

CENMAC News

Assistive Technology in Education | Summer Term 2017

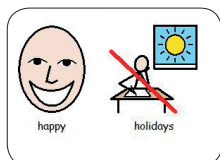


Welcome to our second newsletter as we fast approach the summer holidays! We would

really like to thank the companies and individuals who supported Communication Works this year and the great feedback we received from everyone attending.

The students visiting put the assistive technology on show to the test. Huge thank you to Meru who are offering this newsletter's prize draw, don't miss out on this one and congratulations to Waverley School for winning the last draw and upgrading their InPrint software with Widgit.

The CENMAC team would like to wish everyone a fantastic summer break and we look forward to working with you in September. Please do let us know if we can support with any of your training needs for the new academic year.



Kathryn Stowell
Interim Team Leader

New Department for Education Guidelines

The Department for Education has issued new guidance on using the P Scales to assess the achievements of pupils aged 5 – 16 working below Level 1 of the national Curriculum.

For more details visit:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/p-scales-attainment-targets-for-pupils-with-sen



Caris opening Communication Works 2017 and Kate Caryer our guest speaker

This year Communication Works was opened by Caris, a student at Charlton Park Academy, who made a witty speech and safety briefing using her iPad.

The keynote speech was presented later in the morning by Kate Caryer who was unfortunately delayed. Kate is an AAC user who is lobbying for the inclusion of disabled people, particularly those that use AAC, in theatre, TV and film. As the founding member of *The Unspoken Project*, that works to increase the visibility of disabled people through education, she creates work with a professional theatre company.

Kate is looking to raise money for further performances of her play, *Speechless: The Musical*, which has been performed and recorded. Apparently, the character of the speech therapist in the play is partly based on Trish Davidson, our previous team leader!

There was also a presentation from Matt Goodsell, also an AAC user, who talked about the importance of both communication and speech. He felt speech is so fundamental to most of the population that, despite the myriad other forms of communication (email, social media, sign etc), people are still surprised by AAC.



Website: www.theunspokenprojectcic.com

Twitter: @UnspokenAAC

Speechless online: www.youtube.com/watch?V=UHC4VGOHN4C

www.cenmac.com | [@CENMAC](https://twitter.com/CENMAC)
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Ohbot and DocsPlus at Communication Works

Exhibiting at Communication Works for the second time was Ohbot, a programmable robot head. Students can build up sets of instructions to control the Ohbot's movement and even get it to talk. The instructions are built in blocks based on the Scratch language developed at MIT.

Ohbot can be adapted for use by students with a wide range of abilities. At Communication Works 2017 the Ohbot team collaborated with Tobii, who were on the adjacent stand, to enable a student using eyegaze to control the robot.

Although they were unable to attend Communication Works, Crick Software sent an advanced copy of their latest software release, *DocsPlus* and CENMAC staff were able to show it to attendees. The program is a literacy support tool aimed at older students.

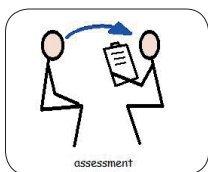
A replacement for *WriteOnline*, *DocsPlus* has the functionality of that program plus a few enhancements. The new features include Voice Notes to help students rehearse what they want to write and record it using a microphone. *DocsPlus* has speech output and the facility to open PDF or Word documents. This means that students with reading difficulties can have greater access to information without relying on someone else to read it to them. A free upgrade to version 2 will be released soon, allowing students to

open a PDF or Word file as well as their own document. This will allow them to read questions with speech support and to write their answers in the same program. An exam mode will be available and this will enable students to use *DocsPlus* in external assessments.

Information about:

DocsPlus can be found at:
www.cricksoft.com

Ohbot: www.ohbot.co.uk.



Assistive Technology and Assessment

Following review visits it has come

to our notice that teachers are unsure what access arrangements can be applied for students that use assistive technology as the normal way of working in their school. In some cases some assessments may have to be done as proof of need however, if the student has a statement this can be sufficient evidence.

For example:

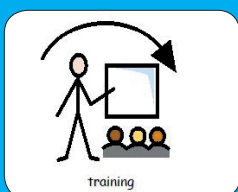
- > Laptops
- > Dragon
- > C-PEN Exam reader pens
- > Read and write
- > Magnifiers both hand held and camera can all be used for both SATs, GCSE and A levels.

This needs to be applied for through the exam boards. If you require further advice or like one of the team to

support you in applying for these access arrangements please contact us.

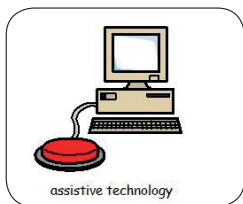
We will be creating more information on this topic next term to support next years applications for exams.

Further information can be obtained from:
www.examofficers.org.uk



Training in Southwark

Ann and Kevin had the pleasure of presenting to Southwark's SENCOs as part of their ongoing training. They discussed how to make the best use of CENMAC, what the most popular software is and what accessibility settings are already available within existing technology. If you are interested in similar training please contact us.



When nothing else exists to meet a need

MERU is a specialist charity that offers design and engineering solutions, backed up by input from occupational therapists, to create products for when nothing else exists to meet a need.



As well as working with people with disabilities and parents of disabled children to create bespoke items, MERU also offers ready-made products that provide solutions to common issues such as mounting and positioning of switches and iPads, as well as adapting equipment and toys to increase their accessibility.

Toys with switches that are adapted for children with disabilities can be a great motivator for learning cause and effect and developing motor control. Some children need bigger switches or controls that are easier to use than those which are found on most standard toys. MERU offer a free toy adaptation service to families where interactive toys can be sent

in and adapted for switch access.

Families need only pay the return postage. MERU also offer a small range of pre-adapted popular toys and switches for sale on their website. The charity is happy to offer advice on the most appropriate switch for an individual child.

MERU also builds the amazing Bugzi micro-sized powered-wheelchair, which can be accessed by families and therapists via a free loan scheme across the UK. An ideal introduction to mobility, each Bugzi is specially tailored and adapted to the individual child's needs, with the capacity to adjust seating and select control methods as they grow and develop.



By allowing disabled children to use and develop their physical co-ordination and spatial awareness, Bugzi provides them the opportunity to learn, explore their world, make choices about what to do – learning about risk and safety – and interact socially with their friends and families. Sometimes children are only capable of using one switch to turn the Bugzi in circles or go forwards. Even if this is the case, Bugzi can be a great motivator for children to learn about their surroundings, develop cause and effect, and improve their switch access skills.

To find out more information about MERU, visit www.meru.org.uk or call MERU on 01372 725 203.

MERU

from disabilities to possibilities

Summer Prize Draw

To win a switch adapted bubble machine, just email: gill@cenmac.com – the winner will be announced in our Autumn newsletter.

Closing Date 14 July

For further details about this prize visit [here](#).

CENMAC Spring prize draw winner:
Susie Browning at Waverley School, Enfield



CENMAC

Shirley Drane

Director of Finance and Resources

Kathryn Stowell

Interim Team Leader

Ann Middleton

Advisory Teacher

Kevin Lynch

Advisory Teacher

Helen Simon

Advisory Teacher

Gill Dodsworth

Support Services Manager