

Checklist for Assistive Technology

The purpose of this checklist is to try to narrow down the focus of assistive technology training in order to tailor it to fit the student's needs.

This checklist is designed to be given in parts; the entire checklist is not necessary for one training session. Please choose the sections that you feel are appropriate for the student's difficulties and the assistive technology that you are working with. Some suggestions about how you could use the checklist are located on the back of each checklist.

The first page contains questions that you can ask students. The second page is a guide to suggest which features of the assistive technology should be taught first in order to make the technology pertinent to the student's needs.

****Please note:** There are several examples of assistive technology software listed in this document, not a complete list of every software available. These are examples only and are not an endorsement of any particular product.

If you have any comments, please contact Marlene McIntosh at marlene.mcintosh@cambriancollege.ca or 705-566-8101 extension 7219.

Adapted with permission from the Centre for Students with Disabilities, Algonquin College

Cambrian College, The Glenn Crombie Centre for disability services, Sudbury, ON

Computer Skills

Student Name: _____

Question	Yes	No
1. Do you know how to use a computer?		
2. Do you know how to type?		
3. Do you use the Internet?		
<p>What type of things do you do on the Internet?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Downloading music <input type="checkbox"/> Searching for information <input type="checkbox"/> Playing games <input type="checkbox"/> Chatting </p>		
4. Do you know how to use MS Word?		
<p>What type of things do you do with MS Word?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Bold, italics, underline <input type="checkbox"/> Double spacing <input type="checkbox"/> Tables <input type="checkbox"/> Saving files <input type="checkbox"/> Page breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Opening files <input type="checkbox"/> Headers and footers </p>		
<p>What have you typed in MS Word?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Letters <input type="checkbox"/> Essays <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Memos <input type="checkbox"/> Journals _____ </p>		
<p>5. Have you ever used other software?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Kurzweil 3000 / Wynn <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiration/Smart Ideas <input type="checkbox"/> textHELP Read & Write <input type="checkbox"/> CoWriter <input type="checkbox"/> WordQ <input type="checkbox"/> Dragon NaturallySpeaking <input type="checkbox"/> Other </p>		

Guidelines for Computer Skills Checklist

This section should give you a good idea about the level of computer skills that your student has before you begin the AT training. You can use this checklist to determine if a student needs to learn basic computer skills before they learn how to use other assistive technology.

Reading Skills

Student Name: _____

Question	Yes	No
Decoding		
1. Can you read words that you don't know by sounding them out?		
2. Do you read in your head?		
3. Do you like to read out loud?		
4. Has anyone ever read a book to you?		
Comprehension		
5. Do you have to read something a few times before you understand it?		
6. Can you pick out what is important when you read – main ideas?		
7. When you read, can you read “between the lines” to try to figure out what the author is trying to say?		
8. Do you read <input type="checkbox"/> Novels <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines		
9. Do you have difficulty reading textbooks?		
Vocabulary		
10. Do you have a difficult time to understand what most of the words mean when you are reading?		
11. Is it hard for you to come up with words that mean the same thing (synonyms) when you are reading?		
12. If you are reading and come across a word that you don't know, can you figure out what it means by reading the rest of the sentence?		
Speed		
13. Does it take you a long time to read something – let's say longer than it takes others to read the same thing?		
14. How long does it take to read a chapter of a textbook?		

Guidelines for the Reading Skills Checklist

You can use this section if you are teaching a student how to use **OCR** software with **text-to-speech** capabilities such as Kurzweil 3000 and Wynn. This is also a good section to use with students who have difficulties with reading.

Decoding – if there are difficulties listed in this section, you may want to begin with the basic steps of how to scan and how to read with the software.

Comprehension – if there are difficulties listed in this section, you may want to begin with reading and using the dictionary and thesaurus. Also, begin reading by chunking text into sentences then into paragraphs to determine how much the student can read and still understand what they are reading.

Vocabulary – if there are difficulties in this section, you may want to begin with reading followed by using dictionary and thesaurus. You may want to include footnotes and the dictionary to help students to build a vocabulary list. Students may want to chunk text and use other vocabulary features of the software to help them to understand words in their text.

Speed – if there are difficulties in this section, you may want to begin with the basic steps of how to scan and how to read with the software.

Written Language

Student Name: _____

Question	Yes	No
Written Expression		
1. Do you have a problem organizing your thoughts when you write? (Does your writing make sense?)		
2. Do you have difficulty starting written assignments?		
3. Do you have difficulty completing written assignments?		
4. Does it take a long time to write assignments?		
5. Do you have difficulty with grammar?		
Spelling		
6. Do you use simple sentences or limited vocabulary when you write?		
7. Do you have problems with spelling?		
8. Do you have problems spelling small words & big words?		
9. Do you ever make homonym mistakes (e.g. there, they're, and there)?		

Guidelines for the Written Language Checklist

You can use this section if you are teaching a student how to use **text-to-speech** software such as textHELP Read & Write, Inspiration, Smart Ideas, WordQ, CoWriter or other software that helps with writing. Also, this section is good for students who need to learn to use **voice recognition** software such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking or SpeakQ.

Written Expression – if there are difficulties listed from the first four questions, you may want to begin with organizational software such as Inspiration or Smart Ideas.

If the student has difficulty with grammar mistakes, you may need to investigate further to determine if the student has grammar *knowledge*. For example, does the student know what a fragment or run-on is? First, let the student listen to a sentence or passage that has grammar mistakes in it. If the student can pick out the errors, then text-to-speech software may be enough. Otherwise, try an editing checklist to accompany the software (e.g. GRADES).

Spelling - if there are difficulties listed in this section, you may want to concentrate on the word prediction and dictionary features. The last question may be useful to determine if a student requires voice recognition software such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking or SpeakQ.

If the student said yes to the last question, then use a software program that has a homonym checker. Start by teaching the student how to use the text-to-speech features, and follow that by teaching them how to use the homonym check. If possible, work with the student and customize the software to eliminate checking homonyms that are not a problem for the student.

Notetaking and Listening

Student Name: _____

Question	Yes	No
Listening		
1. Do you miss a lot of what is said in class?		
2. Do you think that during class, the teacher talks too fast?		
3. Do you often ask others to repeat what they said?		
4. Do you find it hard to listen to everything in a 1 or 2 hour class?		
Note taking		
5. Do you take notes in class?		
6. Can you read your notes after you leave your class?		
7. Does it take you a long time to write by hand?		
8. Can you copy notes from the board or an overhead correctly without missing some or writing them in the wrong order?		

Guidelines for the Notetaking and Listening Checklist

You can use this section if you are teaching a student how to use a **digital recorder** or a **note taking device** such as a laptop, PDA, Neo, or Dana.

Listening – if there are difficulties listed in this section, you may want to begin training by using a digital recorder. Concentrate on the basic features as well as instructions for taking notes using the counter or marking features.

Note taking – if there are difficulties listed in this section, students may need to be trained on how to use a note taking device. Information from the first section (computer skills) can help you to determine the student's level of competence with computers – do they need a simple device, or can they learn to use a more complicated one? If the student answers no to **question 5**, they will also need to learn some note taking skills. If a student has a difficulty listed in **question 8**, they may require another way to capture what is on the board – one example would be a digital camera.

Math

Student Name: _____

Question	Yes	No
Calculations		
1. Do you make mistakes when you do basic math: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division?		
2. Do you remember your times tables?		
3. Do you write numbers backwards sometimes?		
4. Do you often press the wrong key when using a calculator? (e.g. press [+] instead of [x])		
Reasoning/Concepts		
5. Do you have difficulty working with fractions, decimals, and percentages?		
6. Do you have difficulty remembering rules and procedures in math?		
7. Do you leave out steps in a math problem, or do the steps in the wrong order?		
8. Do you have difficulty reading word problems?		

Guidelines for the Math Checklist

You can use this section if you are teaching a student how to use a regular **calculator**, a **talking calculator**, or a **graphing calculator**.

Calculations – if there are difficulties listed in the first two questions, you can begin with a regular calculator. If there are difficulties with the third and fourth questions, you could try using a talking calculator.

Reasoning/Concepts – if there are difficulties listed in questions 5-7, you may want to begin by teaching the student how to create a formula sheet using MS Word. If there is a difficulty listed in **question 8**, you may want to incorporate OCR text-to-speech software such as Kurzweil 3000 or WYNN.

Organization

Student Name: _____

Question	Yes	No
1. When you have several assignments to do, do you feel overwhelmed and don't know where to start?		
2. Can you predict how much time it will take to get assignments done on time?		
3. Do you miss appointments?		
4. Do you forget when your test dates are?		
5. Do you get your homework done on time?		

Guidelines for the Organization Checklist

You can use this section if you are teaching a student how to use a **PDA, Dana,** creating a calendar in **MS Word,** or other organizational software and devices.

Organization – if there are difficulties listed in questions 1-2, you can concentrate on planning using a calendar. You could start by creating a calendar in MS Word and/or a weekly schedule using MS Word. In addition, you can use a calendar, PDA, paper calendar/agenda, or other online calendars for questions 3-5.