

Faculty Showcase 'o6

Sponsored by Academic Technology at Simmons College



Accessible to All: Assistive Technology in Education



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Goals

The goal of Simmons' Assistive Special Education Technology Program is for assistive technology to be infused into everyday life so that everyone can fully participate.

We prepare graduate educators and therapists for leadership roles in the implementation, evaluation, and administration of assistive technology.



Applications Beyond

Assistive technology services are legally mandated through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you want to know more about Simmons'

services for students with disabilities, or if you would like advice on how to make your courses more accessible to all learners, we encourage you to contact the campus Academic Support Center.

Project Overview

The focus of the program in Assistive Special Education Technology is on designing pragmatic accommodations for learners with special needs in general education settings. Technology can be beneficial to all students. But for those with disabilities, assistive technology makes it possible to communicate and participate in school-based education in ways that would be otherwise impossible, working with the same technology and educational materials as their non-disabled peers.

Exploring the Possibilities of Online Learning: It is our belief that creating a more accessible learning environment will result in more active participation by learners with disabilities in classrooms, in the workplace and in the community. Toward that end, we are considering offering our program online so that we can educate more people about assistive technology. With funding from a PTRC mini-grant, we are conducting survey of online offerings offered by other institutions.

This survey will help us learn:

- How online or hybrid course delivery can expand and deepen our students' learning about assistive technology; and
- Which aspects of assistive technology are feasible to teach online, how we can avoid stumbling blocks encountered by others who teach assistive technology online, and what gaps exist in current online offerings.

Our survey analysis will help us make informed decisions about whether or not to move forward with an online program. Assuming we do move on to the next phase of development, the survey will also provide us with ideas for developing a program that is distinguished from other online offerings in the field.