Welcome to Part Two of the AIMing for Achievement Series! Today we’ll focus on the decision-making process related to accessible instructional materials (AIM) and look closely at how each of the steps requires solid thinking and planning on the part of the individualized education program (IEP) team.

Included in this presentation is an introduction to the AIM Navigator, an online tool developed by the AIM Consortium and made available on the National Center for Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM Center) website. The Navigator is a process facilitator that contains in-depth information and scaffolded supports to guide decision-making at every step of the process.
The most efficient and effective way to consider the needs for assistive technology is through a decision-making process. And really, the same holds true for AIM.

Basically, there are three steps that teams must take in order to ensure that students who need materials in these formats have them when needed for educational participation and achievement. Those steps include:

1. Establish need by means of comprehensive evaluation.
2. Select specialized format(s) needed by the student for educational participation and achievement.
3. Commence the Wyoming process to acquire needed formats in a timely manner. We have a publication that goes into great detail about this process on our NIMAS website, under “Forms and Resources.”

http://www.uwyo.edu/wind/nimas/forms.html
Determination of need.

NEED

Determination of Need
In this step, the team thinks about whether the student can:

1. Read and gain information from the standard print-based materials used by all students;
2. Needs the materials in a specialized format; or
3. Needs modified content or alternative materials.
If the student is able to understand the content presented in textbooks and other related core instructional materials that are used by other students across the curriculum, but is unable to read or use them, the student will need another way to get the information contained in the print materials. In this case, the student may need specialized formats of the curricular materials.
Specialized formats are braille, large print, audio and digital text. Detailed information about the specialized formats was provided in the Part One session.
Some of the specific types of information that can be used to help the team make a decision about the need for specialized formats includes, but is not limited to:

1. Reading level, including formal and informal reading diagnostic information
2. Indications in Individual Education (IEP) Plan or 504 Plan
3. Academic achievement scores and grades
4. Curriculum based assessments
5. State-wide and district-wide assessment participation and proficiency
6. Sensory abilities
7. Physical abilities
8. Cognitive abilities
What methods can be used to gather additional information to support decision-making?

- Multiple Trials
- Formal measures
- Learning Media Assessments
- Evaluations
What’s the difference between specialized formats and alternative materials?

• Specialized format
  – Same information
  – No change in content
  – Neither adds nor changes material

• Modified format
  – Content is modified, made less complex
  – Addresses the same goals, but is changed in some way

A specialized format of a print-based material includes exactly the same information as the printed material. The specialized format does not change the content, only the way in which the content is presented to the student. The specialized format neither adds nor changes any information.

Modified material may address the same goals, but the content of the material is modified or changed in some way – usually made less complex – so that it can be understood by the student.
Selection of formats

SELECTION
To start the format selection process, the team gathers information about the print instructional materials used across the curriculum in which the student will participate.

In the next step, the team considers the student’s skills, needs and preferences, the environments in which the student will be working and the tasks for which specialized formats will be needed. Thinking about the student, environments and tasks helps the team understand how materials are used so that the team can make a good decision about which of the combination of specialized formats – braille, large print, audio and digital – will work for the student.

Next, the team determines which specialized format(s) will be most useful to the student. They select the format(s) needed by this student based on matching the student’s needs and the instructional context needs with the features that can be manipulated in the specialized format(s). More than one may be needed and can be selected.

The team uses the information gathered to identify which print instructional materials are needed in which format.

**Selection of Formats**

- List the print instructional materials used across the curriculum.
- Consider the instructional context.
- Select the formats needed.
- Match formats to materials.
How to acquire AIM

ACQUISITION
Acquisition of AIM from these four common sources

- NIMAC
- Online repositories
  - Learning Ally (RFB&D)
  - Bookshare
  - American Printing House for the Blind
  - AccessText Network
- Other sources
- Do-It-Yourself

There are four common sources for acquiring AIM:

1. The National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)
2. Accessible Media Producers (AMPs)
3. Publishers via the AccessText Network
4. Do-It-Yourself

The following is a summary of each source, the type of materials they provide and a description of who is eligible to receive materials from them. In-depth information about the legal context was provided in the Part One session.
The National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) is the repository of textbook files developed in accordance with the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS). In order to receive specialized forms created from NIMAS source files from the NIMAC, a student must:

1. have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This means that the child has undergone an evaluation and is or will be receiving special education services under IDEA.
2. be certified by a competent authority as having a “print disability” as defined by copyright statute.

Procedures for acquiring NIMAS files differ from state to state. We have developed a publication to explain the specific manner in which we acquire and provide materials in a publication called, “Wyoming Procedures for Providing Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM).” This publication is available under the Forms and Resources tab on our NIMAS/AIM website.

Not being NIMAC eligible does not eliminate a district’s responsibility to provide materials in alt formats it just limits the sources a district can use, for example the NIMAC.
**Accessible Media Producers (AMPs)**

- **Bookshare**  [www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org)
- **Learning Ally/RFB&D**  [www.learningally.org](http://www.learningally.org)
- **American Printing House for the Blind (APH)**  [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

**Accessible Media Producers (AMPs)** are organizations or companies that produce accessible materials in specialized formats, such as braille, large print, audio or digital text. To receive materials from AMPs' general collections, students must have a qualifying print disability. To receive specialized formats of print instructional materials created from NIMAC files, the student must also be served under IDEA.

**Bookshare** creates and provides files that can be used for students who need materials in digital text or braille format. They also provide software that can be used to read those files.

**Learning Ally** (RFB&D) creates and provides audio books with human narration, and no text. Specially adapted players or software may be required to play the audio books.

**American Printing House for the Blind (APH)** creates and provides materials in braille, large print and electronic formats for individuals who are blind or have visual impairments.
There are several instances in which publishers can be of assistance with the provision of accessible materials. Upon request, a publisher may be willing to provide a digital file or grant permission for a state or local education agency to copy or scan materials that are not available from another source. When publishers provide these files, it is with the understanding that the use of materials created from the file will be limited to students certified as having a print disability. This is especially helpful when a student with a disability has a service plan (e.g., 504) but is not served under IDEA, or when the material is no longer sold and for which no NIMAS source file has been created. These materials are called “legacy materials.”

Some publishers also provide digital versions of instructional materials along with the printed books. This can be very useful if the materials that are provided contain the same information as the printed book rather than supplementary material. It is important to be aware that just because a material is in a digital format does not necessarily mean that the material is accessible to all students (e.g., text cannot be read aloud, highlighted or otherwise changed).

One of the most promising developments we’re seeing is that publishers are beginning to provide some accessible versions of instructional materials for purchase—typically in digital formats—that can be read by a variety of digital readers. An excellent example can be seen in the HTML Books available from Pearson Publishing (http://www.pearsonschool.com/htmlbooks).
There are numerous free and commercial sources for accessible materials. Although these sources do not typically include textbooks, they may be good sources of supplementary materials, some of which are required school reading. Items that are available free of charge are typically those whose copyright has expired and are in the public domain.

Other sources

- Read How You Want
- Audible.com
- Project Gutenberg (Public domain, out of print)
- Google’s ambitious goal of getting all books in a digital format
The following is a selection of sources that provide electronic or audio books; some texts are available for free and other books must be purchased.

- LibriVox: [www.librivox.org](http://www.librivox.org)
- Net Library: [www.netlibrary.com/](http://www.netlibrary.com/)
- Project Gutenberg: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)
- OverDrive: [www.overdrive.com/](http://www.overdrive.com/)
- Audio Editions: [www.audioeditions.com/](http://www.audioeditions.com/)
Although specialized formats are increasingly available through accessible media producers and commercial sources, the "Do-it-yourself" method of scanning, copying and creating materials remains a way to meet the needs of some students for certain materials. For example, teacher-made materials will almost always need to be created in this manner.

**Do-It-Yourself**

- DIY method of converting material to AIM includes:
  - Scanning material (e.g. textbook)
  - Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to recognize text from scanned images.
  - Editing mistakes from OCR process
  - Converting to desired format (e.g. braille, DAISY, MS Word doc., etc.)
What supports are needed?
The IEP team should determine whether any of the following supports are needed for your child to effectively use the selected AIM:

1. Technology
2. Training
3. Instructional strategies
4. Support services
5. Accommodations and/or modifications

The following is a broad summary of supports that may be needed for a student to effectively use AIM.
After selecting the specialized formats needed and determining how to acquire them, the team will need to decide what types of technology or tools are needed for the student to use the accessible formats for participation and achievement. The information about the student, the environments and the tasks that were identified when selecting formats can be helpful when selecting the technology needed to use the formats. The identified student needs can be matched to the features of the various technology tools that might be used to deliver the specialized formats.

**Technology**

The student will most likely need to utilize technology to effectively engage with the AIM, such as electronic and audio AIM.

- DAISY hardware player or software reader.
- Apps for an iPad, iPhone, or iPod touch.
- Dynamic braille display
Different levels of training will be needed, depending on the complexity of the technology or tool selected to access the specialized formats. For example, use of a large print book would not require much training. However, if the student is using text-to-speech software or a screen reader to access digital text, more advanced skills may need to be taught. Teachers, other school staff and families may also need training in order to support the child at school and in the home.

Students may also need additional types of training, such as when to use a particular format or tool for a specific learning task or how to ask for needed supports when they are not readily available.

Also, staff may also need training in use of these technologies, in order to support the student.
Scenarios for your consideration

1. A ten year old student with a vision impairment has been provided with e-text AIM in the form of PDF document. The student has used screen reader AT to read MS Word documents, but has never read a PDF document before. Is the student comfortable navigating the PDF document with their screen reader AT?

2. If school districts purchase iPad devices for their students, then the schools should consider training student(s) with a print disability on how to acquire assistive technology apps.
Instructional Strategies

The student will need to engage with the material as the primary means of learning in the classroom and at home.

– The IEP team will need to integrate these new tools into the student's normal routine.
– The student will need to learn these new tools in a progressive manner, each step incorporating more complexity than the last.

Educators may need to use various instructional strategies to support students using specialized formats and supporting technologies. When a student first begins using these tools, instruction should include multiple opportunities for the student to understand the purpose, benefits and outcomes of using the tools.
It is helpful to start by providing opportunities for the student to use the tools to successfully complete familiar learning tasks (possibly in a familiar environment). Gradually building on early successes and increasing the functional complexity of the tools will enable the student to learn use the tools for independent mastery of learning goals in a variety of environments. The child's IEP team should work together to ensure that teachers and staff are coordinating to assist the student in using the accessible materials and monitor the change in literacy skills and access.
The student’s IEP should describe any support services needed for effective use of various specialized formats and who is responsible for providing them. Different support services may be needed for different formats. For example, a student using braille may require specialized instruction from a qualified teacher of the visually impaired, and a student with a physical disability may need the support of an occupational or physical therapist. Additional supports, such as classroom organization and arrangement, equipment management and maintenance, and file acquisition, may be needed.
Accommodations and/or Modifications

The IEP may need to provide accommodations to help the student meet the needs of the classroom.

- Additional time to complete tasks.
- Frequent breaks.
- Non-distracting environment for test taking.
- Private room for tests.
- Oral response to demonstrate knowledge of subject matter.

The use of AIM may require accommodations to the student’s educational program. For example, a student may need preferential seating or additional time to complete tasks due to the time required to use a specialize format. Frequent breaks may be needed to avoid fatigue. Some students may need to provide responses orally rather than in writing. The team should consider which accommodations are needed when developing the IEP.
The AIM Navigator is a free web-based tool that facilitates the process of decision-making around AIM for an individual student by IEP or other decision-making teams.

The AIM Navigator provides extensive support at each decision-making point through a series of guided questions.

The AIM Navigator collects all decisions made by the team and uses that information to create a summary report. The AIM Navigator also includes an optional running To-Do list that the team can use as they go through the AIM Navigator to create a list of actions that need be taken and determine who will be responsible for each action.

Also, based on the students IEP and accompanying information, the AIM navigator can direct IEP teams to resources for the acquisition of specialized formats.

The AIM Navigator is available on the AIM Center Web site. [http://aim.cast.org/experience/training/navigator](http://aim.cast.org/experience/training/navigator)

We discuss the AIM Navigator and the AIM Explorer in more detail in the next training module, module three.
This concludes the webinar on Part Two. Thank you for attending.