



CommunicationFIRST

Because communication is a human right.

AAC Users on the Future of AAC Research



AAC users Lateef McLeod (left) and Lance McLemore (right) present on stage at the Future of AAC Research Summit in May 2024. Lateef and Lance type on communication devices. Across from them, the backs of two audience members' heads are visible. They appear to be listening attentively. Image credit: Steven Sutfin.

SPECIAL ISSUE OF AAC JOURNAL:

The journal of *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* organized a special issue to publish papers from the May 2024 [Future of AAC Research Summit](#). That issue has now been published with 21 papers, nearly all of which are **authored or co-authored by someone who uses AAC**. Each article is available for free by clicking on the links below. A two-page compilation of the articles with their links can also be accessed and downloaded here: [The Power of Collaboration Special Issue of Augmentative and Alternative Communication](#).

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<https://CommunicationFIRST.org/>



Papers from the Future of AAC Research Summit:

- Grant Blasko, Janice Light, David McNaughton, Bob Williams, & Jordyn Zimmerman, **Nothing about AAC users without AAC users: A call for meaningful inclusion in research, technology development, and professional training**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)
- Grant Blasko, **Unveiling underlying systemic isolation challenges for AAC users**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)
- endever* corbin, **Speech is exhausting**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)
- Melissa Crisp-Cooper, **Crossing the communication chasm**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)
- Anjali Forber-Pratt, **A personal commentary about disability inclusion and representation in research**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)
- Christine Holyfield, Janice Light, Dana Nieder, & Jamie Preece, **External challenges for individuals who need or use AAC who are learning language: Lived experiences, key research findings, and future directions**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)
- Tim Jin, **Embracing change in AAC technology: The keyboard to my success**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)
- Heidi Koester, Susan Koch Fager, Jessica Gormley, Erik Jakobs, Kelly Johnsen, & Jon Brumberg, **Supporting effective alternative access for individuals with physical disabilities: State of the science, emerging technologies, and future research directions**



- [Article](#)
- [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Ren Koloni, **To include us in our own worlds: AAC is not optional**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Janice Light, Susan K. Fager, Jessica Gormley, Glenda Watson Hyatt, & Erik Jakobs, **Dismantling societal barriers that limit people who need or use AAC: Lived experiences, key research findings, and future directions**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Janice Light, Christine Holyfield, David McNaughton, Dana Nieder, & Jamie Preece, **Overcoming barriers to literacy for individuals who need or use AAC: Lived experiences, key research findings, and future directions**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Lateef McLeod, **How Ableism impacts people who use AAC**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- David McNaughton, Tracy Rackensperger, & Lance McLemore, **Supporting meaningful participation in society by adults with developmental disabilities who need and use AAC: Lived experiences, key research findings, and future directions**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Godfrey Nazareth, **Speaking from the heart: A story about innovation, resilience, and infinite possibilities with AAC**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Pancho Ramirez, **Alternative ways to access AAC technologies**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Patrick Regan, **The first word in accessibility is “access”**



- [Article](#)
- [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Bob Williams, **AAC and technology: What's communication equity got to do with it?**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Bob Williams, **Reading, writing, and AAC are fundamental**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Kevin Williams & Christine Holyfield, **Future of AAC technologies: Priorities for inclusive innovation**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Alice Wong, **How ableism impacts people who need and use AAC**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

- Jordyn Zimmerman, **Beyond access: The intersecting role of AAC, literacy, and technology**
 - [Article](#)
 - [Plain Language Summary](#)

ABOUT THE SUMMIT:

In May 2024, the federally-funded Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on AAC ([RERC on AAC](#)) and CommunicationFIRST co-organized the Future of AAC Research Summit, a ground-breaking, in-person, two-day event. Its goal was to bring a diverse group of AAC users together with researchers to begin to change the conversation both about what kind of research is done about people who need AAC and how that research is done. The Summit aimed to promote the **increased engagement of AAC users in formulating, designing, and carrying out AAC-related research**. Attendees included representatives from federal agencies that fund disability-related research, researchers, technology developers, service providers, advocates, and of course, people who need and use AAC. **The majority of the presenters at the conference were AAC users.** Videos of their presentations can be found below and on [our YouTube channel](#).

Videos from the Future of AAC Research Summit:



- Tim Jin, [Embracing change in AAC technology: The keyboard to my success](#)
- Ren Koloni, [To include us in our own worlds: AAC is not optional](#)
- Lateef McLeod, [How Ableism impacts people who use AAC](#)
- Pancho Ramirez, [Alternative ways to access AAC technologies](#)
- Patrick Regan, [The first word in accessibility is “access”](#)
- Bob Williams, [Reading, writing, and AAC are fundamental](#)
- Alice Wong, [How ableism impacts people who need and use AAC](#)
- 13 AAC Users, [Priorities for Future Research](#)



Several CommunicationFIRST partners and members of its staff, board, and advisory council smile as they pose for a group photo in a hotel lobby following the Future of AAC Research Summit.