

Do you have students requiring scribing, transcribing or reading of print materials?

Have you considered Alternate Format Materials and Assistive Technology?

Teachers spend a great deal of their time supporting students with exceptionalities (such as specific learning disorder), who require accommodations to assist them with reading and writing. Teachers often support these students by scribing, transcribing and reading text aloud. Many of these students can use alternate format materials (AFM) and assistive technology (AT) to increase their ability to work independently.



The use of AFM and AT can enable, increase or maintain a student's ability to meet the learning outcomes of the prescribed curriculum, modified prescribed courses and alternate programming, as outlined in the student's Record of Accommodations and/or Individual Education Plan (IEP). Some AT software programs can read texts aloud, or create written pieces which are dictated by the student. Other software programs predict words that fit the context of a sentence while it is being composed, have

organization tools, or research and citation features. Many of these software programs can work in conjunction with AFM.

Often students with exceptionalities encounter barriers with traditional print material. Students with perceptual disabilities may not be able to use textbooks, class handouts, and other written materials, in their original format. Instead, the student requires that written material be provided in an alternate format such as Braille, audio books, or digital versions of books that can be read to the student using text to voice software. Students who qualify can receive their textbooks, novels and other printed curriculum resources in the alternate format(s) they require. There are alternate formats which benefit students who have difficulty manipulating books, those that can be enlarged for students who have difficulty seeing the print, and others which provide an audio file.

As students become confident using AT and AFM for accommodations, teachers will require less time to sit with them and read textbooks, articles, stories and assessments aloud; students will be also be able to compose responses independently. This will result in additional teacher time

for teaching, assessing and supporting the learning of all students. Reports from schools adopting assistive technology for accommodations indicate that when students are able to complete their work and assignments independently, there is a marked improvement in the quality of their work, they feel more in control of their learning, they are more engaged in the curriculum and with other students, and self-esteem is improved. Students often feel a decrease in levels of frustration and anxiety, which may lead to improved behaviour, and better enable them to reach their potential.

Students who have used AT and AFM as an accommodation during high school are better prepared when they transition to post-secondary institutions. Newfoundland and Labrador's colleges and Memorial University expect that students requiring text to be read or transcribed will be accustomed to using assistive technology. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) has purchased a provincial license for the software program Word Q + Speak Q. All students may use this software as an occasional learning tool, similar to providing a learning centre or offering articles or pieces of literature in video or MP3 format. Installation codes for Word Q + Speak Q have been supplied to all principals. (If a student using WQ + SQ, or any technology offered as an occasional learning tool, requires extensive reliance on technology, this may indicate that further investigation of the student's learning is warranted. A comprehensive assessment may be required.)



Both AFM and AT are deployed by EECD through an application process. Students must have an exceptionality and a related Record of Accommodations. The AT Guidelines require that a student complete a thirty-day trial of the requested technology. The trial form is then submitted as part of the AT application. AFM Guidelines require that the student meets criteria specified by Canadian Copyright laws. When applying for AFM, it is important to also consider the software that will enable the student to access the materials they receive. This may require an AT application.

Further information and application forms are available on the EECD website.
www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentssupportservices/