Beyond One-Size-Fits-All: Honoring Identity in AAC Design
(with AI Innovation Preview)
Facilitator: Lauren Enders Gonzales, MA, CCC-SLP
Dates: March 21, 2025   12:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Virtual Professional Learning
REGISTER AT: https://bit.ly/3D4WK30

DESCRIPTION
In this webinar, we will explore the critical importance of customizing AAC systems to honor users' complete identities. Participants will examine how personalization across personal, linguistic, cultural, spiritual, and social dimensions supports communicative autonomy and authentic expression. Through case studies and collaborative activities, we'll explore practical strategies for identity affirming AAC implementation. The session concludes with an exciting preview of how AI innovations are revolutionizing personalization possibilities, offering glimpses into a future where AAC systems more seamlessly reflect users' full humanity. Join us to transform how we approach AAC design and implementation.

OUTCOMES
1. Participants will identify a tool that can be used to gather comprehensive information about an AAC user's cultural, personal, and social identities to inform system customization.
2. After reviewing the current vocabulary and set up of a student on their caseload, participants will identify at least three specific modifications to better reflect that user's complete identity.
3. Participants will describe two specific applications of current AI technology that can enhance personalization of AAC systems.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER
Lauren Enders Gonzales, MA, CCC-SLP (she/her/hers) is a licensed and certified Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) and special educator with nearly 30 years of experience in Eastern Pennsylvania. As an SLP and Assistive Technology Consultant in K-12 public school programs, she developed expertise in Assistive Technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) with a focus on creating rich, meaningful, and engaging learning experiences.
Lauren enjoys collaborating and consulting with other professionals, AAC companies, and app developers to create more accessible and customizable AAC systems and evidence-based clinical and educational practices. Known for bright, user-friendly resources and an interactive presentation style, Lauren is a sought-after speaker at local, national, and international conferences. She regularly shares her knowledge, networks, and continues learning at larger conferences including Closing the Gap, ATIA, ASHA, #TalkingAAC, and ISAAC and smaller speaking engagements. Touting engagement and human connection as essential for ALL learners, Lauren demonstrates creative uses of widely available open-ended materials and encourages use of neurodiversity-affirming practices. She is proud to mentor others around the world (professionals, paraprofessionals, and family members) who seek knowledge or support in her areas of expertise.

This program qualifies for ISBE PD clock hours and CE for SLPs, OTs, PTs, SWs, Nurses through IDFPR and ASHA CEUs.

NOTE: ASHA CE Registry does not apply to those who independently track their credit hours. CEUs are only awarded to those persons who are valid members of the Registry who attend all hours of the training.

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Questions? Email Samantha Conklin at sconklin@ucpnet.org

Registration fee: No Cost as this training is sponsored through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education.

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