

Assessment Tools Group Activity

Group: Anthony, Millie, Leslee, Melissa, and Samantha

Task: In your small group (using Google docs or another online collaboration tool), select a rubric/chart found on websites listed in the syllabus for this week, and use it to evaluate at least 3 different assistive technology tools.

Post online a one-page group report of the effectiveness of the rubric/chart: Which one did you use? How easy and effective was the rubric/chart? Did it evaluate the tool as intended? Any other reflections about the rubric/chart?

Tool Name:	Google Docs (Read&Write app for Google Chrome)
Where it is being used:	Classroom, home
What goal does the tool use support?	The goal is to support basic writing: structure of a paragraph, language conventions, and organization. The app features include read aloud text, word suggestions, predictive text, highlight text, vocabulary reference.

Tool Name:	Razz Kids
Where it is being used:	This tool may be used at school or home.
What goal does the tool use support?	The goal is used for learning to read: letter recognition, phonemic sounds, blending sounds, decoding, etc. Students can also record sounds and reading for teachers to hear.

Tool Name:	Smart Pen
Where it is being used:	Classroom, home
What goal does the tool use support?	Smartpens are pen-sized computers that record what is being written as well as recording the audio as you take notes. At home a student can tap the pen on the page where he was taking notes and the audio that was recorded at that time will play back. Notes and audio can be downloaded to computer and saved. This tool is good for helping encourage students to take notes and use their notes.

Source: Rubric for Assistive Technology:

http://archives.gadoe.org/DMGetDocument.aspx/AT_rubric.pdf?p=6CC6799F8C1371F6D9C853456CA02FE0CB87C5C4BE1232699096D0E9398C56B0&Type=D

We found our chart from the Georgia Department of Education website. The rubric and chart are relatively straightforward and easy to use. When using it to evaluate Google Docs in combination with Read & Write, it seemed to serve its purpose and reflected what we originally thought of the tools before using its criteria to shape our lenses. For example, most of us agree that Google Docs is an excellent tool for writing. It helps the student produce neater writing, and improves the quality of the writing by helping the student catch spelling and grammar errors. It also has features that allow the teacher to comment on the work, thus providing opportunities for feedback and revision. These aspects of the application made the tool very useful in our eyes. In regard to Read & Write, it further improves the student's writing by having a "read aloud" function that helps the student hear their own writing and catch possible spelling, grammar, or even usage errors. When evaluating these applications using the rubric, these tools would rate as "exemplary." Therefore, in this instance, the rubric did rate the tool as we expected it would.

One area of concern I found when evaluating the assistive technology tools is that the rubric did not mention the tools' ability to be used or transitioned into the home. A student should only be given tools that the student can use at home to do the same kind of work that they are doing at school. In an IEP the IEP team will have already gone through the SETT (Student, Environment, Tasks, & Tools) and this will usually involve the family wanting the child to be able to do the work at home so that they continue to feel success at home as well as at school.

Another problem we found with the rubric is that it does not assess the affordability of the product or tool. For instance, google docs is free as long as the child has access to a mobile device or computer, and wifi access. For example: Read and Write is an add-on for Google Chrome with some basic features that are free but the full features will cost \$100 per year for an educator license and \$10 per student per year. This may not be an issue for some schools or districts, but for many this cost may prevent the tool from being chosen even though it might be worth the money.

We found this rubric helpful for the most part and would recommend using this for evaluating assistive technology tools.

Rubric for Assistive Technology

Use of a Specific Device

Student name:	
Tool name:	
Where it is being used:	
What goal does the tool use support?	

	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary	Score
	1	2	3	4	
Independent functioning	In order for the student to utilize assistive technology tool direct and continuous support must be provided by another person.	When prompted student will initiate and utilize required tool	Student Independently seeks out and uses tool and occasionally needs support or continues to requirement refinement to maximize benefit.	Student consistently uses the tool provided independently and only requires support in cases of malfunction	
Quality of performance	Use of the tool with necessary support does not create a change in the quality of the task	Use of the tool with support as needed creates a noticeable change in quality of task performance.	Use of the tool creates a noticeable change in the quality of the task performance.	Use of the tool creates a consistent noticeable change in the quality of task performance.	
Focus	Student requires frequent prompts and cueing to maintain focus for tool training	Student requires frequent prompts and cueing to maintain focus for tool use	Student requires occasional prompts and cueing to maintain focus for tool use	Student is able to consistently maintain focus for tool use throughout tasks	
Self Advocacy	Student requires a plan to develop awareness for self advocacy skills related to tool use	Student requires a self advocacy plan related to tool use	Student generally recognizes the need for tool use but consistency in tool use is variable	Student recognizes and utilizes tool as appropriate	