Across the Table:
Personal & Professional Perspectives

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www.gatfl.org

IDEAS
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AMAC Accessibility is a social change organization on a mission to create affordable services for governmental, private and non-profits organization working with individuals with disabilities. Services include e-text, braille, captioning, assistive technology, office management software and consulting.
Tools for Life Mission

We’re here to help Georgians with disabilities gain access to and acquisition of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services so they can live, learn, work, and play independently in the communities of their choice.
Welcome to Tools for Life

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, is dedicated to increasing access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for Georgians of all ages and disabilities so they can live, learn, work and play independently and with greater freedom in communities of their choice.

Tools for Life and the TFL Network work collaboratively together to accomplish our mission through:

- AT Demonstration
- AT Evaluations and Assessments
- AT Funding Options & Education
- Access to the TFL AT Lending Libraries
- AT & Durable Medical Equipment Reuse
- AT Training (Individual)
- AT Training (Groups)

Please take our survey to help us gather information that will help better serve the community. The survey can be found at:

TFL Survey
Many of us have sat at "the table" making decisions that often have a significant impact on lives of students with disabilities.

We, too, have sat at that decision making table on many occasions and in various roles. Most people know us as professionals in the AT community, but we both have personal experiences in the AT field that have impacted and informed our professional lives.

Join us as we reflect back, look forward and share a little bit of our story of lessons learned and resources that helped us as we stumbled along the way. We will also share tips on developing self-determination skills, tricks of how to climb out of transition gaps and resources to help build bridges to better services & support.

For Handouts: [http://www.gatfl.gatech.edu/tflwiki](http://www.gatfl.gatech.edu/tflwiki)
Begin with the End in Mind!
Guiding Principle

• disAbility is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:
  • (A) live independently;
  • (B) enjoy self-determination and make choices;
  • (C) benefit from an education;
  • (D) pursue meaningful careers; and
  • (E) enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society in the United States.

Public Law 108-364
My Guiding Principles
(What are yours?)

• Must be an Agent of Change! My actions speak…what are they saying.

• Separate is not equal. This is about Civil Right. Pay attention…and Speak Up!

• Language Does matter…

• We Must Focus on Abilities!

• I am The Expert about – Me…YOU are about You.

• YOU & I have the Power to make the Difference!
  – Change vs. Progress (Bob Phillips)
Why Am I Here Today?

- Master Our Skills!
- Expand Our Knowledge and
- Build Stronger Schools to Create an amazing, Inclusive and United Community!
Why Am I Here Today?
Why Am I Here Today?
Point A to Point B
The Numbers...

- Over 54,000,000 individuals in the United States have disabilities that affect their ability to:
  - see
  - hear
  - communicate
  - reason
  - walk
  - perform other basic life functions
In My Family…

• Over 250 relatives have disabilities that affect their ability to:
  • see - My Mama
  • hear - me, my daughter, 2 nephews
  • communicate – my daughter, my Mama
  • reason - depends on how you define…
  • walk – my Dad, Mama, daughter and many cousins
  • perform other basic life functions - my Dad, Mama, daughter and many cousins
“Technology gives me hope & I need a lot of Hope!”
~ Earnestine
Working, Learning, Playing, Living and Aging in Place!

- **My Mama – Living at Home with Hospice**
  - Vision – started at age 5
  - Huntington’s Disease – started at age 35
  - Progressive
  - High-tech & Light Tech – from talking clocks to Hoyer lifts

- **My Dad – passed March 26, 2011**
  - Rheumatoid Arthritis diagnosed in 1976
  - Progressive (Wrote a book in 1974 about access!)
  - Writing Aids, Computer adaptations, mobility aids – cane to lifts, eating aids, daily living, iPad!
Working, Learning, Playing, and Living!

• **My Daughter –**
  - Cerebral Palsy, Schizophrenia and Hearing - from birth – lived on streets of Delhi
  - Stable
  - Hearing “Cured”
  - High-tech AAC, Bioness, iPad, Computer & Light Tech – aids for dressing, aids for writing, reading, organizing
  - Adapted sports – Swim team, Soccer, Chess club

• **ME – Specific Learning disAbilities**
  - Labeled “gifted-disabled” diagnosed in 1988
  - Lite, Mid and High Tech solutions – early adopter – reading, writing, math, organizing and “hearing”
  - My AT is ever evolving, changes and grows all the time…will even change because I learned of new AT solutions here at GATE!
Working, Learning, Playing, and Living!

- Muscular Dystrophy/Spinal Muscular Atrophy 2 - diagnosed at 9 months
  - Life Expectancy? (Age 2, 7, 11, 17…) I AM 35!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
  - Stable
  - Progressive Muscle Weakness
  - Decline
  - Fatigue
  - Chronic Pain
  - Variety of assistive technology and durable medical equipment - writing, access, environment
  - My list of AT & DME evolves!
Working, Learning, Playing, and Living!

• Changing the environment
• C-Leg and i Limbs
• iPad
• Researching and exploring
  – Kayaking
  – Biking

• Think outside the box! Be creative!
For a person without a disability, technology makes things easier...

For a person with a disability, technology makes things possible.

Working, Learning, Playing, and Living!
L. J.
vs.
Frances V. Phillips
Two

Numbers and Letters, Stand Still!

Up and Over
And in-between,
The Letters,
Words,
Paragraphs.
Wash Over Me,
Like a thunderstorm.
In Georgia on a summer afternoon Full
of Sound
and
Fire.
I am drenched
and overwhelmed
I reach the paddle
(grey muddy)
I lift and sort
and wash clean the concepts.
I then send these thoughts
to you.
I struggle to be understood
by you.
Do you understand?
I am now Clear as Mud.
—Carolyn Phillips
Consider this -

• My Success relies on:
  – Developing a Vision for My Future
    • Created a “Map” and “Vision Board”
      – Personal Goals
        » Strong Relationship with my Family
        » Build a Habitat House (12)
        » Climb the Great Wall of China (2004)
        » Adopt a Child (2! Tucker and Meera)
      – Educational Goals
        » BA from UGA (Took 10 years…)
        » Masters Degree (2005 – M. Ed. UK!)
      – Career Goals
        » Help people through technology (Director of Tools for Life @ Georgia Tech)
Consider this -

- My Success relies on
  - Failing
  - Dignity of Failure
    - I learned More from My “Failures” sometimes than my “successes”
    - Give yourself room to fail – and Grow from the experience
    - Learn to Laugh…a lot!
    - Be Optimistic…
    - Evaluate & Evolve!
Consider this -

- My Success relies on
  - Determination
  - Perseverance
  try again!
don't give up!
learn from mistakes

- “Where there’s a will, there’s a way”
- “Go with the flow”
“She won’t and can’t be successful.”

My Parents were advised to put me in a school for individuals with developmental disabilities. They took me out the next day…they realized that “system” was not designed for me.

Many times they were told I wouldn’t “go far” in life.
Creating My Success

• My Success relies on
  – Communication about My disAbility
  – Understanding My disAbility
    – Language is Powerful
    – Talking with personal caregivers, partners, friends, co-workers, employers about my disAbility
    – and Listening (Understanding their point of view)
  – Understanding My Strengths & Weaknesses
Creating My Success

• My Success relies on
  – Knowing Myself
    • Self-Exploration
    • Honestly Exploring & Knowing –
      – What are MY Dreams?
      – What are MY Goals?
  – Self advocacy
    – Speak up! When you do, they will listen. You will go further!
    – What do I need to accomplish my Goals?
Ben!

• We teach and learn from each other every day!

• We teach others about the meaning of true unconditional love and equality.

• "In your eyes, I am who you say I am" - Pearl Persaud
Creating my Success

• My Success relies on
  – Advocacy
  – Asking questions
  – Love

    support system
    encouragement
    compassion

“All you need is love”
It All has Value

This stuff has Value

This end result has Value
It All has Value
What Can One Person Do?

I AM ONLY ONE PERSON

I am only one person
What can one person do?

Rosa Parks,
Was only one person,
She said one word
She said it on December, 1, 1955.

One person Said
One word
She said it on a bus
She said it to the bus driver
On Cleveland Street in Montgomery

The bus driver said,
"Stand up, woman,
And Give up your seat
To that man!"

Rosa Parks,
One person
Said one word
The Word was "NO!"

One woman
Said one Word
And a nation
Blushed!

One woman
Said one word
And a world
Talked!

One woman
Said one word
And the Supreme Court
Acted!

One woman
Said one word
And the buses were
Desegregated!

I am only one person.
What can one person do?
Tips for Surviving Thriving: Across the Table!

Tell & Help Students to:
• Dig Deep
• What would You do if this was your Child? You?
• Plan for Your Success – in school, work, Life!
• Begin with the End in Mind
• There isn't just one pathway to a particular goal. There are many!
• Listen & Learn
• Try – Fail & Try again…
• Change is going to happen. How you deal with it is your responsibility & understand those consequences.
• When things get off track - Evaluate and Evolve
• Explore & USE Assistive Technology
• Laugh Much!
• Celebrate your Successes!
• Continue to Grow
Our Question to You: What have You Learned today?
Thank You!
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