

# **“Have you considered Assistive Technology?”**

Byron Smith, FDLRS Heartland



# Does this response sound familiar?



- ▶ “Just check yes and move on.”

# Why should you consider Assistive Technology (AT) ?


- ▶ It's only fair
- ▶ It's good teaching, and can benefit all students.
- ▶ It's the law.



# How is it fair to give one child an advantage over other children?

- ▶ The intent of assistive technology, as with any accommodation, is to compensate for a disability. If a child's disability is near-sightedness, he may have a tool (eyeglasses) to give him the same view of the classroom that other students have. If it is dysgraphia, an adapted pencil grip may allow the student to have better control over the pencil, so that writing is as comfortable for her as for her classmates.

# Who benefits from AT?

- ▶ Any student with a disability, from mild to severe.
  - ▶ Any student with reading, writing, math, communications, vision, hearing, or motor problems
  - ▶ ESOL students
  - ▶ Students with 504 plans
  - ▶ Struggling students who do not qualify for ESE services
- 

# What are the legal implications?



- ▶ The school district is mandated by state and federal law (Individual with Disability Education Act) to determine if a student with disability needs assistive technology
- ▶ This determination is made by the IEP Team

# AT Legislation

- ▶ Tech Act (PL 100 407) Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act

[summary PL 100-407](#)

- ▶ ADA (PL 101-336) Americans with Disabilities Act

[summary of PL 101-336](#)

- ▶ IDEA-Individual with Disabilities Education Act

[summary of PL 101-476](#)

# PL 100-407 Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (1988)

- ▶ This act, a.k.a "The Tech Act," recognizes that students with disabilities need special equipment to perform better and more independently (assistive technology). PL 100-407 also authorizes funding to allow states to create statewide systems of technological assistance to meet those needs.



Click graphic to continue

# PL 101-336 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990)

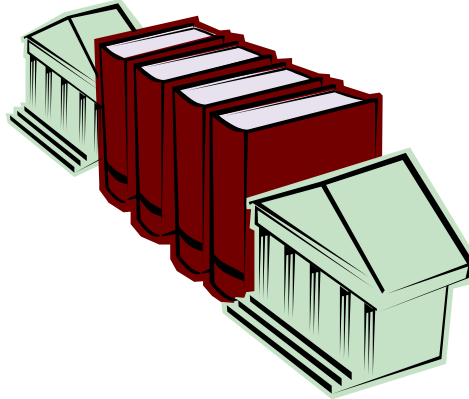
- ▶ This act extends Section 504 of PL 93-112 by requiring the rights of equal access and reasonable accommodation in employment and services provided by both private and public sectors.



Click graphic to continue

# PL 101-476 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004 Reauthorization)

- ▶ PL 101-476 replaced the word "handicapped" with the word "disabled," therefore expanding the services for these students. IDEA reaffirms PL 94-142's requirements of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) through an individualized education plan (IEP) with related services and due process procedures.



Click graphic to continue

# PL 101-476 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004 Reauthorization)

- ▶ This act also supports the amendments to PL 94-142 that expanded the entitlement in all states to ages 3 to 21, designated assistive technology as a related service in IEPs, strengthened the law's commitment to greater inclusion in community schools (least restrictive placement), provided funding for infant and toddler early intervention programs, and required that by age 16 every student have explicitly written in the IEP a plan for transition to employment or post secondary education.



Click graphic to continue


# So, what is Assistive Technology?

- ▶ Any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the function capabilities of a child with a disability.

- IDEA Section 602



# Translation

- ▶ Any tool or device that a student with a disability uses to do a task that he/she could not do as well without. It can make the task easier, faster or done in a better way.
  - ▶ The tool could be something as simple as a pencil grip or as sophisticated as a specialized computer or program.
- 

**Assistive Technology is a tool. It will never replace good teaching. It serves to give struggling students and those with a disability a way to be successful with the curriculum.**



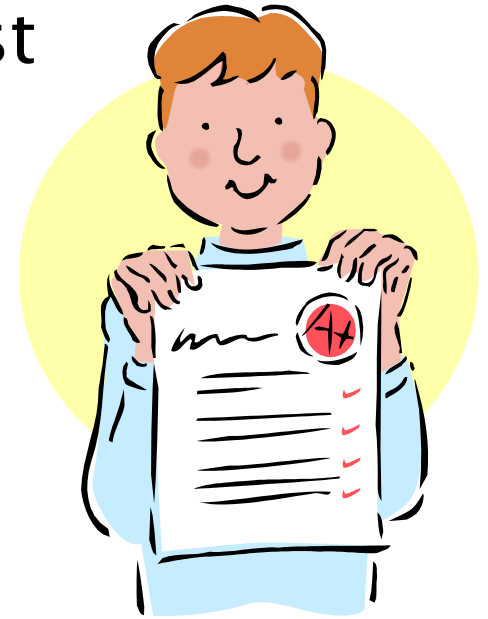
# Benefits of Assistive Technology

- ▶ Assistive technology, when matched correctly to a student's need, will make your job easier.

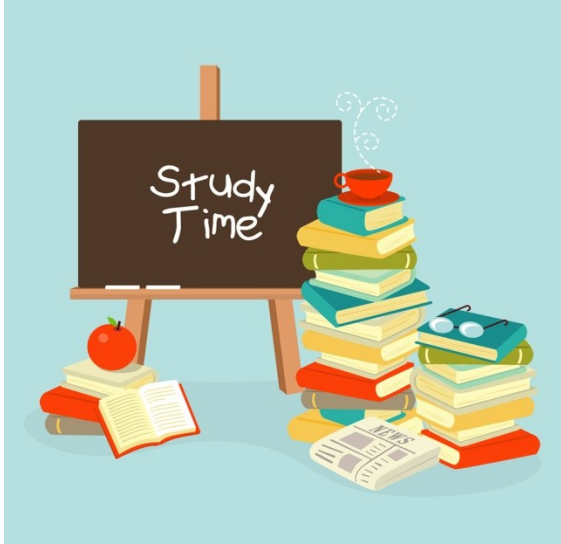


# The FCAT Benefit

- ▶ AT integrated with good strategies will have the greatest impact on students who score low on the FCAT
  - These students will have the greatest effect on your school scores



# FCAT Accommodations



- ▶ The State of Florida allows a variety of accommodations, including assistive technology tools, that may be used on the FCAT by students with disabilities.
- ▶ These tools must be listed on the student's IEP, and used daily as part of instructional strategies.

# IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ACCOMMODATIONS DO NOT DILUTE THE CURRICULUM.

- ▶ Accommodation is changing HOW the student learns
  - EX–Setting, time, length of assignment, assistive technology
  - Students with accommodations are working toward a General diploma
- ▶ Modification is changing WHAT the student learns
  - EX–4<sup>th</sup> grade math in an Algebra class
  - Students who need curricular modifications are working toward a Special diploma

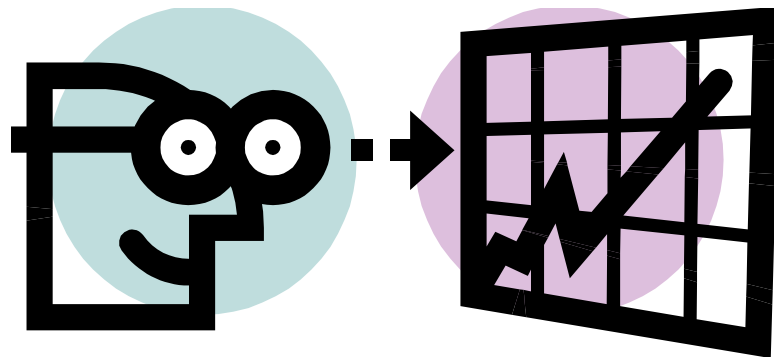
# How do I consider AT?

- ▶ Ask the right questions
  - What specifically does the student need to do?
  - How is he/she currently doing the task, and how well (quickly, easily, accurately, etc.)?
  - What specific IEP goal must the child meet?



# Is it working?

- ▶ AT should be evaluated in the child's natural setting
- ▶ Success with AT comes with daily opportunities
- ▶ AT should be an integral part of the curriculum
- ▶ The effectiveness of the AT should be monitored continually.



# Assistive Technology Range

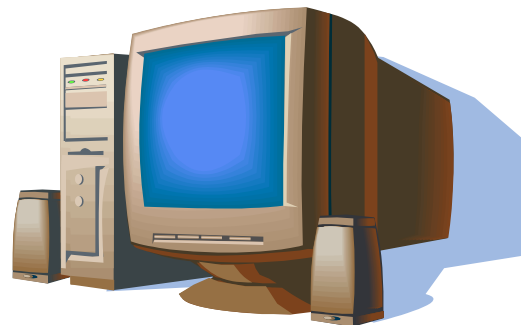
## ▶ Lite tech (LoTTIE Kit)

- Easily accessible
- Low cost
- Used by Peers



## ▶ High Tech

- Very task specific
- Higher cost
- Sometimes makes student feel “different” from peers



# Categories of Assistive Technology

- ▶ Reading
- ▶ Writing (Motor)
- ▶ Writing (Composing)
- ▶ Math
- ▶ Organizing/Studying
- ▶ Computer Access
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Self Help / Daily Living

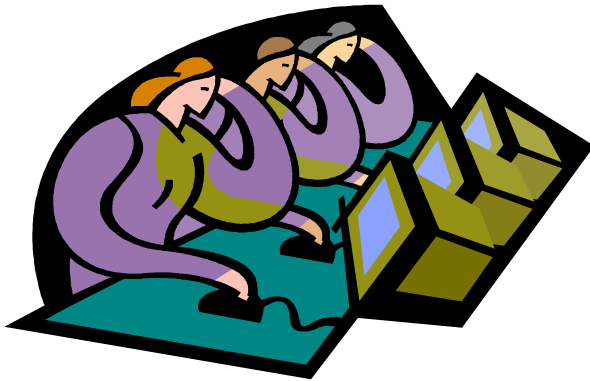


Low cost AT options and teaching strategies to stimulate your thinking can be reviewed by clicking on the image below.



If you are interested in inservice points for this presentation, please contact [Byron Smith](#).

To inspect these and other assistive technology tools, plan to visit the [FDLRS Heartland](#) open lab in November.



# Consider assistive technology



1. How might an AT accommodation assist a specific student in your class?
2. What should you consider in implementing this accommodation?

“Have you considered AT?”

Please check our website  
for future presentations.

[www.efdlrs.net/heartland](http://www.efdlrs.net/heartland)