

**The AAC Learner's Journey:
Responsive Language Instruction & AI-Enhanced Engagement**

Facilitator: Lauren Enders Gonzales, MA, CCC-SLP

Dates: April 16, 2025 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Virtual Professional Learning

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DESCRIPTION

This innovative 3-hour session explores the intersection of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and artificial intelligence (AI), revolutionizing how we approach language instruction for diverse learners. Participants will discover how AI tools can transform traditional teaching methods into engaging, personalized learning experiences. Through practical demonstrations and hands-on examples, educators will learn to harness AI capabilities to support AAC users across all ability levels, creating autonomous learning environments that honor individual interests and communication styles. The session emphasizes student-led learning approaches and provides concrete strategies for implementing AI-enhanced AAC instruction.

OUTCOMES

1. Identify three specific ways AI tools can enhance AAC instruction and support diverse learner needs
2. Explain the process of converting traditional lessons into personalized, learner-led activities using AI assistance
3. Demonstrate the practical application of at least two AI tools for creating engaging AAC learning material

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.



Financial Disclosure: Lauren is being paid a speaking fee and is the sole proprietor of Engaging AAC Solutions, LLC. Lauren is an employee of Delaware University.

Non-Financial Disclosure: Lauren is a member of International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) and United States Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (USSAAC). Lauren is a certified member of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association, ASHA Special Interest Group 12 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Lauren provides volunteer consulting for AvazAAC, FlexSpeak, and Smartbox. Lauren provides volunteer consulting and is a board member for the NIKA project

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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