10 Things Every District Should Know about Assistive Technology

Georgia Department of Education
Georgia Project for Assistive Technology
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
1870 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Reference 16, 23
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Assistive Technology is a Collaborative Effort
“No sustainable change can be accomplished without core people struggling through the anxieties of complex problem solving toward a shared solution.”

Fullan (2004)
Stakeholders
Stakeholders

- Student
- Parents
- Teachers
- Related service providers
- Private professionals
- AT Specialists
- Administrators
Student

- Self Advocate
  - voice decisions
  - test-drive equipment
  - learn responsibilities
  - set goals

- Build Confidence

I know what technology works for me!
**Student**

- **Student-Led IEP Meetings: Planning and Implementation Strategies**
- **Resources for Involving Students in their IEP Process**
- **Becky Wilson Hawbaker’s Webpage**
- **“Hey, Can I Try That?”**

Reference 9, 10, 13, 19, 21
Parents

• Unique prospective
• Provide past history
• Active team member
• Resources
  – Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership
  – Parent to Parent
  – AT Pointers for Parents
Teachers

• Teams benefit from teachers’ expertise in the following areas:
  – Curriculum
  – Expected classroom tasks
  – Classroom procedures
  – Student’s strengths and weaknesses

Reference 8, 12
Related Service Providers

• Services
  • Compensatory
  • Remediation

• Collaborate with private professionals
Private Professionals

- Provide additional information
- Collaborate with school team
  - How they can support the school
  - How the school can support them
Assistive Technology Specialists

• Provides
  – Device category expertise
  – Resources
    • district policies and procedures
    • Ideas and support on implementation
    • Training and troubleshooting
Administrators

• District-wide
  – Policies and procedures
  – Funding

• School-based
  – Set tone for AT use in school
Administrator Resources

• **WATI: A Resource Guide For Teachers and Administrators About Assistive Technology**

• **A School Administrator’s Desktop Guide to Assistive Technology**

• **Helping your Administrators Understand the Important Role they Play in AT**

Reference 17, 18, A
Support is the KEY to Successful AT Use
Pearls of Wisdom

• Services are a big piece
  – Emphasis should be 10 times more on support than on the technology
  – Training provided should be ongoing and incremental
  – Teacher knowledge is dependent on their exposure to the tools

Reference 2
“Wonder If...” Moments

- Basic Training
- Experience
- Understanding Abilities

Implementation

Reference 22, C, E,
Knowledge Sources

- GPAT (www.gpat.org)
- ATSTAR (www.atstar.org)
- CAST (www.cast.org)
- WATI (www.wati.org)
- Vendor resources
  - Trainings
  - Knowledge bases
  - Technical support

Reference C, E, I, R
There are Different Levels in Staff Development for Assistive Technology
Dave Edyburn’s Universal Design Template ‘Planning Pyramid’
https://pantherfile.uwm.edu/edyburn/www/ud.html

Reference 6
Everybody

- All of the staff should know
  - What AT is
  - Legal mandate for AT
  - AT can support student independence
Most

• Most of the staff should know
  – That there is a variety of technology to support students in all curriculum areas
  – That there is a continuum of technology from low to high
  – Who to go to get more information.
• Some of the staff should know
  – Why the student uses technology
  – How the technology relates to academic goals
  – Specific program features
  – Basic trouble shooting
  – Implementation strategies
What’s Out There?

- http://www.integrateat.com/
- http://nolimitstolearning.blogspot.com/
- http://teachingall.blogspot.com/
- http://assistivetek.blogspot.com/
- http://paulhami.edublogs.org/
- http://www.assistivetechnology.vcu.edu/
- http://www.teachingeverystudent.blogspot.com/

Reference B, G, K, L, N, O, P
Assistive Technology Takes Time
Playground time, technology work for children with autism

“The changes in behavior and play did not occur overnight, though, nor even in a matter of weeks. Ricky has taken several years to learn how to behave and to communicate his feelings better.”
AT Selection

- Why is it time consuming?
  - Obtain the equipment
  - Train and Trial
  - Analyze results
  - Make changes as needed
Implementation

• Customization
• Incremental training
• Behavior change takes time
  – Student
  – Staff

Reference 5, 11
Assistive Technology is **Not** Disability Specific
Functional Skills

- Reading
- Written Expression
- Math
- Problem-solving
- Communication
- Recreation
- Daily organization
- Seating/Positioning
- Hearing
- Seeing
- Self-Care
- Mobility
- Behavior
- Specific task-related skill

Reference 23
Deductive Reasoning States...

- AT supports every student’s need but every student’s need does not require the same AT
  - Systematic approach to intervention
  - Continuum of tools

- Fairness isn’t everyone getting the same thing, it is everyone getting the right thing.

Reference 14
Assistive Technology Devices and Services are Ongoing Dynamic Processes
Reasons for Change

• Technology changes occur with change in these areas
  – individual’s abilities
  – Skills
  – Environments
  – Curriculum
  – technology
Consideration

• More than a check
• It’s a process not an event
• Asking the right question
  – How can the student be
    • More independent?
    • Attain higher levels of achievement?
    • Participate with peers?
Consideration Resources

• Georgia Project for Assistive Technology
  www.gpat.org

• Sharing the SETT Framework – Joy Zabala
  www.joyzabala.com/

• Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative
  www.wati.org
Increasing Independence

- Accommodations
- Modifications
- Assistive technology
  - Self esteem
  - Self advocacy
  - Independence
Technology Selection is Driven by Individual Needs
Technology Selection

• Low and high tech options
• Across environments
• Try more than one system
• Use same activities across devices
• Be aware of your personal and teacher biases
Data Collection Review

• Needs to be data driven
  – Observational
  – Student interview
    • Student involvement in the selection of AT is critical in matching the appropriate tool to students needs and preferences
    • Involve students in evaluating their own learning styles, strengths, goals, and their need for AT as related to different environments and tasks
  – Work samples

Reference 1
Inclusion of Assistive Technology in Transition is Crucial
Transition

• When it Happens
  – Classroom to classroom
  – Grade to grade
  – School to school
  – School to community
  – District to district
  – State to state
Benefits of a Well Written Transition Plan

- AT Services are less interrupted
- Equipment needs follow student
- Processes continued not restarted
Transition
Things to Consider

• Older Student Transitions
  – Self advocacy is important
  – Should start long before 16\textsuperscript{th} birthday

• Exiting Transition
  – Technology needs to have a practical application
  – Linked to employment or medical necessity
Documentation of AT is Important
Documentation

• When documenting in the IEP...
  – Clear and understandable
  – Reduce jargon
  – Detail support level
• Explain how the student uses the equipment
• Outline supported goals
Where to Document?

• Documentation in the IEP can be in
  – Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
  – Services
  – Supplemental aids
  – Testing accommodations
  – Annual goals
  – Minutes

Reference 3, 8
Documentation Resources

- GPAT’s Documenting Need for Assistive Technology
- QIAT’s Guiding Document for Including AT in the IEP

Reference 3, 8
Services, Services, Services

• Don’t forget to document assistive technology services
  – Evaluations
  – Customization
  – Applying
  – Maintaining
  – Training...
Assistive Technology is NOT a Magic Cure-all
AT is Not a Magic Cure All

• Assistive Technology does not replace instruction

• Creatively find ways to implement the technology

• Identical pieces of technology work differently depending upon the environment
Pick Your Inspiration,  
Not the Program

1. "Our challenge is not to educate the children we used to have or want to have, but to educate the children who come to the schoolhouse door."
   -- H. G. Wells

2. "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."
   -- Albert Einstein

3. The only people who don’t make mistakes are the ones who aren’t doing anything.
   --Anonymous
Pick Your Inspiration, Not the Program

4. "When you are wrestling with a gorilla, you don’t stop when you are tired; you stop when the gorilla is tired."
   -- Robert Strauss

5. "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."
   -- Maya Angelou