



DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

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A Framework for Aligning Technology With Transition Competencies

Part 1

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*Source: Career Development for Exceptional Individuals
The Council for Exceptional Children
Volume 22, Number 2, Fall 1999*

**Editors Note: Due to the length of this article, it will be presented in several parts over the next few months.*

Abstract: We describe a model that can be used as a framework to guide decision-making about the use of technology to facilitate the development of competencies that people with disabilities need in order to make a successful transition from school to various adult environments. Legal mandates associated with the provision of transition services and technology are described. Types of technology and the technology continuum are explained. Examples of technology applications to facilitate competencies in seven areas of human function that cut across different adult environments are provided. Several on-line sources of information about technology that can be used to support competencies needed for successful transition are provided. Implications are drawn for the use of the framework by those involved in planning and delivering transition services.

Over the latter third of the 20th century, the growth of technological devices that can enable people with disabilities to function more independently has been quite impressive. A glimmer of the potential of such devices for people with disabilities was described in an early article by Blackhurst (1965). Subsequent reviews documented the progress that was being made in realizing technology's vast capabilities (e.g., Blackhurst & Cross, 1993; Blackhurst & Holmeister, 1980; Blackhurst & Lahm, 2000; Cosmos Update, 1993). With the rapid development of microcomputer technology, increased research on instructional procedures, and the



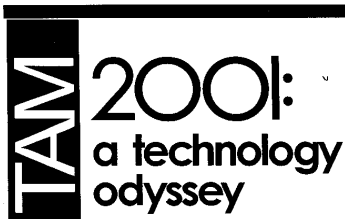
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invention of new devices and equipment to aid those with learning and behavioral disabilities, health problems, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, and communication disorders, the potential of technology is beginning to be realized. Technology is playing an increasingly important role in special education programs and in the transition of people with disabilities from the school environment to independent living, the workplace, higher education, and other post-school environments (Lindsey, 2000). Three of the challenges facing those who are involved in facilitating transition are (a) determining the competencies needed by people with differing disabilities to meet the functional demands placed on them in post-school environments, (b) identifying and selecting technologies that can be used to assist those individuals in acquiring and implementing competencies necessary for success, and (c) providing training and support for those who need to use technology in transition activities.

The purpose of this article is to describe a framework to guide decision-making by those involved in the second and third of the above challenges. Federal legislation related to the topic will be described, followed by a brief description of various types of technology and the technology continuum. A conceptual model will be presented that illustrates the variables involved in the delivery of transition services to people with disabilities and the ways that those variables interact. Some of the competencies necessary for successful transition across disability areas will be described, and examples of different technologies to facilitate those competencies will be presented, which will illustrate the potential that technology has for planning and delivering transition services. Several on-line sources of information about technology also will be described and implications for the use of the framework will be presented. §

Look for part 2 in our June issue!



Call for Papers

The Technology and Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children will hold its annual conference in Albuquerque, NM in conjunction with the Albuquerque Public Schools and the New Mexico Department of Education.

January 11-13, 2001
Hyatt Regency
Albuquerque, New Mexico

TAM welcomes presentations on assistive and instructional technology, especially research and practical experience in implementing technology with students with disabilities.



Check the TAM website at www.tamcec.org for more information.

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Removing Barriers to Appropriate Supports & Services

Part 3

by Susan Lait

If you as a parent or professional have been unable to remove barriers to appropriate supports & services on the local or state level, you may choose to accept the responsibility to advocate for yourself and Special Education Children through a Formal Resolution Process. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and your state's Special Education Policies & Procedures outline the formal resolution process. There are variations from state to state so you will want to be familiar with the process in your state. In addition, you may also contact your Regional Office of the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education and/or the U.S. Department of Justice. If you are a professional you may defer to union representatives or the agencies that provide licensing and/or the agencies that assure ethics & standards are maintained in your field.

My suggestion to both parents & professionals is to enter the Formal Resolution Process understanding that the formal process is a **“tool”** to achieve appropriate supports & services. Formal action is not a personal response. Formal action is a procedural protection to be used when parents or individual professionals feel that administration is not supportive of provisions in IDEA for children, parents, educators and/or therapists.

We have learned through our years of

our parent advocacy that each local, state and federal agency has an attorney or staff of attorneys whose responsibility is to protect the interests of their agency/client. In a **“balanced adversarial environment”** each party has representation and all positions are presented to an impartial third party who renders a decision. Therefore, it seems prudent that parents and individual professionals be provided individual representation' to achieve a balanced adversarial environment. It is common that parents assume that they don't need representation. It is also common that individual school professionals assume that the person or persons who is representing their agency is also representing them as an individual. My personal suggestion to parents and professionals entering a Formal Advocacy Process such as “Due Process” is to consider securing individual representation for your child or yourself if you are a professional.

As a professional or a parent, if you are beginning an advocacy journey, you should expect that the first duty of any system is to protect the system as a whole. This means that serving the individual members of a system (students; teachers; therapists; parents) may conflict with an agency agenda. Professionals....you are advocating for the children, yourself and parents. Parents....you are advocating for your children, yourself and the talented individual

professionals who serve your children. As you learn to support each other, you can redefine your local and state political climates. IDEA can assist professionals & parents as you promote a free and appropriate education, in the least restrictive environment, with appropriate supports and services for each child. Do not be afraid to ask....and ask....and ask. Ask for the children and ask for yourselves. You can learn to advocate together as parents and professionals for a child centered agenda that is independent of an agency agenda. Remember...IDEA requires a child centered agenda based on the Individual Educational Plan Process.

If you are a professional, the next time that you are sitting at an IEP Table, and you are listening to a parent who is advocating for their child and IDEA, please remember the parent is also advocating for you as an individual professional. When a child receives appropriate supports and services, professionals receive the training, assistance, equipment and supports they need to make their job easier. Look at that parent and recognize the 25 years of history that have required parents to carry the burden of implementing IDEA for their children. Please recognize that the least restrictive environment and/or inclusion can not be successful for a child or the professionals who serve him/her without appropriate supports & services. Parents, as you seek to advocate for your child and IDEA,

recognize the pressure that may be placed on a professional to conform to an agency agenda rather than an individual child centered agenda. Help your professionals to be aware of IDEA and help them to develop their own advocacy skills. Encourage your professionals to take responsibility for expressing what is needed (training, assistance, aides, equipment and supports) to appropriately meet the needs of your child.

In closing, let me tell you that as parents and professionals, you are not alone in facing barriers and delays to appropriate supports & services. The January 25, 2000 NOD Report reflects that parents and professionals across the country are facing barriers in all 50 states and U.S Territories. The NCD's Report may help you to realize that it is not good enough anymore to say that we are doing the best that we can do given our local or state political climate. It is also not good enough to ask parents to continue to be patient and wait. For 25 years we have been waiting for the implementation of IDEA. The cost to children, parents, families, professionals and the community has become too high as we struggle to provide appropriate supports & services in administrative environments which are not supportive of IDEA. My message to Congress would be to please establish effective monitoring, enforcement and accountability.

In giving you information to continue your advocacy journey, I want to share with you the following list of my favorite Advocacy & Information Web Sites:

1 . <http://www.wrightslaw.com> - Pete

Wright is an advocacy attorney who sponsors a Web Page and a free electronic newsletter called "**The Special Education Advocate**" which provides information on Special Education Legal Rights. This site provides up-to-date advocacy information.

2. <http://www.reedmartin.com> - Reed Martin is an advocacy attorney who also provides a Web Page and a free electronic newsletter. This site also provides current information on Special Education Legal Rights.

3. <http://www.LDOnLine.org> - This site is a Web Page that offers a free electronic newsletter related to general information and advocacy through the Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities.

4. <http://www.cec.sped.org> - This is the Web Page is for the **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**. CEC is a professional/parent organization that offers educational information, resources and access to ERIC which is the Federal Access Center to information on Children with Disabilities. This was the first organization that I joined and remains an excellent source of information.

5. <http://www.eparent.com> - This is the Web Page is sponsored by "*Exceptional Parent Magazine*" for parenting your child or young adult with a disability or special health needs. Exceptional Parent Magazine was one of my first publications and remains one of my best sources of information.

6. <http://nichcy.org> - This site is the Web Page for the **National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)**. NICHCY provides access to information on disabilities, special education, family issues, IEPs, transition, related services and education rights.

7. <http://www.specialednews.com> - Special Education News Line offers a free weekly newsletter. This weekly newsletter has the latest news in reference to Special Education.

8. <http://www.copaa.net> - The Council of Parents, Attorneys and Advocates is an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization of parents, attorneys and advocates established to improve the quality of legal assistance for parents of children with disabilities.

The above Web Sites will provide links to many other sites that will allow you to develop your own list of favorite sites.

I hope that as a parent involved in self-advocacy, I have given professionals and parents a sample of the resources that we found available to assist us in assuming our responsibilities as advocates. If you have any personal stories, comments, questions or concerns, please contact me at asinc@citcom.net or the editor at DIRECTIONS, Janet Hosmer, at janet@dreamms.org. Directions and I will not publish your responses, comments or mention your name without consent from you.§

Introduction to Technology in Transition

Part 4

Sherrilyn K. Fisher & J. Emmett Gardner

SUPPORTING TRANSITION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Exploring technology applications within the transition framework is a natural development and extension of best practices, which directs consideration of the necessary technology to support the student in the next environments to which he or she will transition from the educational setting. With independence as an important transition goal, the integration of technology that (a) allows access to curriculum, (b) gives a voice to those who could not communicate, and (c) provides heightened mobility and permits multiple employment opportunities, can immeasurably enrich the lives of people with disabilities.

One of the first steps in building a perspective on technology and transition comes through constructing a functional statement merging the language and principles reflected in both legal definitions. Accordingly, we propose the following statement as a starting point.

The concept of technology and transition represents any application of technology, assistive or instructional, that (a) facilitates or enhances the process of persons with disabilities moving from school to specific post-school environments and/or (b) assists the growth of a person's ability to make choices, live, learn, work, and play more independently in the community.

A second step is to recognize that the aforementioned statement reflects a comprehensive perspective that can be inferred even when the concepts of technology and transition are treated separately. For example, depending on one's perspective or interest, the concept of transition might call attention to the *environments* in which the individual functions, the *knowledge* and *skills* required of the individual to function in specific transition environments, or the *activities* and *processes* that are associated with the individual's transition from school to the postsecondary environment. Clearly, the concept of transition cannot be defined by a single variable or factor, and it can mean different things to different professionals.

As the result of IDEA's definition of AT and AT services, the prevailing view of technology in special education focuses its application to improve an individual's functionality. Another equally alternative perspective might include consideration of how technology is used as an instructional tool to facilitate student learning. In this issue Blackhurst et al. provide additional ways of defining technology relative to persons with disabilities. Thus, like the concept of transition, the concept of technology in special education (and transition) is not defined by a single variable or factor, but should rather be considered as an integrated and uniform concept.

A third step in constructing a shared perspective of technology and transition begins from a standpoint that focuses primarily on articulating an

individual's unique needs; specifically, where either technology and/or transition services are used to provide whatever unique physical, cognitive, or procedural supports that become a part of an individual's skill repertoire. This focus still addresses the careful selection of supports (whether technological or transitional) that improve individuals' functionality, but it directs emphasis away from pure consideration of "technology devices" or "transition environments" as the starting point of conceptualizing technology and transition. §

See part 5 in our June issue!

Conferences

Date: June 25-27, 2000
ConnSENSE 2000
Mystic, CT,
800-622-9905

Date: June 26-28, 2000
NECC 2000
Atlanta, GA
www.neccsite.org

Date: October 5-7, 2000
SouthEast Augmentative
Communication Conference
Birmingham, AL. Call for Papers
deadline is May 15, 2000.
Contact: seac@ucpbham.com

Date: October 17, 2000
Total Technology - CT's Premier
Assistive Technology Trade Fair
Hartford, CT,
www.techact.uconn.edu

Family Center on Technology and Disability Update

New Network Members

Parents Encouraging Parents, Nashville, TN; Partnerships in Assistive Technology, Raleigh, NC; 100 Black Men of Albany, NY; Middle Rio Grande Development Foundation, TX; Harlem School For Education, New York, NY; Kidstart Services, DE; Support for Families of Children with Disabilities, CA; The Disability Network, Flint, MI.

Resources

The Family Center web site now has more than 600 members of its network of organizations. These organizations are listed by state and include e-mail addresses and web sites. Take advantage of this wonderful resource that can be viewed at <http://www.ucpa.org/fctd/netorgst.htm>

“Questions and Answers About IDEA,” a new publication of the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY), gives a good overview of various provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. Check www.nichcy.org/pubs/newsdig/nd21.htm to view this document or call 1-800-695-0285 or e-mail nichcy@aed.org for a hard copy.

Where can I find AAC camps for my child? For a comprehensive list of camps, check the Family Center discussion board at www.ucpa.org/fctd/bbt.htm.

A great site for products, stories, questions and answers, etc. about

technology is sponsored by United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago, Illinois at <http://www.infinitec.org>.

Parents Helping Parents now offers an “Equipment Exchange” database on their web site where items for sale, give-away or needed may be posted at no charge. There is also an online Community Calendar database for nationwide events. Visit <http://www.php.com/submit.htm> to see where you may share what is happening in your area!

Want to know where you can talk to people who actually used augmentative communication and how it has worked for them and their family? A very good forum where AAC users share their experiences is in a publication called *Communicating Together*, an affiliation of ISAAC (International Society of Augmentative & Alternative Communication). On-line sample issues can be obtained at www.ahs.uwo.ca/orcn/assoc/comtog/comtog.html. In Minnesota, there is an organization called Express Yourself of Minnesota (www.expressyourself.org). Express Yourself of Minnesota is a non-profit support group for individuals that use AAC devices.

Parents Helping Parents now offers an “Equipment Exchange” database on their web site where items for sale, give-away or needed may be posted at no charge. There is also an online Community Calendar database for nationwide events. Visit <http://www.php.com> to see where you may share what is happening in your area!

News

Senators Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) have introduced the Family Opportunity Act of 2000. The Family Opportunity Act would allow states to offer middle-income families of children with disabilities the option of buying into Medicaid based on a sliding scale. Currently, these children are ineligible for Medicaid because family income exceeds the allowable level under Medicaid. Under the proposed legislation, the full range of Medicaid services, including those provided through the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program would be available to families who buy into Medicaid.

President Clinton has announced that the Corporation for National Service will commit \$10 million to recruit 750 qualified AmeriCorps members for projects aimed at bringing digital opportunity to youth, families and communities. These volunteers will provide technical support to school computer systems, tutor at Community Technology Centers, and offer IT training for high-tech careers. UCP has long been involved in ensuring that community service includes people with disabilities through its Access Americorps training and technical assistance cooperative agreement with the Corporation for National Service and through Project Success, an inclusive learn and serve program conducted through nine UCP affiliates. For more information about these programs, contact Susan Finisdore at Sfinisdore@ucp.org.

HalfthePlanet Highlights

David Clark Becomes Chairman of the Microsoft Accessibility Advisory Council

In a move that has confirmed Clark's reputation as an expert of accessibility issues and a leader in the disability community, Microsoft's Advisory Council voted Clark chairman last week. The Council, comprised of 30 leaders within the disability field, advises the executive members of Microsoft on Internet accessibility issues.

Non-profit Charter Partner VSA Arts Launches Virtual City

Artropolis, VSA art's virtual city, is an online community for artists and specifically designed for people with disabilities. Being the first of its kind,

Artropolis is the Internet's home of the arts. Among the many exciting features of the city, you will find a Music, Theatre, and Art District as well as an Arts Employment Center and a Library. What makes Artropolis truly unique is that the city can be customized to suit all visitors, especially those with disabilities.

Read more about Artropolis at <http://www.halftheplanet.com/diversions9.cfm> and see the city for yourself at <http://www.artropolis.org>.

Commentary by Mike Ervin: The Steven Kelso Story Revisited

This last December, on Christmas Day, Richard and Dawn Kelso abandoned their 10-year-old disabled

son at a children's hospital in Delaware. Ervin expresses his views on why the situation is such an injustice, how the situation will impact Steven, and what Steven needs to do to overcome the challenges that lie before him.

Read the full commentary at <http://www.halftheplanet.com/commentary4.cfm> and check back weekly for Mike's commentaries.

Contact Us: If you have comments or suggestions, send an email to <mailto:suggestions@halftheplanet.com>. For other contact information, go to <http://www.halftheplanet.com/contactus.cfm>.

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New CD Available from RJ Cooper and Associates

April 13, 2000

I am **very** excited to finally release, and make available, my new CD, with **everything** I make, software-wise, on it. That's right. It has all of my software on it, for both Mac and Windows. Here's how I've designed it (I'm pretty proud of it :)...

The CD is set up like a web browser, with all the installers accessible right from the CD's 'web' pages. Just pop in the CD and it should run automatically (please let me know if your's doesn't).

Demo (Evaluation) Installation: Each CD has **all** our software on it. You can install any title for a limited use evaluation period. These installers install the **full** software (unlike our floppy or web demos, which, because of size, had to limit how much got

installed). There is no obligation to purchase whatever you install.

Purchased titles: When you purchase software from us, you will receive one CD for each title purchased, along with a Registration Code for that title. Remember, each CD has all our software on it, so you can install any title for a limited use evaluation period. Or, when/if you have purchased the software, simply enter the Registration Code when prompted for unlimited use.

You can purchase by purchase order (mailed or faxed), check, or credit card, by phone (1-800-RJCooper for voicemail; 949-582-2571 after May 1 for speaking to us directly; 949-661-6904 until 4/28), or via email< at registration@rjcooper.com> and you save on the shipping if you already have the CD!

If you have purchased software in the past from us, we would **love** you to send your floppies back to us, and we will replace it with a CD.

You may request as many CD's as you wish. They're great to give out. But remember, you can use the same CD over and over again for installing onto **lots** of computers. **** The CD does **not** need to be in the drive **after** you install! ****

Again, the CD is set up like a web browser, so you might even think you're on the 'Net' while browsing our on-the-cd-catalog!

So please, contact us with your name and snail-mail address, and how many CD's you would like, and they will be on their way :).§



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