Module: Assistive Technology: An Overview

1. **Name at least three items that could be considered AT and describe how those devices could support a student with a disability in the classroom.**

   Three items that could be considered assistive technology devices are specialized writing tools, raised lined paper, and an alternative keyboard. Specialized writing tools are used to develop gross and fine motor skills in an individual where fine motor skills are considered a disability. These tools will eliminate frustration while writing. Additionally, students will increase their writing skill as well as speed. Raised line paper provides visual and tactile feedback to students while writing, and will help students improve their writing skills. Standard keyboard layouts may be too confusing to some students with certain disabilities. Alternative keyboards can be manufactured to adapt for a specific child’s needs. Use of a split keyboard will allow students to use the device more comfortably.

2. **Explain two reasons why it is necessary to consider AT for students with disabilities.**

   Assistive technology is used to improve the functional performance of an individual with a disability. Therefore, it is important to consider AT devices for students with disabilities. Such technologies can help students complete and perform tasks more easily or simply get around the school. Using assistive technology devices can empower students with disabilities by helping provide them with confidence. As tasks become easier to perform, disabled students and their teachers will notice improved performance. AT devices will allow students to focus on the task at hand rather than its frustrating attributes.

3. **Why is it important to consider both AT devices and services?**

   It is not enough to only consider what AT devices would be appropriate. Also considering services that will back up AT devices is equally important. AT devices can be complex and difficult to use. Acquiring proper services will add support not only to the students
but all to those involved to make the implementation process go more smoothly. These services will provide training and troubleshooting where needed. If services are unavailable when the technology falters, the AT devices will no longer be of use.

4. **Describe three responsibilities of the Implementation Team.**

The implementation team is responsible for obtaining knowledge and information for all assistive technology devices needed. It is important that they provide information and training to team members and students about using the devices for a smoother implementation process. Additionally, they are responsible to search for or identify new assistive technology devices for future use per each student special needs. Another responsibility of the implementation team is to develop a personal education plan. This plan should be tailored specifically to the individual with the disability. These plans are made to enhance the student’s learning experience by providing support in all areas of disability. A personal education plan will ensure that the disabled student is not missing out on the important points of the curriculum.

5. **List three outcomes the implementation team can determine by evaluating a student’s assistive technology.**

As the implementation team observes the student they can determine whether the assistive technology device is helping or hindering the student’s progress. Performance data will help in this decision. The team can then choose to either purchase the technology or to research new possible devices. By continually checking and monitoring each student, the implementation team can determine if the student is engaged with the AT device, or if the device has been abandoned. If any one of these outcomes has a negative result, the implementation team can determine whether another AT device should be used.
6. **Imagine you are a seventh-grade general education language arts teacher and a student in your class has an upcoming IEP meeting. What types of information should you gather ahead of time to contribute to the discussion of the student's AT needs? Name at least four.**

    As a general education language arts teacher I would begin with gathering information on the student’s strength and weaknesses. Knowing the student’s strengths and weaknesses will allow the IEP team to more accurately match the student with the appropriate device. I would also need to determine how the AT device needed will supplement the content of the curriculum as well as additional information on how simple the AT device be to implement. Finally, determining if the AT device will result in more time to perform or complete tasks is important. Collectively, this will help the IEP team determine the best type of device and AT services needed.

7. **During the meeting suggested in the example above, the IEP team recommends AT for the student. As a general education teacher, describe your role in the AT implementation and evaluation processes.**

    To properly implement an AT device into the classroom I would need to attend appropriate training sessions for the device. I would then develop my curriculum to encourage AT use daily. Other students in the class would need to be informed about the disabled student and their individual AT device. Students would need to understand and appreciate why some students need to use these devices. Discussing this with the class will help them to accept their classmate(s) and their particular disabilities. In addition, I would make sure the AT was setup in an easily accessible location. To foster and promote daily use, providing accessibility to the AT device is imperative. The AT device should be included each disabled student’s daily routine. Lastly, I would plan to monitor and document each student’s progress on a daily basis. Monitoring the student’s progress will help determine whether the AT device is working to satisfaction, and if it is beneficial or not. Early observations can also lead to corrections or adjustments that may lead to successful use and implementation of the AT device.