

Ten Tips for Assistive Techies

Collaborate and communicate to promote the use and success of technology in the classroom.

Use it in the classroom.



Technology increases learning and participation when students and teachers have access to it. Create classroom opportunities for the student to communicate, read, and write with peers.

Make sure it works.



Test equipment before delivering it to a classroom. Keep staff supplied with batteries. Make sure people can contact you when things go wrong!

Start with the familiar.



People use equipment they recognize. Try a switch interface that looks like a mouse. Explore accessibility options or books on tape before resorting to complex eyegaze systems and voice recognition.



Keep it simple.

Multiple contraptions may lead to abandonment of the assistive technology. Avoid moving computers from classroom to classroom. Find solutions that require little time and maintenance.



Use existing equipment.

Look in classrooms and storerooms to find assistive equipment. Speak with staff members and administration about your options before buying new equipment.

Upgrade only when necessary!



Focus until you achieve your first goal, then set another goal. It takes valuable time for a student to master a new device. Don't try to keep up with the pace of changing technology.

Work with the team.



Involve the team in the process of selecting equipment. Consult with parents, teachers and paraeducators before programming devices or creating computer-based activities. Ask for their feedback.

Train others in a natural setting.



The natural setting provides authentic problem-solving opportunities which trainees can immediately apply to the classroom, lunchroom or playground environment.

Start small and wait for questions.



Refrain from highlighting every feature of a complex device. Wait for others to master the basic features before introducing advanced details. Limit your use of technical jargon.



Set specific goals.

Apply technology to a specific task or goal. Write goals that align with the IEP and learning objectives, are relevant to the environment and easily understood by the team.