Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) Instructions

Before an item in the QIAT Matrices is discussed and self-rated, groups must read the entire item in the list of ***Quality Indicators and Intent Statements*** (below) so that the intent of the item is clear.

1. Read the ***Quality Indicators and Intent Statements*** (below)
2. Read the ***QIAT Matrices***
3. Complete the ***QIAT Matrices* self-rating document**

Also, prior to beginning the self-assessment/rating, the Local Education Agency (LEA) may need to gather and review educational records, processes, information and documents related to assistive technology in the LEA. This information may include:

1. Student Educational Records/IEPs.

2. Assistive Technology Inventory.

3. Policies and Procedures for Considering and Assessing Students' Assistive Technology Needs.

4. Written Descriptions of Job Requirements for Administrator, Teacher, and Staff Positions.

5. Past, Present, and Future Professional Development Opportunities.

6. Transition Planning Documents.

7. Technology Planning and Budgeting Processes.

If an LEA does not have any of the above documents to refer to, completing the self-evaluation tool may help in the direction/creation of such documents.

Quality Indicators for Consideration of Assistive Technology Needs

Consideration of the need for AT devices and services is an integral part of the educational process contained in IDEA for referral, evaluation, and IEP development. Although AT is considered at all stages of the process, the Consideration Quality Indictors are specific to the consideration of AT in the development of the IEP as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In most instances, the Quality Indicators are also appropriate for the consideration of AT for students who qualify for services under other legislation (e.g., 504, ADA).

1. **Assistive technology devices and services are considered for all students with disabilities regardless of type or severity of disability.**

   Intent: Consideration of assistive technology need is required by IDEA and is based on the unique educational needs of the student. Students are not excluded from consideration of AT for any reason. (e.g., type of disability, age, administrative concerns)
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2. **During the development of an individualized educational program, every IEP team consistently uses a collaborative decision-making process that supports systematic consideration of each student's possible need for assistive technology devices and services.**

   Intent: A collaborative process that ensures that all IEP teams effectively consider the assistive technology of students is defined, communicated, and consistently used throughout the agency. Processes may vary from agency to agency to most effectively address student needs under local conditions.

3. **IEP team members have the collective knowledge and skills needed to make informed assistive technology decisions and seek assistance when needed.**

   Intent: IEP team members combine their knowledge and skills to determine if assistive technology devices and services are needed to remove barriers to student performance. When the assistive technology needs are beyond the knowledge and scope of the IEP team, additional resources and support are sought.

4. **Decisions regarding the need for assistive technology devices and services are based on the student's IEP goals and objectives, access to curricular and extracurricular activities, and progress in the general education curriculum.**

   Intent: As the IEP team determines the tasks the student needs to complete and develops the goals and objectives, the team considers whether assistive technology is required to accomplish those tasks.

5. **The IEP team gathers and analyzes data about the student, customary environments, educational goals, and tasks when considering a student's need for assistive technology devices and services.**

   Intent: The IEP team shares and discusses information about the student's present levels of achievement in relationship to the environments, and tasks to determine if the student requires assistive technology devices and services to participate actively, work on expected tasks, and make progress toward mastery of educational goals

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6. **When assistive technology is needed, the IEP team explores a range of assistive technology devices, services, and other supports that address identified needs.**

   Intent: The IEP team considers various supports and services that address the educational needs of the student and may include no tech, low tech, mid-tech and/or high tech solutions and devices. IEP team members do not limit their thinking to only those devices and services currently available within the district.

7. **The assistive technology consideration process and results are documented in the IEP and include a rationale for the decision and supporting evidence.**

   Intent: Even though IEP documentation may include a checkbox verifying that assistive technology has been considered, the reasons for the decisions and recommendations should be clearly stated. Supporting evidence may include the results of assistive technology assessments, data from device trials, differences in achievement with and without assistive technology, student preferences for competing devices, and teacher observations, among others.

COMMON ERRORS:

1. AT is considered for students with severe disabilities only.
2. No one on the IEP team is knowledgeable regarding AT.
3. Team does not use a consistent process based on data about the student, environment and tasks to make decisions.
4. Consideration of AT is limited to those items that are familiar to team members or are available in the district.
5. Team members fail to consider access to the curriculum and IEP goals in determining if AT is required in order for the student to receive FAPE.
6. If AT is not needed, team fails to document the basis of its decisions.

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Quality Indicators for Assessment of Assistive Technology Needs

Quality Indicators for Assessment of Assistive Technology Needs is a process conducted by a team, used to identify tools and strategies to address a student's specific need(s). The issues that lead to an AT assessment may be very simple and quickly answered or more complex and challenging. Assessment takes place when these issues are beyond the scope of the problem solving that occurs as a part of normal service delivery.

1. **Procedures for all aspects of assistive technology assessment are clearly defined and consistently applied.**

   Intent: Throughout the educational agency, personnel are well-informed and trained about assessment procedures and how to initiate them. There is consistency throughout the agency in the conducting of assistive technology assessments. Procedures may include–but are not limited to–initiating an assessment, planning and conducting an assessment, conducting trials, reporting results, and resolving conflicts.

2. **Assistive technology assessments are conducted by a team with the collective knowledge and skills needed to determine possible assistive technology solutions that address the needs and abilities of the student, demands of the customary environments, educational goals, and related activities.**

   Intent: Team membership is flexible and varies according to the knowledge and skills needed to address student needs. The student and family are active team members. Various team members bring different information and strengths to the assessment process.

3. **All assistive technology assessments include a functional assessment in the student's customary environments, such as the classroom, lunchroom, playground, home, community setting, or work place.**

   Intent: The assessment process includes activities that occur in the student's current or anticipated environments because characteristics and demands in each may vary. Team members work together to gather specific data and relevant information in identified environments to contribute to assessment decisions.

4. **Assistive technology assessments, including needed trials, are completed within reasonable time lines.**

   Intent: Assessments are initiated in a timely fashion and proceed according to a timeline that the IEP team determines to be reasonable based on the complexity of student needs and assessment questions. Timelines comply with applicable state and agency requirements.

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5. **Recommendations from assistive technology assessments are based on data about the student, environments and tasks.**

   Intent: The assessment includes information about the student's needs and abilities, demands of various environments, educational tasks, and objectives. Data may be gathered from sources such as student performance records, results of experimental trials, direct observation, interviews with students or significant others, and anecdotal records.

6. **The assessment provides the IEP team with clearly documented recommendations that guide decisions about the selection, acquisition, and use of assistive technology devices and services.**

   Intent: A written rationale is provided for any recommendations that are made. Recommendations may include assessment activities and results, suggested devices and alternative ways of addressing needs, services required by the student and others, and suggested strategies for implementation and use.

7. **Assistive technology needs are reassessed any time changes in the student, the environments and/or the tasks result in the student's needs not being met with current devices and/or services.**

   Intent: An assistive technology assessment is available any time it is needed due to changes that have affected the student. The assessment can be requested by the parent or any other member of the IEP team.

COMMON ERRORS

1. Procedures for conducting AT assessment are not defined, or are not customized to meet the student's needs.
2. A team approach to assessment is not utilized.
3. Individuals participating in an assessment do not have the skills necessary to conduct the assessment, and do not seek additional help.
4. Team members do not have adequate time to conduct assessment processes, including necessary trials with AT.
5. Communication between team members is not clear.
6. The student is not involved in the assessment process.
7. When the assessment is conducted by any team other than the student's IEP team, the needs of the student or expectations for the assessment are not communicated.

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Quality Indicators for Including Assistive Technology in the IEP

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requires that the IEP team consider AT needs in the development of every Individualized Education Program (IEP). Once the IEP team has reviewed assessment results and determined that AT is needed for provision of a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE), it is important that the IEP document reflects the team's determination in as clear a fashion as possible. The Quality Indicators for AT in the IEP help the team describe the role of AT in the child's educational program.

1. **The education agency has guidelines for documenting assistive technology needs in the IEP and requires their consistent application.**

   Intent: The education agency provides guidance to IEP teams about how to effectively document assistive technology needs, devices, and services as a part of specially designed instruction. related services, or supplementary aids and services

2. **All services that the IEP team determines are needed to support the selection, acquisition, and use of assistive technology devices are designated in the IEP.**

   Intent: The provision of assistive technology services is critical to the effective use of assistive technology devices. It is important that the IEP describes the assistive technology services that are needed for student success. Such services may include evaluation, customization or maintenance of devices, coordination of services, and training for the student and family and professionals, among others.

3. **The IEP illustrates that assistive technology is a tool to support achievement of goals and progress in the general curriculum by establishing a clear relationship between student needs, assistive technology devices and services, and the student's goals and objectives.**

   Intent: Most goals are developed before decisions about assistive technology are made. However, this does not preclude the development of additional goals, especially those related specifically to the appropriate use of assistive technology.

4. **IEP content regarding assistive technology use is written in language that describes how assistive technology contributes to achievement of measurable and observable outcomes.**

   Intent: Content which describes measurable and observable outcomes for assistive technology use enables the IEP team to review the student's progress and determine whether the assistive technology has had the expected impact on student participation and achievement.

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5. **Assistive technology is included in the IEP in a manner that provides a clear and complete description of the devices and services to be provided and used to address student needs and achieve expected results.**

   Intent: IEPs are written so that participants in the IEP meeting and others who use the information to implement the student's program understand what technology is to be available, how it is to be used, and under what circumstances. "Jargon" should be avoided.

COMMON ERRORS:

1. IEP teams do not know how to include AT in IEPs.
2. IEPs including AT use a "formula" approach to documentation. All IEPs are developed in similar fashion and the unique needs of the child are not addressed.
3. AT is included in the IEP, but the relationship to goals and objectives is unclear.
4. AT devices are included in the IEP, but no AT services support the use.
5. AT expected results are not measurable or observable.

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Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Implementation

Assistive technology implementation pertains to the ways that assistive technology devices and services, as included in the IEP (including goals/objectives, related services, supplementary aids and services and accommodations or modifications) are delivered and integrated into the student's educational program. Assistive technology implementation involves people working together to support the student using assistive technology to accomplish expected tasks necessary for active participation and progress in customary educational environments.

0. **Assistive technology implementation proceeds according to a collaboratively developed plan.**

   Intent: Following IEP development, all those involved in implementation work together to develop a written action plan that provides detailed information about how the AT will be used in specific educational settings, what will be done and who will do it.

2. **Assistive technology is integrated into the curriculum and daily activities of the student across environments.**

   Intent: Assistive technology is used when and where it is needed to facilitate the student's access to, and mastery of, the curriculum. Assistive technology may facilitate active participation in educational activities, assessments, extracurricular activities, and typical routines.

3. **Persons supporting the student across all environments in which the assistive technology is expected to be used share responsibility for implementation of the plan.**

   Intent: All persons who work with the student know their roles and responsibilities, are able to support the student using assistive technology, and are expected to do so.

4. **Persons supporting the student provide opportunities for the student to use a variety of strategies–including assistive technology– and to learn which strategies are most effective for particular circumstances and tasks.**

   Intent: When and where appropriate, students are encouraged to consider and use alternative strategies to remove barriers to participation or performance. Strategies may include the student's natural abilities, use of assistive technology, other supports, or modifications to the curriculum, task or environment.

5. **Learning opportunities for the student, family and staff are an integral part of implementation.**

   Intent: Learning opportunities needed by the student, staff, and family are based on how the assistive technology will be used in each unique environment. Training and technical assistance are planned and implemented as ongoing processes based on current and changing needs.

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6. **Assistive technology implementation is initially based on assessment data and is adjusted based on performance data.**

   Intent: Formal and informal assessment data guide initial decision-making and planning for AT implementation. As the plan is carried out, student performance is monitored and implementation is adjusted in a timely manner to support student progress.

7. **Assistive technology implementation includes management and maintenance of equipment and materials.**

   Intent: For technology to be useful it is important that equipment management responsibilities are clearly defined and assigned. Though specifics may differ based on the technology, some general areas may include organization of equipment and materials; responsibility for acquisition, set-up, repair, and replacement in a timely fashion; and assurance that equipment is operational.

COMMON ERRORS

1. Implementation is expected to be smooth and effective without addressing specific components in a plan. Team members assume that everyone understands what needs to happen and knows what to do.
2. Plans for implementation are created and carried out by one IEP team member.
3. The team focuses on device acquisition and does not discuss implementation.
4. An implementation plan is developed that is incompatible with the instructional environments.
5. No one takes responsibility for the care and maintenance of AT devices and so they are not available or in working order when needed.
6. Contingency plans for dealing with broken or lost devices are not made in advance.

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Quality Indicators for Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Assistive Technology

This area addresses the evaluation of the effectiveness of the AT devices and services that are provided to individual students. It includes data collection, documentation and analysis to monitor changes in student performance resulting from the implementation of assistive technology services. Student performance is reviewed in order to identify if, when, or where modifications and revisions to the implementation are needed.

1. **Team members share clearly defined responsibilities to ensure that data are collected, evaluated, and interpreted by capable and credible team members.**

   Intent: Each team member is accountable for ensuring that the data collection process determined by the team is implemented. Individual roles in the collection and review of the data are assigned by the team. Data collection, evaluation, and interpretation are led by persons with relevant training and knowledge. It can be appropriate for different individual team members to conduct these tasks.

2. **Data are collected on specific student achievement that has been identified by the team and is related to one or more goals.**

   Intent: In order to evaluate the success of assistive technology use, data are collected on various aspects of student performance and achievement. Targets for data collection include the student's use of assistive technology to progress toward mastery of relevant IEP and curricular goals and to enhance participation in extracurricular activities at school and in other environments.

3. **Evaluation of effectiveness includes the quantitative and qualitative measurement of changes in the student's performance and achievement.**

   Intent: Changes targeted for data collection are observable and measurable, so that data are as objective as possible. Changes identified by the IEP team for evaluation may include accomplishment of relevant tasks, how assistive technology is used, student preferences, productivity, participation, and independence, quality of work, speed and accuracy of performance, and student satisfaction, among others.

4. **Effectiveness is evaluated across environments during naturally occurring and structured activities.**

   Intent: Relevant tasks within each environment where the assistive technology is to be used are identified. Data needed and procedures for collecting those data in each environment are determined.

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5. **Data are collected to provide teams with a means for analyzing student achievement and identifying supports and barriers that influence assistive technology use to determine what changes, if any, are needed.**

   Intent: Teams regularly analyze data on multiple factors that may influence success or lead to errors in order to guide decision-making. Such factors include not only the student's understanding of expected tasks and ability to use assistive technology but also student preferences, intervention strategies, training, and opportunities to gain proficiency.

6. **Changes are made in the student's assistive technology services and educational program when evaluation data indicate that such changes are needed to improve student achievement.**

   Intent: During the process of reviewing evaluation data, the team decides whether changes or modifications need to be made in the assistive technology, expected tasks, or factors within the environment. The team acts on those decisions and supports their implementation.

7. **Evaluation of effectiveness is a dynamic, responsive, ongoing process that is reviewed periodically.**

   Intent: Scheduled data collection occurs over time and changes in response to both expected and unexpected results. Data collection reflects measurement strategies appropriate to the individual student's needs. Team members evaluate and interpret data during periodic progress reviews.

COMMON ERRORS:

1. An observable, measurable student behavior is not specified as a target for change.
2. Team members do not share responsibility for evaluation of effectiveness.
3. An environmentally appropriate means of data collection and strategies has not been identified.
4. A schedule of program review for possible modification is not determined before implementation begins.

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Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Transition

Transition plans for students who use assistive technology address the ways the student's use of assistive technology devices and services are transferred from one setting to another. Assistive technology transition involves people from different classrooms, programs, buildings, or agencies working together to ensure continuity. Self-advocacy, advocacy and implementation are critical issues for transition planning.

1. **Transition plans address assistive technology needs of the student, including roles and training needs of team members, subsequent steps in assistive technology use, and follow-up after transition takes place.**

   Intent: The comprehensive transition plan required by IDEA assists the receiving agency/team to successfully provide needed supports for the AT user. This involves the assignment of responsibilities and the establishment of accountability.

2. **Transition planning empowers the student using assistive technology to participate in the transition planning at a level appropriate to age and ability.**

   Intent: Specific self-determination skills are taught that enable the student to gradually assume responsibility for participation and leadership in AT transition planning as capacity develops. AT tools are provided, as needed, to support the student's participation.

3. **Advocacy related to assistive technology use is recognized as critical and planned for by the teams involved in transition.**

   Intent: Everyone involved in transition advocates for the student's progress, including the student's use of AT. Specific advocacy tasks related to AT use are addressed and may be carried out by the student, the family, staff members or a representative.

4. **AT requirements in the receiving environment are identified during the transition planning process.**

   Intent: Environmental requirements, skill demands and needed AT support are determined in order to plan appropriately. This determination is made collaboratively and with active participation by representatives from sending and receiving environments.

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5. **Transition planning for students using assistive technology proceeds according to an individualized timeline.**

   Intent: Transition planning timelines are adjusted based on specific needs of the student and differences in environments. Timelines address well mapped action steps with specific target dates and ongoing opportunities for reassessment.

6. **Transition plans address specific equipment, training and funding issues such as transfer or acquisition of assistive technology, manuals and support documents.**

   Intent: A plan is developed to ensure that the AT equipment, hardware, and/or software arrives in working condition accompanied by any needed manuals. Provisions for ongoing maintenance and technical support are included in the plan.

COMMON ERRORS:

1. Lack of self-determination, self-awareness and self-advocacy on part of the individual with a disability (and/or advocate).
2. Lack of adequate long range planning on part of sending and receiving agencies (timelines).
3. Inadequate communication and coordination.
4. Failure to address funding responsibility.
5. Inadequate evaluation (documentation, data, communication, valued across settings) process.
6. Philosophical differences between sending and receiving agencies.
7. Lack of understanding of the law and of their responsibilities.

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Quality Indicators for Administrative Support of Assistive Technology Services

This area defines the critical areas of administrative support and leadership for developing and delivering assistive technology services. It involves the development of policies, procedures, and other supports necessary to improve quality of services and sustain effective assistive technology programs.

1. **The education agency has written procedural guidelines that ensure equitable access to assistive technology devices and services for students with disabilities, if required for a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE).**

   Intent: Clearly written procedural guidelines help ensure that students with disabilities have the assistive technology devices and services they require for educational participation and benefit. Access to assistive technology is ensured regardless of severity of disability, educational placement, geographic location, or economic status.

2. **The education agency broadly disseminates clearly defined procedures for accessing and providing assistive technology services and supports the implementation of those guidelines.**

   Intent: Procedures are readily available in multiple formats to families and school personnel in special and general education. All are aware of how to locate the procedures and are expected to follow procedures whenever appropriate.

3. **The education agency includes appropriate assistive technology responsibilities in written descriptions of job requirements for each position in which activities impact assistive technology services.**

   Intent: Appropriate responsibilities and the knowledge, skills, and actions required to fulfill them are specified for positions from the classroom through the central office. These descriptions will vary depending upon the position and may be reflected in a position description, assignment of duty statement, or some other written description.

4. **The education agency employs personnel with the competencies needed to support quality assistive technology services within their primary areas of responsibility at all levels of the organization.**

   Intent: Although different knowledge, skills, and levels of understanding are required for various jobs, all understand and are able to fulfill their parts in developing and maintaining a collaborative system of effective assistive technology services to students.

5. **The education agency includes assistive technology in the technology planning and budgeting process.**

   Intent: A comprehensive, collaboratively developed technology plan provides for the technology needs of all students in general education and special education.

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6. **The education agency provides access to on-going learning opportunities about assistive technology for staff, family, and students.**

   Intent: Learning opportunities are based on the needs of the student, the family, and the staff and are readily available to all. Training and technical assistance include any topic pertinent to the selection, acquisition, or use of assistive technology or any other aspect of assistive technology service delivery.

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7. **The education agency uses a systematic process to evaluate all components of the agency-wide assistive technology program.**

   Intent: The components of the evaluation process include, but are not limited to, planning, budgeting, decision-making, delivering AT services to students, and evaluating the impact of AT services on student achievement. There are clear, systematic evaluation procedures that all administrators know about and use on a regular basis at central office and building levels.

COMMON ERRORS:

1. If policies and guidelines are developed, they are not known widely enough to assure equitable application by all IEP teams.
2. It is not clearly understood that the primary purpose of AT in school settings is to support the implementation of the IEP for the provision of a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE).
3. Personnel have been appointed to head AT efforts, but resources to support those efforts have not been allocated. (Time, a budget for devices, professional development, etc.)
4. AT leadership personnel try to or are expected to do all of the AT work and fail to meet expectations.
5. AT services are established but their effectiveness is never evaluated.

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Quality Indicators for Professional Development and Training in Assistive Technology

This area defines the critical elements of quality professional development and training in assistive technology. Assistive technology professional development and training efforts should arise out of an ongoing, well-defined, sequential and comprehensive plan. Such a plan can develop and maintain the abilities of individuals at all levels of the organization to participate in the creation and provision of quality AT services. The goal of assistive technology professional development and training is to increase educators' knowledge and skills in a variety of areas including, but not limited to: collaborative processes; a continuum of tools, strategies, and services; resource; legal issues; action planning; and data collection and analysis. Audiences for professional development and training include: students, parents or caregivers, special education teachers, educational assistants, support personnel, general education personnel, administrators, AT specialists, and others involved with students.

1. **Comprehensive assistive technology professional development and training support the understanding that assistive technology devices and services enable students to accomplish IEP goals and objectives and make progress in the general curriculum.**

   Intent: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) defines FAPE for each student. The use of AT enables students to participate in and benefit from FAPE. The focus of all AT Professional Development and training activities is to increase the student's ability to make progress in the general curriculum and accomplish IEP goals and objectives.

2. **The education agency has an AT professional development and training plan that identifies the audiences, the purposes, the activities, the expected results, evaluation measures and funding for assistive technology professional development and training.**

   Intent: The opportunity to learn the appropriate techniques and strategies is provided for each person involved in the delivery of assistive technology services. Professional development and training are offered at a variety of levels of expertise and are pertinent to individual roles.

3. **The content of comprehensive AT professional development and training addresses all aspects of the selection, acquisition and use of assistive technology.**

   Intent: AT professional development and training address the development of a wide range of assessment, collaboration and implementation skills that enable educators to provide effective AT interventions for students. The AT professional development and training plan includes, but is not limited to: collaborative processes; the continuum of tools, strategies and services; resources; legal issues; action planning; and data collection.

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4. **AT professional development and training address and are aligned with other local, state and national professional development initiatives.**

   Intent: For many students with disabilities, assistive technology is required for active participation in local, state and national educational initiatives. Content of the professional development and training includes information about how the use of assistive technology supports the participation of students with disabilities in these initiatives.

5. **Assistive technology professional development and training include ongoing learning opportunities that utilize local, regional, and/or national resources.**

   Intent: Professional development and training opportunities enable individuals to meet present needs and increase their knowledge of AT for use in future. Training in AT occurs frequently enough to address new and emerging technologies and practices and is available on a repetitive and continuous schedule. A variety of AT professional development and training resources are used.

6. **Professional Development and Training in assistive technology follow research-based models for adult learning that include multiple formats and are delivered at multiple skill levels.**

   Intent: The design of professional development and training for AT recognizes adults as diverse learners who bring various levels of prior knowledge and experience to the training and can benefit from differentiated instruction using a variety of formats and diverse timeframes (e.g., workshops, distance learning, follow-up assistance, ongoing technical support).

7. **The effectiveness of assistive technology professional development and training is evaluated by measuring changes in practice that result in improved student performance.**

   Intent: Evidence is collected regarding the results of AT professional development and training. The professional development and training plan is modified based on these data in order to ensure changes educational practice that result in improved student performance.

COMMON ERRORS:

1. The educational agency does not have a comprehensive plan for ongoing AT professional development and training.
2. The educational agency's plan for professional development and training is not based on AT needs assessment and goals.
3. Outcomes for professional development are not clearly defined and effectiveness is not measured in terms of practice and student performance.
4. A continuum of ongoing professional development and training is not available.
5. Professional development and training focuses on the tools and not the process related to determining student needs and integrating technology into the curriculum.
6. Professional development and training is provided for special educators but not for administrators, general educators and instructional technology staff.

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