

May Month Connections & Giveaways

Wow! It's May Month again! And what a year 2020-21 has been thus far. I was reading last year's NLTA Speech Language Pathologists SIC newsletter when we were smack dab in the middle of our first school shut down due to COVID. At that time, I couldn't have imagined what this school year would look like, and a second shutdown was inconceivable. Now, here we are doing in person intervention while wearing masks and cleaning our supplies in between every student. We have had to adapt to a different way of doing things in person and have been thrown in head-first with virtual intervention. No matter where you find yourself on the technology side of things, it is safe to say that the learning curve has been steep for each and every one of us. The executive of the NLTA SLP SIC thanks you for your hard work, dedication and willingness to learn. Our SLPs have gone the extra mile, attending webinars, learning

to use Google Meet and providing stellar PL for each other. As an SIC, we have had a number of Google Meets to problem solve and to share both our frustrations and our wins. As COVID has interfered with our plans to provide either in person or virtual Professional Learning for our group, we couldn't let this year go by without something. We hope you were able to avail of the membership to one of two online PL websites, speechpathology.com or speechtherapypd.com. Finally, to kick off May Month, we had a province-wide meeting on May 3 with giveaways. Our winners of the giant mouth models were Kirsten Wallace, Natasha Kapoor, Darlene Marche and Carol-Ann Dick. The winner of the 6 in 1 therapy tool was Cailey Walsh. Congratulations everyone. This May Month, be sure to kick back and celebrate you, the SLPs who support our children within the Education System. You rock!

PL Grant Funds in Action

2020 Winner – Sandy Crowley

I would first like to say a BIG thank you to the NLTA SLP Special Interest Council for their \$500 professional learning/resource grant. I was the 2020 winner. In times where money is tight, it is nice to know that there are grants like this available. I encourage everyone to apply this year. The link to the on-line application form is in this newsletter. I chose to spend the grant on a one-year subscription to Theraplatform.

Theraplatform is a telepractice platform designed for Speech-Language Pathologists. It is user-friendly and web-based. All you need is an internet connection. There are a wide variety of speech-language therapy apps that are built in to the platform design. It has significantly cut down on my prep time which increases the amount of time available I have for face-to-face interventions. I rarely have to go searching for additional digital resources. It is a win-win situation for both me and the students I serve.

Another great feature is that it is interactive. My students are able to manipulate the games and activities at the same time as me. It also collects your data for you and provides graphs of a child's progress over time which is great to show both parents and teachers. My students also love the reward game feature which you can set at an interval of your choosing. You can do all of this while still being able to see both yourself and the child on the screen.

Theraplatform provides a 30-day free trial period. If you are interested in trying it out, please click on the following link <https://www.theraplatform.com/>

Sandy Crowley

2019 Winner – Marie Stirling

In June 2019, I was fortunate enough to win the \$500 grant from NLTA's Speech Language Pathologists Special Interest Council. Winning this grant was extremely timely as I was taking on a new role in the 2019-20 school year in an effort to improve what we are doing for our students with complex communication needs in the areas of communication and literacy. My new role saw me provided with three days of my weekly schedule freed up to focus on this initiative with the SLPs in the Avalon Region. The money from the grant enabled me to purchase resources that supported me in this endeavour.

With the grant money I received, I purchased a number of resources that were instrumental in helping me prepare Professional Learning Sessions for the SLPs and IRTs around improving our implementation

of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). These included the **AAC Implementation Toolkit** by Speechy Musings; the book **The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever** by Michael Bungay Stanier; and the book **Kids These Days** by Jody Carrington. I highly recommend the **AAC Implementation Toolkit** – it contains a wealth of research-based information and worksheets to help facilitate implementation by parents and school teams, is well organized, and has a "ready-to-go" PowerPoint presentation that you can use with parents and school teams for introducing AAC.

In January 2020 the book, **Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write**, by Karen Erickson and David Koppenhaver, was published. Based on their belief that all students can learn to read and write print, the book addresses each of the elements that is required for a student to learn to **read with comprehension** and to **write to convey thinking**. Research-based instructional strategies and practical lesson formats are provided for working with students who are emergent readers and writers, as well as those acquiring conventional literacy skills. These strategies are relevant across both inclusive and self-contained settings. I cannot state enough how this book has changed my thinking on what our students with complex communication needs can accomplish when given the proper instruction. This book is a must for anyone working with students who struggle with learning to read and write, but especially for those working with students with significant disabilities.

In March 2020, when a global pandemic necessitated a move to online intervention sessions, I used more of the grant money to purchase a Green Screen Kit from the Play Spark website. I had lots of fun using the green screen to target a variety of gals with my students during virtual sessions.

Lastly, a portion of the grant was used to attend virtual conferences and webinars related to AAC and literacy, including CATE 2020 (Conference for Assistive Technology and Education); #Talking AAC 2020 Conference; and a webinar on Communication Circles by Carolyn Musselwhite. These Professional Learning opportunities provided me with additional information to share with others in our endeavour to strengthen and improve the support we are providing for our students with complex communication needs in order to increase and enhance their communicative competence, their educational opportunities for vocational success, self-empowerment capabilities, and independence.

Thank you SLP SIC!!
Marie Stirling

Professional Learning/Materials Grant

For the fourth year in a row, we are happy to offer a grant to SLP Special Interest Council members. Grant money may be used for professional learning or for the purchase of therapy materials. Please read on to learn how to **apply by June 21, 2021**.

The grant to be awarded is a maximum of \$500. Applications will be reviewed by the SLP SIC executive and eligible applicants will be randomly selected. Please consider the following guidelines:

- *Travel, accommodations and registration will be covered up to \$500; the fund does not cover the cost of meals.*
- *Funds will be awarded when proof of attendance and necessary receipts are received.*

- *Professional development must be in the area of speech, language and literacy, and/or be relevant to school-based speech-language pathologists.*
- *Applicants must agree to provide a short written summary of what they learned during their professional development. This summary will be shared with our members through our newsletter and social media.*
- *Funds must be used within one calendar year of the awarded date.*

Hurry and get your applications in **by June 21** before it's too late. This is an opportunity you won't want to miss!

Go to www.nlta.nl.ca/slp-pdgrant to submit your application.

Good luck to all applicants!