

Assistive Technology Training:

Exploring our model of delivery



The setting

NorQuest College




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Our problem

How do we provide AT training to an ever increasing number of learners with disabilities?



Our solution


Let academic strategists provide AT training during their 1-1 strategies sessions!



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- Customized training based on learner strengths
- Strategists can liaise with instructors
- Strategists can integrate training over time



Our research

A qualitative study on the efficacy of our model of delivering AT training through academic strategists sponsored by the Canadian Council on Learning and NorQuest College.



Research questions

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Research questions

1. Does assistive technology training and support have a positive effect on adult student engagement and outcomes, such as the completion of courses?
2. Does an assistive technology training model, which uses course content as the basis for assistive technology training (delivered by an Academic Strategist with the support of an assistive technology team), achieve learner engagement in courses for adult learners?
3. To what extent does this context-based assistive technology training model result in adoption of the technology by adult students?



The participants - Students

Participant	Age	Primary factor	Subject area	No. of semesters before beginning AT Training
0	33	mobility	High school English	0
1	37	mobility	Literacy level English	1
2	29	learning disability	High school biology	2
3	25	learning disability	High school English	2
4	42	sensory*	High school English	0
5	27	learning disability	High school biology/math	1
6	20	mobility	High school English	0
7	33	sensory*	High school English	0
8	20	mobility	Literacy level English	0
9	44	sensory*	High school English	0



The participants - Strategists

Participant	Subject area specialization	Experience delivering AT training
S0	English/humanities	extensive
S1	math/science	proficient
S2	English/humanities	limited
S3	English/humanities	limited
S4	math/science	extensive



The participants - Instructors

Participant	Subject area specialization	Experience supporting learners using AT
I0	English/humanities	limited
I1	math/science	limited
I2	math/science	limited
I3	English/humanities	limited
I4	English/humanities	extensive
I5	English/humanities	extensive
I6	English/humanities	limited



Data Collection

- One – one audio recorded interviews before beginning AT training and after training
- Vetting of preliminary results with all stakeholders
- Two additional vettings with other post-secondary service providers



Findings

A. Students felt that AT was facilitating their engagement in learning and contributed to completion of their courses.




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BUT

Instructors did not note a significant increase in engagement as measured by participation, completion of assignments or course completion.



Findings


B. Increased student independence



Findings

C. Factors affecting adoption of AT


- Accuracy of AT assessment
- Student characteristics
- High stake or low stake environment



Findings

D. Benefits of AT training in context of strategies sessions


- "instant application" for AT
- Time efficient
- Positive training relationship
- Individualized learning



Findings


E. Challenges of AT training in the context of strategies sessions

- Mastery of course content takes precedence over AT learning
- Basic computer competence is prerequisite
- Strategists often felt unprepared to train



Findings - unanticipated

None of our participants had significant experience using AT to address their disability in an educational environment before attending our college.



Findings- unanticipated

All participants were positive they would succeed, however; some felt their disability had little to do with their lack of achievement.



Findings-unanticipated

Conflicting expectations of the roles and responsibilities of students, strategists and instructors.




Findings - unanticipated

Special adjustments for students who become visually impaired or blind later in life



Your thoughts?



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For copies of our research report visit
<http://www.norquest.ca/appliedresearch/reports/index.htm>