

Friends
come with
all types of



TOPIC: Understanding Assistive Technologies

Help your students explore and discover new technologies that are available to assist people with disabilities.

GRADE: 5

TIME: 20 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Understand that assistive technologies provide useful tools that make life easier for people with various types of disabilities (physical, learning, developmental etc.)
- Learn that there is a wide and varied range of assistive technology available
- Learn about different types of assistive technologies that can help someone struggling in the classroom

MATERIALS:

- Writing utensils and paper for students (if brainstorming independently)
- Whiteboard or interactive whiteboard (if brainstorming as a class)
- Cromwell Center word web (from previous classroom program)
- AV equipment to show students a short video

ACTIVITY:

1. Begin by asking students to brainstorm a list of tools they use regularly that make their lives easier or better. You can have them do this individually or as a class. Give them an extra minute or two to list tools that help them in school.
2. Refer back to the word web/mind map that was made when the Cromwell Center visited. Read over the different tools that were listed that can help someone who has a disability. Tell students that items like wheelchairs, computers, etc. are types of “assistive technologies.” These items can make life easier and better for people who have disabilities, but they do not cure a disability.
3. Show students the video “Assistive Technology Rocks My World” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WELoJutEYHo>). Alternately, choose one of the videos at the bottom of this curriculum if you prefer.
4. Ask students if anything in the video surprised them. What did they learn about assistive technologies? What kinds of technologies allow Eliza to communicate and do well in school? Note: some students may make a connection between the video and the book Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper.

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5. Let students know that the video is just one example of assistive technologies that make life easier and better for people with disabilities.
6. Tell students that their classroom is actually full of examples of assistive technologies. (They may have already thought of some during the brainstorming.) Ask students to quietly stand up and walk around the classroom, looking for other examples. Tell them to stand next to one when they have found it. (Multiple students can stand at one example). Call on several students to talk about what they have found and how it makes learning easier.

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

- Have students choose an example from a list of assistive technologies and research their choice. They can present information to class in the form of a poster or essay.
- Invite the special education teacher, life skills teacher, or occupational therapist to visit your classroom and bring along several examples of assistive technology they use with their students.
- Read *Out of My Mind* aloud—include a discussion on how Melody uses her assistive technology and how it changes her life.
- Ask students to imagine an assistive technological device that will exist in the year 2050. How will it make life better for someone with a disability?

MORE GREAT VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIC8G5nNE7k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8VuA8yVBv8>

These 2 videos profile women with cerebral palsy who use a device called a DynaVox to communicate, very similar to what is described in *Out of My Mind*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMHuWGUEu2M>

This video shows a young boy with vision impairment and the device he uses to write

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkthpZxC_HU

This video is about a middle school student who uses assistive technology to help with his learning disabilities

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE CROMWELL CENTER

Dear Teacher or Guidance Counselor:

Your brief feedback on this or on any of our other lesson plans is very important. It will enable us to share results with our grant funders and help obtain future funding, and any suggestions for improvements will help us fine tune the activities to best meet your needs.

To provide this valuable feedback, please go to the form on the bottom of this page on our website:
<http://cromwellcenter.org/teacher-resources/>.

Or, if you prefer, you can e-mail your comments to sgreenwood@cromwellcenter.org.

Thank you!

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