

Use of Computer Technology to Help Students with Special Needs

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Abstract: Millions of students across the United States cannot benefit fully from a traditional educational program because they have a disability that impairs their ability to participate in a typical classroom environment. For these students, computer-based technologies can play an especially important role. Not only can computer technology facilitate a broader range of educational activities to meet a variety of needs for students with mild learning disorders, but adaptive technology now exists that can enable even those students with severe disabilities to become active learners in the classroom alongside their peers who do not have disabilities. This article provides an overview of the role computer technology can play in promoting the education of children with special needs within the regular classroom. For example, use of computer technology for word processing, communication, research, and multimedia projects can help the three million students with specific learning and emotional disorders keep up with their nondisabled peers. Computer technology has also enhanced the development of sophisticated devices that can assist the two million students with more severe disabilities in overcoming a wide range of limitations that hinder classroom participation—from speech and hearing impairments to blindness and severe physical disabilities. However, many teachers are not adequately trained on how to use technology effectively in their classrooms, and the cost of the technology is a serious consideration for all schools. Thus, although computer technology has the potential to act as an equalizer by freeing many students from their disabilities, the barriers of inadequate training and cost must first be overcome before more wide-spread use can become a reality.

Keywords: Role Computer Technology

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- [5]. See note no. 4, National Center for Education Statistics, chapter 2: Elementary and secondary education.
- [6]. 6. Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Public Law 105-17, title I, part A, 602 (3) (June 4, 1997).
- [7]. See note no. 4, Office of Special Education Programs, Tables AA3 and AA4
- [8]. Specific learning disability is defined as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations." See note no. 6, Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, part A, 602 (26)
- [9]. See note no. 6, Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, part A, 602 (25)

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