

Assistive Technology



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WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

Assistive technology (AT) refers to any device, software, or equipment that is designed to help people with disabilities perform tasks that might be challenging for them otherwise. The primary goal of assistive technology is to enhance the independence, mobility, communication, and overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.



TYPES/PURPOSE

1. Communication Devices: Devices that aid individuals with communication difficulties, ranging from basic communication boards to sophisticated speech-generating devices.
2. Visual Aids: Tools like magnifiers, screen readers, and Braille displays that assist individuals with visual impairments.
3. Environmental Control Devices: Systems that enable individuals with physical disabilities to control appliances, lights, and other devices in their environment.
4. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Devices: Systems and tools that support or replace verbal communication for individuals with speech or language difficulties.



BENEFITS

The field of assistive technology is dynamic, and advancements in technology continue to expand the range of possibilities for supporting individuals with disabilities. The goal is to empower individuals to participate more fully in various aspects of life, including education, employment, communication, and recreational activities.



HOW TO USE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

- Assessment of Student Needs:
 - Identify students who may benefit from AT
- Collaboration and Communication:
 - Engage in open communication with students, parents, and special education teams to gather insights into the student's learning style and preferences.
- Selection of Appropriate AT Tools:
 - Based on the assessment, choose AT tools that align with the specific needs of the student.
- Integration into Lesson Plans:
 - Incorporate AT into lesson plans to support diverse learning styles.
- Individualized Implementation:
 - Tailor the use of AT to each student's unique requirements.
- Accessibility of Materials
 - Ensure that all classroom materials, including digital content, are accessible to students using AT.
- Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Regularly assess the effectiveness of AT implementation through student progress, feedback, and observations.

GET CREATIVE!

Incorporating assistive technology (AT) in the classroom enhances inclusivity and engagement. Simple solutions like providing name stamps are a starting point, while integrating switches into games enables students with specific needs to actively participate alongside peers. For example, connecting switches to games allows students to independently control and play, fostering collaboration. Customizing AT solutions is evident in activities like using switches with motorized scissors, empowering students in tasks like cutting. This collaborative approach promotes inclusivity and encourages peer interaction. Ultimately, AT integration not only addresses unique student needs but also cultivates a supportive learning environment that values independence for all.

REMINDERS

- It's crucial to individualize the selection and implementation of assistive technology based on the specific needs and preferences of each student.
- Ongoing training and support for both students and educators are essential for successful integration into the classroom environment.



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