

Initial Thoughts: Assistive Technology

What should teachers know about assistive technology and how it is used by students with disabilities?

Teachers should become familiar with the student's disability and what stipulations could hinder the student from learning. The assistive technology is there to assist the student with their disability to be completing assignments independently. Teachers should become somewhat familiar with the assistive technology provided for the students and what are some of its features and functions. Most times the student can show the teacher how it works.

What are the school's responsibilities regarding assistive technology?

It is the school's responsibilities to provide teachers with the student's IEP. Also it is the school's responsibility to have the proper personnel to explain to the teacher how the assistive technology works. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the student receives proper support from outside resources for operations or repairs. The school must contact responsible parties to ensure that the student has the correct assistive technology. It is the school's responsibility to do all that is possible to ensure the delivery of the student's education and that the student's understanding is not hindered due to their disability.

What can classroom teachers do to help their students fully succeed in their use of assistive technology?

Teacher can learn how to function the assistive technology. Teacher should be familiar with every aspect of the student's IEP. The teacher should build a rapport with the students, so that they feel comfortable within the classroom. Therefore, the student will not feel embarrassed about the assistive technology within classroom. The teacher could find a responsible peer that could support the student with their assistive technology.

Post Reflection Thoughts

What should teachers know about assistive technology and how it is used by students with disabilities?

The teacher should be familiar with the students' IEP and what accommodations that are required help meet the need of the student due their disability. The teacher should also be familiar with the operations of the student's assistive technology. According to IRIS Center for Training Enhancements (2010), teachers are not required to know everything about the assistive technology and they should remember that there are supports and resources available when they begin to implement it into the classroom. The teacher should understand that in order for the assistive technology to be success, the student must have the proper devices and services which includes support. This experience has helped me to see what I was supposed to know in order to provide the proper support for my student, who has albinism which results in impaired vision. Had I known that I should included her CCTV as a part of my everyday instruction and possibly gained support from peers to help, my student may have wanted to use her assistive technology more often. From my experience with her this summer, I realized that she thinks it is a cool device to use; however, she did not want to appear any more different than the rest of her classmates.

What are the school's responsibilities regarding assistive technology?

The school is responsible for informing every involved teacher about the IEP. The teacher should also be one of the many members of the student's IEP team. On the IEP team, there should always be at least one person who is very knowledgeable of the students' disabilities, who can provide strategies or accommodations for the student, and they are capable of finding the proper support to help provide proper accommodations for the student's disability. The school is responsible finding the proper support system for the student. When it is time to implement the technology, it is important that the student receives training along with the teacher. Last school term, my student entered into my classroom mid-school year. Therefore, I was informed of the student's IEP and assistive technology. Different members of the IEP team received training of the CCTV except for her teachers. They explained to us what it was; however, there was no training provided. The IRIS Center for Training Enhancements (2010) states, "it is critical to begin troubleshooting and monitoring to ensure that the student receives the maximum benefit from the AT." As her teacher, had I gained the knowledge that I have now, I would have been able to provide her with the proper support within my classroom. Nevertheless, she often received services from her vision teacher weekly. Therefore, she received lots of support. After applying knowledge from the readings, my field experience with my student helped me to realize that I might have seen different results within the classroom although she did fine academically.

What can classroom teachers do to help their students fully succeed in their use of assistive technology?

Teachers can build a rapport with their student to make them feel comfortable with using their assistive technology in the classroom. If the teacher does not receive proper training on the assistive technology, they should research how can it be used in their classroom and ask the student for training. The teacher should make the assistive technology a part of their everyday instruction and allow other students to assist or provide support for the student. For example, I normally assign a technology manager as a class job to set up computers and tablets for the day. I could have allowed that manager to set up my student's CCTV as a part of their daily routine. This would have helped others to view it as one of the many technologies in the classroom which may have resulted in an increase within my student's comfort level about using her assistive technology. One tip provided by the IRIS Center that has truly helped me during my summer field experience was seeking support from knowledgeable individuals. This summer, I was able to seek support from the Lead Special Education teacher and my student's mother, who are both on M.E's IEP team. Having conversations with the both of them about her disability and conditions with albinism was very beneficial for me to plan for the strategies to implement with our activities.

Resources :

The IRIS Center for Training Enhancements. (2010). Assistive Technology: An Overview. Retrieved on July 8, 2014 from <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/at/>