our home because we are nearing the time of life when my eighty year old mother may have to come to live with us in the not too distant future. With that in mind I will do the evaluation (and remediation) as it relates to our home and with her in mind.

The style of our house is a ground level entry split-level. The front entrance comes in at ground level (plus the normal one step front stoop). All three bedrooms and the main bath are up a short flight of stairs from the main (entry) level and the other bathroom (powder) and the family room. Probably the first and biggest problem to address would be that of the location of the bathrooms. Either another bathroom would have to be added to the house or a decision made as to which level of the house would be utilized and adapted for my mother's use. Adding another bathroom is not really an option so the decision of which bathroom to adapt the house around would depend on a secondary consideration of where does the family spend most of its free time and would therefore be the most advantageous for my Mother's use.

Clearly the decision will be to set her up to live in/bear/around the family room. This is the biggest room in the house and therefore offers more options as to its adaptability. In fact, the room is big enough to add a private area (or bedroom) for her right near the entrance to the downstairs powder room. This would give same floor access to her bedroom, the family room, and the bathroom.

Next, the downstairs powder room would have to have a tub or shower facility added to it. The powder room itself isn't large enough to accommodate the addition of a tub or shower, but fortunately there is a relatively unused room right next to the powder room. Probably the best thing to do would be to remove the partition between this room and the powder and then enlarge the door into the combined room with a door large enough for a wheel chair. We decided to install a four foot wide shower stall instead of a tub (easier access) and the shower also built-in seats in the back two corners. Handrails could be added on the wall adjacent to the shower and the toilet.

The only two remaining problems that I see are access to the dining area on the first floor and wheel chair access at the front door entrance. The dining room access could be resolved with the addition of a basic wheelchair lift or small elevator. There is adequate room for this type of device right against the header wall (below the floor of the dining area) and right below the dining room table. The elevator would open out to a location right at the dining room table. With the addition of a ramp up onto the front stoop then access can be gained to both the first floor (entrance level) and the lower level where the family room is.

Question 2

Case Study 4

Question 1 1) Required Question: Select an article from the Supplemental Materials listed above and provide a brief synopsis to your fellow participants.

Visually Impaired Resource Guide: A Joint Project of SET-BC and PRCVI

http://www.empowermentzone.com/vi_edtec.txt

I chose this article because of its relevance to my new responsibilities within our school district which will be primarily related to participating in the IEP process as the assistive technology evaluator. I found this article very well organized and I think will be useful to me as a checklist type of tool for assistive technology evaluation within our school district. We presently have one high school aged student who is blind.

Organizationally the article seems to cover all the bases with its three major divisions: broad learning skills, Braille users, and technology for low vision. I found the suggestions for facilitating word recognition and increasing recall and understanding especially practical. Probably the most useful tool in this article is the skills by grade level breakdown. As with everyone who is in a leaning situation reasonable expectations and worthy goals are critical for both the teacher and the learner, and the section on skills in this article will be a great help especially to those of us who have had limited experience with blind students. I also added to my stash of gleaned resources the "Selecting Computer Technology" checklist in the appendices.

The article includes a resource section with a good number of books listed, including textbooks for the blind, a list of Internet resources, and a great glossary of terms at the end of the article.

Question 2

Case Study 5

Question 1 From our discussion of the FAP and the assessment process, we have learned that consumer "buy in" is important to device usage. How do you think Ed will respond to these technology interventions? Also provide some techniques or suggestions the team (and his family) could use to increase the chances of a successful technology match.

When I first read about Ed being somewhat of a leadership personality in the recreation center I was hopeful that he would also be receptive to new technology that would be helpful to him. But, not surprisingly, as all too often seems to be the case with senior citizens, they (and I find myself getting more & more this way as I pass by the 50 marker~ ;) find it more difficult to adjust to the use of assistive devices.

I think the key with Ed could possibly be an effort to focus on his place of leadership in his immediate community. This position is probably his reference for him and something that he very much values. He will need to be 'sold' (see I am developing the 'Consumer' in assistive tech perspective~ ;) on the fact that assistive listening device would REally improve his ability to fill his leadership positions and would be beneficial to both him and the folks in his immediate community.

I'm thinking that it will be very important for the solution that Ed's family and the folks who are working with them on Ed's situation have the decided solution well prepared at the time they bring it to Ed, so that the solution is sure of working well right from the start. This is an understanding that I have been coming to grips with in general through my experience with implementing technology at the school district where I work. It seems that there is always a 'frustration' level that almost always surrounds the implantation of new technology. I think a lot of it is just resistance to change and the demand of having to learn something new. The real deal breaker, though, is when the technology being offered actually does not work well for the user once they are finally ready to try it out and give some time to learning to use it and developing a new skill. I think also explains a great deal of the failure rate with assistive technology in general.

Possible Techniques:

- 1.) Have someone else (similar age, disability, etc.) that has accepted the same assistive technology solution that is going to be prescribed and has realized the benefit of it, visit with the user that is struggling with its use in order to share its benefits and encourage its use by the other person.

- 2.) Get two people together with the same (basic) need and start using assistive technology at the same time so they can compare notes and progress, and encourage each other.
- 3.) For Ed's situation, organize the Resident Advisory Board on which Ed sits as the vice president and get them to 'positively' approach Ed to encourage him to try using assistive technology to help him hear better so that he and the committee can work more effectively.

Question 2

Case Study 6

Question 1 Using the information provided in the Tech Points of this case study, report to the group on the ergonomics of your workstation. Also, provide some suggestions for improvement.

My Chair: Moderately high quality: It has arm rests to reduce fatigue when typing and facilitates moving it around while seated in it since the hands can be used to get it started moving and also to steer it as it is moved. The back rest has only a medium amount of lumbar support, but I have learned to capitalize on any amount of lumbar support by keeping the backrest tilted forward (into my back) as much as can be done and still have the seating be comfortable (I tend to be a 'sloucher' so this setup tends to check my poor sitting posture). I also keep the actual seat tilted forward to keep my hips rolled forward. I've learned through the years that my lower back pain comes from the combination of poor quality desk chairs, sitting in them in a slouched position, and allowing the chair setup to roll my hips to back. Get a Good chair!

Monitor: I recently upgraded my monitor to a 17" flat screen (not flat panel). The 17" viewing area is nice but the REal benefit is the flat screen. It has much less glare and I find that I am much less fatigued after long session of viewing the monitor. A flat panel might be even better (even less glare) but there is a trade off in the precision of the image. It's probably a matter of the exact quality of the monitors being compared. I also have gone to setting my monitors down onto the surface of my work area (and I am recommending this to all the users that I service) instead of having the monitor up on top of the computer (CPU). The optimum level for viewing a monitor is slightly below eye level, and setting them up this way greatly reduces neck strain. It's a Much more comfortable level. It also works well with the current trend towards using larger monitors. Many of these larger monitors can't fit under (inside) the hutch on a typical computer desk when they are placed on top of the computer (CPU). By setting them down onto the work area surface the CPU can be placed somewhere out of the way leaving more room for the monitor. This also usually frees up some work area directly in front of the user. If the desk area isn't large enough for the monitor and the CPU in separate places, then the CPU can be put on an adjacent desk or cart (mine is se up this way) or in the case of a tower it can go on the floor. If there is a printer taking up space on the desk (and there usually is~ ;) then just switch the monitor and the printer so that the printer sits on top of the CPU and the monitor is down on the desk.

Also, to reduce the amount of head movement necessary to use the Windows Taskbar, I suggest placing the Taskbar at the top of the screen; especially when your monitor is properly placed down onto the work area surface so that it is at the correct level for viewing. Just left click and drag it to the top of the screen. This places the Taskbar right at viewing level, eliminating the need to look all the way down to the bottom of the screen every time the user needs to see the Taskbar.

Mouse: I have bee using an optical (no ball) mouse for some time now and I loved the first one so much I purchased them for all of the computers that I use. They are extremely smooth and much more precise for fine detailed work. My original purchase was the Microsoft Optical Mouse and then I tried the Logitech version. Both of these mice are two button mice with a wheel. I program the wheels on them to be a double click when they are pressed down. I have some arthritis and Carpel Tunnel Syndrome starting to develop in both of ny wrists and hands and I enjoy not having to double click all the time. The Logitech version is usually less

expensive to purchase but I've found that I like the shape and size of the slightly larger Microsoft mouse better. It is a better fit for my hand (average sized) and the shape is more comfortable (natural) fit in my hand.

My Desk: I have a standard sized office desk (30" x 60") with a return. I set my monitor back into the corner produced by the desk and the return. It allows me to set it further back from me (which allows me to see it better without having to use my 'reader' glasses). It also frees up some useable space in back of my keyboard and in front of the monitor. This gives better access to the work areas on the desk and the return and reduces the need to turn and reach as much which is Much better for the back.

The main area of improvement for me would be the height of the keyboard. It should be lower than the desktop, where it sits, by a few inches which would reduce tension in my shoulders and neck. The reason I don't make use of a keyboard drawer that came with my desk is because I'm not a touch typist so I like having the keyboard up on the desk where I can see the keys. The price I pay for that is neck and shoulder tension. I Really should take a touch typing course~~ ;)

Question 2 A) Field Trip: Try out some of ergonomic equipment we discussed in this case study (chairs, mouse alternatives, keyboard alternatives, etc.) either in your office, a local AT evaluation center / lending library, or at a local computer supply store (Staples, Computer City, etc.) and report back on your experience. Please include the following information in your answer:

* Information on the equipment you tried
(name of device, company information, price, etc.)

* Describe the ergonomic features of the device

* Describe who may benefit from this device

and~~

B) Assistive Technology Research:

Identify human factors professionals in your community. Describe the services they provide and how the AT team could benefit from their inclusion.

I included both the A & B parts of this application exercise Question 2 in this response because my "Field Trip" turned out into a multifaceted 'expedition' lending itself to research (real-life); and I am hoping for it to continue as a research resource in the days ahead. It's an especially useful resource because my contact for the field trip is a woman in our own community who has been blind for 18 years of her 50+/- years of age. She has raised two of her children (now out of the home) as a sighted mother and is now raising two adopted children age 3.5 & 4.5 as a blind parent. She uses her computer to write and e-mail news articles for one of the local newspapers. An additional important characteristic of this person is that she was a public school teacher in our own district prior to becoming blind. (I think they call this a Gold mine~~ ;)

I had the opportunity to meet with Kate at her home last Thursday (5/22) for two and one-half hours. She had agreed to show me her arrangement to using her computer. When I arrived she had me sit down at their dining room table, introduced her two little boys, and immediately proceeded to request that I place a handkerchief over my eyes, take her cane, turn, walk, etc. She explained the basics of using the cane and told me basically where we were heading. I survived my 'trip' into the kitchen and began a little exercise of trying to identify the contents of two cans of food. I learned that the rounded edge (stackable) on the bottom of tuna fish cans is helpful in identifying them, and that little magnetic labels in Braille are Really handy for the other type of cans. Then I exited the kitchen and proceeded to the computer room which was up a short flight of stairs in their raised ranch style of home.

At that point Kate allowed me to remove the blindfold and begin to look over her laptop computer although the screen was covered by a sheet of paper. She guided me through the process of launching Juno e-mail and the Internet Explorer and dialing up to check for e-mail and then checking out our web site at school. It was an extremely informative session and I learned and experienced a great deal. She is using Dectalk and Jaws on a laptop that is about three years old. Her present difficulty, the reason that she first contacted the tech department at the school where I work, was that her screen reader was not able to read the HTML formatted e-mail that she was receiving from teachers in the school district nor was her screen reader able to read the text that was incorporated into graphics on the web page. The third problem that we were addressing was her inability to read the district's Action Lines (reports from the Board of Education) that she had formerly been able to read. It turns out that the Action Lines had been changed from a plain HTML posting that her screen reader could handle to Adobe Pdf. I was able to get the format changed back to html by that afternoon and we are now going to make the Action Lines available in Pdf as a secondary posting for those who really need them in Pdf.

Additionally, version 6.0 of Adobe Acrobat Reader has been released (as in the last 48 hours) and supposedly has a read aloud feature built into it that will work with "some" operating systems. I'll be evaluating that later today. She happened to call me this morning to make an appointment to visit their home again so that I can meet her husband, Dave, who does most of her computer configuration. I'm hoping to learn more about Dectalk and Jaws as the result of meeting with him and to also provide some assistance with their software configurations. They started having trouble when they downloaded a new version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. I'm guessing they installed version 6.0 Reader along with their older Adobe Acrobat 4.0 version and the two conflicted. It will be a learning experience for both of us, but a great opportunity to get to know them and improve the public relations for the school district. After I get a grip on the new Adobe Acrobat and Reader situation I'll post it to the Hyper-news. I've also been working with Windows XP "Narrator," the built-in screen reader that comes with Windows XP in the Accessibility folder of "Accessories." So far I'm not as impressed with it as I am Kate's older version of Dectalk and Jaws. Actually Microsoft themselves prefaced "Narrator" in a window at its first use on my system and indicated that people with serious need for this type of software use may need a third party screen reader with greater power. (I think they might be right~ ☺) although in fairness to them I am trying to use it on a 333 MHz laptop. The "Speech" feature that comes with Windows XP and Office XP won't even install on a system less than 400 MHz and they recommend a 500 MHz system (2 GHz is probably closer to reality).

Along these lines, I have recently had a conversation with one of the hardware providers in our region who has just started producing laptops about using one of their new laptops for a demonstration of voice recognition and text to speech software for the Special Education department at our school district and they were very much open to the idea. I'm hoping to be able to have Kate participate in the demonstration.

MODULE 4:

Question 1 Describe a past or present supervisor who you feel was/is a good leader. Describe their leadership style, traits, pros and cons, which make you work better as a team member.

At age fifty-one and being in my third career path I find it interesting to think back over the what has now come to be a rather large number of supervisors and leaders who have I have had the opportunity to follow. Fortunately for me many of them have been good leaders and friends. And so after having given this question some serious thought (and hoping that those who were not chosen as the subject of the answer to this question) never have the opportunity to read this~ ;)

My choice, it turns out, is a (was) very young man who served as my pastor. This relationship was very multifaceted and gave him the opportunity to affect me more than any other person in my life other than my own wife and father. As a pastor Tim had the responsibility to lead me spiritually, and

because the relationship was one that was volunteer in nature (at least for me) it was made difficult because I could leave it behind at will. Leadership I have found, especially in this age, has become even more complicated by our increasingly independent natures and it seems, I think, that we are less inclined to accept someone else's direction or expectation(s) as the standard for our own lives.

The cons, or disadvantages, that I see Tim brought into his leadership relationship with me would be his youth and relative inexperience. He was fresh out of college and also relatively newly married and without any children. Despite the lack of life experience he was well equipped to fulfill his responsibilities. His upbringing prepared him well. His dad was also a minister and had lead his own children and family well and so Tim was able to draw from the training that his father had provided. Additionally, and even more importantly, was the training his mother provided throughout his life. She was totally committed to the family's work in the ministry and her responsibility of nurturing her family. Tim's upbringing more than overcame his inexperience.

Tim's strengths came from a variety of resources. By nature Tim was an ever moving bundle of restless energy, a trait that usually lends itself to impatience in its owner's personality; a character flaw that is entirely unacceptable in the work of the ministry. He was well known to be a chronically restless sleeper and never seemed to run out energy to want to be on the move. Despite this he consistently demonstrated self-discipline and was well recognized as a divinely patient person. He managed his studies well and was faithful to his task of being an informed student of the Scriptures and preparing himself before attempting to prepare the people he was charged to shepherd. His patience, I believe, did not come naturally but was a skill that had been planted, grown, and increasingly cultivated over a long period of time. It has served him well and is the basis for what I believe is the single most important key to his success in leading and that is the sensitivity to the timing of leadership that he always seemed to have. He knew when to restrain or even withdraw and he knew when to forge ahead; to the extent that I think most of his constituents would agree that he has demonstrated very few if any failures. Even those people that experienced the difficult side of hard decisions that he had to make along the way respected him at the time he made them and trusted him to be right in the long run.

Finally, if I had to pick just one trait that I see as being what most enabled him to influence me to be a better team worker, it would probably be his willingness to be a part of the work. He was always where the work was. He did the physical tasks and the academic tasks of his trade. He worked along side the carpenters when the congregation built a new church and still put in the time to consistently improve his own understanding by studying for his preaching and teaching responsibilities. His understanding of his task and faithfulness to it earned a respect from me that motivated me to follow his leadership (and I was a hard customer to convince~ ;)

Question 2B) Assistive Technology Research:

Research the Vision or Mission Statement of your own organization or AT Service provider in your community. Do you share the same Vision or Mission? What changes would you make? How would you go about making those changes? Report back on your findings.

District Mission Statement for Wayne Central School District

Based upon the belief that all students can learn, the staff of the Wayne Central School District accepts the responsibility to teach all students, regardless of differences, the fundamental skills. We further accept the responsibility to challenge all students to attain higher levels of achievement. Wayne Central will provide the opportunity, environment, and encouragement to meet this goal while developing the whole child physically, socially, emotionally, and culturally.

It has been awhile since I have taken a look at the statement of our mission and, of course, looking at it now comes with a somewhat expanded perspective from the one I had before the start of my study in assistive technology.

I absolutely do share the same mission that the school's statement sets forth but I have to admit that my perception of the vision that should accompany that statement has been somewhat clouded and may be getting a little more clouded as time has rolled on. Looking at this statement gives me an opportunity to examine my own responsibilities within the mission and in fact challenge me as to my own commitment in the areas that I have now been given the opportunity to affect.

Our statement indicates a belief that all students **can** learn and a commitment to each student's progress independent of their abilities or disabilities. Since one of my own pet peeves has been a concern over the amount of focus on the achievements of the gifted and talented students with a neglect of the less perfect people within our areas of responsibility, I see that this statement of mission gives me a basis for encouraging a fair share of the attention on those whom we serve in the less privileged group.

The good news is that my employer, the Wayne Central School District, has demonstrated the good sense to "think outside of the box" a little and consider that there might be a better way to meet the needs of the students other than just throwing money at the problem (although I'd like to have a little money to throw where I'd like it~ ;) Whereas the practice in the past has been to utilize the BOCES for assistive technology evaluations Wayne Central now plans to accomplish those evaluations utilizing its own technology support group, and is willing to provide the necessary training to see that the tech group has the skills necessary to do the evaluations responsibly; hence, my enrollment in the CSUN ATACP.

So, no more blame-shifting for me. Now I'm the 'go-to guy.' I see it as a great opportunity to really help carry out the spirit of the school's mission statement. This new approach will allow me to directly support the students with disabilities (both learning and physical), their teachers, and even the students' families in our community as a service from the school. As stated in the districts' mission statement we accept the responsibility for **establishing** the opportunity, **conditioning** the environment, and **mustering** the encouragement for learning, and these are all areas that I will have opportunity to impact in the days ahead.

If there were one thing I would change (actually add) it would be one statement challenging each individual of the organization with a thought about the privilege of teaching. I looked for an appropriate quote but couldn't come up with what I was after. Maybe the statement I would add would go like this: *"We, the staff and faculty at Wayne Central School District, accept with the sense of great privilege, the honor of being entrusted with the charge of guiding the children of our community to becoming all that they are capable of becoming."*

MODULE 5:

Question 1

Question 2

MODULE 6:

- How long did it take to complete the on-line work – were the posted hours realistic?

121 hours (not counting project time or live training) ~ I think that actually the course requires much more than 100 hours as presented.

- **Was the on line course easy to navigate and easy to understand?**

Yes, I found the online approach easy to get used to both the html content of the online study and the Hypernews program for the application exercises. This is a remarkably efficient approach when coupled with broadband Internet and some form of online file storage.

I have a cable modem service that provides a 1.5 megabit per second connection (average) and our school has a Xerox DocuShare service provided by the local BOCES. This setup allowed me to keep my files for the course in the DocuShare and then access them from either my computer at work or home. I kept my notes for the course in a MS Word XP document and used the Windows clipboard to copy/paste information from the study sources (mostly Internet) to my Word doc. This leaves the information in digital form and therefore easy to reuse again in posting to the web, e-mailing friends with questions, or training purposes (or my next AT course~ ;) Just kidding~ ☺ I was also able as I studied online to remotely access my Assistive Technology website at the school where I worked and update it with hyperlinks to resource sites as I came across them in my study.

- **Was the format of the 2 day live training beneficial?**

The two day live training was definitely very beneficial, although I think I would have preferred the five day tract for a number of reasons: There is more material to cover than fits in the two days. Five days would give the time necessary to work more closely with a greater variety of hardware and software, especially since voice recognition and text to speech software are really starting to come into their own. The other aspect of the live training that could be better utilized with the five day tract would be the resource of the members of the class. I was amazed at the variety of skills and experiences of our class membership. I would have loved to have more time to interact with the group members. Lastly, another basic benefit of the five day tract would be having more time to adjust to the time change (for those of us who traveled from the East coast), more time to enjoy the Los Angeles area.

Although the cost of housing would be increased, I think I would like to see the ATACP course precede the CSUN conference by one week, so that I could take the course and then stay a second week and make full use of the conference.

- **Did you enjoy this style of learning?**

Yes. Although I am a technician and much of my ongoing learning takes place through reading technical information online, this was my first chance to do a prolonged and organized study using the Internet. I feel that it was a very successful approach, but I have to say I enjoy the personality(ies) of the live teacher(s) and a textbook/workbook is hard to beat.

- **Did you utilize any of the alternative formats provided to you? If so, which format?**

Yes. Because of getting such a late start on the online portion of the course I loaded the Microsoft Word alternative format onto my laptop and studied on the plane trip from New York to LA. My work on the two flights was probably the most useful 'online' sessions of the course. I'm also becoming very interested in the MP3 audio format for instruction and would like to take more time to try it and compare its effectiveness as an instructional medium. As an FYI, I ran into a new program that makes it Very easy to create MP3 files from ASCII text. TextAloud

from NextUp software www.NextUp.com works very easily with the Windows clipboard to create MP3 files and also screen reads anything copied to the Windows clipboard. Also, Adobe has just released version 6.0 of what used to be called Adobe Acrobat Reader (the free part of Adobe Acrobat). It's now called Adobe Reader. It has a Read Out Loud text to speech feature built in and it now reads the Adobe e-books making it unnecessary to install a separate e-book reader program. I think both of these formats offer great promise as instructional media.

- **What would you change to improve the course?**

I would change very little. Perhaps the volume of material for the online part of the course could be reduced and more of it placed in the supplementary material. I found myself, (despite a fair warning at the beginning of the course) with more time accumulated than was practical. Other than the suggestion above to have a five day ATACP the week preceding the CSUN conference and coffee every morning ;) I wouldn't change anything. I've recommended the course to another group in our county and I think they're already making plans right now for Washington in August. Hope things are well with Mike. I had a great time, learned a lot, and loved the group. I'm hoping to see y'all in LA next March.

Exercise #	Module Name	Question #	Completed?
1	Introduction		X
2	Module 1	Question 1	X
3		Question 2	X
4	Module 2	Question 1	X
5		Question 2	X
6	Module 3	Question 1	X
7	Case Study 1	Question 2	X
8		Question 1	X
9	Case Study 2	Question 2	
10		Question 1	X
11	Case Study 3	Question 2	
12		Question 1	X
13	Case Study 4	Question 2	
14		Question 1	X
15	Case Study 5	Question 2	
16		Question 1	X
17	Case Study 6	Question 2	X
18	Module 4	Question 1	X
19		Question 2	X
20	Module 5	Question 1	
21		Question 2	
22	Module 6		X