

Assistive Technology Consideration Resource Guide Glossary

This is a companion document to the Assistive Technology Consideration Resource Guide. This glossary defines commonly used assistive technology terms found in the GPAT Assistive Technology Resource Guide. It is not intended to be a comprehensive document.

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<i>Tool(s)</i>	<i>Definition</i>
A	
Accessibility Features	Accessibility features are built-in features within a computer operating system that make the computer easier to use by students with disabilities. Operating systems have the ability to assist students with visual difficulties (i.e., screen reader, enlarging print, changing color combinations, text or icon size), motor difficulties (i.e., on-screen keyboard, mouse responses), and/or hearing difficulties (i.e., changing volume, visual notifications, text captions). All of these changes can be made through desktop controls to provide computer access for a person with a disability.
Adapted Books	Adapted books contain age appropriate content which substantially modifies the content of printed materials. The modifications are such that the language is simplified and supported by pictures and/or recordings to provide print access to people with severe intellectual disabilities.
Adapted Measuring Devices	Adapted measuring devices assist students who are unable to use standard measuring tools. These can include measuring cups with large print or adapted handles, talking tape measures, rulers with large print or special grips, or thermometers with speech output and/or large print.
Adapted Paper	Adapted paper is an alternative to standard writing paper for students who need additional supports or are unable to use standard paper when writing. These can include bold or raised line paper, paper with additional lines to assist with upper and lower case letter formation or different colored paper.
Adapted Tools	Adapted tools help students participate in their environments. These are variations of everyday tools that assist students to complete tasks such as cooking, eating, household chores, personal hygiene, and toileting.
Advanced Reading and Writing Aid	Advanced reading and writing aids are comprehensive software programs that allow students to use one program in order to complete literacy assignments. These programs include optical character recognition (OCR) and allow editing of underlying text maintaining the integrity of the original document. These software programs contain a wide range of features such as text-to-speech with highlighting, note taking tools, grammar and spell checkers, word prediction and vocabulary support.

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Aided Language Stimulation	Aided Language Stimulation is a teaching strategy in which the communication partner teaches symbol meaning by simultaneously pointing out selected vocabulary on the communication system while speaking. These communication exchanges happen throughout the day in natural interactions. It is the expectation, through modeling, that the student will understand that symbols are a means of communication. Eventually the student will also use the communication system to expressively communicate with a partner.
Alerting Devices	Alerting devices can be auditory, visual or tactile based and are designed to alert students with sensory impairments to special circumstances and situations. There are a variety of alerting devices including doorbell alerting systems, paging devices, telephone signaling systems, smoke alarm systems, security alarms, and wake up alarms.
Alternate Access	Alternate access allows a student to operate their computer/device using tools other than a standard keyboard or pointing device/mouse. These tools can include adapted pointers, alternative mice, alternative keyboards, switch access, screen readers, speech recognition and screen magnifiers.
Alternative Calculators	Alternative calculators are for students who have difficulty using standard calculators. They can be talking, on-screen, large key/display, and/or money calculators.
Alternative Keyboard	Alternative keyboards are adaptations of standard computer keyboards and may be different in size, shape, layout, or function. They can be hardware or on-screen keyboards.
Alternative Mice	Alternative mice are pointing devices for students that are unable to operate a standard mouse. Mouse alternatives vary in design. They can be a variety of sizes or shapes or can be other devices such as trackballs, joysticks, head pointing devices or eye gaze systems.
Alternative Writing Aids	Alternative writing aids are devices which allow students who are unable to use standard writing tools (i.e., pencil/pen, standard keyboard) to write. These tools can range from adapted pencils/pens and alternative keyboards, speech recognition software/apps to slates and stylus' and braille writers for students with visual impairments.
Amplification Systems	Amplification systems can support hearing impaired or highly distractible students by increasing the preferred (speech or sound) auditory signal over background noise. These can be whole room or personal systems that amplify a speaker's voice or other sounds.

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Assistive Listening Devices	Assistive listening devices (ALDs) help isolate and/or amplify a sound source and reduce distractions from background noise. ALDs are used for classroom lecture, public address systems or audio devices, such as televisions and radios. ALDs can be used with or without hearing aids.
Audio/Digital Recorder	Audio/digital recorders record information that can be saved in various file types such as MP3, DAISY or WAV files. There are a wide variety of audio recording devices ranging from software programs on a computer to hand held devices. Some digital recorders have the ability to place "auditory markers" on the recording, allowing students to mark specific information and fast forward to each index sound.
Audiobooks	Audiobooks are recordings of text/books being read. These can be read by a human speaker (digitized speech) or a computer generated voice (synthesized speech).
Auditory Reminders	Auditory reminders are devices/apps which provide an auditory cue, either a sound or speech. They can be set to list steps for an activity or cues at a specific time to remind a student to complete a task. Examples of devices include audio recorders, watches with auditory chimes, or computer programs/apps for timing and scheduling.
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	AAC is any device, system or method that increases or improves communication abilities. Students with severe speech or language difficulties use AAC as a supplement for speech and language that is non-functional. AAC includes, but is not limited to, sign language/gestures, picture/symbol systems, voice output devices and/or software/apps. Terms often used synonymously for AAC include voice output communication aids (VOCAs) and speech generating devices (SGDs).
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Braille	Braille is a system of writing and printing specifically for the blind and visually impaired using patterns of raised dots to represent letters of the alphabet and numbers.
Braille embosser	Braille embossers are printers that create raised dots on a page to form braille text.
Braille note taker with refreshable display	Braille note takers with refreshable display are portable braille word processors that allow the text to be presented actually on the braille display for students with visual impairments.
Braille Translation Software	Braille translation software/apps are programs that convert computer text to braille code.

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Braille Writer	Braille writers allow a student to produce a print copy of material in braille. Braille writers come in manual and electric versions.
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Closed Captioning	Closed Captioning (CC) is a text transcript of the spoken part of a television program, movie, or computer-based presentation. Sometimes it includes descriptions of non-speech elements.
Color Identifier	Color identifiers are devices or apps that allow students without color perception to identify colors accurately. This includes students with color blindness and visual impairments.
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Document Camera	A document camera is a small camera hooked up to a computer or LCD projector which allows a teacher to display enlarged images of an object or document to an audience or classroom.
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eBook Reader	eBook readers are handheld computer devices that make it possible for books in electronic format to be viewed and read by users.
eBook	An eBook is an electronic version of a print book that can be read using a computer, tablet, eBook reader or smart phone.
Electronic Math Worksheets	Electronic math worksheets are software programs/apps that can help students organize, align, and work through basic math problems (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) and/or fractions on a computer/tablet.
Electronically Scanned Worksheets	Electronically scanned worksheets are worksheets that are scanned into a computer/device using a document scanner and used with a software program/app that allows the student to fill in the areas of the worksheet using a keyboard.
Engineering the Environment	Engineering the Environment is providing symbols, pictures and/or words throughout the classroom so that students have constant access to communication. The students' environment is embedded with language rich representation (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, comments, etc.) providing exposure to receptive and expressive symbolic language. Students build language skills when they are immersed in the use of picture symbols for communication. This is accomplished by providing easy access and modeling the use of pictures, symbols, communication boards and devices. Aided Language Stimulation is an integral strategy to be used with Engineering the Environment.

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Environmental Control Units (ECUs)	Environmental control units (ECUs) are devices that allow students with physical impairments to control electronic devices, including televisions, computers, lights, and appliances. Students can access these units through touch, switch access or voice control.
Equation Editors	Equation editors are software programs/apps that provide students with mathematical symbols to input math and science equations in word processing programs.
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GPS for Students with Visual Impairments	GPS (global positioning system) for students with visual impairments is specifically designed as a navigation assistance system and includes additional features above and beyond a traditional GPS system. These features include landmark and obstacle recognition.
Graphic Organizers	<p>A graphic organizer is a visual chart or tool used for a variety of purposes during the writing and/or reading process. It is often series of shapes connected with lines or arrows with the information written in the shapes. Graphic organizers can be used to structure writing projects, sequence events, analyze cause and effect, compare and contrast, problem solving, decision making, develop concepts in detail, planning research and brainstorming. Graphic organizers can be either print or electronic.</p> <p>Graphic organizers may also be referred to as story maps, concept maps, knowledge maps, or concept diagrams.</p>
Graphing Software	Software programs/apps that allow students to create graphs from mathematical information.
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Handheld Reading Device	A handheld reading device is a device or tablet that can read eBooks (electronic text).
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Keyguards	Keyguards are usually made out of clear plastic, and have cutouts that directly correspond to keyboard keys. They allow users to better isolate the keys they are trying to hit and helps reduce mis-hits.
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Large Print Materials	Large print materials are books or other material in which the print (or font) is larger than usual to accommodate students with low vision.

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Literacy Suite Software	Literacy suite software is a group of individual software applications that are designed to work separately or together. When used together, they work seamlessly to allow the student to engage in literacy activities from reading through the writing process. Examples of literacy suite software programs are SOLO and Premier Literacy Suite.
Long White Canes	Long white canes are used as mobility tools that enable students with visual impairments to travel and navigate safely throughout their environment(s). These devices also help others identify individuals with visual impairments.
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Magnifiers	Magnifiers increase the appearance of the size of an object or text. Magnifiers can range from hand held magnifiers to software or electronic devices such as video magnifiers (CCTV).
Math Translators	Math translators are software programs that convert math to braille math notation.
Money Identifier	Money identifiers are devices or apps that identify the denomination of paper money.
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Non-slip Materials	Non-slip materials are materials which provide a stable, non-slip area for items. These can range from materials such as tape to stabilize paper, shelf-liner to place under a clip board to commercial products such as Dycem or a slant board.
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OCR Scanning Software/App	OCR (optical character recognition) scanning software is used to convert scanned documents to editable text files.
Online Dictionary	An online dictionary that can be accessed online through a computer or tablet. It can be web-based or software/app and provides access to information found in a standard, print dictionary.
On-Screen Keyboards	On-screen keyboards are virtual keyboards that appear on computer or other device viewscreens. They are usually accessed by touch or mouse. On-screen keyboards can be customized to meet user needs, e.g. high contrast colors, larger keys/targets, etc. Scanning access is available for people with more severe disabilities who use switches for access to the computer.

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Page Fluffers	Page fluffers attach to pages and create spaces between the pages making them easier to turn. A wide variety of materials can be used to make fluffers, including foam, puff paint, sponges or popsicle sticks.
Pencil Grips	Pencil grips are used to help students modify their grasp when writing and facilitate an optimal pencil grasp. Grips can come in a variety of size and shapes.
Picture Cues	Picture cues combine pictures/symbols with text in order to provide visual supports for an activity. Examples include activities such as sequencing tasks, steps in a job, behavior management, or reading/vocabulary supports.
Picture Exchange System (PECS)	PECS is an augmentative/alternative communication system using picture symbols for students with severe communication impairments. There are six phases of PECS.
Picture Symbols	Pictures symbols are photographs, graphics, clip art, or line drawings used to represent a word or idea. Examples of commonly used picture symbols are Picture Communication Symbols, PicSyms, DynaSyms and Minspeak symbols.
Picture-based Word Processor	A picture-based or graphic word processor is software that pairs picture symbols with printed text. Pictures/symbols are inserted above/below the text as the words are typed. It can be used to create picture stories, schedules, and/or adapt books. It can also provide students with picture-based writing prompts.
Portable Dictionary with Speech Output	Portable dictionaries with speech output are handheld dictionaries that speak the word entered (using text-to-speech) and/or the definition of the word.
Portable Word Processors	Portable word processors are lightweight devices that provide access to word processing without a computer. Text can also be downloaded from the device to a computer or to a printer for editing, saving and printing.
Positioning Aids	<p>Positioning aids are customized supports that aid the positioning of students with physical disabilities. Students who require seating and positioning support often need to use a variety of positions throughout the day. Examples of this type of equipment include a prone stander (the student is positioned upright in a standing position with the support in front of the body), a supine stander (the student is positioned upright in a standing position with the support behind the body) and a side lyer (the student is positioned on their side with support for the back, side, legs and head). These can give students better access to classroom materials.</p> <p>Positioning aids can also refer to tools which can position classroom materials for easier access (i.e., book stands, slant boards, etc.).</p>
Power Control Units	Power control units allow the student to turn an electronic device on or off. Generally this is done by activating a switch. These can also be considered basic environmental control units.

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Screen Enlargement	Screen enlargement software, app or operating system feature magnifies areas of a computer/tablet display.
Screen Reader	Screen readers are software programs/apps that read aloud what is being displayed on the computer screen. All elements on the screen are read (i.e., menus, icons, title bars and text).
Slate and Stylus	Slate and Styluses are portable tools used to write braille. They can be compared to pencil and paper for sighted students.
Slant Board	A slant board is an angled board that is designed to provide an ideal writing and/or working surface to assist students with writing and/or reading.
Smartpen	A smartpen is a writing tool that students may use to take notes. Smartpens record the speaker and sync the recording as the student takes notes. The recording can be accessed later when the student taps on specific words on the special paper used for note taking.
Soundfield System	A soundfield system is designed to amplify and evenly distribute the speaker's voice around the classroom.
Specialized Format Books	Specialized format books are curricular content materials which make print accessible exclusively for students who are blind or other print disabled and are unable to access or read standard print. Specialized format books do not alter or modify the content of the original printed material that includes large print, braille books, audio books or digital text.
Specialized Tote for Students with Visual Impairments	Specialized tote for students with visual impairments that are specifically designed to accommodate long canes, note takers, and braille books.
Speech Amplification Systems	A speech amplification system amplifies a speaker's voice to a volume that can be heard by listeners.
Speech Prompting	Speech prompting is a verbal recording that serves as a reminder for the student. These recorded reminders support students in completing the steps of an activity. They are recorded on a device or software program/app.
Speech Recognition	Speech recognition converts spoken words to text. It can be built into a computer's operating system or software/app. It allows the student to dictate to the device/computer using their voice rather than a keyboard to input information or give commands to the computer. It is also referred to as voice recognition.

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Spell and/or Grammar Checker	Software/app or device that provides the ability to check the spelling of a desired word and/or grammatical correctness of written materials.
Switch Accessible Toys/Devices	Switch accessible toys/devices are toys and/or electronic devices that have been designed to be operated with a switch.
Switch Adapted Spinners	Switch adapted spinners are used by students to replace a standard game spinner or dice.
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Tactile Graphics	Tactile graphics are raised representations of visual images used by students with visual impairments to convey non-textual information such as maps, paintings, graphs, and diagrams.
Telecommunication Devices	Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD's), also called TTY's, allow the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to communicate via a text telephone system using typed messages.
Text-to-Speech	Text-to-speech refers to electronic text being read aloud by a computer generated voice. It also allows for viewing of the print text.
Total Communication	Total Communication is using any means of communication, including the use of sign language, voice, fingerspelling, lip-reading, writing, gestures, and/or pictures that works for the student. The idea behind Total Communication is that the method should be fitted to the child and that the means of communication may need to be adjusted based on the situation.
Tracking Aids	Tracking aids isolate sections of text (line) on a page to help students focus and increase attention while reading. Aids can range from a homemade reading strip/window to electronic highlighting of text on a computer or tablet.
Transfer Board	A transfer board is a device which is designed to help students with physical impairments move from one place to another.
Translation Services for Hard of Hearing or Deaf	Translation Services for Hard of Hearing or Deaf provide translation of spoken language into an accessible language for the student. These services include the use of sign language interpreters, oral interpreters or computer aided transcription services, such as CART (Computer Assisted Realtime Transcription) or C-Print.

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Visual Supports	Visual supports are tools that are used to increase the understanding of language and to provide support for students. Visual supports are often used to communicate choices, organize daily routines, give directions, reinforce expected behaviors, and/or assist in transition. Examples of visual supports may include photographs, text, calendars and picture symbols.
Voice Output Communication Aids	A Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA), also known as a Speech Generating Device (SGD), is a device that supplements a student's current means of communication. There are a variety of communication devices. These are single or multi-level systems having either static display (where the user must physically change the display/level) or dynamic display (where the display is automatically changed when the user presses a specific location on the screen). Speech output is either digitized (recorded human speech) or synthesized (computer generated speech).
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W	
Wheelchair Supports	Wheelchair supports are used to ensure that students have appropriate positioning. These can include shoulder straps, bolsters, pommels, etc. Wheelchair supports are important in order for students to access and manipulate classroom materials.
Word Prediction	Word prediction software/app used in conjunction with a word processor allows a student to select a desired word from a word list displayed in the prediction window. The generated list predicts words from the first or second letter(s) typed by the student. Some programs will also predict the next word to be typed based on grammatical formulas and frequency of use.
Word Processor	A word processor is a portable device or software/app where a student can enter text for a written product as well as perform formatting and editing tasks. Most word processors also contain spell and grammar checkers. Additional features to assist students with writing difficulties may include picture support, text-to-speech, word prediction and speech recognition capabilities.