Proposal Summary:

Technologies are now available to assist students with special needs in academic settings. The products have increase, however, the use of technologies has not been included in many training programs for teachers or students. The challenge becomes training teachers to teach students the use of new programs and devices to support academic programs.

Training teachers to include technologies to support students begins with matching technologies to students’ skills. Evaluating strengths and needs allows the technology to be matched to optimize support for students in their deficit areas. Secondly, training students and guiding them through the use of new programs with hands-on experiences ensures successful use. Finally, providing integrated use for intervention. This stage provides use in the classroom to complete the cycle for the technology to become part of the intervention process.

These steps are demonstrated with low-tech devices showing students using a spellchecker as a part of a lesson. Programs to support reading, writing, and math instruction of a class are shown for mid-tech level support. High-tech programs are demonstrated with the use of a scan-to-read program for students who are non-readers or labor over grade level text. Assignments, read to the student, provide access to grade-level curriculum and focus remains on content rather than mechanics of reading.

The video format allows demonstration of training while students use technology supports for academic lessons. The training for both teachers and students is integrated in class settings and with the use of curricular materials. Technologies compensate for students’ deficit skills. Training teachers to support students with guided practice allows new programs to be mastered and used independently as part of interventions. These steps, when completed successfully, allow skills to be used in other settings, and provide computer literacy for students with special needs.

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