

Current trends in adaptive hardware software for handicapped students:



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Essay by Ashok Kaul Current trends in adaptive hardware/software for Handicapped The society owes responsibility to prepare the handicapped students as adults and citizens of this world, with equal opportunities to face the present day challenges. It is in this direction that laws have been in place for such physically and mentally challenged students This essay is to briefly describe the various aspects of the needs of such handicapped students and the laws to assist them

Identifying the particular needs of ESE (94-142/IDEA) students and the electronic tools available to address these needs.

The individuals with disabilities education act was passed in the year 1997. for the assistance of ESE students who are not at par with other students mentally or physically. During the year 1997 Public Law 94-142(IDEA) was passed which promised free and proper public education to all handicapped children. However, during the following years the acts like PL 100-407 did speak about the assistive technology that could be used to help the handicapped students.

Assistive technology can address the problems of such students.

This technology defined the any piece of equipment or software that could be helpful to such students to improve their functional capabilities. while considering the assistive technology that can be used by an individual, there are certain factors like the environment, needs of the individual and the particulars of the technological tools available to meet the specific requirements. to keep in mind. The assistive technology can be divided as

low, medium or high technological devices. The high-level technological devices will include computers along with the software, microchips, and electronic equipment that can perform a certain function for the student. For example, a student with reading problems can have the computer read the book and print it in a larger font to make it easily readable by the student. In the present day environment, special software programs along with related hardware tools are available to the handicapped students to learn at ease.

Legal definition of section . 504 students

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 along with the Title 2nd of ADA(Americans and Disabilities Act) states in strong terms that there should be no discrimination of disabled individuals by the federal or state as well as local governments, or by the business houses who receive government funding. Section 504 further ensures that all disabled students shall have same opportunities to study and succeed as other students. There are various examples to specify the advantages of this act for the disabled students.. For one example, if a student has trouble in reading , or for a blind student taking an exam, it is the responsibility of the university or the exam taking authority to provide alternative forms of the book or the question paper, that may include the Braille version of same.

A person with the following impairments is defined to be eligible for Section 504 benefits:

. Any person who has substantial physical or mental disability that limits any of the major life activities, including walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, learning or breathing etc can have 504 benefits.

Anyone who has a record of such disability is eligible.

A student who possesses the required educational qualification and technical
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standards required for the admission to a certain educational program.

Accommodation for 504 students

Students who are in-home education programs can select FCAT as a required assessment with the allowed accommodations. If the student uses any accommodation on regular basis, then the student needs to make a request to the school district for that particular accommodation on the FCAT. While the student will be administered FCAT in the student's home school, the request for any accommodation has to come from the parents and that should be in line with the accommodations used during instruction.

In case a student uses a computer to type a response, then such typed responses must be transferred and the typed sheets returned to the district coordinator. Transferring can be done by the school personnel and verified by the FCAT agent.

While normal students may not be aloud to read a question loudly in an examination hall, a section 504 student is allowed to read it loudly, for apprehending and understanding the question properly. However, such accommodation may require the student to e tested in a different setting that does not disturb the other students. While the answers transferred, have to fit in the space allowed in the answer sheets, special papers like large writing sheets can be provided if the disability prevents the student from writing on a normal size paper.

However, the technologies of the computer software that has the spell and grammar checker are not allowed to be used by such students. Nevertheless, it is not important for such students to be good in spelling.

While the accommodations cited above may be listed among the

accommodations permitted for ESE students, the student's 504 plan must
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specify the accommodations that are allowed during testing.

Source used

Disabled Student Resources & Services Student Handbook

Western Michigan University