



Assistive Technology:
A System of Support for Including
Students with Disabilities within General
Education Programs:
A General Overview

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Purpose of Today's Presentation

- Increase awareness of Assistive Technology and AT's potential role in the education of students with disabilities.
- Understand how Assistive Technology is considered throughout the IEP Process.
- Gain insight into how Assistive Technology can support students with disabilities in General Education Settings.

Assistive Technology

A Brief Case Study

- **Who is this person?**
 - *High level Spinal Cord Injury*
 - **Abilities**
 - Able to Speak
 - Able to Hear
 - Able to See
 - Able to Think
 - **Limitations**
 - Paralyzed from C-2 level
 - Ventilator dependent
 - Dependent in all activities of daily living



COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS About AT

- All AT is computer based
- All AT is complex
- Only students with the most severe disabilities need AT
- AT solves all problems
- Only AT specialists deal with AT
- AT is a one-shot process



Definitions

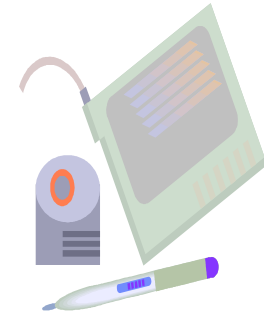
Refer to Handout

Individuals Who May Be Involved With AT

- Special Education Teachers
- General Education Teachers
- CST members
- Parents/Family Members
- **Student**
- Peers
- Related Service Personnel (OT, SLS, PT)
- Community Learning Site personnel
- Specialty Teachers (Art, Music, etc.)
- Administrators
- Others familiar with the student in their school environment
- AT Specialist

How Do You Organize Information About AT?

- There are many possible ways to classify or categorize Assistive Technology Devices. The most common classification is:



Low Tech to High Tech

AT Continuum

CHARACTERISTICS



- Readily Available
- Simple
- Low Cost
- Easy to use
- Limited Capability
- Limited Features
- Little Maintenance

- Not readily available
- Complex Electronics
- Expensive
- Complex to learn and use
- Greater Capability
- More Features/Functions
- High Maintenance



Performance Areas

What Are Performance Areas?

Performance Areas are categories, established through best practices, in which measurable tasks can be identified

AND

which may require some form of accommodation, modification and/or AT to enable the student to perform at their highest level.

How does consideration of the Performance Areas assist the student?

- AT Devices and Services are not identified through:
 - The student's disability;
 - The student's grade level; or
 - The student's educational environment .
- Instead, they are identified by the specific task the individual student is having difficulty performing or is unable to perform at all.

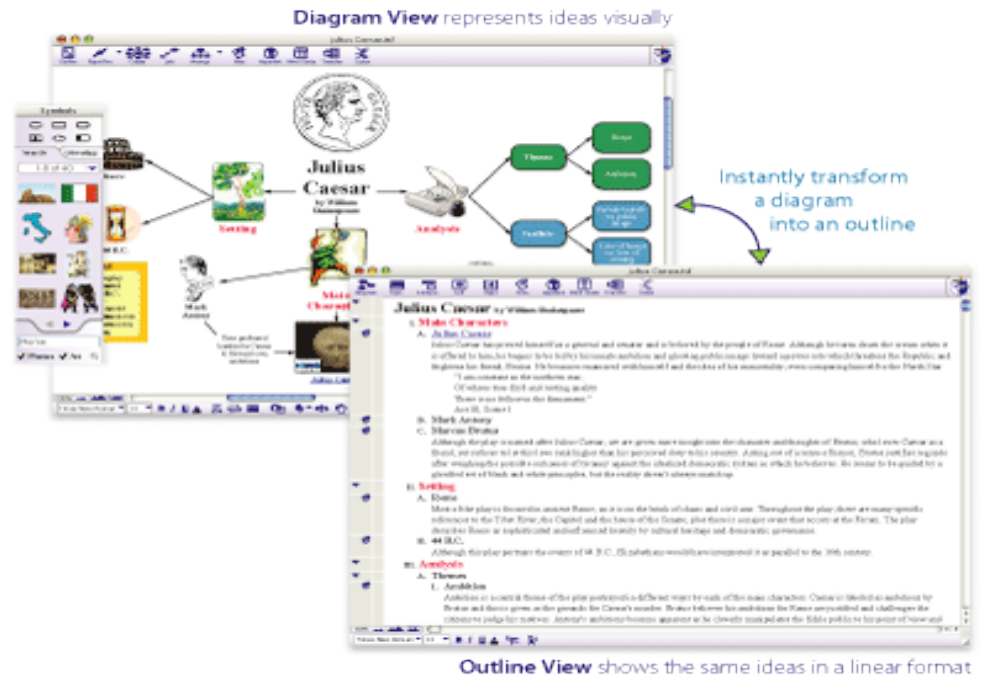
16 Performance Areas

- Spelling
- Compose Written Material
- Mechanics of Writing
- Computer Access
- Vision
- Calculation
- Reading
- Study & Organizational Skills
- Communication
- Hearing
- Seating & Positioning & Mobility
- Listening/Attending
- Recreation & Leisure
- Activities of Daily Living
- Transition to Adult Life
- Behavior

Compose Written Material

If a student has difficulty with composing written material in multiple environments...

A mid-tech example:

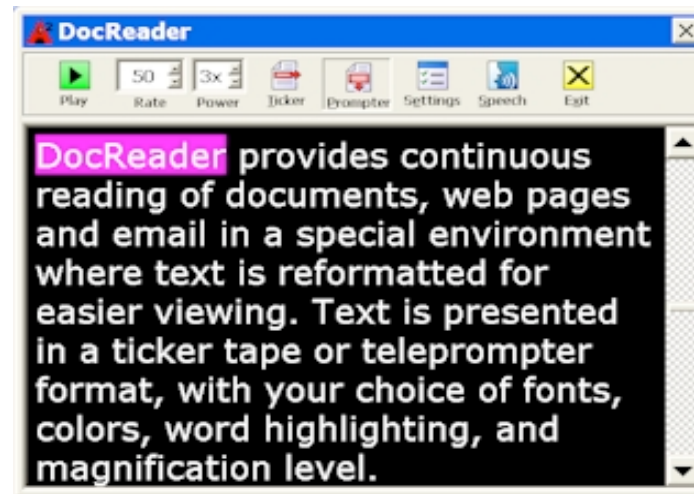


Organizational software is designed to assist with the brainstorming of idea formulation and organization for later conversion to a linear outline.

Reading

If a student reads at a lower level than others or is struggling with the written word...

A mid-tech example:



Document reading software is able to “read” aloud most text and html documents and has multiple features including contrast adjustments, spacing, type of voice and speed of speech.

Study and Organizational Skills

If a student has difficulty with mastering good study skills and organizational habits...

A low-tech example:











A three-sided highlighter can be used to indicate priority to material being studied.

Behavior

If the student has challenging behaviors that interfere with his/her education...

A low tech example:

David's Monday Schedule

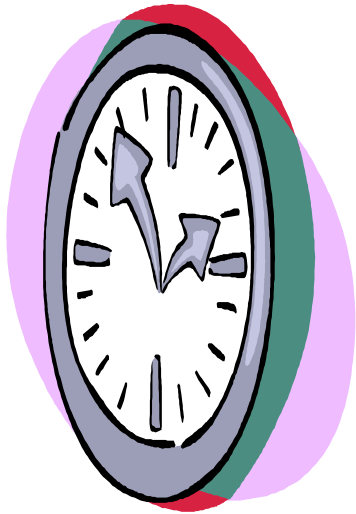
 hang up jacket	Get ready for class	 sit at desk
 show and tell	Show the class something special you brought from home	
 desk work	Work at your desk on what the teacher give's you to do	
 lunch	Get your lunchbox and eat what is in it	 lunch box
 recess	Go outside and play with class	
 story time	Sit on mat and listen to teacher read a story	 sit on mat
 time to play	Play until Mom comes to pick you up	

A “Visual Schedule” can be used to assist the student to sequence and complete activities.

Summary of 16 Performance Areas

- Performance Areas are those for which AT has been proven to demonstrate an impact.
- Performance Areas are related directly to the individual task or tasks the IEP has identified as being difficult for the student.
- Only a few of these areas will apply to most students.

Time for Questions





AT and the IEP Process

NJAC 6A:14

Individualized Education Program

6A:14-3.7 Individualized Education Program

(c) When developing the IEP, the IEP team shall:

9. Consider whether the student requires assistive technology devices and services:
 - i. The district board of education shall ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, as defined in IDEA, are made available to a student with a disability if required as part of the student's special education, related services or supplementary aids and services.
 - ii. On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a student's home or in other settings is required if the IEP team determines that the student needs access to those devices in order to receive a free, appropriate public education.

When do we think about Assistive Technology?

- Prior to the IEP Meeting
- During the IEP Meeting
- After the IEP Meeting

Prior to the IEP Meeting

Information Gathering

Who is involved??

and

What information will assist in determining whether or not assistive technology is needed as a component of the student's instructional program??

Parent's Role in Information Gathering

YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD BEST

Parents contribute by sharing their own observations, potential recommendations, and concerns

AND

providing requested information to various educational professionals.



Finally...



Do you think your child/student exhibits difficulties in any of the Performance Areas which may require an AT device or service?



Information Gathering Worksheet:

Performance Area Checklist

(Can be used during Routine Assessments)

Refer to Handout

Information Gathering Worksheet Sections

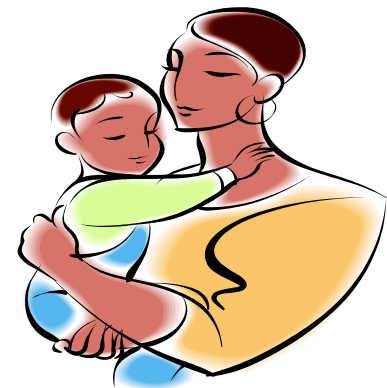
- Subject
- Performance Area
- Area of Strength
- Area of Concern
- Task of Concern
- Potential Accommodations/Modifications
- Potential Assistive Technology Solutions



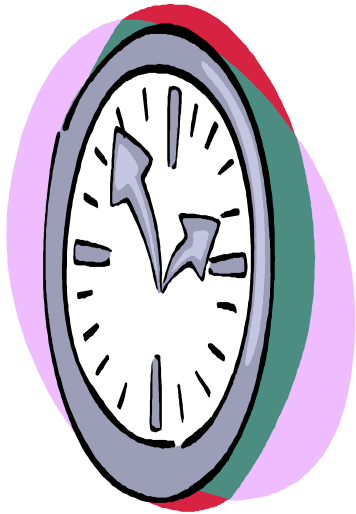
A Parent's Perspective

By:

Marty Mayes

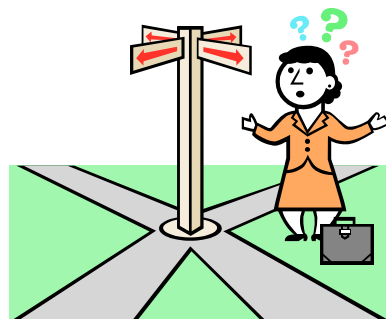


Time for Questions



During the IEP Meeting

Decision-Making



**How is the gathered information
used for IEP decision-making
regarding Assistive Technology?**



IEP Team Discusses:

- The student's strengths, abilities, preferences and interests;
- Performance Areas of concern;
- Current instructional strategies, accommodations, modifications or AT which are effective for the student and how they are being implemented across the content areas;
- Specific tasks or activities in which the student is struggling and for which AT may be utilized;

After the Discussion the IEP Team Shall:

- Consider if any Accommodations are necessary
- Consider if any Modifications are necessary
- Consider if any AT Devices and/ or Services are required to support the student's access to the curriculum and GE learning environment

After the IEP Meeting



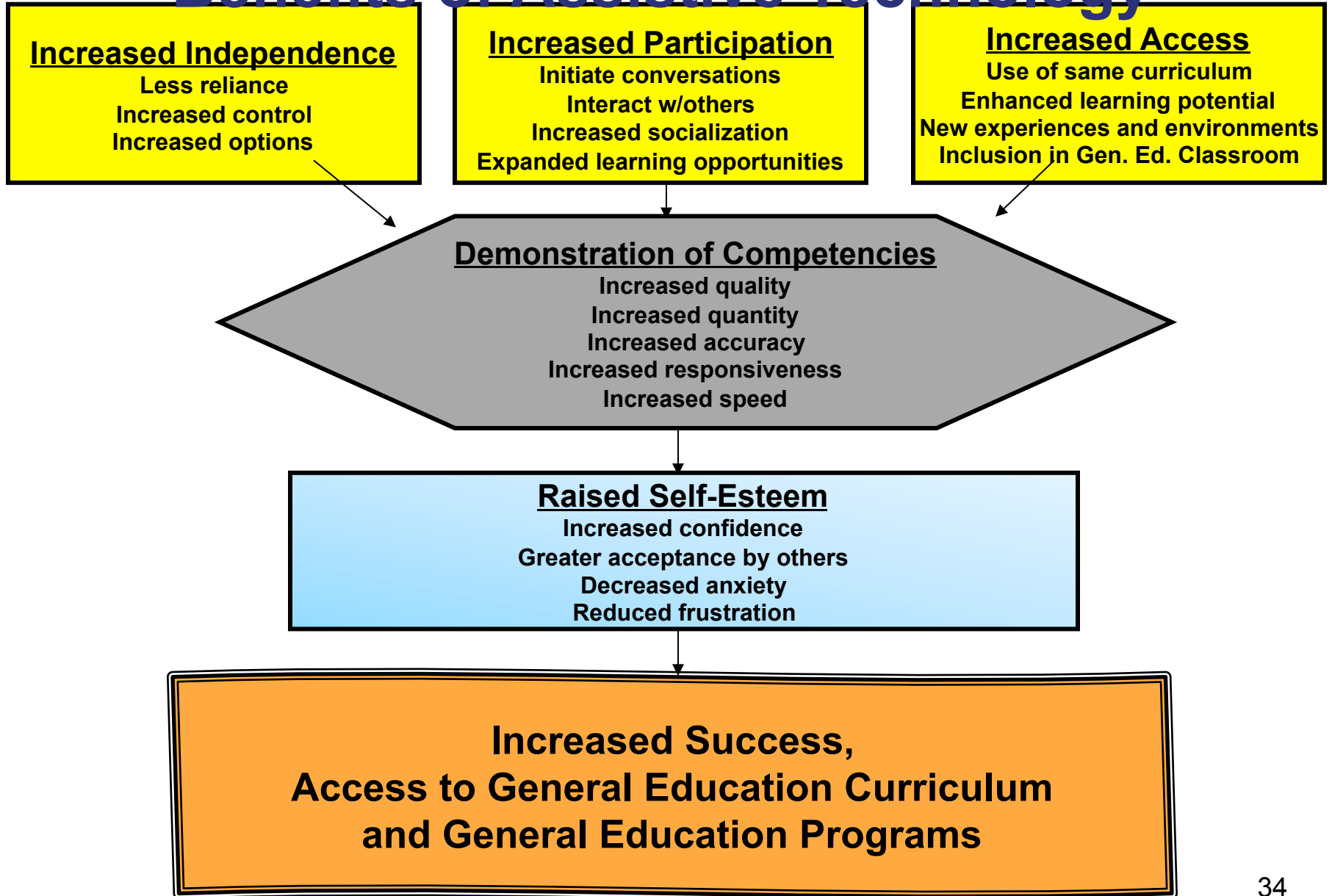
Implementation and Coordination of AT Devices and Services

Implementation is the key to the successful integration of AT into the student's overall educational plan.

Best Practices in Implementation May Include:

- Identification of school personnel responsible for implementation of AT services
- Establishment of a time schedule for implementation
- Coordination of AT services
- Acquisition of appropriate devices/services
- Conducting trial periods (**See handout**)
- Monitoring impact of AT devices and services on student performance across the school day

Benefits of Assistive Technology



Parent's Role in Implementation

- Maintain communication between school and home regarding the use of the device
- Know how the device works and how your child is using the device in school
- Engage your child in conversation regarding the use of the device
- Provide observations and feedback to school personnel and your child
- Stay knowledgeable about AT and its role in accessing the curriculum, developing friendships/social networks, and supporting the inclusion of your child in general education classrooms.

Summary of AT Decision-Making Process

Refer to Handout



Resources

Refer to Handout

*All students
must be headed in the same direction,
even if they are traveling at different
speeds, or in different vehicles.*



~ Barbara Gantwerk ~
Assistant Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education

Final Questions

