

INTRODUCTION

The theme of this issue is "Assistive Technology in Secondary and Higher Education." Applications of assistive technology in education are most prevalent in the primary grades. Professional conferences on technology in education, such as those sponsored by the Council for Exceptional Children's Technology and Media Division and by RESNA's Special Interest Group on Special Education, continue to focus on applications for primary school and, most recently, on applications for early intervention. Assistive technology for secondary and higher education is neglected by comparison. Transition problems at critical junctures in service delivery that cause discontinuity or termination of service for persons with disabilities are acknowledged but receive little attention. Problems in the transitions between high school, vocational school, and higher education receive even less attention. The newest *Annotated Bibliography on Transition from School to Work* (Volume 5), by the Transition Institute at Illinois, lists 448 articles. Technology is the subject of only *two* of these articles.

Recent legislation is broadening the role of assistive technology in education and in transitions. On October 30, 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) became law as P.L. 101-476. The law reauthorizes and amends the Education of the Handicapped Act. The amendments address the use of assistive technology in education for children and youths with disabilities. The IDEA legislation clearly establishes a role for assistive technology devices and services with educators in schools. For example, IDEA mandates the provision of technology-related services to children and youths in schools. Consideration of the potential utility of assistive technology is now an integral part of developing the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Also, IDEA requires training in the use of assistive technology for special education personnel and related services personnel, with special emphasis on training personnel in the use of assistive technology to enhance the development of infants and toddlers.

Assistive technology is moving up through grade levels along with the students. The new emphasis on assistive devices in secondary schools will soon move to vocational and higher education, as students enter campus classrooms with

their devices in tow. This issue of *Technology and Disability* visits the levels of secondary and higher education, and the transitions in between. The first two articles address assistive technology in special education programs. J. Michael Livesay and Paul Murray present a model of instructional technology integration as a process of organizational innovation. Jane Burnette summarizes the experiences of project directors in designing assistive devices for students.

Paul Wehman and Christopher Smith each consider the role of assistive technology in vocational education. Dr. Wehman shows how technology provides work options and shapes vocational training, and Mr. Smith offers a perspective on trends influencing vocational curriculums.

Assistive technology in postsecondary education is the subject of three articles. Barbara Shiller Heinisch traces the issues in the development of an assistive technology laboratory. Michele Hurlburt's case study illustrates the process of providing a computer access system for one college student.

The role of assistive technology in transition services is the subject of the final two articles. Colleen Haney, E. Maria Chianos, and Robert Stump describe a model that bridges the service gaps encountered by students in the transition to higher education or the workplace. Erik Aasland closes the issue with a discussion of the implications of IDEA's mandate to define transition needs in the IEPs of students over age 16.

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