

# *Establishing Assistive Technology in a Rural School District*

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Presented by Lincoln County School District #2  
July, 2010

# What is Assistive Technology?

- The IDEA of 2004 mandates the provision of assistive technology (AT) and provides definitions of assistive technology devices and services.
- Assistive technology devices are "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities."

# What is Assistive Technology?

- Assistive technology services are "any services that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device." Services include the following:
  - Evaluating
  - Providing devices
  - Selecting, designing, customizing
  - Maintaining, repairing
  - Coordinating
  - Training/Technical Assistance-student, family, and school service providers



# Localize AT...Why?

- Location and proximity
- Ability to quickly respond to student needs
- Capacity to work with teams for high quality assessment and service delivery
- Availability of AT devices

# Localized AT

- Vision
  - Build and sustain the capacity to provide effective AT evaluation, technology, services, and technical assistance to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities in Lincoln County School District #2.
- Overview

# Development of AT Team

“In Assistive Technology (AT), an army of one is often not enough.”

Assistive Technology Assessments:  
A Team Approach is Best; An Interview  
with Dr. Roger O. Smith

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link:

[http://www.ucp.org/ucp\\_channel.doc.cfm  
/%201/14/86/86-86/5028](http://www.ucp.org/ucp_channel.doc.cfm/%201/14/86/86-86/5028)

# Forming LCSD2 AT Team

- Team formed January 2003
- Initially consisted of SLP and two special education teachers
- SLP received Advanced Assessment Training through University of Nevada at Las Vegas and RIATT @ NASDSE
- SLP and two special education teachers went to a workshop with WIND/WATR
- Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology

# Evolution of LCSD2 AT Team

- One special education teacher left team; added OT to team
- High needs special education teacher wrote grant for AT loan library and joined team
- OT and SLP went to workshop to begin writing policy and procedure for AT in LCSD2
- AT team began online training for Basic Certification in Assistive Technology from Research Institute for Technology and Training (National Association of State Directors of Special Education)



# Current Status of LCSD2 AT Team

- Team will have at least an OT, SLP, and two special education teachers
- Three-year commitment to team
- Continuing changes to policy and procedure
- Ongoing training

# Training Opportunities

- Instructional Technology training opportunities
- WATR/WIND trainings
- Vendor online or onsite trainings
- National conventions
  - California State University-Northridge (CSUN) Center on Disabilities AT Training Program
  - Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA)
  - Closing the Gap (CTG)
  - Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)

# Working Together Effectively

- “A team is an integral part of any organization. It consists of a group of two or more people working together to achieve a specific task or outcome. Now more than ever, team members need to work together effectively to accomplish tasks. . . . By understanding the different approaches, strengths and weaknesses of the type, the organization can improve team performance by leveraging team members’ natural strengths. Understanding these types, both of oneself and of others, can help team members open themselves to different perspectives and thus more effectively solve problems, resolve conflicts and improve collaboration and team cohesiveness.”

# Referral Process

- Pre-Referral Steps:
  - Implement classroom accommodations and interventions
  - Consult AT Consideration Guide
  - Conduct AT trials – low tech or limited high tech trials

# Initiating the Referral

- Case manager contacts AT chairperson to discuss the referral
- Case manager completes referral forms
- Referral for AT assessment may or may not be documented on IEP at this point

# Referral Forms

- Request for Assistive Technology Consideration
- Parent letter explaining assessment process
- Permission to photograph
- Permission to test (state form)

# Assignment of Team Leader

- AT chairperson assigns assessment team leader
- Assigned on rotation basis – or by student need
- Forms sent to assessment team leader by AT chairperson

# Responsibilities of Team Leader

- Coordinates assessment day with case manager
- Determines observations, interviews, trials, and prepares schedule for day of assessment
- Collects work samples
- Schedules brainstorm session with case manager
- Meet with case manager after brainstorm session to prepare Assistive Technology Assessment Plan
- Conduct follow-up contacts and documentation of trials
- Compile final Assistive Technology Assessment Report and recommendations



# Initial Assessment Day

- Preparation
- Assessment Resources
- Equipment
- Procedures
- Team Collaboration

# Preparation

## Background Knowledge:

- Universal Design for Learning
- SETT Framework – Dr. Joy Zabala

Dr. Zabala is the Director of Technical Assistance for Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) and for the National Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center  
[www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org)

# Assessment Resources

- ASNAT: Assessing Student Needs for Assistive Technology (formerly WATI – Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative)
- FEAT: Functional Evaluation for Assistive Technology
- Assessments unique to discipline: language assessments, occupational therapy assessments, seating and positioning, vision, etc.
- Others: AT Consideration Checklist (University of Georgia) EvaluWare, Life Space Access Profile, Every Move Counts, Communication Matrix...many more , both commercial and free on-line

Hey! Can I Try That?

<http://www.otap-oregon.org/Pages/OTAPPublications.aspx>

A free student handbook for choosing and using assistive technology.

Texas Assistive Technology Network

<http://www.texasat.net/default.aspx?name=trainmod.reading>

An awesome collection of resources on assistive technology supports for struggling readers.

Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (WATI) Assessment Forms

<http://www.wati.org>

A comprehensive collection of reproducible assistive technology assessment forms.

Fritschi's Assistive Technology Tool Chart

<http://fritschi.home.mindspring.com/tools2.html>

A chart that organizes a variety of assistive technologies by area of need with vendor links.

Source: National Institute for Literacy <http://www.nifl.gov/>

# ASNAT AT Checklist

*The AT Checklist is a concise listing of assistive technology arranged by the task for which it would be utilized. Categories are:*

- \*Seating, Positioning and Mobility
- \*Communication
- \*Motor Aspects of Writing
- \*Reading
- \*Organization
- \*Activities of Daily Living
- \*Hearing
- \*Computer Access
- \*Composition of Written Material
- \*Mathematics
- \*Recreation & Leisure
- \*Vision
- \*Multiple Challenges

# Local Resources

- Case Manager Checklist
- File Review Form
- Interview Form
- Environmental Observation Form -  
ASNAT p. 5
- Assistive Technology Assessment Plan

[www.lcsd2.org/assistivetechology](http://www.lcsd2.org/assistivetechology)

# Equipment to Take

- Assessment computer with various software
- Camera
- Reading Probes
- Specific equipment to trial according to area of need -- examples: portable word processor, hand-held dictionary, reading pen, organization notebooks/files, motivator, reacher, etc.
- Forms for file review, observation, interviews

# Procedures

- Case Manager/Team Leader  
Collaboration prior to assessment day
- Team Leader assigns team member responsibilities for the day
- Assignments rotate so all team members get experience with various assignments; two members conduct trials



# Procedures

- File Review: medical history, assessments, aptitude and achievement reports, details of services, etc.
- Interviews: student, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, anyone pertinent such as service providers, case managers, community employer, if needed
- Observations: multiple observers, multiple environments
- Trials of software and equipment

# Observations

“The observer’s role is to capture what is occurring, not to make decisions or even formal recommendations; that comes later in the decision-making part of the assessment process.

During the observation(s), the observers are simply gathering information.”

--ASNAT Ch. 1

# Team Collaboration

- Team members record impressions, discuss findings during the day
- Separate write-ups emailed to Team Leader, who compiles information for team
- Continued trials conducted; Team Leader follows up with Case Manager
- Students on agenda at weekly AT Team meetings; team conducts its own preliminary brainstorm to generate ideas prior to actual brainstorm

# Implementation



# Implementation Process

- Weekly AT team meetings
- Notebook
- School building representatives
- Brainstorm
- Assistive Technology Assessment Plan (ATAP)
- End-of-year site visits

# Technical Support



# Tech Support for Assistive Technology

- Why is tech support essential?
- What is involved?
  - Hardware
    - Computers
    - Devices
  - Software
    - Dragon Naturally Speaking
    - Clicker
    - Intellitools Classroom Suite
  - Training

# Maintenance and Troubleshooting

- Software
  - Keeping software running to it's full potential and fixing errors or problems.
- Hardware
  - Keeping computers and devices running to their full potential and fixing errors or problems.
- Research is important to understand the needs and compatibility of devices. Also, research into which devices are available.



# Tech Support Responsibilities

- Helpdesk
  - Software and device needs
  - Training needs
- Loan Library
- Website

# Questions?

- If you would like to know more about the Lincoln County School District #2 assistive technology process, you can contact Beverly McEntire at [bmcentire@lcsd2.org](mailto:bmcentire@lcsd2.org).

Thank you!

