

What is Assistive Technology?

Title slide:

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Narrator (Tess) in front of learning environment (facing camera)

The first thing many people ask is – “What is assistive technology?”

There are many ways to answer that question.

You could say that it is technology that assists you in some way.

Narrator (Tess) voice over

(MoE building with MOE person in front)

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education defines assistive technology as...

MoE person (talking to camera)

(Speech bubble)

The specialised equipment and technology that “assists” students to access and participate in learning.

Narrator (Tess) voice over

(Panning across class at work, showing a selection of students with different AT needs)

Assistive technology can support a student’s presence, participation, and achievement in many different ways.

As every student learns differently the assistance they require needs to be a good fit for both the student and the context.

(Student in a wheelchair behind a standard desk that is too low)

Imagine you use a wheelchair.

The desk provided stops you from reaching the resources you need for a learning activity.

(Student in a wheelchair behind a raised desk)

There are assistive technology solutions that can help.

(Student reading a book)

Imagine you are given a textbook and the print is too small to see.

(Student is handed an iPad or magnifier to view text)

There are assistive technology solutions for that.

(Student is writing in a book)

Imagine you are asked to write an essay and you require support to form letters or to handwrite in a way that others can read.

(Student is handed a laptop to use)

There are assistive technology solutions for that, too.

(A group of students walking towards “curriculum” sign)

Assistive technologies provide an “on-ramp” to the curriculum for many students.

(AT text to speech shown – tablet, headphones, iPad)

Many assistive technologies, such as text-to-speech are now built into our phones, tablets and laptops or can be downloaded for free.

They become a resource that all students can use to support their learning.

(Laptop screen showing webpage of brailnotes)

Sometimes a student may require the support of a specific assistive technology that is not freely available.

Narrator (Tess) in front of MoE building (facing camera)

To find out more about funding for assistive technology options, please contact your local Ministry of Education office.