



The *Paraeducator* Press

Helping Students Shine



Assistive Technology: Is It Working For Your Student?

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For many students, the successful use of their assistive technology tool is closely tied to the training and skill of the paraeducator working with them. Since it is the paraeducator who often spends the most one-to-one time with the student, it may become her responsibility to see that the AT device is clean and in good working order, programmed and kept current, the student's position is supporting his access to his device, the student is equipped with the necessary AT tools for his various classes (pencil grip, highlighter, notetaking materials, spell checkers, calculators), and a host of other duties. It is also the paraeducator who does not often get to attend the trainings and workshops where educators gain the knowledge and skills in the area of assistive technology.

This issue of The T/AC Telegram is dedicated to data-driven decision making for special educators. Best practice and research tells us that accurate student data collection assists educators in making informed, objective decisions about their students. It is how the question, "AT: Is it working?" can be answered.

To assist with this process, paraeducators should be aware of the various data collection tools used in the class (program), know how their communication and instruction may effect the student's optimum use of his AT, be trained in the appropriate use and collection of data, know how to report the student's progress based on data collection, and be able to make suggestions to improve the student's effective use of his device.

What is the best way to gain information and record data on your student?

- Master good observation skills: Watch the student while he is interacting with others and in other environments.
- Be aware of the verbal and nonverbal prompts (requests) used during instruction: Give enough wait time. Be consistent with each prompt.
- Communicate about the student using data: Rather than subjective descriptions of how the student is doing, use the data to report the results.



Kim did
great
today



Kim used
her device 6
times today

(Continued on back)

(Continued from front)

- Know what you are measuring: Measure one goal or one skill. Be consistent and record data for each goal the same way each time it is measured.
- Chose a time period to collect the data: You do not have to collect it everyday.
- Keep it simple: Consider graphing the results weekly.

Kim's Latency Data

Kim's daily responses within 10 seconds of request to activate her Step-by Step device.

Session/Date	Responds within 10 seconds	Responds more than 10 seconds	% responses within 10 seconds
1 10/2	////	//// /	40
2 10/3	//	//// ///	20
3 10/4	////	////	50
4 10/7	///	//// //	30
5 10/8	////	//// /	40
6 10/9	///	//// //	30
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

- Each time Kim activates her Step by Step device (a single switch VOCA) within a 10 second period after the request was given, her response was recorded

A weekly graph shows Kim's responses and use of her device over a period of weeks

