Technological Aides for the Inclusive Classroom

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June 2003
Q: I’ve read about a new federal law that promotes the use of assistive technology by students in special education. Does this mean that I can require my son’s school to pay for any technology that I might think is helpful?

A: NO. While the technology components of the reauthorized IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Amendments have received a lot of attention, the legislation does not guarantee technology approval. Parents, along with other members of the multidisciplinary IEP (Individualized Education Program) team, have a say in identifying technology and other necessary accommodations. The appropriateness of a specific technology is determined by the IEP team.

Adapted from: Schwab Foundation for Learning
What is Instructional Software?

In terms of practical application in an inclusive setting, Instructional software can be defined as any technology that is designed or developed to improve particular skills or a particular subject. Many students with learning disabilities will suffer from weaknesses in math, the writing process as well as encoding and decoding words. Such software is designed to build a foundation for advanced learning in these areas.
What is Assistive Technology?

It can be defined as any item, piece of equipment, or system that helps people bypass, work around or compensate for learning difficulties. It helps individuals develop means for working around problems by focusing on their strengths, rather than their weaknesses. It can also empower an individual to be more independent in daily activities.
• Assistive Technology (AT) can vary from a dollar or two for "low tech" tools — pencil grip or calculator — to several thousand dollars or more for "high-tech" hardware and software. There's a lot to think about when selecting AT for your child.
What types of Assistive Technology exist?

- Written Language Technologies
- Reading Technologies
- Listening Technologies
- Organization/ Memory Technologies
- Math Technologies
What are some Assistive Technologies available?

- CAST eReader
- Laser PC6
- Alpha Smart
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Smart Board
- Franklin Speller
- Browse Aloud (textHELP!Inc.)
- Word Smith
- Co:Writer
- Author’s Toolkit
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- Touch Window
- Big Keys Keyboard
What are some examples of Instructional Software available?

• Clip Read
• Reading Strategies for Older Students (SOS)
• Microsoft PowerPoint
• Inspiration and Kidspiration
• Thinking Maps Software
• Smart Board
• Math and Reading Blaster
How do I choose the best type of Technology for my child?

• Determine your child’s specific disability/ difficulty
• Identify your child’s strengths
• Include your child in the selection process
• Narrow down the types of technology that might be helpful, based on your child’s strengths and weaknesses
• Examine the specific settings where the technology will be used.

• Consider portability of the device
• Select technologies that “work together”
• Choose technologies that are easy to learn and operate
• Consider if the products offer on-line or toll-free tech support
• Research the reliability of the product
• Consider the cost of the product or availability

Adapted from: Schwab Foundation for Learning- “Assistive Technology for Children With Learning Difficulties”
A guide to helpful internet resources on different Instructional and Assistive technologies……..

- AlphaSmart- [http://alphasmart.com/](http://alphasmart.com/) a great site for learning about and ordering an AlphaSmart writing device.
- Inspiration- [http://www.inspiration.com/home.cfm](http://www.inspiration.com/home.cfm)
- Franklin Speller- [http://www.franklin.com/](http://www.franklin.com/)
Helpful articles pertaining to the integration of technology into inclusive classrooms

- Inclusive Technology and Learning Difficulties-
  http://www.inclusive.co.uk/infosite/itlearn.shtml
- Integrating Technology into Instruction in an Inclusive Classroom for Diverse Learners-
  http://www.isec2000.org.uk/abstracts/papers_x/xin_1.htm
- Information Communication Technology and Autism-
- Integrating Assistive Technology into the Standard Curriculum-
  http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/Eric_E568.html
- The Council for Learning Disabilities Infosheet about Assistive Technology-
  http://www.cldinternational.org/c/@FDw3dgn8mMHVk/Pages/assistive.html
Thank You!

~We hope this information is helpful!~

Pam & Kyle