



MARCH 2003

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT WORK?

When assistive technology hasn't made a difference for the individual with learning disabilities it is usually because of a lack of planning and forethought. Complaints and possible problems can include :

- The student/employee doesn't know how to use AT independently
- Training on the AT is not provided
- The student/employee doesn't have time to use it
- The teachers don't know how to use it, further adapt it, or fix it when something goes wrong.
- The student/employee is using other software or only part of the tool.
- The parents don't know how to use the technology successfully or address problems at home.
- Homework solutions continue to be a problem for the student, as many are not allowed to bring the AT tool home.
- Negative attitudes from teachers/co-workers towards AT tool intimidate the user.

The most common problem is that the Assistive Technology has not been successfully integrated into the day to day activities (either at school or in the workplace). When assistive technology hasn't made a difference, it is important to identify key elements of a four part plan.

### **Part 1. Development**

- How were the student's/employee's strengths, determined – based on what assessments?
- Are the tasks to be performed aligned with the functions of the AT tool
- How were the student, teacher, parent, or employee and employer involved in the plan?
- How did the individuals involved feel about the plan? Were they comfortable with it?
- What had been tried in the past - worked and not worked?
- What were the interim and / or necessary accommodations or modifications to the classroom, to the curriculum, to the workplace ?

### **Part 2. Implementation**

- Was there sufficient training? Who received it?
- Were the assistive technology devices and / or services being used in the appropriate context?
- What expectations were agreed upon, as a plan until the student had learned to use the assistive technology, such as a word processor effectively?

- Has a sufficient amount of time been incorporated in the plan to ensure that the person with learning disabilities can become confident using the Assistive Technology?

**Part 3. Monitoring**

- What were the targeted goals, timelines and how did they relate to the classroom/workplace demands?
- How were these integrated to foster success?
- Were opportunities to check-in, review progress or difficulties, and adapt the plan considered?

**Part 4. Integration**

- How were other supports and interventions integrated as part of the plan?
- Was there ample time set aside for all players to integrate and problem solve the plan?

Consideration of these questions are central to the successful intergration of assistive technology. When properly planned, assistive technology can help the student/worker to compensate for areas of weakness and develop more independent skills.

<p><b>FACT SHEET</b>  <i>What happens when assistive technology does not work?</i></p> <p>Learning Disabilities Association of Canada          323 Chapel Street, Suite 200          Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 7Z2          (613) 238-5721          (613) 235-5391 (fax)          email: <a href="mailto:information@ldac-taac.ca">information@ldac-taac.ca</a>          web site: <a href="http://www.ldac-taac.ca">www.ldac-taac.ca</a> March 2003</p>	<p><b>DISTRIBUTED BY:</b></p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------