Region AT Representatives

Sponsored by MN Regions 5 & 7

Benton-Stearns—Kelly Peterson

Buffalo—No representative

Elk River—No representative

Freshwater—Eric Weber

Little Falls—Jeannie McKee

MAWSECO—Shawna Moe

Mid-State—Ashley Thompson

Group Facilitator & Editor—Barb Lhotka

Paul Bunyan—Margaret Knebel

Regional Low Incidence Facilitator—Mary Ruprecht

Rum River—Jenny Groess

St Cloud—Barbara Commers/Pamela Moening

SCRED—Connie Sim

Sherburne-Northern Wright—Joran Swedzinski

West Central—Cindy Ostrander

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Calendar of Events

2015-2016 REGIONAL MEETINGS
Benton-Stearns Ed District Office, Sartell MN   9:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

September 15—Processes in AT: SETT, Consideration, Assessment
October 7—Sample Language for Processes in AT
November 4—Components & Issues for Technology: Writing & Keyboarding
December 2— Components & Issues for Technology: Early Childhood
January 6— Components & Issues for Technology: Reading & Literacy
February 3— Components & Issues for Technology: Math
March 2— Components & Issues for Technology: Transition
April 6—Components & Issues for Technology: App Evaluation Systems
May 4— Components & Issues for Technology: Content Areas

33rd ANNUAL CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE
Minneapolis MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: October 12-13, 2015
Conference Sessions: October 14-16, 2015

CHARTING THE CS CONFERENCE
Arrowwood, Alexandria, MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: April 24, 2016
Conference Sessions: 25 & 26, April 2016

AT Information: Listservs

AT Listserv
The AT Listserv is a wonderful resource for educators who work with students who use technology for learning. Members ask questions, share information, and discuss topics that are relevant to our day-to-day work with students ages birth through 21.

How to Join: To subscribe, visit https://webmail.mnet.state.mn.us/mailman/listinfo/assistive-tech or send a message with the word "help" in it to the request address, assistive-tech-request@lists.statemn.us for further instructions.

To Post on the Listserv: Send message to assistive-tech@lists.state.mn.us. Complete the subject line identifying the topic of your post. Type your message and send it. Remember confidentiality when posting!

QIAT Listserv
The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT—pronounced quiet) listserv is a place to share resources, questions ideas, and problem-solving in an on-going email discussion (there are archives and a website of resources to assist you, too). To sign up, go to the following website http://qiat.org and follow the links to join the listserv.

How Should Teams Consider AT?

Consideration

Every time an IEP is written, assistive technology must be considered. It is not a "yes" or "no" question. It is a question that requires the team to consider not the tools, but the needs of the student. If the student has needs leading to goals and objectives, will the student benefit from the use of technology? That is true question for consideration.

The Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) has published an Assistive Technology Consideration Process Guide which has suggested a process for IEP teams to use informally at the IEP meeting to frame their discussion. Teams need to ask key questions that will lead them to the discussion about what services, interventions, and/or devices might meet the need the student shows. Some of the questions include:
1. Is the student independently completing tasks in each instructional setting using standard classroom tools?
2. Is the student completing tasks in each instructional setting with accommodations and modifications and what are those accommodations and modifications? A list of services, trainings, devices, etc. should be maintained for documentation purposes. The list should identify which accommodations and modifications are successfully used and which have not been successful.
3. Is the student having difficulty completing some tasks in specific instructional settings? What areas can be identified? What are the issues that make it difficult for the student to be successful? Is there technology that might assist the student in becoming successful?

The next steps, according to GPAT would be:
- "If potential assistive technology solutions are known to the IEP team, trial use of the identified assistive technology solution may be documented in the IEP and implemented.
- "If potential assistive technology solutions are not known to the IEP team, the IEP team may choose to recruit consultants who can assist the team in addressing assistive technology."

A trial use of assistive technology is always recommended, with the results of success and lack of success and the conditions of each documented for further consideration of technology.

Consideration is not evaluation. Consideration is documentation of need and finding solutions (similar to curriculum choices) to help the student become successful in completing a task.

The documentation of the use of assistive technology should:
- Describe the features of the AT that impacted learning (pro or con). Do not list devices by brand name
- Relating the AT to the learning task, daily living task, etc. that it supports is important in the documentation.

GPAT recommends teams go beyond just checking yes or no on the Assistive Technology Consideration portion of the IEP. Here is their suggested approach:

"Checking yes or no to the above consideration question (and if yes, describing the technology required) is considered minimal compliance to the requirement for considering assistive technology. However, it is best practice to document the decision making process used to consider the student's need for assistive technology. For example a statement regarding the discussion of assistive technology needs may be documented in the minutes of the IEP meeting and may be included in other components of the IEP as described below. For example, a statement such as '*An analysis of the required tasks within the relevant*

instructional areas revealed that Steve can independently accomplish the tasks; therefore, assistive technology is not required.' could be used to document that assistive technology assistive technology was considered but not required. For a student requiring assistive technology, a statement such as *'An analysis of the required tasks within the relevant instructional areas revealed that John has difficulty completing math calculations; therefore, it is recommended that he have access to a hand held calculator to complete math calculations in all classes.'* could be used to document the consideration process for a student who requires assistive technology."

Analysis of Tasks

To analyze required tasks, simply means the team needs to think about the tasks required of the student in the classes he/she will be taking within the year-long cycle of the IEP and determine what needs and supports are needed for the student.

Areas for consideration during the student's instructional day include:
- Activities of Daily Living
- Computer Access
- Hearing/Listening
- Math
- Oral Communication/Language
- Pre-vocational/Vocational
- Reading
- Recreation/Leisure
- Seating/Positioning/ Mobility
- Spelling
- Study/Organization Skills
- Visual Access
- Writing/Written Composition

Teams may not feel they have "expertise" in identifying support technology for students in all areas. There are resources within your district/cooperative/ed district to assist you in identifying potential services and devices. Apps for the iPad are included in this consideration.

Ongoing Documentation

The AT consideration process is part of the IEP process, but it is also an ongoing and dynamic process that continues throughout the life of the IEP. Team members need to problem solve and document technology supports throughout the year and will need that information at the next IEP.

The Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) has developed an on-going problem solving model called the WATI Assistive Technology Decision Making Guide. This information can be added to throughout the year as challenges arise for a comprehensive consideration of the student's program. It looks like this:
1. Identify Student's Abilities and Difficulties
2. Environmental Considerations
3. Tasks
4. Reframe the Questions of Access
5. Potential Solutions
6. Solution Selection
7. Implementation Plan
8. Impact of Implementation (Follow-up)

No matter what AT is utilized by the student and team, on-going evaluation of its effectiveness and role in the student's classroom success must be completed. One tool will not fit every situation. Documentation for future consideration is essential for the program of the student to continue to meet identified needs.

App of the Month

Brainscape—Smart Flashcards by Brainscape

Free on iTunes
Requires iOS 8.0 or higher
Updated September 24, 2015
iPhone and iPad

"Find, create, and share SMART FLASHCARDS on any device. DOUBLE your learning speed using the most effective study system on the planet. Keep all your content in sync across Brainscape's website and all your iOS devices.

"Brainscape works by personalizing the TIMING of each flashcard repetition, using proven cognitive science. Whether you're learning a language, preparing for a test, or just acquiring some fun trivia, Brainscape spaces the repetition of each bite-sized concept based on exactly the right interval for YOUR brain.

"All you have to do is rate how well you know each concept, on a scale of 1-5, and Brainscape determines the right time to quiz you again. It's strangely addicting and is scientifically proven to slash your required study time."

Photo Math by MicroBlink Ltd.

Free on iTunes
Requires iOS 7.0 or higher
iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch

"PhotoMath is the world's smartest camera calculator! Just point your phone camera to a math expression, and PhotoMath will instantly display the answer with detailed step-by-step explanation."

"Use it to get help when you're stuck with a math problem. Hit the steps button, and see a fully explained step-by-step solution! Check below to see the full list of supported Math problems.

"Students can use it as a tool to learn math, while parents can use it to quickly check their kid's homework. With PhotoMath, you can have a math teacher in your pocket! :)

P"hotoMath currently supports arithmetic, fractions, decimal numbers, linear equations, equation systems and several functions like logarithms. Support for new math is constantly added in new releases as we aim to make the entire math easy to learn and fun.

"Handwritten text is not supported, only printed problems from math textbooks."