

Inclusion and Accessibility

What does success look like and how do you get there?

The goal

Children with disabilities make up the world's largest and most disadvantaged minority in terms of education. When this is combined with students who are remote, unwell or otherwise homebound, school accessibility can look sorely lacking. As students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their learning and develop technology skills, schools have a responsibility to provide accessible technology that can meet each student's needs.

What are the benefits of equal access?

With the global focus on Personalized Learning, equal access means that students of all abilities have opportunities to learn. With the technology they need to develop 21st century skills, as well as learn according to their individual needs and style, your school can prepare every student for the future.

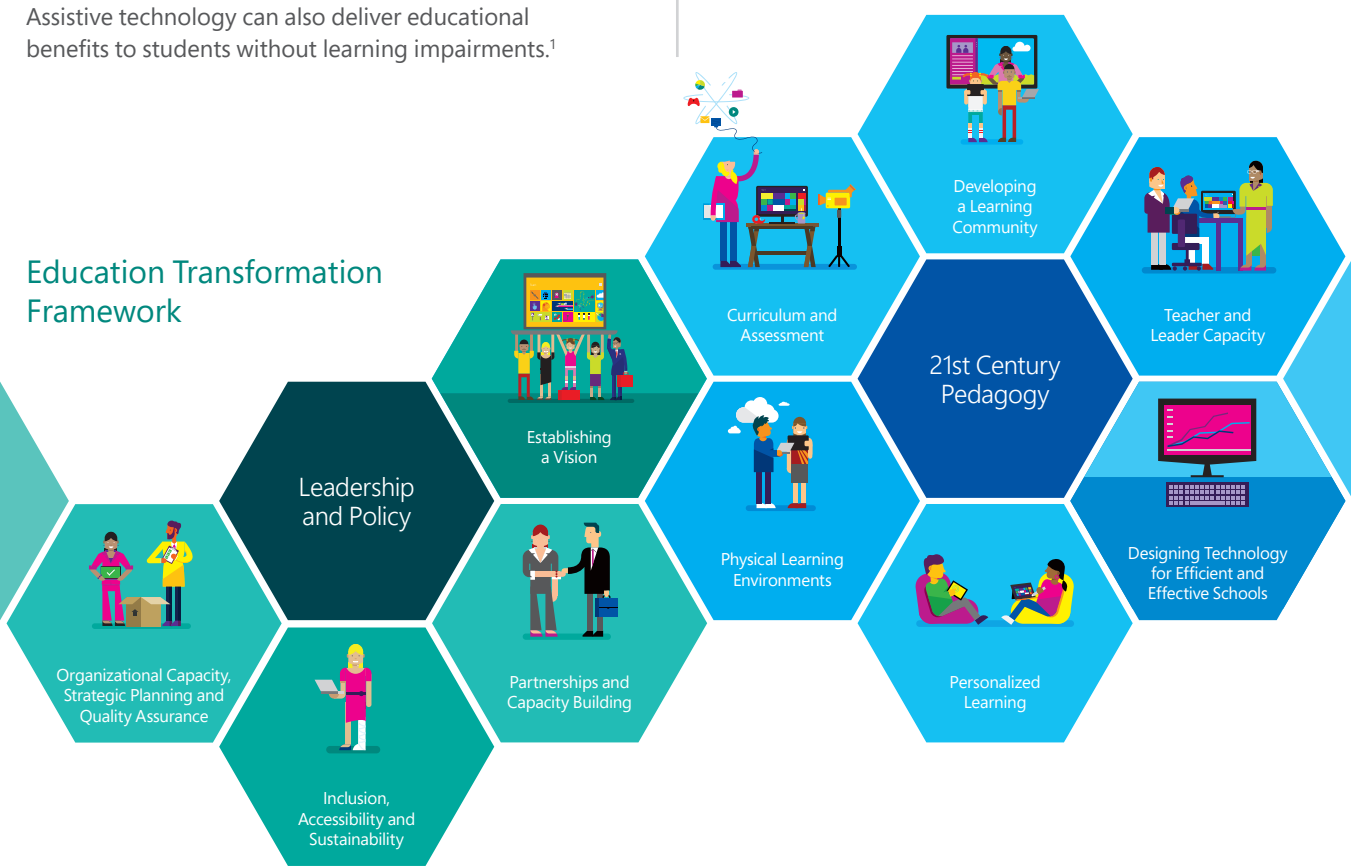
While many students are not disabled or in a special needs program, there are students in every classroom who have mild impairments or challenges that would be helped by using technology to facilitate learning. Assistive technology can also deliver educational benefits to students without learning impairments.¹

How do we get started?

UNESCO has outlined practical solutions to support Personalized Learning in schools, with specific attention to accessibility and technology use;²

- Increasing awareness of existing accessibility features will help many students, without the need to acquire new technology
- Training will enable teachers to help students personalize the technology they use
- Successful integration of students with disabilities happens when teachers understand how to adjust curriculum and create accessible materials
- Equipping students with the life skill of personalizing technology benefits them throughout the educational system
- Considering best practices and all student needs during the planning phase can reduce overall costs
- Cloud technologies can remove the requirement for expensive, physical hardware without compromising security, performance and control.

Education Transformation Framework



Guiding questions

What does 'anytime, anywhere' learning mean in our country?

How will we ensure differentiated access and learning is provided at every age level?

Will all learning materials and services be available with 24/7 access?

How are students with special needs supported in the classroom, on campus, and everywhere learning occurs?

How successful is the integration of students with disabilities?

Do teachers understand how to adjust curriculum and create accessible materials?

How aware are teachers of the power of assistive technology to deliver educational benefits to students with and without learning impairments?

How can technology help build capacity?

Here are some of the ways technology can deliver inclusive learning spaces:

- Students who have difficulty typing or reading text because of a learning, language, or mobility impairment can often successfully work on a computer with the use of speech recognition available in Windows 10
- Microsoft Skype in Office 365 Education provides a real time conversational environment for students who are deaf
- Skype assists by providing onscreen transcript of a conversation, and allows users to communicate by video using a webcam, so students who communicate by sign language can easily interact with anyone
- It's been found that students with social communication issues react positively to using Kinect, which makes accessible interactions easier with gestures, voice commands, and gaze recognition.

Resources

Whitepapers: Expert Advice

We have commissioned a series of new whitepapers on cutting-edge education transformation concepts, each written by a noted expert.

Complete versions are available at microsoft.com/education/leaders

Additional Support Materials

- Deployable workshops
- Accessibility guides
- Curriculum resources
- Teacher training workshops
- Blogs
- Case studies

Available at the Microsoft Enable site microsoft.com/enable/education

References

1. Collins, R. (2013). Using Captions to Reduce Barriers to Native American Student Success. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 37, 3, 75-86.
2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2009). Empowering Persons with Disabilities through ITCs. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001847/184704e.pdf>

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