

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Sandra Mitchell Tunstill (2005)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

**LEADERSHIP THAT INFUSES ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM FOR
STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES:
A CASE STUDY**

Despite the recent emphasis on ethical leadership, the legislation pertaining to technology for students with disabilities and the identification of the function of assistive technology, there is difficulty in providing these devices for students with mild disabilities. This is due in part to the fact that educators lack professional development on the use of these devices, the devices tend to be costly and the eligibility requirement is quite involved. Yet the most recent legislation IDEA of 1997 (P.L. 105 -17) mandates that every disabled student be considered for an assistive device at their annual IEP meeting.

This case study explored the circumstances under which a single teacher worked to infuse assistive technology into the curriculum at Roosevelt Senior High School, a public high school in the Boyle Heights area of the city of Los Angeles. Data was derived from a triangulation of sources that included observations, interviews and documents. There are several factors that seem to be contributing to the infusion of assistive technology into the curriculum at Roosevelt. First of all, this investigation revealed that the individual who leads the program to infuse assistive technology into the curriculum is both caring and knowledgeable. He was also found to be a teacher, a collaborator and a facilitator. Then AT has shifted from being available exclusively in the special education classrooms for special needs students alone to being on hand for any student who may benefit from the use of the devices. Lastly, school officials at Roosevelt are averting the barriers that are typically associated with the infusion of AT into the curriculum. The barrier of professional development is prevented because of the expertise of the project leader who works to teach faculty members how to employ these devices. The eligibility process is no longer an issue. Assistive technologies preexist with the school. Lastly the barrier of cost is being averted. The school is attaining assistive technology by employing methods that are documented in the literature on this topic as well as methods that have not yet been discussed in the research.

Further investigations in the area of obtaining assistive technology should center on the factors for attaining assistive technology that are not yet mentioned in the literature. It can be concluded from this investigation that the assistive technology needs of the mildly disabled student can be addressed when special education transcends from a model of exclusivity to a model that is open to the unique needs of all students.