Training Technologies for
Assistive and Augmentative Communication Devices

Video developed through PT 3 Grant
Proposal for Poster/Demonstration-SITE Convention, March 2004

Abstract:

Training videos provide a multi-dimensional presentation of steps to train while demonstrating techniques being explained. The training of augmentative devices for students with severe disabilities provides training techniques with equipment that shows a range of low-tech to high-tech products that provide a means of communication for students who are non-verbal. The video shows one category of devices that meets the technology requirement of IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Act (1997). The video is applicable for pre-service and in-service training to give exposure to capabilities for enabling students with disabilities to take part in general education settings.

Summary:

The challenge of the PT3 grant at the State University of West Georgia was to Prepare Tomorrows Teachers to integrate Technology in learning environments. Awareness of the wide range of products available is one step to create a knowledge base of the types of products available and the range of support provided for students with disabilities. The next step is learning how technologies provide academic support for curriculum and finally to assist students within the general education setting, providing access to general education curriculum. Each of these levels of training are enhanced through the use of the video format for training teachers to use technologies within their general education. As the number of students with severe disabilities increases in the general education classroom, so does the increased need for teachers’ exposure to range of technologies available to support students with the absence a mode of communication. The use of assistive and augmentative communication devices allows students to communicate for daily instructional activities. The devices used to communicate become routine tools of the general education classroom. However, technologies have been developed since current classroom teachers have received their academic training. As a result training of new developments is needed. The video format provides the in-service training needed by teachers in general and supportive special education education settings. This type of training for technologies has become a dilemma at the pre-service and in-service level (Lahm & Nickels, 1999).

This video shows a range of products to raise awareness of devices. When shown for pre-service and in-service levels, products used for demonstration raise the knowledge of the range of devices available. The knowledge of product availability provides the starting point for teachers to ask questions and gain new equipment for their students. The range of products is demonstrated by students who are use these products within their academic settings. The training demonstrated in this video can be used across a variety of products and academic settings. The successful integration of students using these products allows many advantages to help individual students gain access in classroom settings where they can interact academically at their cognitive level. Assistive and augmentative communication devices facilitate interaction for low-verbal and non-verbal students. This video shows a sampling of a range of technologies and teaching procedures to successfully customize commercial products to the level of the student with disabilities. The unique part of this video is the demonstration of successful use of products within a classroom setting. This video shows how technologies can provide access to age/grade and cognitive level curriculum through the use of products available commercially, with customized features for each child’s needs.

References:


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