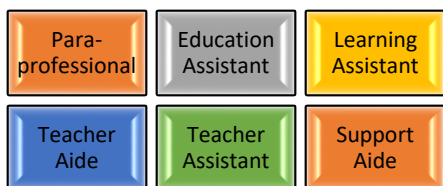




Assistive technology training for paraprofessionals (education assistants) and the consolidation of their roles in assisting students with disabilities to use assistive technology is required in order to ensure effective use of AT within classrooms. Ascertaining the prior level of knowledge of staff and conducting further research is necessary to determine a widely applicable curriculum for AT training for this group.

AT Training for Paraprofessionals



There has been a substantial increase in many countries in the number of paraprofessionals (classroom support staff) utilised in classrooms to support students with disability (Blatchford, Russell, & Webster, 2012).

Assessment tools were devised and used to determine prior knowledge. An 8-week training course was developed, as one-off training sessions have limited transferability to practice.

What is the impact for AT users and other stakeholders?

AT users are more likely to receive appropriate support for AT use in the classroom, as paraprofessionals are empowered with appropriate skills and knowledge.

Implications for Products, Provision, Personnel or Policy?

Products AT training based on role and competencies required for paraprofessionals.



Provision AT services can be integrated into an inclusive classroom setting, with the support of specialist personnel. Services are provided at point of need, rather than as an external add-on.

Personnel Paraprofessionals are often required to work closely with students with disability and therefore are well placed to understand their needs and task requirements.
Policy Support for students to use AT is often a part of paraprofessional policy at a local level, but may not be established at a national policy level.

Implications for other aspects of the Global Research Agenda

AT training for paraprofessionals has implications for a number of areas in the GRA, including:

- ❑ Making best practice solutions known to people who implement them (paraprofessionals)
- ❑ Maximises opportunities for students with disability to use AT
- ❑ Increases knowledge and skills of personnel in AT area.
- ❑ Development of a curriculum based on competencies for paraprofessionals.
- ❑ Development of understanding of individual needs of students with disability.

Strategies to share and build global capacity based on this work

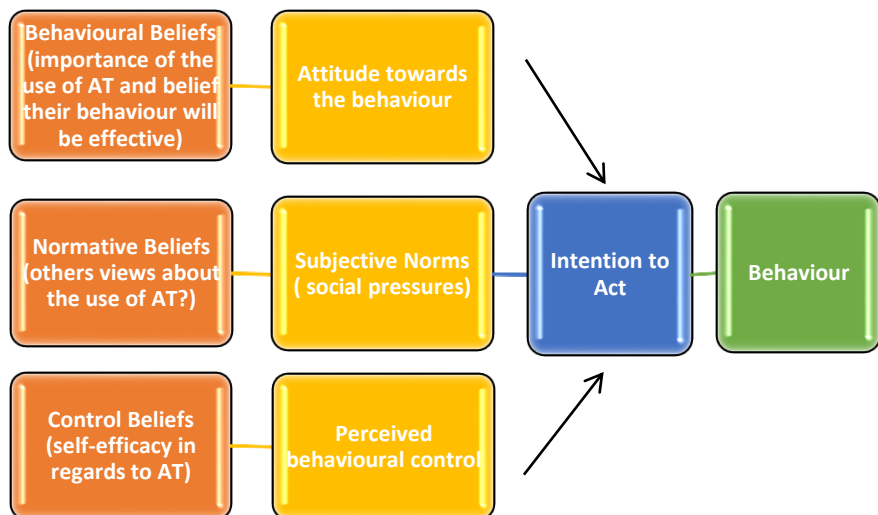
The author welcomes interest from international colleagues and is able to share:

- ❖ Assessment processes used to determine progress.
- ❖ Considerations for training this unique group.
- ❖ Description of the training provided.
- ❖ Results of small group study.

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(Theory of planned behaviour, Ajzen, 2002)