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Assistive Technology

SPE 346

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Synthesis Paper

Over the course of this semester my knowledge on what assistive technology has completely changed. If I had not gone to the Abilities Expo I don’t think I would of fully understood how many different forms of assistive technology there really are. Before taking this course I thought assistive technology had to be something involving technology like an Ipad, computer, or phone. But this is really not the case there are so many different forms of technology, wheel chairs, adaptive sport equipment, art therapy, body/hand cream, and so much more. As a future educator and hopefully working in an autism based classroom I need to know all the different forms of AT that are out there for my students.

After doing some research I found several different apps for Ipads or Iphones that would help nonverbal autistic students. These apps give them their voice. A family that I nanny for has a nonverbal autistic child. At age 2 she was diagnosed, she was not meeting milestones and not functioning typically next to her older sisters or peers. Her parents fought hard for all the services she would require, speech, OT, PTa, and a one on one paraprofessional. The town provided her with an Ipad that she could take to and from school. This Ipad was her voice. She went from not being able to communicate and because of her apraxia she could not sign very well, they were very sloppy, to being able to express everything going on in her mind. Now during a meltdown her parents would be able to hear what she needed. As a parent it must be truly hard not knowing what to do when your child clearly is sick and not feeling well and your child could not verbally express it. When finally given her voice there were no more worries, she could have conversations with peers; express her happiness, and so much more. This was a huge moment in my life, to see someone I had known since she was first diagnosed, to never hear talk, but when given this technology to assist her in her daily life she finally had a voice.

There is so much more in the autism world for assistive technology, adaptive equipment for gym, bicycles, a gluten free diet, Ipads and much more. Through my research for this class and going to the expo I was able to see how truly diverse these assistive technology’s are. Something so simple as adapting an art project for someone in a wheelchair is part of AT. My perspective on assistive technology has now changed for the better since coming to this class and being able to research the topic even further on my own. I now have a better understanding of it not only for myself but my future students.