


Chapter 9

Using Assistive Technology to Promote High Leverage Practices: Connecting the Dots for Pre- Service Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will focus on providing strategies that can be supported within educator preparation programs (EPPs) that can enhance the capacity of pre-service teachers to effectively integrate AT and HLPs to assist students academically and socially-emotionally. Specific topics in this chapter will include information related to preparation strategies that support student enhancement of academic, communication, social-emotional, and sensory strategies supported by explicit AT and HLPs. Teachers' knowledge of and their ease in using and helping their students use AT is key for appropriate and individualized support for students who have an IEP. In order for teachers to effectively support students and their individualized needs, however, teachers need to use pedagogical strategies that increasingly support students' access to learning, which can be strategically implemented through the use of high leverage practices (HLPs).

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CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Readers will understand the relationship between high leverage practices and the integration of assistive technology.
2. Students will be able to enumerate ways the effective use of assistive technology facilitates inclusion of students with disabilities.
3. Learners will become familiar with available assistive technology for supporting academics, communication, social-emotional skills, and sensory differences.
4. Educator preparation program personnel will gain ideas for ways to integrate assistive technology instruction into the curriculum, either by embedded instruction or facilitating experiential learning.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and ensures that special education and related services are available to eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Moreover, the IDEA governs how states and public agencies (e.g. schools) provide services such as early intervention, special education, and related services. As part of such services, IDEA ensures the availability and use of assistive technology (AT) devices to support students' access to curriculum and progress in academic or social-emotional individual education plan (IEP) goals. In schools across the United States, 66 percent of students served under IDEA spend 80 percent or more of their time in general education classes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). This means that teachers' AT knowledge and proficiency is key for appropriate and individualized support of students who have an IEP (Judge & Simmons, 2009; Conner, Snell, et al., 2010). For teachers to effectively support students and their individualized needs, however, they need to use pedagogical strategies that directly impact students' access to learning, which can be implemented through the use of high leverage practices (HLPs). HLPs are a series of fundamental teaching practices that have been identified as critical to helping students learn important academic and social-emotional content (McLeskey, et al., 2019). This chapter will focus on providing strategies that can be supported within educator preparation programs (EPPs) that can enhance the capacity of pre-service teachers to effectively integrate AT and HLPs. Specific topics in this chapter will include information related to preparation strategies that support the enhancement of access, academic, and social-emotional skills supported by an explicit understanding of the intersection of effective AT and HLPs.

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