

ATACP Class: LA FastTrax 03

Project Deadline: June 18, 2003

Name: David R. Colburn

Title: Computer Services Assistant

Organization: Wayne Central School District

Work Address:

6076 Ontario Center Rd.
P.O. Box 155
Wayne Middle School, Tech Support
Ontario Center, New York 14520

Work Telephone: 315.524.3083

Work Fax: 315.524.0229

Email Address: dcolburn@wayne.k12.ny.us

Project Title: “In-Sight in School”

Project Summary: This project entitled “In-Sight in School” will be very closely related to the representative project given in Representative projects:

1. . . .
2. . . .
3. **Assist a person with a sensory disability to obtain technology that is needed on the job, in the home, or at school. Address assessment, training, funding, follow through, supports and implementation process.**

Although originally there were a number of different projects that I had contemplated submitting for this course “In-Sight in School” has presented itself as my project of choice for a couple of important reasons. The people involved in it have touched my own heart. They are people in my own community with very significant needs and they have already faced obstacles in the meeting of those needs. Secondly, I believe building this “project” around the personalities of these real community people will provide the driving force for the plan of this project to progress and eventually truly succeed.

This project is in both a developmental and an early stage of already being in-process. It has the potential to become a very valuable service to the community and a significant improvement in the school system with the way we meet the needs of our constituency. The potential for this kind of value comes from the fact that it will bring the real needs of real people face to face with the real financial limitations that the public school system is experiencing right now, especially in New York State.

This project is still in the planning stage because it has the capacity for almost unlimited growth as it is *successfully* utilized. It is in the “in-process” stage because it is necessary to ‘kick-it-off’ in order to allow the

planning aspect to progress and to begin to get the two key people involved. Failure to implement the various elements of the plan for this project will reveal very early-on its inability to develop and its inevitable failure.

The note struck here in this summary probably sounds very much lacking in hope for its success, but actually this project bears much hope for being a real-life improvement in the process of the local school system fulfilling its responsibilities to the taxpayers who provide for its existence and more importantly entrust the safe-keeping of their children educationally to the public school system. The beauty of the 'consumerism' concept that has been expressed in the ATACP is that it fosters accountability.

The hope that does exist in this project is rooted in the real people with real needs that I somewhat unexpectedly and inadvertently have come to know fairly recently. It is their names and faces that will challenge us to the point that real and lasting decisions will have to be made concerning people and their needs and the provision, management, or prioritization of the necessary tools to accomplish the tasks. It is no longer acceptable to say "just get it done" without also addressing the reality (or lack thereof) of the resources necessary to underwrite the required result. It would seem that, especially in the world of education, intellectual honesty is the first order of business.

Goals/Objectives:

Objective: To establish and enhance improved **communication** and **organization of resources** between the school district and the community (both students, parents, staff, and faculty); especially with people with disabilities; which will lead to a more efficient use of the available resources in the community and a greater success in meeting the needs of people with disabilities in the community by the local public school district.

Goals:

To identify resources within the community and the public school system which can be coordinated to provide the best service for students and / or parents in the communities who have disabilities

To develop an existing opportunity with a member of the community who is blind and has been trained and experienced as a teacher and position them as a trainer and mentor to a young sight impaired and becoming blind student in the same community; and as a consultant to the student's family and myself

To generate increased awareness and sensitivity to the needs of disabled people within our community and our school district

To facilitate an ongoing development and improvement in the ability of the school district to address the needs of the disabled in our student body and with their families

To incorporate members of the community into the process of recognizing and addressing the needs of disabled people in our community and school district

To use this project as it develops as a model for ongoing community / school district collaboration efforts in the area of disabilities and assistive technology

Timeline for Implementation:

The plan for this project is dynamic and its continuing development is dependent on its progress and growth. But at the same time this project has actually already been launched, because the basis of its existence involves

people already identified who both have needs themselves and also have the ability to be key resources within the community in their area of disability.

The timeline for this project actually turned into the timeline and an outline of the justification and methodology for the project:

ATACP Project Outline for Dave Colburn

I. Initial implementation: Already underway: approximately May 2003

- A. 4/30 Meet with Sandy, Michelle, and Kathy
- B. 5/22 Meet with Mrs. Chamberlin (blind parent in community ~ former teacher)
- C. 5/28 Meet with Mr. & Mrs. Chamberlin (review her current software)
- D. 5/29 Nicholas Marini IEP assistive tech evaluation
- E. 6/4 Meet with Sandy, Michelle, & Kathy
- F. 6/12 Dustin Schrieber meeting w/ FE teachers
- G. 6/13 Tyler Chamberlin meeting w/ FE teachers
- H. Four key resources identified:
 - 1. A blind parent in the community
 - 2. A sight impaired child (student) with a prognosis of total blindness in the future
 - 3. Myself: The Assistive Technology evaluator in the local public school district
 - 4. The school district
- I. Obtain permission from Office of Student Services to interface with the two different families

II. Present this project to the school district for consideration of adoption: August 1, 2003

- A. Demonstrate the need(s)
 - 1. That there is currently a student in the school district with a degenerating sight condition whose preparation for life without sight is currently inadequate.
 - 2. That there is currently a member of the immediate community whose training and experience would provide the best possible support for the above mentioned student.
- B. Demonstrate the planned methodology of meeting the needs with this effort.
 - 1. The school district providing the services of the technology department for assistive technology evaluations for the purposes of advising the student and his family concerning choices in software and hardware that is available to address his special needs in visual assistance.
 - 2. In this case the community member, because of her personal experience of having lost her sight and needing to adjust to an unsighted lifestyle, in combination with her training and experience as a public school teacher and a mother; would provide consultation to the student, his family, and the school district as to the best way to meet the student's needs.

C. Demonstrate the value of this approach

1. A more and better skills and expertise pool to draw from
2. A sense of ownership by the community in the local public school system
3. An enhanced relationship between the public and the local school system
4. An improved level of support from, commitment to, and participation in the public school system by the community
5. More needs being better met with proportionately less financing

D. Demonstrate the expected results of this effort

1. Preparation of the Schrieber boy for life without sight
 - a) Emotional
 - b) Functional (Assistive Technology)
 - (1) The school district: The IEP process
 - (2) Through the district's assistive technology evaluator: Mr. Colburn
 - (3) Through a community member: Mrs. Chamberlin

c) Intellectual

E. Demonstrate the ability of this project to grow and the additional services that could be provided if it were given the resources to grow.

1. Increased support from the community when favorable results are perceived
2. Increased participation due the observed successes and pride of ownership (by the community)
3. Increased funding due to recognized successful outcomes

III. Get basic structure organized and functional: Start of the school year September 2003

A. The project will be under the supervision of the Department of Student Services at the Wayne Central School District

B. It will be recognized that this project is dependent upon a collaborative effort between the school district and volunteer participation by the members in the community at least until such a time that the school district determines to expand the assigned personnel.

C. The design of the project's approach to dealing with the needs of students and their parents in the community will center around one community member who has the potential to be a very valuable resource to one of the school district's students and the student himself:

1. Consult with the family of the blind student
2. Consult with the blind parent concerning her supporting the blind student (and his family)
3. Begin the blind parent's supporting the blind student within the student's educational program
4. Examine financial resources that will be required to accomplish the expectations of this effort
 - a) Consider possible sources / solicit grant money to fund this effort from:
 - (1) State education sources
 - (2) State funding from sources outside of education
 - (3) Federal sources
 - (4) Local resources
 - (5) Community organizations
 - (a) Town
 - (b) Rotary
 - (c) Firemen
 - (d) Churches

(e) Private funding

(f) Regional organizations

b) Seek to secure funds and participation from these sources:

- (1) Initiate an advertising effort to make the needs and intended effort known to the public
- (2) Create a website on the district web that relates to this project
- (3) Secure media coverage of the project: Radio, TV, etc.
- (4) Conduct a community informational seminar to increase disabilities awareness.

IV. Review the project's progress and consider whether to expand, maintain, or reduce the scope of its original objectives: Target date June 1, 2004

How did ATACP assist me with the completion of the project:

There are a number of ways that the ATACP has provided assistance to me in the creation of this project. The ATACP has been very successful in developing awareness in me of the great number of people who live with disabilities and the need for my place of employment, the public school system, to expand its efforts and effectiveness in supporting the people of the community and their families who live with disabilities. I have always considered myself a person of heart but when I realized how many more disabled people there are out there than what I was aware of I had to reconsider just how much I had been paying attention.

Closely related to awareness and yet somewhat to be distinguished is sensitivity. The increased sensitivity that I find myself experiencing has become a consistent driving force in me to not only complete the ATACP but to employ the information, and hopefully skills, that I have gained throughout this course. I think the course set the stage for renewal of my sensitive side but meeting the two people who have become the subject of this concluding project together with the volume of information derived from this course and the challenges provided during the live training have combined to form what I believe will be an ongoing sensitivity to the people who build their lives beyond the disabilities with which they live.

Probably the most obvious contribution to this project by ATACP is the inexhaustible volume of information. I believed it was mentioned by a number of the ATACP students in the LA FastTrax 03 class that the course might have exceeded the 100 hour mark, and the upside of that is the wealth of information that was provided. The Internet provided a great delivery mechanism for all this information and will continue to allow us students to communicate with each other and the ever-developing bank of data surrounding the subject of assistive technology.

With as much information as was available on the subject of assistive technology comes the need for organization and taking the course has the effect of moving you to organizing your data, thinking, and even your time spent in studying, all of which contribute to a better organization of your understanding. Not only does that requirement to become organized enable the completion of the project but it also underwrites our

carrying on with the process of adding new knowledge to our understanding and to organizing the data for future use.

I have found motivation to be another benefit from the ATACP (there's just no substitute for a term project with a deadline to generate motivation~~ [although it always intrigues me how that motivation seems to peak so very near the deadline~~] ;) Even more valuable than the written project though is the motivation of the trainers and the motivation of a good group dynamic as we found with the live training. I hope the group continues to communicate following the conclusion of the ATACP because I think there will continue to be very valuable motivation from each other that we can benefit from for many days ahead.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, is the aspect of communication that the ATACP provides. The forum for interfacing with both the trainers and the other students of the ATACP was mentioned in the preceding paragraph. As efficient as the Internet is as a communication tool there just is no substitute for live interaction and the personality of a live teacher / trainer. The combination of the two though, really provides a pipeline of communication opportunities. The Hypernews and listserv were helpful in continuing the familiarity of the acquaintances that we made at the live training and I believe spurred us on to the completion of our projects. I'm anxious to continue the use of these tools even following the completion of our projects and the ATACP.

2,391words