



SELECTION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

To determine the kinds of assistive technology (AT) that will best suit the needs of the an individual with learning disabilities, the functional limitations that the individual displays need to be defined. Some key questions to answer are:

1. What job duties or coursework obligations is the individual expected to perform?
2. In what specific areas is the individual having difficulties?
3. What is it specifically that the individual cannot do or does not do according to the employer's/instructor's expectations?

The answers to these questions will determine the kinds of assistive devices that can be put in place to enable the individual with learning disabilities to perform the essential functions of the job or meet the requirements of a course or perform day to day tasks.

Every individual with learning disabilities has a unique profile of strengths, weaknesses, interests, and experiences. Again, before choices are made, it is important that specific technologies be considered relative to

1. the individual's unique profile,
2. the task to be performed, and
3. the particular context in which the technology will be applied.

It is important for the teacher or employer to keep in mind that the technologies suggested to help an individual compensate for a learning disability in one area might be used creatively, alone or in conjunction with other technologies to meet an individual's needs in another area of disability. Experimentation and a creative approach to each individual's unique needs are called for.

Before making AT choices, it is important for the teacher or employer to be specific about the functional limitations of the learning disability in question and then to be specific about what it is that is expected on the job or in the learning situation that will be better accomplished with the help of some assistive technology tool or device.

As well, the strengths of the individual with learning disabilities must be weighed. It is important to find assistive technology support services for help in:

1. identifying the kinds of assistive technologies that will help compensate,
2. learning how to use various technologies, and
3. preparing all participants within the given environment to feel comfortable with the tool of choice.

FACT SHEET*Selection of Assistive Technology*

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