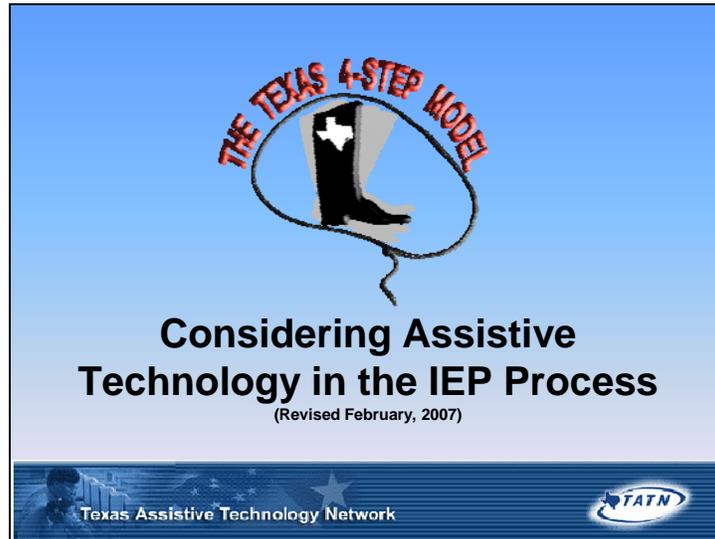


Slide 1



**SAY:**

Welcome to Considering Assistive Technology in the IEP Process.

In this presentation, we will discuss the foundations of AT consideration and provide you with a process that can be used to consider whether or not a student with disabilities requires AT devices and services to receive a free, appropriate public education as required by law during the development of the student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

**(Revised February, 2007)**

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**

**A Professional Development Module**  
available at [www.texasat.net](http://www.texasat.net)

Collaboratively developed by



- Texas Assistive Technology Network
- Texas Technology Access Project
- The University of Texas, Department of Special Education, College of Education

2

**SAY:**

The Texas 4-Step Training Module was collaboratively developed by:

- The Texas Assistive Technology Network, a collaboration between the twenty educational service centers (ESCs) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) with Region 4 ESC providing statewide leadership
- The Texas Technology Access Project, the State Assistive Technology Act Project, Texas Center for Disability Studies, University of Texas at Austin
- The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Special Education, College of Education.

**This module was updated in 2006 to reflect the passage of IDEA 2004 and the Final Regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Education in the summer of 2006.**

You have been furnished with a copy of the slide set to serve as a note-taking guide. It frees you to concentrate on the presentation and add your own notes rather than copying the slides. Your handouts also include a Resource Guide, which includes contact information, legal information, details related to the consideration process, and helpful websites.

**Note to Presenter:** Please be sure to have all the materials needed in order to deliver this module on Considering Assistive Technology in the IEP Process.

This includes the following:

Slide presentation

Presenter notes

Participant Note-taking Guide

Participant Resource Guide

Considering AT in the IEP Process video

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**





**Objectives**

Participants in “Considering AT in the IEP Process” will learn about:

- **Federal and state legal contexts**
- **Basic definitions and examples**
- **The Texas 4-Step Model**
- **Resources**

3

**SAY:**

During this session, you will receive information and participate in exercises that will enable you to better understand and use:

- Federal and state legal contexts of AT consideration,
- Basic definitions and examples of AT devices and services,
- The Texas 4-Step Model, a process for considering a student’s need for AT devices and services, and
- Resources to support AT consideration.

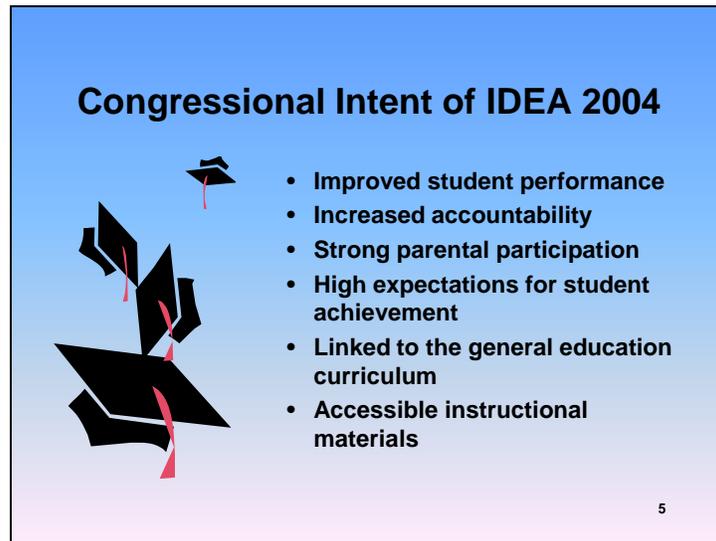
First, we’ll take a brief look at the history of federal legislation related to the education of students with disabilities.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



## The Legal Evolution of Access

- EHA 1975 *Access to schools*
- IDEA 1990 *Access to classrooms*
- IDEA 1997 *Access to general  
education curriculum*
- IDEA 2004 *Access to instructional  
materials*



**Congressional Intent of IDEA 2004**

- Improved student performance
- Increased accountability
- Strong parental participation
- High expectations for student achievement
- Linked to the general education curriculum
- Accessible instructional materials

5

**SAY:**

With the passage of IDEA 2004, Congress affirmed the strong emphasis in several areas originally made explicit in IDEA'97.

First, there is the expectation that the academic progress of ALL students will continue to increase and that progress will be measured through participation in statewide assessments so that the educational growth of all students is documented and schools are held accountable.

As previously, parents are to be actively involved in the development of the education programs of their children. Schools and families working together are to have high expectations for the educational achievement of EVERY student and plan educational programs that lead to the achievement of those expectations.

Underscoring congressional intent that every student have the opportunity to make progress in the general education curriculum to the greatest extent possible, the IDEA 2004 included a mandate that states provide accessible textbooks and core instructional materials to students with disabilities in a timely manner.

The Congressional intents are clear. ALL students are to have opportunities that enable them to achieve strong educational results, HOWEVER, some students with disabilities require the support of AT devices and services for access to the curriculum, which includes access to instructional materials. AT provides the opportunity for students to benefit from higher expectations and to achieve expected educational results.

Please turn your attention to the video to see some examples of how AT has improved the educational participation and achievement of students with disabilities.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SLIDE AND TO SHOW VIDEO.**

Slide 6

*Considering AT in the IEP Process Video Introduction*

- **PLAY** - click in the video viewing area and wait for the video to load
- **PAUSE** - click on the video viewing area once
- **RESUME** after pausing - click in the video viewing area again
- **FAST FORWARD/REVERSE** - use the arrow keys on the keyboard
- **ADVANCE SLIDE** - click outside the video viewing area
- **BEGINNING OF VIDEO** – press the Esc key

6

**NOTE TO PRESENTER:**

**You MUST have QuickTime to view video.**

**ALSO, please be patient and plan ahead – only click ONCE within the video frame and wait for video to load – this may take up to 1 minute.**

**PLAY** - click in the video viewing area and wait for the video to load (you must have QuickTime to view video)

**PAUSE** - click on the video viewing area once

**RESUME** after pausing - click in the video viewing area again

**FAST FORWARD/REVERSE** - use the arrow keys on the keyboard

**ADVANCE SLIDE** - click outside the video viewing area

**BEGINNING OF VIDEO** – press the Esc key

**Congressional Intent of IDEA 2004**



**IDEA 2004 affirms emphasis on AT as a means to support educational achievement**

- Requires consideration of AT in the IEP process
- Places responsibility for decision-making with ARD committees
- Requires accessible instructional materials

7

**SAY:**

Because of what is now known about the positive impact that well-selected and well-integrated AT devices and services can have on the educational achievement of students with disabilities, Congress also strengthened the emphasis on AT devices and services in IDEA '97 and affirmed that in IDEA 2004.

Prior to the requirement that AT be considered during the development of the IEP for ALL students with disabilities, in many parts of the country either AT was not considered at all for many students with disabilities, or the responsibility for AT decision-making was maintained by small district-level expert teams. Because Congress intends that all students have the AT devices and services that they require in order to benefit from their educational programs and participate in general curriculum, IDEA '97 shifted the responsibility for AT decision-making to the campus level, where it remains today, by including the requirement that each IEP Team consider the student's possible need for AT as they develop the IEP. Each IEP Team has the responsibility to determine whether the student can work toward mastery of the goals and objectives set forth in his educational program, in the least restrictive environment without AT devices and services or whether AT devices and services are required for the student to progress appropriately and benefit from FAPE. In 2004, Congress added requirements regarding accessible instructional materials.

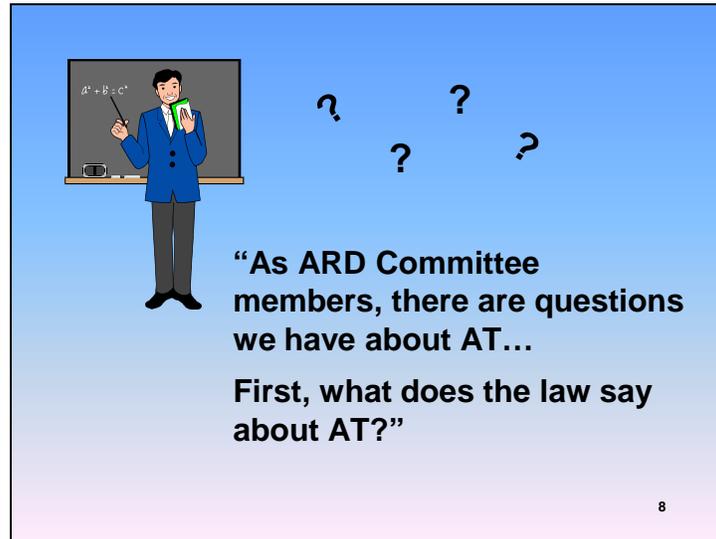
In Texas the IEP team is referred to as the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. For purposes of this training, we will be referring to both as appropriate. When referring to federal law, IEP Team will be used; otherwise ARD Committee will be used.

Although IDEA 2004 continues to make it clear that members of the IEP Team must consider the student's need for AT, there is nothing in the law that prescribes HOW this is supposed to be done.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



Slide 8



**“As ARD Committee members, there are questions we have about AT...  
First, what does the law say about AT?”**

8

**SAY:**

Since 1997 when AT decision-making shifted to the campus level, many ARD Committee members have found that they need increased knowledge and skills in order to make informed decisions about whether or not a student requires AT devices and services. When faced with the legal mandate to consider AT devices and services, team members find themselves asking several important questions.

The remainder of this session focuses on these questions and the answers.

First, there is a need to know about the federal and state legal issues related to AT service provision.

For the next few minutes, we will look at what IDEA 2004 says about AT from the federal perspective, and then we will look at what Texas has done to further strengthen the provision of AT services in the state.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**

A presentation slide with a blue background. On the left, there is a black hand icon. To its right, the text reads "IDEA 2004: Final Regulations" in bold black font. Below this, the word "Definitions" is written in bold. Underneath, two sections are listed: "Sec 300.5 - AT Devices" and "Sec 300.6 - AT Services". On the right side of the slide, there is a photograph of the United States Capitol building. In the bottom right corner of the slide, the number "9" is displayed.

**IDEA 2004:  
Final  
Regulations**

**Definitions**

**Sec 300.5 - AT Devices**

**Sec 300.6 - AT Services**

9

**The “hand” icon indicates that information can be found in the Resource Guide.**

**SAY:**

In your Resource Guide, you will find the definitions that explain what is meant anytime AT devices and services are referred to in IDEA 2004. These definitions are virtually identical to the definitions used in most federal and state legislation that refers to AT. **(PROVIDE TIME TO FIND PLACE IN RESOURCE GUIDE)**

**Read the definition of AT devices. (PROVIDE TIME)**

The definition of AT devices is broad and inclusive and begins with the words “any item.” The only items that are clearly excluded are “surgically implanted devices.” as explicitly stated in section (b) of the definition. Although there are some devices that were originally developed as AT tools, there are many common tools that can be considered AT if they are required by a student and written into his IEP. What makes an item AT is whether that item is required in order for the student to receive FAPE. The main focus of this module is to provide a process to assist in making this decision. Keep in mind, however, that an AT device must be an ITEM or THING... A person - perhaps, an assistant who acts as a scribe for a student who has difficulty writing - is NEVER AT.

**Read the definitions of AT services. (PROVIDE TIME)**

A wide range of services can be considered AT services; all of which relate to supporting a student and those around him in the selection, acquisition and use of an AT device. Those services include a functional evaluation in the student’s customary environments. This is sometimes needed to gather the information needed by the AT team to make a decision about whether AT devices are needed and, if so, the nature of those devices. Further, there are AT services that are related to the acquisition and maintenance of AT devices as well as training for the student, staff, parents, and others.

It has been found that when AT devices fail to meet the needs of the student, often the contributing factors behind that lack of success are related more to the lack of needed AT services than to the inappropriate selection of AT devices. Remember that, as you consider a student’s need for AT, you will be thinking not only about devices that the student might need, but also the services that will be required. For example, providing a communication aid for a student without adequate training for the teacher, student, and other key individuals would be a failure to provide a needed service.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**





The slide features a blue background with a white hand icon on the left. To the right of the icon, the text reads "IDEA 2004: Final Regulations" in bold black font. Below this, "Section 300.105" is underlined, followed by "- Assistive Technology" in bold black font. On the right side of the slide, there is a photograph of the Illinois State Capitol building. In the bottom right corner of the slide, the number "10" is displayed.

**The “hand” icon indicates that information can be found in the Resource Guide.**

**SAY:**

Although AT devices and services are included in several places in IDEA 2004, the principle references to them are found in Section 300.105 of the Final Regulations of IDEA 2004, which speaks to the responsibilities of each public agency, in our case, each school district.

As you see in your Resource Guide, Part A of Section 300.105 states that the school district must provide the AT devices and services that are required by the child as part of his special education, related services, and/or supplementary aids and services. In other words, districts are required, by law, to provide the AT devices and services that are required to implement the IEP, provide access to the general curriculum, and assure the provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE).

When AT is needed, it becomes part of a free, appropriate public education for the student.

Part B of the same section states that school-owned AT must be made available to the child at home or in other educational settings IF THE ARD Committee DETERMINES that access to the AT in those places is necessary for the child to receive FAPE.

An example of when the ARD Committee might determine that AT is needed in other settings is when the student has homework that must be completed and the AT is needed in order for the child to do the homework.

***Ask the group for additional examples.***

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



The slide features a blue background with a white hand icon on the left. To the right of the icon, the text reads "IDEA 2004: Final Regulations". Below this, the text "Section 300.324(a)(2)(v)" is underlined, followed by a bullet point: "– Consideration of Special Factors". On the right side of the slide, there is a photograph of the United States Capitol building. The number "11" is located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

**Note:** The “hand” icon indicates that information can be found in the Resource Guide.

**SAY:**

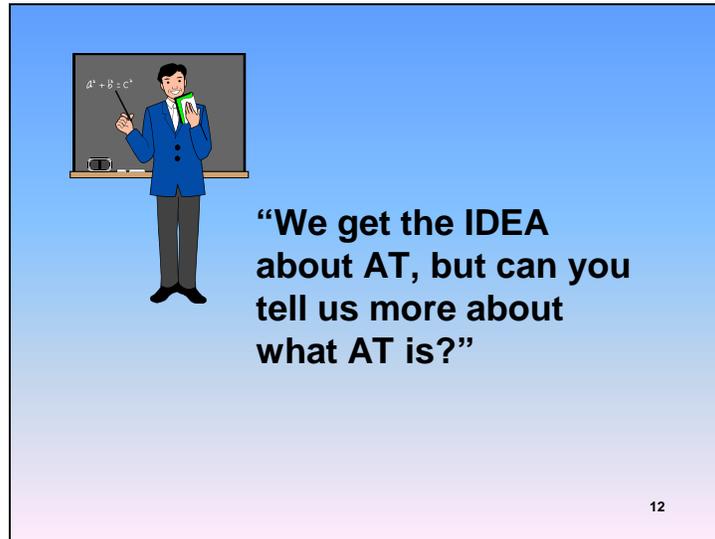
One of the things mentioned earlier when we were talking about the Congressional intent of IDEA 2004 was that additional responsibility has been given to the ARD Committee, which, by legislative requirement, is a collaborative team that includes school personnel, parents, and the student when appropriate.

Among the responsibilities assigned to the ARD Committee by IDEA '97 and affirmed in IDEA 2004 is the “Consideration of Special Factors” during the development of the IEP. Whether or not the student requires AT devices and services must be considered by EVERY ARD Committee during the development of EVERY IEP, both when the initial IEP is developed and every time it is revised.

Although consideration may be a relatively brief process, it does require significant thought. The ARD Committee is charged with the responsibility to determine whether or not AT devices and services are needed for the student to work toward mastery of the goals and objectives set forth in the educational program in the least restrictive environment.

Consideration of a student’s need for AT requires more than just checking a box on a form that AT has been considered. We will be talking soon about a relatively simple process that, when undertaken with care, constitutes appropriate consideration.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



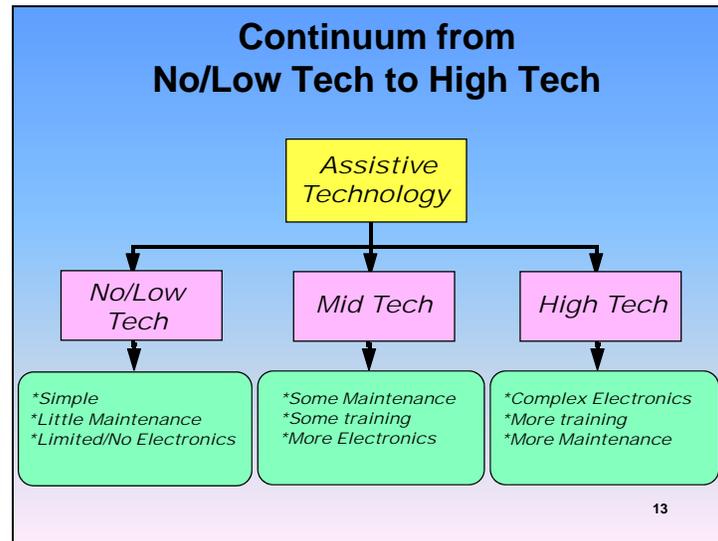
**“We get the IDEA  
about AT, but can you  
tell us more about  
what AT is?”**

12

**SAY:**

Another question, which is often asked by ARD Committee members, is “What is AT?” As you look at the definition of AT devices found in IDEA 2004, you can see that a wide range of items would fall under this very broad definition. In this section you will have an opportunity to learn about examples of several different kinds of AT.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



**SAY:**

There are literally thousands of items that can fall into the definition of AT devices, so some classification system is helpful.

Often, when people think of technology, they think only of high-tech products, such as computers and high-tech communication aids, but the range of AT devices falls into a broad continuum from no tech/low tech, non-electronic technology to very complex high technology. Different people use different classification systems. What is important to remember is that there is a broad range of items that can be defined as AT; it is not essential to categorize the items.

Some AT devices are relatively simple, but are potentially very effective “no tech/low tech” devices. Sometimes they have no electronics in them, and sometimes they have very simple electronics which are often powered by standard batteries. Talking spell checkers, pencil grips, slant boards, adapted feeding utensils and single-message speaking devices are some examples of no/low tech devices.

Other AT devices are a bit more complex and fall into the lower end of “high-tech.” Devices in this category are called “mid-tech” by some people. They have a degree of electronic functioning and almost always have some sort of power source that requires some level of care. These devices are potentially very powerful, but for many users often require less training and support to get started. Some examples of mid-tech devices include portable word processors, multiple-message communication aids, and some alternate computer access devices.

Examples of the most complex, but often necessary, AT category – high-tech - include computers, academic support software, sophisticated communication aids, and more complex computer input systems such as those controlled by eye gaze or speech. Tools in this category generally require more training and maintenance than less complex tools, which needs to be considered when determining what AT services are needed.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**





**“We know more about AT now, but how do we consider AT as we develop the IEP?”**

14

**SAY:**

This brings us to the next question...Now that you have an idea about the range of what is included in AT, how do you decide what, if any, AT is needed or required by an individual student?

Let us focus on a process that supports ARD Committee members as they consider whether or not a student needs AT devices and services.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



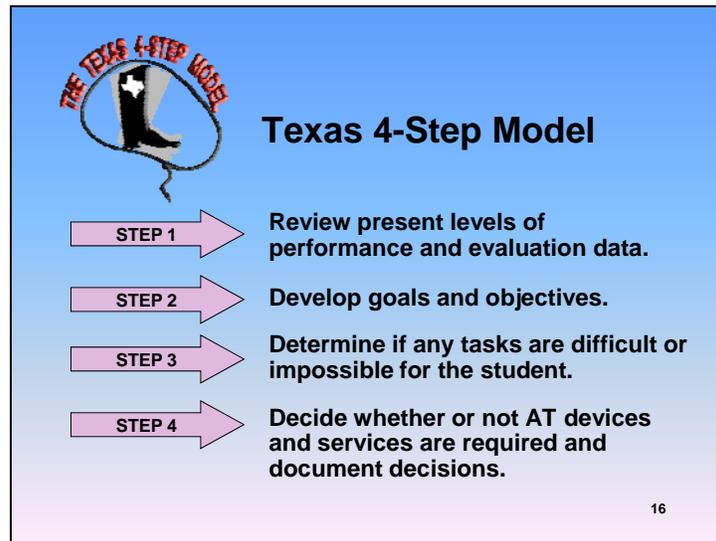
**SAY:**

Considering a student's need for AT is NOT a separate process, but is embedded in the special education and IEP processes. It is embedded in just the same way as any other special education service, related service, or supplementary aid/service is.

Although AT consideration occurs at all stages of the special education process, our focus today is on how the consideration is embedded into the IEP development process.

Let's look at how the Texas 4-Step Model guides you through this process.

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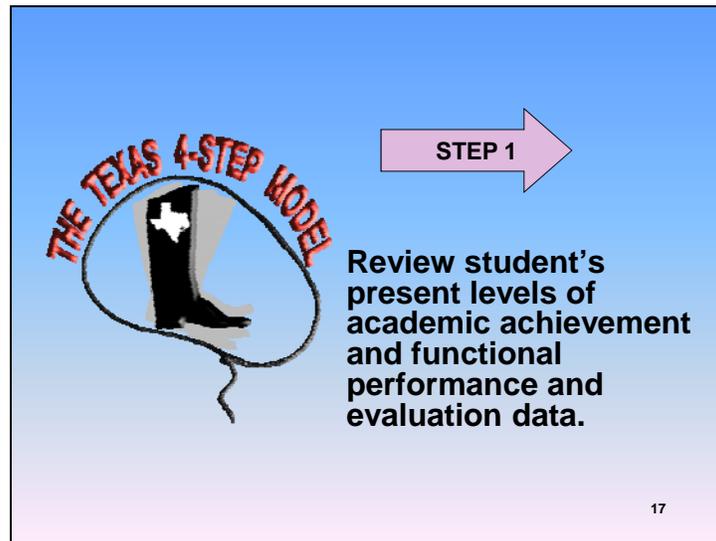


**SAY:**

***You will notice that the Texas 4-Step Model mirrors the IEP development process.*** The consideration of whether or not a student needs AT is integrated into this process, and logically, follows the same steps and takes place at the same time. When completed in the IEP sequence, the consideration of AT is a relatively brief, reasonably simple process during which ARD Committee members determine if they have the information they need to make a decision or if more information is needed before a decision can be made.

As we proceed through each step of the Texas 4-Step Model, notice how the steps lead to responsive and responsible decision-making based on the student's needs, abilities, and educational program.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



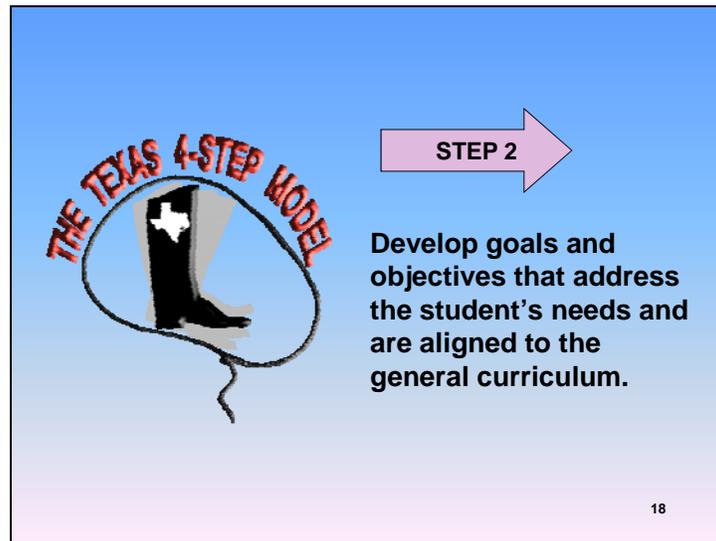
**SAY:**

Step 1 involves discussion of the student's present levels of performance and the review of evaluation data. Take care to notice what has been said about AT.

When the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are discussed, it is important to note whether or not the student has been USING AT as an accommodation or modification that has enabled him to reach the present level of performance in any area. Further, as the areas of need in the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are discussed, it is critical to begin thinking about if and how technology might be included in the student's program to support increases in the student's educational performance.

In addition to direct recommendations about AT that some members of the evaluation team may offer, evaluation data can provide critical information that will be of significant use in making determinations about AT. For example, if during an evaluation for a suspected visual disability, data indicate that the student has difficulty seeing text of less than a certain size, it would be important to think about how AT can make all text accessible to the student. This example is one of the many ways that we think about a student's need for AT devices and services.

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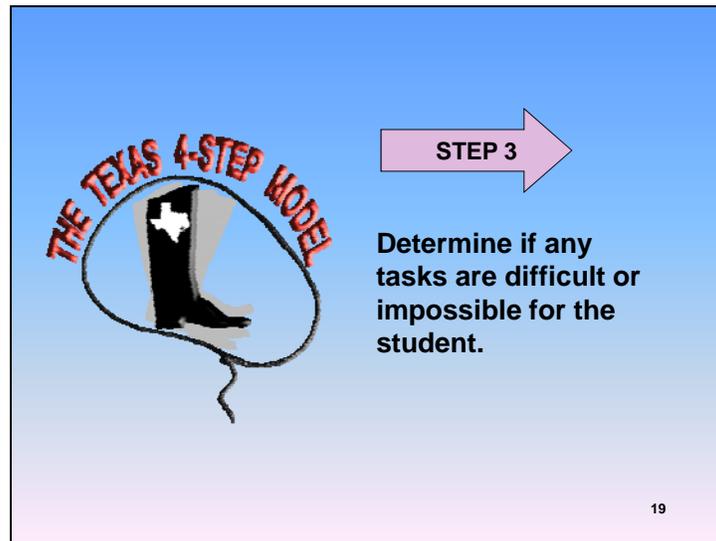


**SAY:**

As the goals and objectives are being developed in Step 2, ARD Committee members must keep in mind that the goals and objectives need to be aimed toward what the student needs to be able to learn to do to participate in and benefit from the educational process, **NOT** what the student is able to do at the time that the goals and objectives are being developed. As IDEA 2004 so firmly points out, high expectations, student progress, and student achievement are focal points of the special education process and the goals and objectives in the IEP must reflect these expectations.

After the ARD Committee determines what the student needs to learn and writes the goals and objectives, it is important to determine what specific tasks the student must be able to do to work toward mastery of those goals and objectives.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



**SAY:**

In Step 3, ARD Committee members think about what is happening in the classroom and other environments that enable students to make educational progress. In each educational environment, there are tasks that students need to be able to do in order to participate actively.

***You will also want to think about whether or not the core instructional materials used during these tasks are readily accessible for this student or whether the student will need AT to access the materials.***

As team members think about identified tasks, they determine if any of the tasks would be difficult or impossible for the student to work on at the appropriate level of independence.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**

**Instructional/Functional Skills**



The illustration shows a group of seven stylized human figures in various colors (green, yellow, red, purple, blue) holding hands in a line. From left to right: a person in a wheelchair, a person with a cane, a person with a white cane, a person with a hearing aid, a person with a hearing aid, a person with a hearing aid, and a person with a hearing aid.

- Reading
- Written Expression
- Math
- Communication
- Recreation
- Daily organization
- Seating/Positioning
- Hearing
- Seeing
- Self-care
- Mobility
- Other areas

[A Consideration Resource Guide with video links](#)

20

**SAY:**

When thinking about tasks, the ARD Committee will examine instructional and functional skills that are pertinent to the student's tasks in his customary learning environments and think about how the specific needs of the student will impact the student's performance of those tasks. It is possible that the student's ability to work on educational tasks that will enable the student to move toward achievement of educational goals may be compromised by needs in one of more of these skills areas. Think about how technology might support or supplement needed skills that are of concern so that learning tasks can be addressed.

***Please open your resource guide to the section entitled "Assistive Technology Consideration Resource Guide," developed by the Georgia Project for Assistive Technology.***

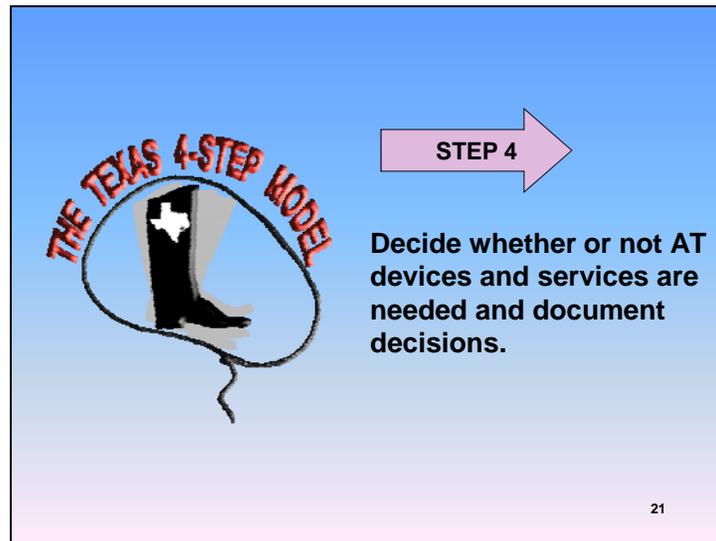
The Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) has developed a document which lists samples of functional tasks required in schools such as writing, reading etc and provides examples of common standard classroom tools, modifications and accommodations of tasks and expectations, and possible AT solutions. This framework is often useful for ARD Committees to use to get started in the consideration process. GPAT also has an online version of this form that has video links that provide additional information about classes of AT tools. ([http://coefaculty.valdosta.edu/spe/ATRB/Video\\_Tips.htm](http://coefaculty.valdosta.edu/spe/ATRB/Video_Tips.htm))

There are several other sources that can be located through the Web site resources listed in your guide. Each of these tools can assist you with this step of the consideration process. The Resources section of the QIAT web site might be a good place to look.

As the team identifies tasks in the instructional and functional skills that are of concern, they begin to think about the supports and services - including AT devices and services which could be included in the student's educational program to support growth in that area.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**





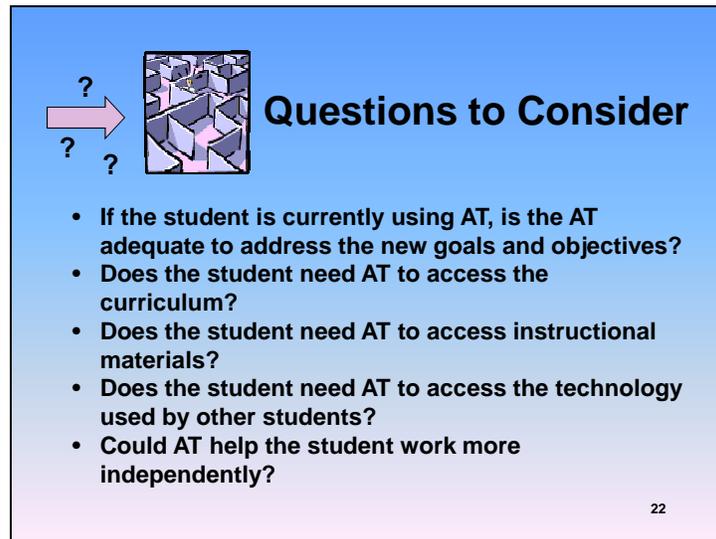
**SAY:**

Finally, in Step 4, ARD Committee members decide whether or not AT devices and services are required for the student to make progress in the educational program that has been developed. Team members come to one of three possible conclusions that will be discussed in depth shortly: AT is not needed, AT is needed, or more information is needed. Once decisions are made, those decisions are documented in the IEP.

Discussion and decisions made in Step 4 follow logically from Steps 1, 2, and 3. The first three steps serve as the context and supporting data source for the decisions the ARD Committee makes about the student's need for AT, just as they do for other supports and services.

As the team considers whether or not AT is needed by the student, there are several questions that might be helpful for them to ask themselves.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



**Questions to Consider**

- If the student is currently using AT, is the AT adequate to address the new goals and objectives?
- Does the student need AT to access the curriculum?
- Does the student need AT to access instructional materials?
- Does the student need AT to access the technology used by other students?
- Could AT help the student work more independently?

22

**SAY:**

While many supports and services can be provided to a student who requires them as part of his FAPE, the services selected for an individual student should always be aimed at supporting the student in a way that fosters the development of competence, confidence and independence - three skills areas that are critical not only to the learning tasks at hand, but also to lifelong learning and effective living.

**PROVIDE TIME TO LOOK AT OR DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS**

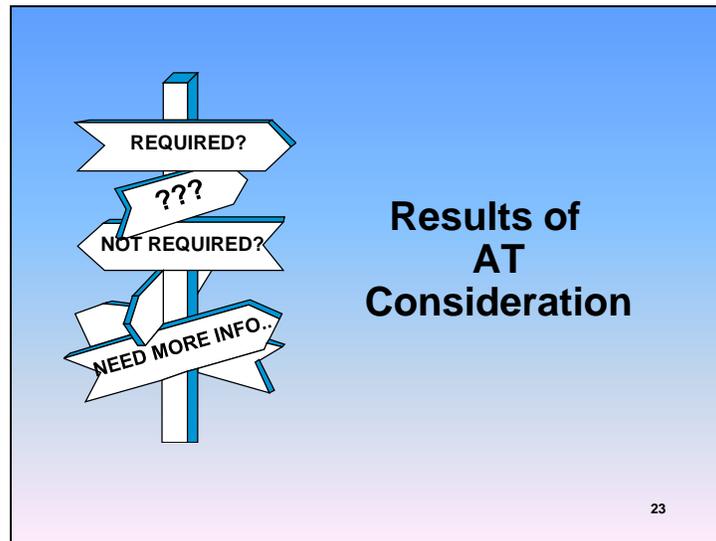
As you weigh alternatives, this example may help.

Think about a student who, because of his disability, is unable to produce legible hand-written text, a critical functional skill in almost all educational endeavors. One of the first accommodations that often comes to mind is that the student be allowed to dictate his work to a scribe who then puts his words into writing. Though this accommodation may meet the short-term need and be quite efficient, there are some inherent problems. One is that, if the scribe is not present, the student cannot write. Another is that the student often does not have the opportunity and responsibility to learn all of the skills that it takes to be a writer and to participate actively in learning the writing process. Consider that alternative strategy of an AT tool that enables the student to write independently and, and thus, take responsibility for his own written work, just as other students are expected to do. Think about the long-term results in student growth and independence that each of these options provide. This is not to say that a scribe is never needed or never a viable solution, just that both the short-term and the long term implications of various options must be considered as decisions are being made.

As team members consider the student's AT needs, they ask themselves whether technology would enable to student to work more independently, more effectively or more efficiently.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**





**SAY:**

While consideration of a student's possible need for AT devices and services requires serious effort on the part of all members of ARD Committees, the four steps of the process that we have just discussed, when imbedded in the IEP development process, will support the team in reaching an informed decision and provide the basis for documentation of that decision.

Basically, at this point in the process, teams will be able to reach one of three possible conclusions.

1. AT is not required because it is anticipated the student will be able to access the curriculum and make reasonable progress on his educational program without AT devices and services.
2. AT is required for the student to access the curriculum and make reasonable progress in his educational program, or
3. More information is needed before such a decision can be made.

Next, we'll look at what each of these decisions means and how they are to be documented in the student's IEP.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



**AT is Not Required**

**ARD Committee Considerations**

- AT may be needed in the future and should be reconsidered.
- Best practices indicate that the basis of the decision is documented.

24

**SAY:**

If, after completing the four steps of the consideration process, the ARD Committee anticipates that the student will be able to make reasonable educational progress without AT devices and services, the team has a reasonable basis for determining that AT is not required **at this time**. This decision at this time does not mean that AT should not be reconsidered in the future.

When the decision is made that AT is not required, best practices require documentation of the basis of that determination. Documenting the process by which the decision was reached not only provides evidence of compliance with the legal requirement to consider a student's AT needs but allows all parties concerned, including the student and parents, to understand how the decision was reached.

Let's discuss how this decision might be documented in the IEP.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



## AT is Not Required

### Documentation in the IEP

- The ARD Committee anticipates that the student will be able to:
  - participate in the educational program,
  - accomplish expected tasks, and
  - make reasonable progress toward mastery of IEP goals and objectives with typically available supports and services.

25

**SAY:**

Many districts have included the documentation of AT consideration in their IEP forms. If it is not included in the forms in your district, a consistent place should be selected and used across the district. Wording should make it clear that AT has been thoughtfully considered by the ARD Committee. Be sure to include evidence that supports the decision.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



## AT is Required

### ARD Committee Considerations

- **AT is required and the ARD Committee knows the nature and extent of the AT devices and services needed.**
- **AT devices and services to be provided are documented in the IEP.**

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**SAY:**

The second conclusion that the team may reach is that AT is required.

This decision is reached when, after completing the four steps of the AT consideration process, the ARD Committee anticipates that the student will NOT be able to make reasonable progress in his educational program without the use of AT devices and/or the support of AT services.

There are several instances in which this conclusion may be reached. Let's have a quick look at some of them.

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## AT is Required

**Examples**

- AT has been used to obtain present levels of academic achievement and functional performance and can adequately address the new goals and objectives.
- AT has been used to obtain present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, but different AT is needed to adequately address the new goals and objectives.
- AT has NOT been used previously but is needed to adequately address the new goals and objectives.

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**SAY:**

In the first instance, discussion and a review of data indicate that the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance were reached with the use of AT devices and/or the support of AT services. Following the development of the new goals and objectives, the ARD Committee finds that the same technology will provide needed and adequate support for working toward mastery of the new goals and objectives.

In the second instance, discussion and a review of data indicate that the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance were reached through the use of AT devices and/or the support of AT services. However, following the development of the new goals and objectives, the ARD Committee finds that additional or different technology is needed to work toward mastery of the new goals and objectives.

The third instance in which the team may decide that AT is required, is when a student has not previously required AT devices and services, but evaluation data and/or a review of the student's present levels of performance and new goals and objectives, reveals that the student will be unable to participate adequately or make reasonable progress in his educational program without AT devices and/or services.

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## AT is Required

### Documentation in the IEP

- The ARD Committee anticipates that the student will NOT be able to participate in the educational program or make reasonable progress toward mastery of IEP goals and objectives WITHOUT assistive technology devices and services.
- *The specifics of the devices and services must be included in the IEP.*

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**SAY:**

In each case, IF the collective members of the ARD Committee have the knowledge and skills to determine what AT devices and services will be required, the nature and extent of the required devices and/or services are recorded in the IEP.

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## More Information is Needed

**ARD Committee determines that additional information is needed to:**

- **Decide whether or not the student requires AT devices and services to participate in the educational program and make adequate progress toward mastery of IEP goals, or**
- **Determine the nature and extent of AT devices and services needed.**

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**SAY:**

The third possible result of the AT consideration process occurs when, after completing the four steps, members of the ARD Committee are unsure about whether or not AT is required or are unsure about the nature of the AT that is required and need more information before making a decision. When the ARD Committee reaches this conclusion, they make a request for assistance in gathering the additional information needed to make a decision.

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## More Information is Needed

### Documentation in the IEP

- **Additional information is needed and the type of assistance needed is documented.**
- *The specific assistance requested is written into the IEP as an AT service.*

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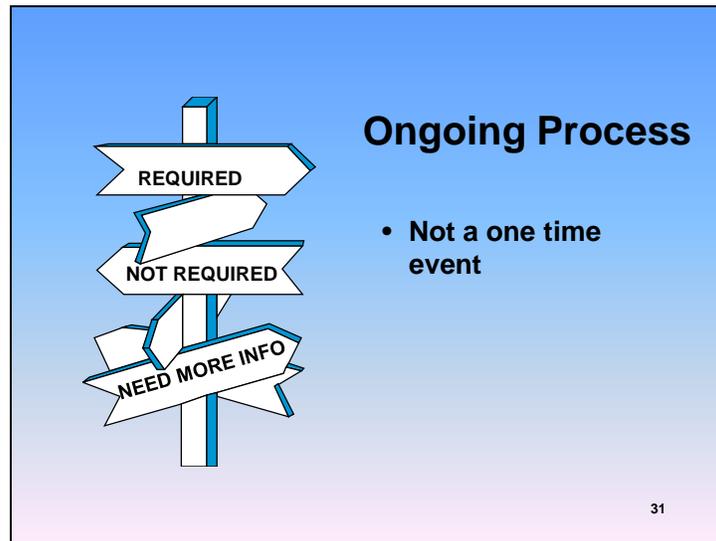
**SAY:**

If more information is needed about the student and his functional needs in his educational environments, the team requests an AT evaluation and documents the evaluation in the IEP as an AT service to be provided to the student. Depending upon the needs of the student and the information that is needed, such an evaluation may be brief or may involve the participation of several people and/or trials with various types of AT.

If the ARD Committee knows what the student needs to be able to do and knows the characteristics of an effective system, but needs help to identify specific tools which have those characteristics, they will want to consult with others who have more experience with AT tools to get help determining WHICH tools they want to try. Or they may want to try out some tools before making a decision.

When documenting that assistance is needed, document the type of assistance that is needed and include a time frame during which it is expected that a decision will be reached.

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**Ongoing Process**

- Not a one time event

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**SAY:**

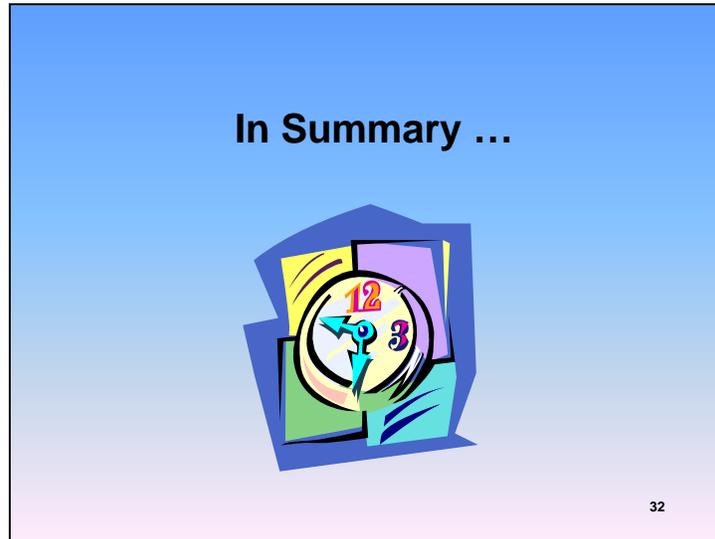
As we draw this section of our session to a close and look at each of these results of AT consideration, it is very important to stress that whatever decision is reached, it applies AT THIS TIME.

Consideration is an ongoing process that can be revisited at any point that there is reason to think that it should be... at any time when the student is experiencing unpredicted difficulties in his educational progress or when changes in the student, the environments, and the tasks indicate that the student's needs are not being met with current tools. And, of course, these decisions will be revisited at least once a year, as the next IEP is being developed.

AN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATION DECISION IS NEVER PERMANENT. It is based on the needs of the student in relation to his educational goals, objectives, and tasks at the present time and revised as needed.

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**SAY:**

We conclude this overview with a brief summary of the main points of this session.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**



## A Quick Review...

***Why must ARD Committees consider assistive technology?***

**ARD Committees consider AT because it is required by federal statute to do so during the development of the IEP**

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**REVIEW THE INFORMATION ON THE SLIDE**

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## A Quick Review...

*How do ARD Committees consider assistive technology?*

ARD Committees follow the 4-Step consideration process that is embedded in IEP Development and Special Education processes

- STEP 1 • Review evaluation data and present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.
- STEP 2 • Establish goals and objectives.
- STEP 3 • Determine difficult or impossible tasks.
- STEP 4 • Decide if AT devices and services are required and document.

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REVIEW THE INFORMATION ON THE SLIDE

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### **A Quick Review...**

***What decisions do ARD Committees make as a result of AT consideration?***

- AT is not needed at this time and the basis of this decision is documented in the IEP.
- AT is needed and is included in the IEP.
- More information is needed before a decision can be made.

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**REVIEW THE INFORMATION ON THE SLIDE**

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**Considering AT in the IEP Process: William's Vignette**

- **PLAY** - click in the video viewing area and wait for the video to load
- **PAUSE** - click on the video viewing area once
- **RESUME** after pausing - click in the video viewing area again
- **FAST FORWARD/REVERSE** - use the arrow keys on the keyboard
- **ADVANCE SLIDE** - click outside the video viewing area
- **BEGINNING OF VIDEO** – press the Esc key

36

**Ask the participants each of the Guiding Questions. Sample responses are provided.**

What are the instructional tasks that the student is expected to accomplish?

- Read grade level materials
- Generate written work using correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Participate in class discussions
- Complete assignments like other students

What barriers exist for this student to be able to accomplish the required tasks?

- Difficulty completing lengthy written assignments due to stamina and motor control
- Needs auditory spell checker so he can hear what has been written

How does assistive technology help the student be able to overcome barriers and accomplish instructional tasks independently?

- The portable word processor allows him to type his responses which is easier
- The micro recorder is a low tech solution to assist him with long written assignments.
- He is able to work independently with AT.
- He is able to check his spelling.

What are some other observations about the range of supports provided to the student?

- A range of supports are used from low tech to high tech

**Considering AT in the IEP Process: Trinity's Vignette**

- **PLAY** - click in the video viewing area and wait for the video to load
- **PAUSE** - click on the video viewing area once
- **RESUME** after pausing - click in the video viewing area again
- **FAST FORWARD/REVERSE** - use the arrow keys on the keyboard
- **ADVANCE SLIDE** - click outside the video viewing area
- **BEGINNING OF VIDEO** – press the Esc key

37

**Ask the participants each of the Guiding Questions. Sample responses are provided.**

What are the instructional tasks that the student is expected to accomplish?

- Communicate responses using signs
- Learn vocabulary words
- Follow directions and complete activities
- Trace letters with paper and pen
- Learn sight words

What barriers exist for this student to be able to accomplish the required tasks?

- Limited hearing impairs her ability to develop vocabulary
- Short attention span interferes with concentration
- Visual difficulties require Trinity to hold her head in an unusual position to be able to see materials and the monitor

How does assistive technology help the student overcome barriers and accomplish instructional tasks independently?

- Manipulatives are especially helpful for younger students
- Manipulatives such as sentence strips attached by Velcro, allow Trinity to actively respond to teacher directions and demonstrate learning of sight words
- Markers allow her to trace letters and provide her with kinesthetic responses
- Use of the computer significantly increases interest and motivation
- Use of the computer allows her to manipulate parts to demonstrate part/whole relationships

What are some other observations about the range of supports provided to the student?

- A range of assistive technology from no/low tech to high tech is used to sustain Trinity's attention and promote learning
- A change of positioning (allowing Trinity to kneel in the chair) when using the computer allows her to hold her head in a natural position when looking at the monitor
- Sign language is incorporated into all lessons



**Considering AT in the IEP Process: Jesus and Joseph's Vignette**

- **PLAY** - click in the video viewing area and wait for the video to load
- **PAUSE** - click on the video viewing area once
- **RESUME** after pausing - click in the video viewing area again
- **FAST FORWARD/REVERSE** - use the arrow keys on the keyboard
- **ADVANCE SLIDE** - click outside the video viewing area
- **BEGINNING OF VIDEO** – press the Esc key

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**Ask the participants each of the Guiding Questions. Sample responses are provided.**

What are the instructional tasks that the students are expected to accomplish?

- Both boys are expected to participate in the general curriculum
- Both boys are expected to complete written assignments

What barriers exist for these students to be able to accomplish the required tasks?

- Both students have physical disabilities which significantly limits their ability to write and complete classroom assignments independently

How does assistive technology help the students overcome barriers and accomplish instructional tasks independently?

- Without the technology, the physical limitations would impact work completion and frustrate students' efforts
- Without appropriate AT expectations would be lowered
- AT helps these students develop their ideas and generate written work
- Both boys have learned how to use the programs and devices to support their unique needs which allows them to work more independently
- AT provides the means for the boys to demonstrate mastery of their work

What are some other observations about the range of supports provided to the students?

- An adjustable height table is provided for Jesus to assist when he writes. A range of supports is used from no/low tech to high tech
- The school provides support for the boy's home computers and works with the student and family to ensure that programs are working properly
- As students mature, their involvement in selecting and using assistive technology enables them to gain control over their own learning
- Self-advocacy fosters self-esteem and can help students explain what they need and why they need it
- Use of the Internet provides an avenue for leisure activities





**“Now we know how to start, but how can we get help when we need it?”**

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**SAY:**

Another question that ARD Committee members often ask is how to get help when it is needed.

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The slide features a blue-to-white gradient background. In the top left corner, there is a black handprint icon. To its right, the word "Resources" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the title, there is a bulleted list of three items: "District Resources", "Regional Resources", and "Web-based Resources". In the bottom right corner of the slide, the number "40" is displayed.

- District Resources
- Regional Resources
- Web-based Resources

40

**Provide information on who to contact in your district as an AT resource**

**SAY:**

The contact information for the AT specialist at each of the educational service centers in Texas is available at the Texas Assistive Technology Network (TATN) website at <http://www.texasat.net>

In your Resource Guide there is a list of useful Web site resources that provide you with additional information about AT consideration.

You will also find contact information for the collaborators who sponsored the development of this training module. Please do not hesitate to contact them if they can be of help to you.

**CLICK THE MOUSE TO MOVE TO THE NEXT SLIDE.**

***“Where there was once an observer,  
let there now be a participant.”***



**- Eliot Eisner**

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**SAY:**

This session has provided you with the information needed for a basic understanding of AT consideration. It may have answered some questions for you, but, undoubtedly, has raised many.

As you go about considering AT, it is important to keep the IDEA concepts of high expectations and student achievement in the forefront.

We conclude with this statement by Eliot Eisner that embodies the big idea of what AT can do for students who, without assistance, could only be observers in the teaching/learning processes. These processes are critical to the successful educational results that are our goal for all students.

Thank you.

**THE END**

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**Texas Assistive Technology  
Network (TATN)**

[www.texasat.net](http://www.texasat.net)

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(713) 744-6386

Texas Assistive Technology Network



For more information on other modules and general assistive technology questions:

Region 4 ESC  
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Texas Assistive Technology Network (TATN)  
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