Assistive Technology:
More than "Checking A Box"

Sara Pericolosi
Alt+Shift

Michigan Alliance for Families
information, support, and education

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Alt + Shift
Rethink the possible. Realize potential.

Sara Pericolosi

Alt+Shift is an *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Grant Funded Initiative through the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education

MICHIGAN Education

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Meet the Presenter

Sara Pericolosi

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- AT/AAC Specialist
- Speech-Language Pathologist

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Learner Outcomes

- Explore how Assistive Technology can be written in various sections of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
  - Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)
  - Transition
  - Goals/Objectives
  - Supplementary Aids and Services
  - Testing
  - Related Services, Transportation
- Identify next steps

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Special Factors

For each individual learner, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team must consider the:

- ❑ need for assistive technology devices and services
- ❑ communication needs

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More than Checking a Box

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...this box doesn't provide any details!

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What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

- Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a person with a disability.

- Any service that directly assists the person with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

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"For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible."

--IBM Training Manual, 1991

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Back to "The Box"

For each individual learner, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must consider the:

❏ need for assistive technology devices and services

❏ communication needs

Assistive Technology (AT) Consideration MUST take place for EVERY student receiving special education services.

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Consider This...

Assistive Technology (AT) Consideration is a process that involves:

❏ Collaborative decision making

❏ Reviewing existing information about a learner

❏ Collecting additional information (if needed)

❏ Deciding whether or not AT is needed

❏ Identifying the AT in order for the learner to be successful (if needed)

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Common Errors of AT Consideration

- AT is considered for students with severe disabilities only.
- No one on the IEP team is knowledgeable regarding AT.
- Team does not use a consistent process based on data about the student, environment and tasks to make decisions.
- Consideration of AT is limited to those items that are familiar to team members or are available in the district.
- Team members fail to consider access to the curriculum and IEP goals in determining if AT is required in order for the student to receive Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- If AT is not needed, team fails to document the basis of its decisions.

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5 Outcomes of Assistive Technology Consideration

Developed by Karen Janowski

01 — We've considered AT, and it's not necessary at this time.

02 — We've considered AT, and the AT currently in place is working and the student's needs are being met.

03 — We've considered AT, and found that the student has not had access and may benefit from AT.

04 — We've considered AT, the student is currently using AT, but still has unmet needs.

05 — We've considered AT, and we as a team do not have enough information. More information or data is needed.

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We Need More Info…Now What?

Evaluation process
- SETT process
  - Student
  - Environment
  - Tasks
  - Tools
- Fonner Modified SETT framework
  - Provides guidance with device/tool trials, data collection, and implementation plans

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Who Can Contribute to the Convo?
Consideration, Selection, and/or Implementation

- ANYONE on the student's IEP Team
  - Student
  - Parent
  - Teacher
  - Ancillary staff
  - Other people actively involved in student's life

AT Skills Inventory (bit.ly/ATskillsinventory)

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Sections of an IEP

- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)
- Transition
- Goals and Objectives
- Supplementary Aids and Services
- Testing, Transportation
- Related Services

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Present Levels (PLAAFP)

- Consider:
  - Learner strengths, parent concerns, special factors
  - Progress on previous goals and objectives
  - Baseline of how they access and participate in educational tasks
- If the learner moves tomorrow, will the new team know how to best support him/her?

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Suggested Components of the PLAAFP

- Academic Achievement
- Communication
- Medical/health
- Social-emotional/behavioral
- Perception/Motor/Mobility
- Adaptive/Independent living skills
- Transition/Vocational
- Transportation*

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Example: Further Exploration of AT for Written Expression

Nick has a weak grasp due to a progressive neuromotor condition, and as a result he has difficulty handwriting responses beyond a few sentences. Due to his fine-motor difficulties, Nick dictates extended paragraph forms to his resource teacher to complete his assignments. A more independent mode of writing is needed for Nick and further assessment is necessary to determine accommodations that will enable him to complete paragraphs without assistance.

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Example: Further Exploration of AT for Self-Help Skills

Kyle enjoys interactions with peers during lunch in the school cafeteria. Due to his motor difficulties, a teaching assistant feeds him. Further assessment and exploration of adapted eating utensils may facilitate more independence while eating.

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Example: Further Exploration of AT for Communication

Susie, a kindergartener, responds to yes/no questions with appropriate head movements. She indicates her wants and needs by pointing and gesturing in her environment. Susie needs an AT assessment to determine if she could benefit from an augmentative communication system to increase her expressive communication with others.

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Example: AT Re-Assessment for Written Communication

Jon is in 4th grade; his handwriting is illegible and is slower (3 Words per Minute (WPM)) than his peers. He types using a portable word processor at 10 WPM. This has helped to ensure that his typing speed is closer to that of his grade-level peers, he may benefit from the use of keystroke reduction such as word prediction and/or abbreviation/expansion to increase his typing speed. Further assessment of his AT needs can determine if additional AT supports can increase his written production speed to better meet the current academic writing demands.

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Examples: AT is Effective

Writing Difficulties: Using a pencil grip, Julie performs all written assignments in her first grade classroom independently.

Auditory difficulties: Angie has a moderate hearing loss in both ears for which she wears hearing aids. She understands general classroom lecture and discussion when wearing her hearing aids.

Visual difficulties: Bill reads eighth-grade-level text material when enlarged to 1 inch using a closed-captioned TV.

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AT IN TRANSITION

- Employability
- Independent Living
- Post-Secondary Education
- Socialization
- Recreation and Leisure

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Goals and Objectives

- Connect to the need expressed in the PLAAFP
- Include the task/skill the learner is expected to achieve
- Identify HOW the student will achieve the task/skill
    - What tool?
    - How much support?
- Goals are learner-driven (not staff-driven!)

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Example Goal for Communication

Utilizing a form of AAC and aided language input, Carolyn will produce 3-5 word utterances in order to participate in a three-turn conversational exchange at least once per day, 4/5 days per week, in order to improve her overall communication skills.

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Example Goal for Written Expression

Utilizing an electronic graphic organizer, Ryan will independently write an opening topic sentence, three supporting detail sentences, and a closing sentence to construct a 5-sentence paragraph during writing assignments.

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Supplementary Aids & Services: Things to Consider

- Accommodations and Modifications to Tests, Materials, and Presentation of Subject Matter
- Supports to Address Environmental Needs
- Specialized Equipment Needs
- Pacing of Instruction
- Consultative services
  - Speech-Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Teacher Consultant
- Time/frequency/condition
- Location

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AT or Universal Supports?

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State/District Assessments

- State assessments
  - Accommodations are identified for each assessment
    - Corresponds to a need identified in the PLAAFP
    - Aligns with supplementary aids and services
  - Accommodations also need to be used for more than just the state/district assessments
    - Ex: Questions are read orally for classroom assessments as well as state/district assessments

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Related Services, Transportation

- Direct services
  - Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy
  - Orientation and Mobility
- Transportation
  - Wheelchair lift
  - Harnessing system
  - Securement system

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Resources

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Alt+Shift

- We collaborate with educators and families to improve educational outcomes for every learner by rethinking what is possible through our:
  - Professional Learning Opportunities
    - Online Modules (available to anyone)
    - ISD Partnerships
  - Lending Library (available to Michigan educators)
  - Technical Support

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Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC)

- MDRC is a non-profit organization devoted to creating justice and equity for individuals with disabilities, promoting collaboration, and dismantling obstacles.

- MDRC partners with individuals, families, and organizations to build inclusive communities, foster disability pride, and eliminate oppression.

- MDRC provides training, resources, and services to parents, children, and adults with disabilities

Phone: 517-333-2477 or 800-578-0280
Email: info@mymdrc.org
Website(s): www.mymdrc.org or www.mymdrc..org/assistive-tech-program/

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Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP)

- MATP is a FREE federally funded program that provides AT related supports around the state including:
  - Awareness Information
  - Training
  - Demonstrations
    - Customized virtual or in-person "how to" sessions to explore AT that meets your needs
  - Loan Program
    - MATP has over 1600 AT items for demo and/or loan
    - Try before you buy!
- MATP is by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, their allies, and other community members.

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Thank you!

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We are here to support you!

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For more information visit
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Michigan Alliance for Families

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