

Assistive Technology: Receiving a Student Using Technology

An Interview with Dr. Penny Reed

About Dr. Reed...

- Penny Reed, Ph.D., is an independent consultant in the field of special education specializing in assistive technology services. She was founder and director of the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative from 1993 to 2003 and has been a teacher, consultant and administrator in the field of special education for over thirty years. In 1992 Dr. Reed received the National Leadership Award from the Technology and Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. She has contributed to or written many assistive technology books and is a member of the Leadership Team for Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services (www.qiat.org). She regularly consults and provides training on a variety of topics related to assistive technology with a special focus on helping school districts improve their delivery of assistive technology services.

What can members of a team do when they receive a student who already has assistive technology?

- “The greater the distance between the people that do the assessment and the people who do the implementation, the more likely for failure”
- If there is good documentation accompanying the student, start there (why was it chosen?)
- Re-SETT (Zabala and Bowser) Student, Environment, Tasks, and Tools
 - Reviewing and re-framing the AT implementation
 - <http://www.connsensebulletin.com/resett.html>
- Pull together a team to support the student
 - the student, the parent(s), the classroom teacher (key), Special Ed Assistant, support staff (e.g. OT/PT, SLP)
 - look at the student, his/her goals (IEP), what tasks has the technology been supporting in the past
 - determine if the technology will meet his/her current needs
- If a roadblock occurs (e.g. team does not know what the technology does or how to use it) – don’t wait - find the resources and/or call for help!

Notes

What can sending teams do to help receiving teams in the future?

- Ensure there is adequate documentation for the student and his/her use of technology
- Teach the student self-advocacy skills around using the technology so he/she can explain it if necessary to the receiving team

Notes

If, after the Re-SETT process, a receiving team determines the technology no longer meets the student's needs, is it alright to stop using it?

- First, be very sure that the technology doesn't meet the needs – make sure team members truly understand the technology and what it can do – do the homework!
- Avoid the tendency to throw out technology before you should
- If the student has truly outgrown it and the needs have changed, then it is time to consider other solutions

Notes