

Abstract

With recent technological advances and social media such as Facebook and Twitter, face-to-face interaction is becoming increasingly menial. Students with disabilities are less apt to walking into the disability support services offices; however, they are logging into the internet to seek out services. It is imperative that Disability Service Providers make their services fully available online. Furthermore, it is essential they use technology as a means to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Having this avenue of access is sure to decrease stigma and increase student participation. This presentation will highlight literature and outline steps to making disability services available online. This presentation will also discuss different ways to use technology as a means to accommodate students with disabilities.

“For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier, for people with disabilities technology makes things possible”
(Bryant & Bryant, 2003, p. 2)

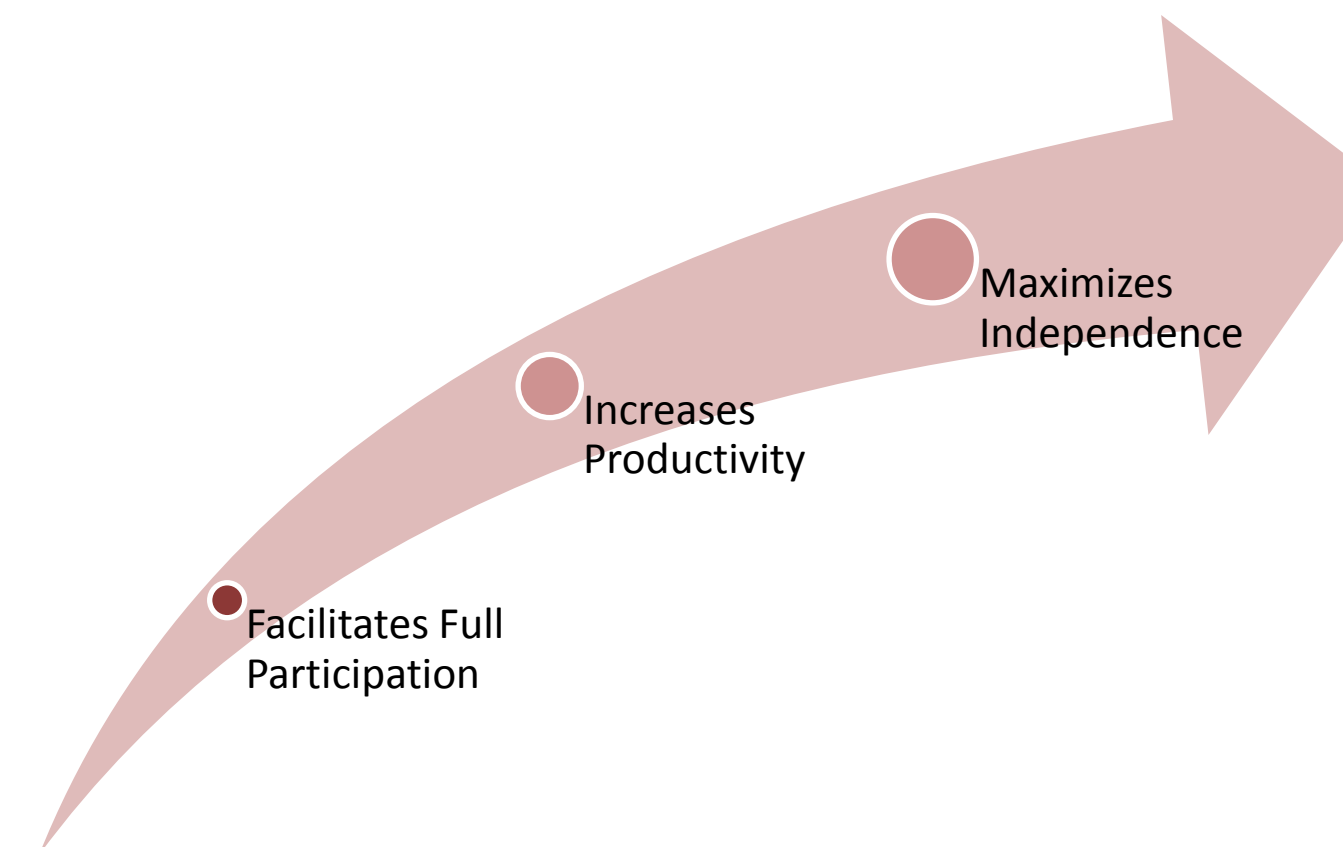
Introduction



- Technology encompasses all aspects of everyone’s lives; including, education, employment, and community involvement.
- “Access to electronic and information technology has the potential to promote positive postsecondary academic and career outcomes for students with disabilities” (Burgstahler, 2003, p. 1)
- Greater emphasis has been placed on K-12 rather than postsecondary education regarding the integration and use of technology (Male, 2003; Martinez-Marrero & Estrada-Hernandez, 2008; Ulman, 2005)

Why Use Assistive Technology (AT)

For students with disabilities, having the ability to utilize technology.....



- AT services, minimize students with disabilities functional limitations, maximize their functional abilities, and facilitate transition for school-aged individuals.
- Technology improves pre college and post-secondary outcome of persons with disabilities.
- AT assists students with disabilities in succeeding in their academic endeavors.
- AT enhances the individuals learning abilities by minimizing deficits.
- Through the utilization of AT, persons with disabilities maximize their abilities and are able to perform at levels demonstrated by individuals without disabilities.
- Knowledge of AT increases employability of individuals with disabilities in high tech career fields.

So What! How does Technology Help Student With Disabilities

- Maximize independence in academic and employment tasks
- Participate in classroom discussions
- Gain access to peers, mentors, and role models
- Self-advocate
- Gain access to the full range of educational options
- Participate in experience not otherwise possible
- Succeed in work-based learning experiences
- Secure high levels of independent living
- Work side-by-side with peers
- Master academic tasks that they cannot accomplish otherwise
- Prepare for transition to post-secondary education and careers**
(Burgstahler, 2003)

The Problem

- Students with disabilities leave high school without education, training, and services needed to promote post-secondary education, employment, and successful adult living, thus
 - Many students with disabilities are unemployed or employed on a part time basis
 - Many students graduate from post-secondary institutions at a lower rate than individuals without disabilities do.
- Taking advantage of the full potential of using technology to prepare young people with disabilities for post-secondary education is not being realized (National Council on disability & Social Security Administration, 2000).
- Individuals with disabilities are less than half as likely as their non-disabled counterpart to own computers and they are about one quarter as likely to use the internet (Keye, 2000).

Legislation

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** constitutes and education act that provides financial support to state and local education agencies. The focus of IDEA is to guarantee educational services for children with disabilities. IDEA mandated that the student’s assistive technology needs be considered in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in programs and services that receive federal funds that include the vast majority of educational institutions.
- **The Americans with disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** reinforced the provision of the rehabilitation act of 1973 and extended civil rights protection to students with disabilities attending institutions that do not receive federal assistance.

(Burgstahler, 2003; Day & Edwards, 1996; Fisher, 1999; Fisher & Gardner, 1999, Galvin & Wobschall, 1996; Wallace et al., 1995)

Types of Assistive Technology Devices

- Input Devices** – Allow an individual to enter and manage a computer device
 - Large Print Keyboards
 - Alternative Keyboards
 - Electronic Pointing Devices
 - Trackballs
 - Touch Screens
 - Screen Captioning
 - Screen Magnification Programs
- Output Devices** – Provide visual, audio, or printed enhancements
 - Braille Embossers (Printers)
 - Dragon Naturally Speaking
 - Text-to-Audio Program
 - Printed Version of the Textbook
- Process Devices** – Allow users easy operation of the device and information processing.
 - Key-Combination “Hot-Keys”
 - Inspiration
 - Handheld Recorders
- Others**
 - Cell Phone
 - IPADs



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

(ATA, 2000; Martinez-Marrero & Estrada-Hernandez, 2008)

Recommendations

- Technology that is grounded in an instructional design has the potential to increase students performance; therefore, it is imperative that special education teachers are trained on
 - How to use AT in the classroom,
 - How to evaluate the effectiveness of the AT,
 - How to locate AT devices, and
 - How to train students on using the AT devices.
- We must have stakeholders in place in the K-12 setting; specifically, at the secondary level. These stakeholders will assure that all individuals with disabilities have
 - Access to technology,
 - Learn to use technology, and
 - Experience a seamless transition to post-secondary education.
(Burgstahler, 2003)
- Identifying funding sources for AT in an adequate amount of time allows the necessary devices to be located and training for the student and teacher.

Conclusion

- Technology will connect the student to the real world of education, work, and adult life.
- Effective use of technology in the k-12 setting for individuals with disabilities will create smoother transition to post-secondary education, employment, and community involvement.

