

NSSLHA NEWSLETTER

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES



International AAC Awareness Month

What is AAC?

AAC stands for augmentative and alternative communication. There are many ways of communicating, and AAC is one of them. People who use AAC may need access to many different types of AAC - from sign language and pen and paper, to speech-generating devices.

AAC can be no-tech, low-tech, or high-tech. No-tech AAC includes signs and gestures. Low-tech AAC can be the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), symbol charts, communication boards, and communication books, to name a few examples. High-tech AAC can involve the use of computerized devices such as specialized communication devices or iPads that feature communication apps.

How does AAC help people communicate?

People with severe communication challenges may use various AAC methods to supplement existing speech or to replace speech that is not functional. AAC is an area of clinical practice that supplements or compensates for impairments in speech-language production, including spoken and written modes of communication.

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NSSLHA AT CSULA



Who can benefit from the use of AAC?

Any person with congenital disabilities, acquired disabilities, or neurological differences such as autism may benefit from the use of AAC. Some examples of congenital disabilities are cerebral palsy, developmental apraxia of speech, and intellectual disability. Examples of acquired disabilities that may result in AAC use include cerebrovascular accidents (strokes), traumatic brain injuries, neurodegenerative diseases (such as ALS), supranuclear palsy, primary progressive aphasia, apraxia, surgery-related disabilities (such as glossectomies or laryngectomies), and temporary/intermittent conditions for patients in critical care settings (such as intubated patients) and patients with acute laryngitis.

Why is it important for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to familiarize themselves with AAC?

SLPs play a critical role in the development of communication skills by AAC users. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has a number of resources on its Practice Portal, including a list of the roles and responsibilities of SLPs with respect to AAC and a summary of current state and federal laws relating to reimbursement and funding for AAC therapy and devices. We highly encourage you to visit their Practice Portal by going to [ASHA.org](https://www.asha.org) → Practice Management → Practice Portal → AAC. As stated by ASHA, SLPs play a central role in the screening, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of persons requiring AAC intervention. The professional roles and activities in speech-language pathology include clinical and educational services such as the aforementioned, as well as advocacy, education, administration, and research. SLPs are also responsible for providing training for medical and allied health professionals, educators, family members, and community members about AAC use and the impact of AAC on quality of life. Please visit [ASHA.org](https://www.asha.org) for more roles and responsibilities.

Can AAC hinder communication?

It is a common misconception that AAC hinders communication, particularly speech development. Rather than hindering speech development, AAC supports it. AAC may be an unfamiliar topic to many and as SLPs, we must inform others because everyone deserves a voice.

Professor Spotlight

Heather DeFelice

M.S., CCC-SLP

Speech-Language Pathologist

Part-Time Lecturer



Please provide a brief background of your career, including your educational experience and any areas of research.

I am a speech-language pathologist at the Diagnostic Center, Southern California, while also teaching part time at Cal State LA. I earned my B.A. in liberal studies with a minor in psychology from San Diego State. During that time, I realized that I did not want to be a classroom teacher, but really enjoyed analyzing language samples in my language development class. I then canceled graduation and began taking classes in the COMD department while applying for grad school in communication disorders. I earned my M.S. in Communicative Disorders from University of Wisconsin-Madison. I also earned an Assistive Technology Applications certificate through CSUN and have extensive experience working with children in public schools as well as in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) camp settings. Areas of expertise include AAC, autism, and moderate-severe disabilities.

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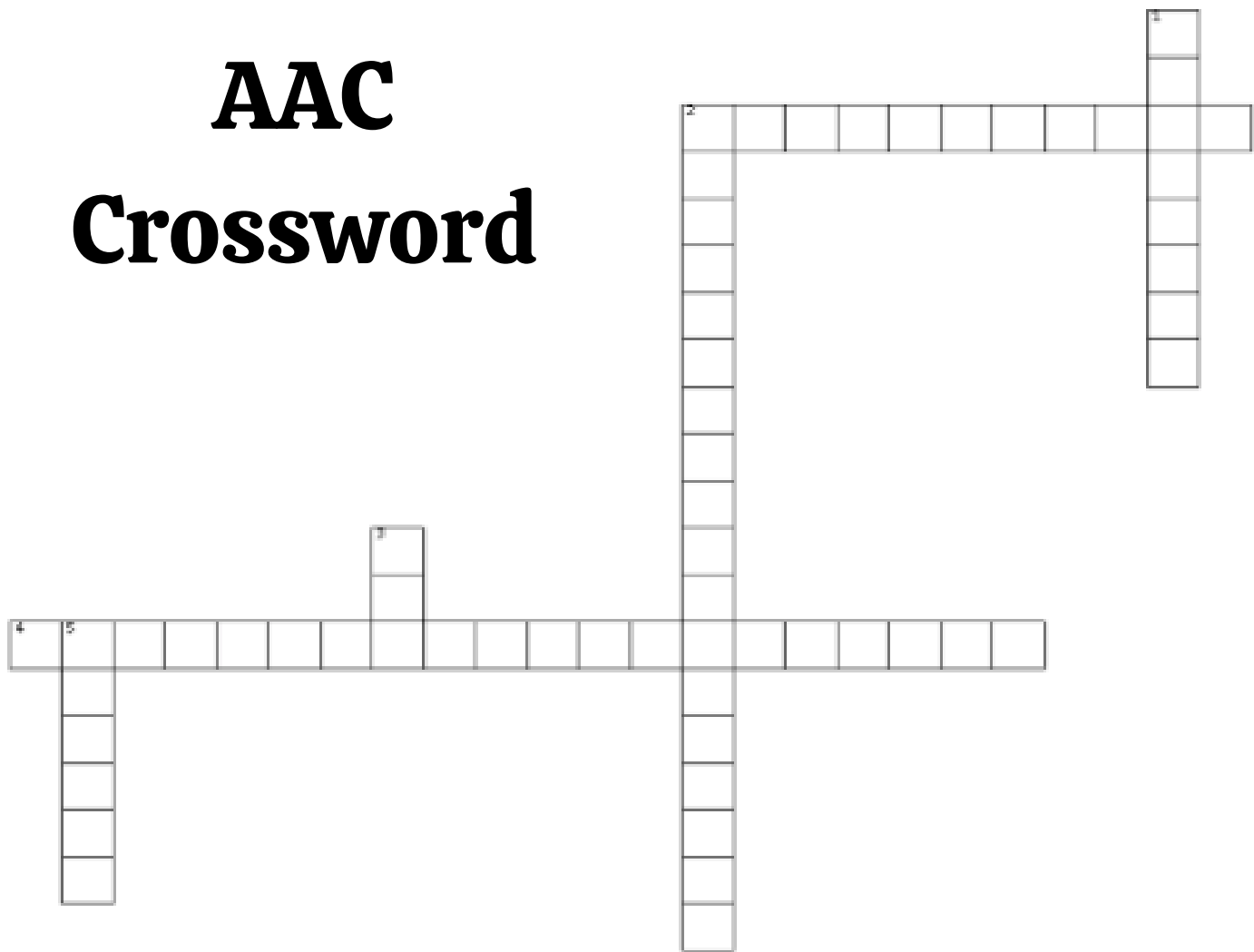
If you could spread awareness about one thing regarding AAC, what would it be?

Everyone does and can communicate, even if it's not with oral speech, pictures, or high-tech devices. AAC is highly individualized and includes all forms of communication other than oral speech; even pointing or using gestures is part of AAC. Our recommended supports must match the skill set and needs of that person and understanding development is a big piece of the puzzle.

What advice would you give students who are interested in learning more about AAC?

Play! We learn by doing and the best way to get comfortable with AAC devices is by jumping in and exploring them. Seek out students who use devices and look into volunteering or working at AAC camps.

AAC Crossword



ACROSS

2. A learned or self-realized method of employing AAC aids, symbols, and/or techniques to effectively enhance and/or facilitate communication and/or communication potential
4. A mode of communication that includes nonverbal means of natural communication such as gestures and facial expressions

DOWN

1. Describes one type of AAC technology system that uses features such as apps on an iPad or tablet, or a computer with a voice
2. A mode of communication that includes approaches that require some form of external support, such as a communication board with symbols or computers, handheld devices, or tablet devices with symbols that generate speech
3. (abrv) An area of clinical practice that attempts to compensate either temporarily or permanently for the impairment and disability patterns of individuals with severe expressive communication disorders
5. Describes one type of AAC that includes things like gestures, facial expression, writing, drawing, or pointing to photos, pictures, or written words

Submit attendance form with completed crossword puzzle by November 7th

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About Graduate School

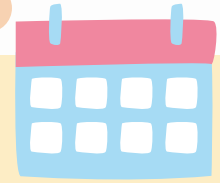
Is it possible to work while going to grad school?

Cal State LA strongly discourages students from working while in grad school. That said, there are grad students who for many reasons hold part-time or full-time jobs while in school. Having Zoom classes/clinic and/or working from home may make this more of a possibility.

Working might also be more manageable during some semesters than others since course and clinic loads vary from semester to semester. For example, spring semester of the first year is known to be super intense and you will need strong time management skills to maintain your mental health and do well in classes and clinic while working!

Do you have a life outside of school?

This depends on how well you manage your time, but grad school will almost certainly prey on most of your waking hours for the two years of the program. A grad student once said that that you see your classmates more than you see family and friends. There is truth to that! However, this doesn't mean you won't be able to find any quality time for yourself and your loved ones. You'll need to develop good time management skills and be sure to communicate with those around you about your graduate school responsibilities.



What is a typical day like?

This can vary a lot from semester to semester and even from student to student since each student works with different clients. But to give you an idea of what to expect, here is one second-year grad student's schedule for Wednesdays of this semester, Fall 2021.

9:45am-12pm	Group Therapy Session and Meeting with Supervisor	Zoom (from home)
2-2:30pm	Meeting with Supervisor	Zoom (from home)
4-4:50pm	Individual Therapy Session	Zoom (from campus)
5-5:50pm	Individual Therapy Session	Zoom (from campus)
6-7:15pm	Class	In person

Gaps between classes/sessions are spent writing clinic notes (SOAP notes), preparing for classes and therapy sessions, doing other clinic paperwork, commuting, and grabbing quick bites to eat.

Do you have classes during summers?

Yes! Some undergrad and post-bacc students are surprised to learn that the two-year master's program includes summers. This means that if you begin graduate school in Fall 2022, you will be in school in Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Summer 2022, Fall 2023, Spring 2023, and Summer 2023.

Announcements

Peer Mentoring

Mon-Thurs 3:30-5 PM

Zoom ID for Mon/Tues/Thurs: 893 7173 6614

Zoom ID for Wed: 842 0260 1683

NSSLHA members earn 2 pts per meeting

Spanish for SLPs

Thurs 4-5 PM

Zoom ID: same as peer mentoring (see above)

NSSLHA members earn 2 pts per meeting

Apply for Spring Graduation (Undergraduates)

Deadline: October 15

Undergraduate students, apply for spring graduation by October 15. Students should make an appointment to meet with an advisor for assistance (calstatela.edu/hhs/ac).

Student Advocacy Day

October 20

<https://www.nsslha.org/programs/legislative-advocacy/>

Announcements

Virtual Grad School Fair/PhD Center

November 18-19

<https://www.nsslha.org/programs/virtual-events/grad-school-fair/>

ASHA Convention

November 18-20

Hybrid convention (in-person and online)

<https://convention.asha.org/registration-and-housing/how-to-register/>

Raw Conversations: Ableism in CSD Education

December 15 7:30-9 PM ET

<https://www.nsslha.org/programs/virtual-events/>

Check out the COMD Department Canvas page's new Additional Graduate Programs module! The department will post flyers and information it receives about graduate programs in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology at other universities and also graduate programs in related fields. Many of these programs have virtual and/or in-person information sessions that they are advertising. Additional flyers will be added to the module in the near future!

The Hidden Curriculum

Are you an Undergrad?

A Certificate Student?

A Transfer Student?

Would you like to talk to a peer about
recommendations for ...

1.

Which classes to
take / order?

2.

How to reach out
to professors?

3.

Navigating
student life?

Join us!

To learn more about
The Hidden Curriculum

a.k.a.

**The things we wish someone had
told us.**

When: October 19 @ 7 p.m.

Zoom Link: TBH

10 NSSLHA PTS

+ 5 w/ Merch



• CSULA NSSLHA •

Fall Mixer

10. 21. 21
7PM

Members earn 10 points for attending!
Wear a halloween costume for 2 extra
points!!

MEETING ID: 821 7762 9276
PASSCODE: 258907



NSSLHA MEETING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29TH AT 7PM

**GUEST SPEAKER: SANDRA
MORENO SHARES HER
EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH
THE L.A UNIFIED SCHOOL
DISTRICT.**

**INCLUDING A TYPICAL DAY IN
THE LIFE OF AN SLP OR SLPA
& SALARY BENEFITS**

**EARN 25 NSSLHA POINTS FOR ATTENDING AND
5 EXTRA POINTS IF WEARING NSSLHA MERCH!**

**MEETING ID: 870 742 2328
PASSCODE: 011678**

Meeting ID: 885 7359 4043

Passcode: 523325

5th annual

COMD Symposium



NAVIGATING THE FIELD AS A PERSON OF COLOR

Friday, November 5th, 12th

4-7pm

Earn 5 points per guest speaker

NSSLHA POINTS

THE OFFICIAL BREAKDOWN OF WHERE TO GET YOUR NSSLHA POINTS IN 2021



- **Color/Label Activities: 5 pts**
- **COMD Book Club Meetings: 5 pts**
- **Merch Mondays:
5 pts (25 pts max)**
- **General Meetings: 25 pts**
- **Crossword Puzzles: 5 pts**
- **Grad Application Workshop:
20 pts**
- **Annual COMD Symposium:
5 pts/speaker**
- **Peer Mentoring: 2 pts/day**
- **Volunteering: varies**

REMEMBER

To receive NSSLHA cords for graduation, NSSLHA members need to earn 75 points for two consecutive semesters

To receive points for completing your crossword, you must submit the attendance form (available on our website) with the completed crossword puzzle

Want to check your current totals?
Visit our website at
www.csulansslha.com