


Access to Communication and Technology Unit

ACTU

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### ACTU Team

Student Services Department

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## ACTU core team

- Speech and Language therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Learning Support assistant

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## What is ACTU?

- Access to Communication and Technology Unit (ACTU)
- Provides assessment service to people with special needs in the area of Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- AT consists of broad range of devices, technical aids and strategies, which can help solve problems faced by people with disabilities in every day life, education, pre-vocational or social situations.
- AAC includes a range of strategies which can be used to support expressive and receptive communication difficulties.


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Assistive Technology devices and services help individuals with special needs:

- see
- hear
- communicate
- play
- remember
- read
- work with numbers
- write
- use a computer
- study







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## Why Assistive Technology?

- promotes self esteem
- improves quality of life
- increases productivity
- enhances performance
- increases independence







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## AAC


- We use AAC when children have difficulty speaking or are not understood when they do attempt to speak
- Without language many of these children will have difficulties coping with the school curriculum even though they may have the potential to do so
- Typical AAC may include: Key word signing, PECS, Big Mac, Supertalker and even an iPad
- Some children especially children with a diagnosis of ASD will need AAC to help them understand what is happening during the school day and it may help to lessen anxiety e.g. with a visual schedule

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**AAC**


Key word signing




Big Mac



SuperTalker




PECS



iPad as a communication aid

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**ACTU Objectives**



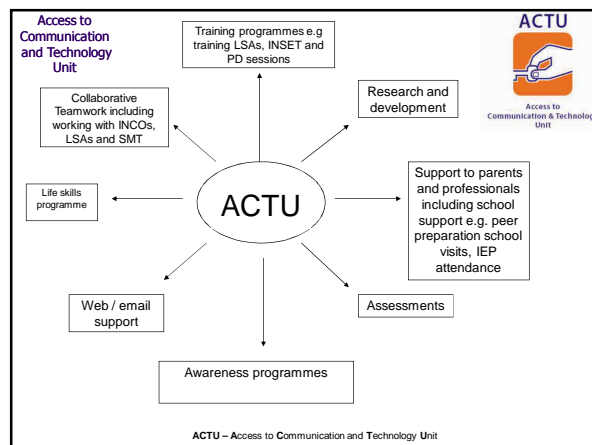
- Areas of concern for those who contact the service include issues in accessing:
  - the educational curriculum
  - Communication
  - problems with reading and writing
  - Difficulties in controlling the environment either at home or in school or at work

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**ACTU aims to provide...**




- An AT and/or AAC assessment service for students with physical, communication and/or learning disabilities.
- Recommendations and implementation of AT to help the student participate in home and school activities.
- Recommendations and implementation of the appropriate augmentative communication strategies.



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**Referral Form**



- Who can refer?
- What consent is needed?
- Components of the referral form.
- You can find the referral form on [actu.inclusivecurriculum.com](http://actu.inclusivecurriculum.com)

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**Team members for the Assessment Process**




- Student
- Parents / carers
- ACTU core team
- Professionals supporting the student
- Other specialists (VI, HI, PMLD, Autism)
- Class teacher & learning support assistant
- INCO

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**Venue of Assessment**

- School
- ACTU
- Home
- somewhere else !...




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**Services offered**

- Assessment for AAC devices. This includes low tech and high tech systems.
- Alternative means of computer access where the student has difficulty to access a computer or will have difficulty due to a deteriorating medical diagnosis.
- Assessment of Environmental Control Systems such as opening doors using remote control devices, personal alarms systems etc.
- Assessment for alternative access to technology through for example, the use of switches.
- Trial for specialised software such as an educational, text to speech and voice recognition systems.
- Support to implement recommendations both at home and at school.
- Parent and professional training.



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**Classroom example**



This is Lori. Lori is able to be actively engaged in a class lesson with the support of Assistive Technology.

Lori chooses her answer to a question using a voice output device.



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**ACTU**

Tel: **21255876**

Email: [actu.meef@gov.mt](mailto:actu.meef@gov.mt)

[sharon.borg@ilearn.edu.mt](mailto:sharon.borg@ilearn.edu.mt)

