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Is Assistive Technology Leveling the Playing Field for Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Settings?

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Overview

- About the speakers
- Purpose of the Study
- Importance of the Problem
- Methodology
- Results
- Recommendations
- Discussion
- Contact information



What is Assistive Technology?

- According to the Assistive Technology Act (2004), assistive technology is “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of people with disabilities” (U.S. Congress, 2004, Section 3(3)).

- [Assistive Technology Video from IST site](#)

Teaching All Students, Reaching All Learners, Including Students with Disabilities as Diverse Learners

About the Speakers



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Purpose of the Study

Examine the status of assistive technology use by postsecondary students with disabilities.



Does assistive technology provide equal access to technology and the curriculum?



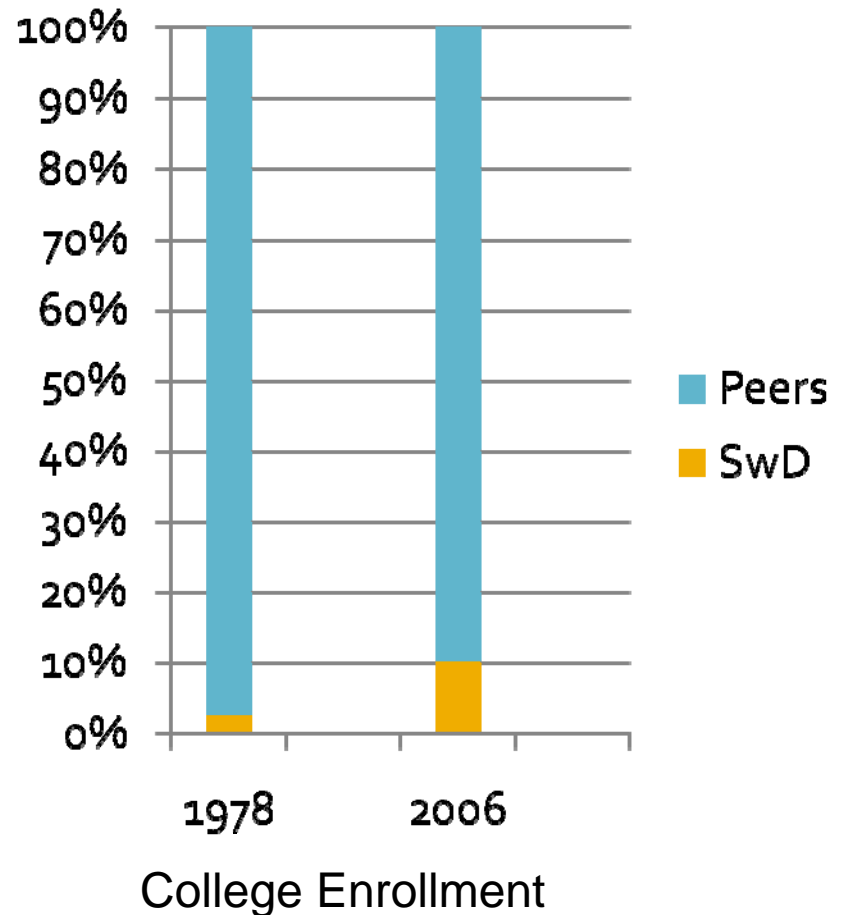
What factors effect the usefulness of assistive technology?



What can institutions do to provide better access to technology and the curriculum?

Importance of the Problem

- Number of students with disabilities (SwD) in higher education increasing (2.6% in 1978 to 11.3% in 2006).
- Use of assistive technology (AT) increasing.
- BUT SwD still experience significant barriers in higher education.
- AND SwD are still less likely to graduate from college than their non-disabled peers.



(National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Educational Supports, 2002;Horn and Nevill, 2006)

Methodology



Review of empirical studies
published in the United
States between 2004-2009

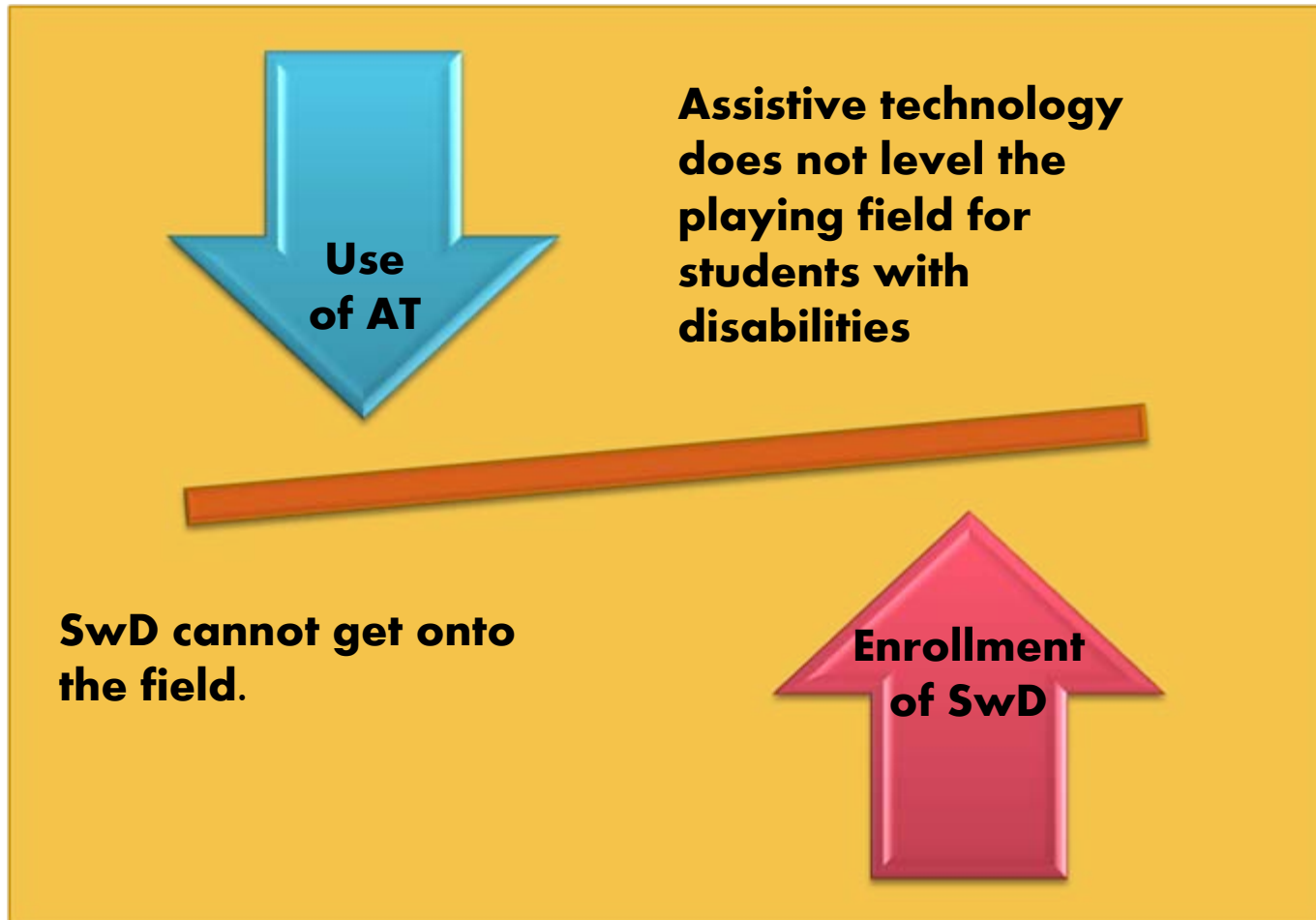


Search yielded 19 relevant
articles

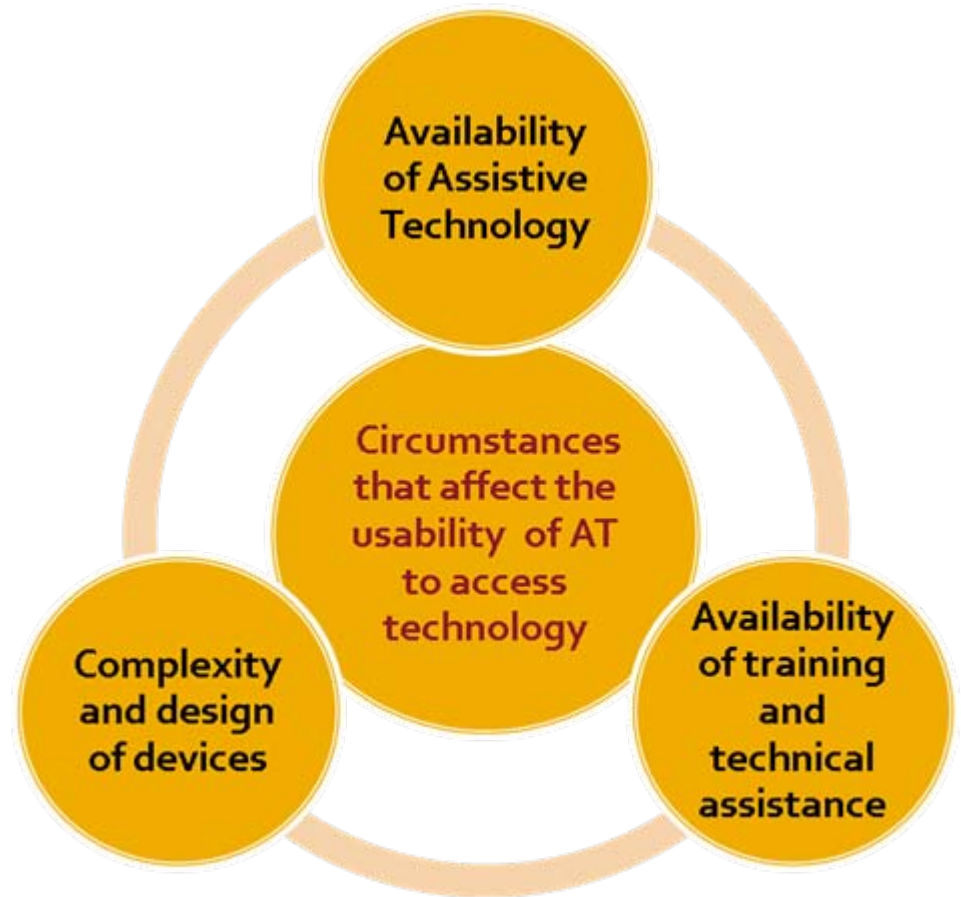


Articles analyzed for
common themes

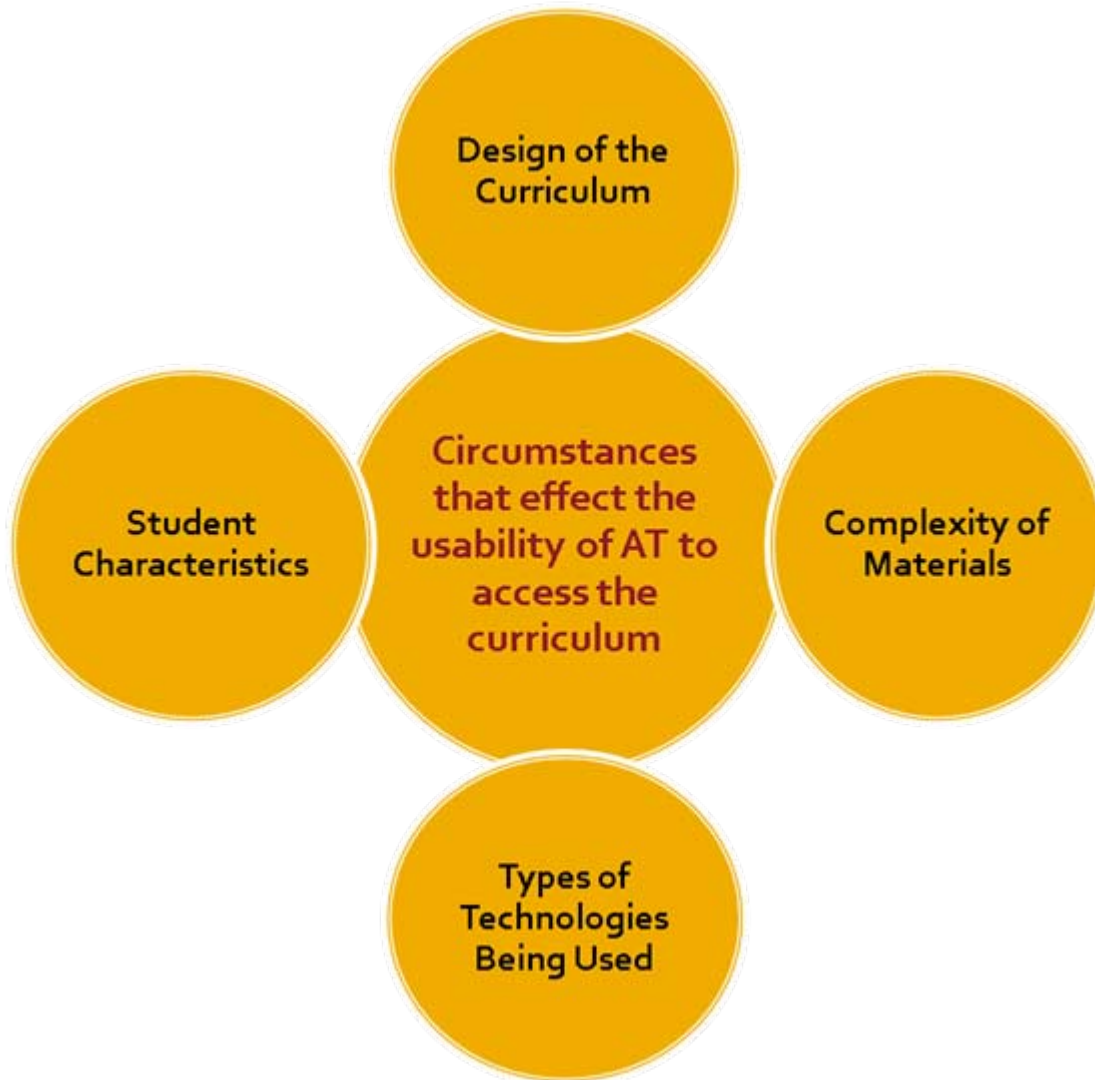
Results: Overall Findings



Results: Finding One



Results: Finding Two



Recommendations

Universal Design for Learning

- U D L principles should be applied in higher education

Colleges and Universities

- Support the use of AT
- Recognize its limitations

Research

- Examine strategies that eliminate AT barriers

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Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- Flexible and intuitive to accommodate a wide range of learner needs.
- Benefits both students with and without disabilities.
- Applicable to everyday technologies.
- No cost or little expense to incorporate.



Recommendations

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Colleges and Universities

- Include the provision of AT in open computer labs and libraries.
- Provide technical assistance in the purchase and use of AT.
- Comply with laws concerning accessibility of electronic and print media.

(Guyer and Uzeta, 2009; McNaughton and Bryen, 2007; Stumbo, Martin and Hedrick, 2009)



Recommendations

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More research is needed to determine:

1. How barriers can be overcome.
2. In what ways does UDL enhance and minimize the use of AT?
3. When AT is available, how does it affect other support services?
4. What are effective ways of supporting faculty?



Research in the area of Assistive Technology needs to go beyond...

“Here are the benefits of AT but here are the problems.”



TO



“These are the ways to truly level the field for people with disabilities.”

Discussion

- How do your experiences with AT match or contradict our findings?
- How do you think we can provide better access to technology and the curriculum for SwD?
- What other recommendations would you suggest for “equalizing the field” in postsecondary settings?



Contact Information

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Students with Disabilities as Diverse Learners
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