CCCF AAC ADVISORY PANEL

Over the course of the past 15 years, the international activities of CCCF have focused increasingly on providing support for AAC activities in areas where AAC is just emerging and/or coming into its own --- places like Ghana, Malawi, Romania, Mexico, Hong Kong and Poland. To provide us with expert advice in conducting these activities, we have established an AAC Advisory Panel, made up of individuals with extensive backgrounds in researching, practicing and developing innovative ideas in Augmentative Communication and have a history of collaborating. The current members are listed below.

1. Sarah Blackstone, PhD (Chair)

Sarah Blackstone chairs CCCF’s AAC Advisory Panel. Dr. Blackstone is a licensed speech language pathologist in CA whose work in AAC reaches back to the 1970’s. She served as Editor to the first book (1986) in the field of AAC for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (Augmentative Communication: An Introduction; Implementation Strategies for Improving the Use of AAC in the Schools) and was a founding member of the United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (USSAAC). Over the past four decades, she has published scores of articles and several books in the field of AAC. She has served as keynote speaker at AAC conferences in Europe (Portugal, France, Italy, Sweden, etc.), Australia, Chile, New Zealand, Israel and Mexico. She currently serves on the national advisory board of the National Institutes of Health’s Institute of Deafness and Communication Disorders. She has previously also served as a member of the California Assistive Technology Advisory panel.

Dr. Blackstone received her doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh in 1980. She has worked as a clinician at the Rehabilitation Institute of Pittsburgh, as Chief of Speech-Language Pathology at the Kennedy-Krieger Institute, as an instructor of Rehabilitation Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, and has directed two federally funded projects at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

From 1989 to 2009, Blackstone published edited and wrote for two international newsletters, Augmentative Communication News and Alternatively Speaking, working collaboratively with both professionals and individuals with complex communication needs and their family members in collecting, synthesizing and disseminating research to support AAC practice. Her publications include Social Networks: An assessment and intervention-planning tool for person with complex communication needs and their communication partners, and numerous chapters and articles. Social Networks has been translated into fourteen languages. Her most recent book, Patient: Provider Communication: Roles for Speech-Language Pathologists and Other
Health Care Professionals, points the way towards new roles for AAC professionals in the health care field.

Dr. Blackstone is President of Augmentative Communication, Inc. She was a Partner and Project Director in the AAC-RERC, funded by National Institutes of Disability and Rehabilitation Research in the United States. She also served as principal AAC consultant to the Berkeley Unified School District for more than two decades, and, as a leader in her community’s Emergency First Responder community, was recently named a “Local Hero” by the American Red Cross.

Dr. Blackstone has served in various leadership capacities, including President of both the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) and the United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. She currently serves as Past President on the Board of Directors of the United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. She also was editor of the ISAAC book series. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Bridge School, the United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and the Central Coast Children’s Foundation. Her awards and honors include the DeCarlo Award for Clinical Achievement, ISAAC’s Distinguished Service Award and the Award of Excellence from the United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and she is an ISAAC Fellow. A list of publications is available upon request.

2. Vicki Casella, Ed.D

Vicki Casella is the Executive Director at The Bridge School and Professor Emeritus of Special Education at San Francisco State University. Her experience and expertise in Assistive Technology for individuals with physical and speech impairment goes back many decades, and her work in professional development and in the enhancement of teaching and learning was a mainstay of her tenure at San Francisco State, where she established and directed the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching (CET) in 1993. The Center offered pedagogical and technical support to faculty in such areas as curriculum development, Instructional skills development and pedagogy. The CET also facilitated workshops and provided resources to support the use of technology in the classroom. Dr. Casella received her doctorate from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

The Bridge School opened in 1987 and established a preschool program in 2003. Its main purpose is to provide children with an effective means of communication so they can interact effectively and efficiently with the people in their lives today, as well as prepare to communicate with people anywhere at any time in their future. In 1997, the Teacher in Residence (TIR) program collaborated with the International Society for Augmentative and
Alternative Communication (ISAAC) by bringing teachers and speech-language pathologists from countries where the use of AAC and AT was emerging (India, Poland, Singapore, Mexico, South Korea, Romania, and South Africa) for a semester-long placement. Casella has also led groups of AAC experts to most of these countries to present follow-up symposia for local professionals, AAC users and family members. The Bridge School uses a transitional model that aims to transition all students back to their home districts and is not intended to be a permanent school placement. One of its core beliefs is that educators, families and students must work collaboratively to allow learning to be effective, and that families and students need to be actively participate in their own learning. The use of multi-modal communication is encouraged, encompassing vocalizations, body language, eye gaze and gestures, as well a variety of low and high tech AAC and AT tools and strategies.

The Bridge School’s out-reach program offers intensive training to professionals from throughout the state of California and university students from San Francisco State and San Jose State in the application of technology with students who use AAC and collaborate with Samuel Merritt College to train graduate OT students in the use of technology and methods of access. Their AAC By the Bay Conference reaches hundreds of professionals throughout California and provides training and current information related to the use of AAC and AT by students with severe physical impairments and complex communication needs. The staff also offers intensive training and on-going support for teachers, therapists and instructional assistants who serve the students who graduate from The Bridge School. The school’s comprehensive web site offers professionals throughout the state an opportunity to take advantage of successful strategies employed at The Bridge School. Their Lecture Series affords local professionals the opportunity to hear and interact with national and international speakers in the field of AAC. A list of publications is available upon request.

3. Frank DeRuyter, PhD

Frank DeRuyter has been at Duke University Medical Center since 1995 where he is Professor, Department of Surgery; Chief, Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology; Section Head, Division of Head and Neck Surgery & Communication Sciences; Principal Investigator of the NIDRR LiveWell Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for ICT Access; and, Principal Investigator of the international Consortium for Assistive Technology Outcomes Research. In addition, from 1998-2015, he served as Principal Investigator of the NIDRR national Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Communication Enhancement (AAC-RERC).

His primary interest is in emerging information and communication technologies, AAC/AT, mobile healthcare, outcomes/performance monitoring, and program development. In addition to his clinical, academic and research responsibilities, he supervises 96 speech pathologists, audiologists, rehabilitation engineers and support personnel. He has received over $23 million
dollars in federal extramural research funding; presented over 300 invited professional papers at national/international conferences; and, has over 100 publications. He has also served on numerous professional committees and advisory boards including the California Assistive Technology Advisory Committee. Currently he serves on the Board of Directors of the Bridge School in Hillsborough, California.

Prior to Duke University, Dr. DeRuyter was at Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center for 15 years serving as Director of the Communication Disorders Department. In addition, while at Rancho, he conceptualized, developed and directed the national Center for Applied Rehabilitation Technology (CART); implemented and directed the Department for Outcomes Management & Program Evaluation; and, served as Co-Director of the NIDRR Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technology for Children with Orthopedic Disabilities. He has previously also served as a member of the state AT advisory panel in California. Some of his publications are listed below. A more complete list is available.


(MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW):


**4. Harvey Pressman (ex officio)**

Harvey Pressman, the President of the Central Coast Children’s Foundation, has a long history of involvement in Assistive Technology and AAC. He has served in editorial roles as Managing Editor at Augmentative Communication, Inc. and as Technology Editor at *The Exceptional Parent Magazine*, and was a founding board member of the Alliance for Technology Access (ATA). He was the recipient of the 2005 Advocacy Award from the United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (USSAAC) and co-chairs USSAAC’s Emergency Response Committee. In the 1980’s he served for several years as a member of the Editorial Board of *The Exceptional Parent* magazine and was Contributing Editor to *Children's Advocate* from 1987-1991,

Pressman’s past work activities have been as a college professor (Education, Asian History), a teacher trainer, a Peace Corps official, creator/director of a variety of demonstration programs in the human services (education, disability, volunteer services, *et al.*), a foundation executive, an editor and a writer (15 books, primarily in areas relating to assistive technology for people with disabilities, technology and learning, education and employment of disadvantaged youth, *et al.*). He is the author and/or coauthor of some fifteen books and scores of journal articles in these areas. He is a former college professor and Peace Corps official and has directed demonstration programs in educational technology, employment of welfare recipients and people with disabilities, urban education, and youth employment.

From 1996 to 2002, Pressman successfully initiated and then managed a $6.5 million federally-funded Technology Innovation Challenge Grant program for the Berkeley Unified School District. Prior to that, he had managed two other large-scale, federally funded demonstrations of technology integration in public school classrooms. Pressman has also directed employment programs for people with disabilities, disseminated them around the
country, and written extensively about them. Some of his AAC and AT related publications are cited below.

A. Books


B. AT and AAC Related Articles


New Opportunities for Spreading Assistive Technology and AAC,” Friends of ATIA Newsletter, June, 2012. (with Sarah W. Blackstone)


5. Wendy Quach, PhD

Wendy Quach is a licensed, certified speech language pathologist and associate professor in the Communicative Disorders & Sciences Department at San José State University. Her teaching and research interests are in the areas of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for people with complex communication needs and motor speech disorders. She is also the Program Director and Project Director for the following grants: Project AACES, Project Tapestry, Project EPICS. She is a Co-Principal Investigator for a U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research Field Initiated Program grant that focuses on assessment for people with complex communication needs. Dr. Quach currently serves as the president of the United State Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication.

Since starting her academic career at SJSU, she has developed and initiated two specialized clinics, the SJSU Conversation Club for adults who use AAC, and the AAC Kids Camp for children with disabilities who are non-verbal or have limited speech. She has also served as an advisor for the local chapter of the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association.

Dr. Quach has presented locally, nationally, and internationally on her research in AAC. She is actively engaged in several collaborative research projects with faculty and professionals both within the Lurie College of Education and universities and research centers across the country. She is a member of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association and has served as a reviewer for professional journals.

Dr. Quach earned her doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Prior to that, she worked in Canada and England with adults and children in a variety of settings, including public schools, hospitals (rehab and acute), and community clinics.

The following are a selected list of Dr. Quach’s publications and presentations:


Other Publications


Book Chapter


Peer-Reviewed Presentations


Lund, S., Quach, W., & McKelvey, M., & Weissling, K. (2015, November). Technology to help complete literature Reviews. Two-hour seminar at the ASHA annual convention, Denver, CO.

McKelvey, M., Weissling, K., Quach, W., & Lund S., (2015, November). A clinician’s guide to understanding systematic reviews: Using the clinical assessment project as a model. Poster session presented at the ASHA annual convention, Denver, CO.


