

BENJAMIN FRANKS

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EXPERIENCE

Self-employed - Independent Assistive Technology Specialist 08/2011 - Present

- Provide person-centred AAC and assistive technology support for children, young people and adults with physical disabilities, communication needs, dyslexia/literacy difficulties, access-to-learning needs and study organisation challenges.
- Advise families, schools, colleges, local authorities and individuals on practical technology solutions that support communication, learning, independence and inclusion.
- Develop bespoke support plans, equipment recommendations and implementation guidance so individuals, families, carers and staff can use technology confidently and consistently.
- Maintain specialist knowledge of AAC/AT hardware and software, NHS and education pathways, SEND practice and disability policy.
- Contributed as Assistive Technology Consultant to a working group involving Havering LEA and North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT).
- Collaborate with AAC/AT users, teachers, OTs and SLTs to improve access, independence and participation.

NHS - North East London Foundation Trust - Assistive Technology Specialist London • 09/2011 - 01/2016

- Worked with OTs, SLTs, educators and service teams to identify appropriate assistive technology solutions and implementation pathways.
- Prepared clear assessment reports summarising access needs, equipment recommendations and service considerations.
- Evaluated emerging AAC/AT products and translated technical options into practical recommendations for clinical and educational contexts.

Charlton School - Assistive Technology Coordinator and Teacher London • 01/2002 - 07/2011

- Led classroom-based assistive technology support enabling students with complex access and communication needs to engage with the curriculum.
- Taught science, ICT and humanities and acted as co-tutor for a Key Stage 4 group, combining teaching practice with access technology expertise.
- Coordinated with staff, healthcare professionals and external vendors to resolve access, communication and technical barriers.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Assistive Technology Specialist, educator and advocate with over 30 years' combined professional and lived experience across education, NHS-linked services, care, governance and disability advocacy.

Experienced in AAC, assistive technology assessment, access to learning, implementation support, staff training and client advocacy.

I bring a person-centred and evidence-informed approach, combining professional expertise, lived experience of disability and master's-level study in applied child psychology to support realistic solutions that improve communication, independence, confidence and inclusion.

EDUCATION

University of Sussex

Brighton • Academic Year 2024/25

Master's-level study: Applied Child Psychology

- Completed 45 credits of master's-level study in Child, Educational and Developmental Psychology.
- 2024/25 credited module results (15 credits each): Contemporary Issues in Child Psychology - 70% (Distinction-level); Educational Psychology - 53% (Pass); Professional Assessment of Children - 54% (Pass). Average across completed credited modules: 59%.
- Focus: child assessment planning, psychological case conceptualisation, developmental research methods and evidence-based intervention planning

University of Sussex

Brighton • 07/2020

BSc (2:1): Neuroscience with Psychology

Northbrook Further Education Centre

Worthing • 07/2017

Diploma: Access to Health

ACE Centre Advisory Trust

Oxford • 09/2010

Postgraduate Diploma: Assistive Technology

Institute of Education

London • 07/1998

PGCE Science course (not completed; no QTS)

University of Sussex

Brighton • 07/1996

BSc (Hons): Environmental Science

Acland Burghley School

London • 07/1993

A-levels

Relevant coursework

- Biology, Chemistry and Geography

Acland Burghley School

07/1991

GCSEs

Awards & Honours

- Grades A-C, including English, Maths and Science

**Charlton School - Assistive Technology Specialist
(Communication Teacher)**

05/2000 - 04/2002

- Supported students 1:1 and in small groups to identify effective recording, communication and curriculum access strategies.
- Worked with students and teachers to increase independent curriculum access wherever possible.
- Assessed individual assistive technology needs and provided practical guidance on device and software selection.
- Researched emerging assistive technology products to support evidence-informed recommendations.

**Centre for Micro-Assisted Communication (CENMAC) -
Assistive Technology Specialist**

London • 11/1999 - 04/2002

- Supported students with physical disabilities across London to overcome barriers to recording work and accessing ICT.
- Delivered training and INSET for teachers, students and families, including government-funded access technology training for mainstream and special schools.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

USSU - Communications Officer

10/2017 - 07/2021

- Built and maintained relationships with student, community and stakeholder groups.

School of Psychology - Course Representative

10/2020 - 06/2021

- Liaised effectively between students, academic staff and professional services to communicate academic concerns and feedback.
- Facilitated discussions between faculty members and students and collaborated with other course representatives to support successful outcomes.

Linton Mead Primary School - School Governor

09/2007 - 07/2011

Helped shape the school's direction and priorities, completed training in education and safeguarding law, served on interview panels and gave evidence at employment and disciplinary tribunals.

REFERENCES

Available on request.

SKILLS

Assistive Technology / AAC

- Person-centred assistive technology practice
- AAC assessment and implementation
- Assistive technology assessment
- Alternative access and input methods
- Curriculum access and recording support
- Access to learning and study support
- AT hardware and software advice
- Technology implementation and adoption
- Staff, family and professional training
- Client advocacy and disability awareness

Digital / Accessibility Technology

- Eye-tracking technology for research and access
- Speech-to-text (dictation) technology
- Accessible digital content and user-centred design
- Web development and design
- App development for Mac, iPhone and iPad

Psychology / Child Assessment

- Educational and developmental psychology
- Child assessment planning
- Psychological case conceptualisation
- Evidence-based intervention planning
- Reflective professional practice
- SEND and inclusion
- EHCP and SEND technology advice
- Lived disability-informed practice
- Multidisciplinary working with OTs and SLTs
- Research interests: ototoxicity and hearing loss

Interests

- Web and app development for accessibility, communication, independence and learning
- Exploring eye-tracking and dictation technology as access tools