

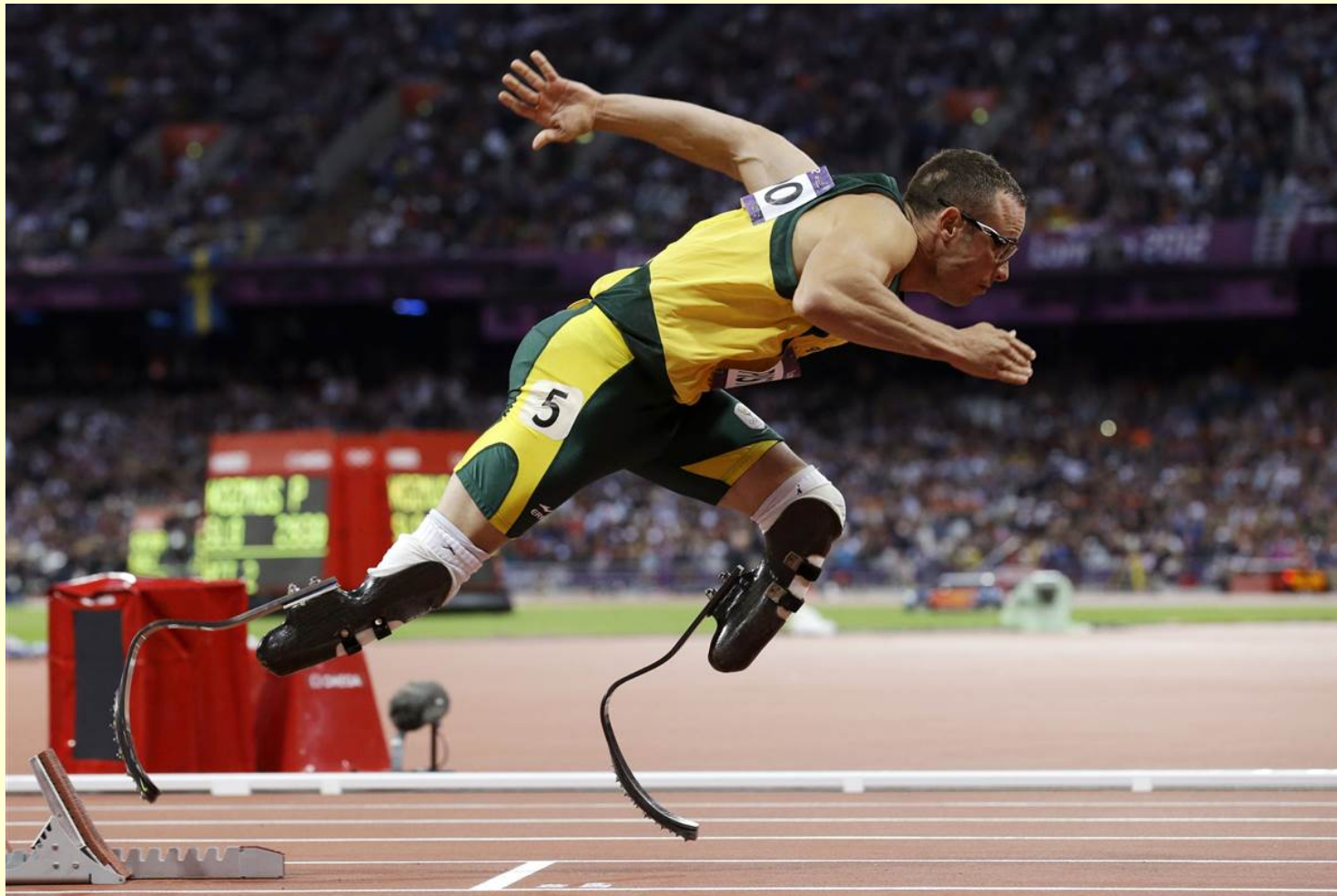
**Assistive Technology  
as part of Raising Attainment and  
Access Arrangements  
for GCSE and A levels**

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# What is Assistive Technology?



## As defined by Wikipedia - **Assistive technology**

Is an umbrella term that includes assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for people with **disabilities** and also includes the process used in selecting, locating, and using AT.

Assistive Technology promotes greater independence by enabling people to accomplish tasks that they were formerly unable to perform, or had great difficulty in accomplishing. This is by providing enhancements to, or changing methods of interacting with the technology needed to accomplish such tasks.

In other words, "Assistive Technology" is **any object or system that increases or maintains the capabilities of people with disabilities,"** while "Adaptive Technology" is **"any object or system that is specifically designed for the purpose of increasing or maintaining the capabilities of people with disabilities."**

# Does it create a level playing field?





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# Setting the Context

Research on use of Assistive Technology in schools

- Staff awareness, training and available resources (internal)
- Constraints imposed by the public exam system (external)

# To Write or to Speak?

- The difference between what you say and what you write:

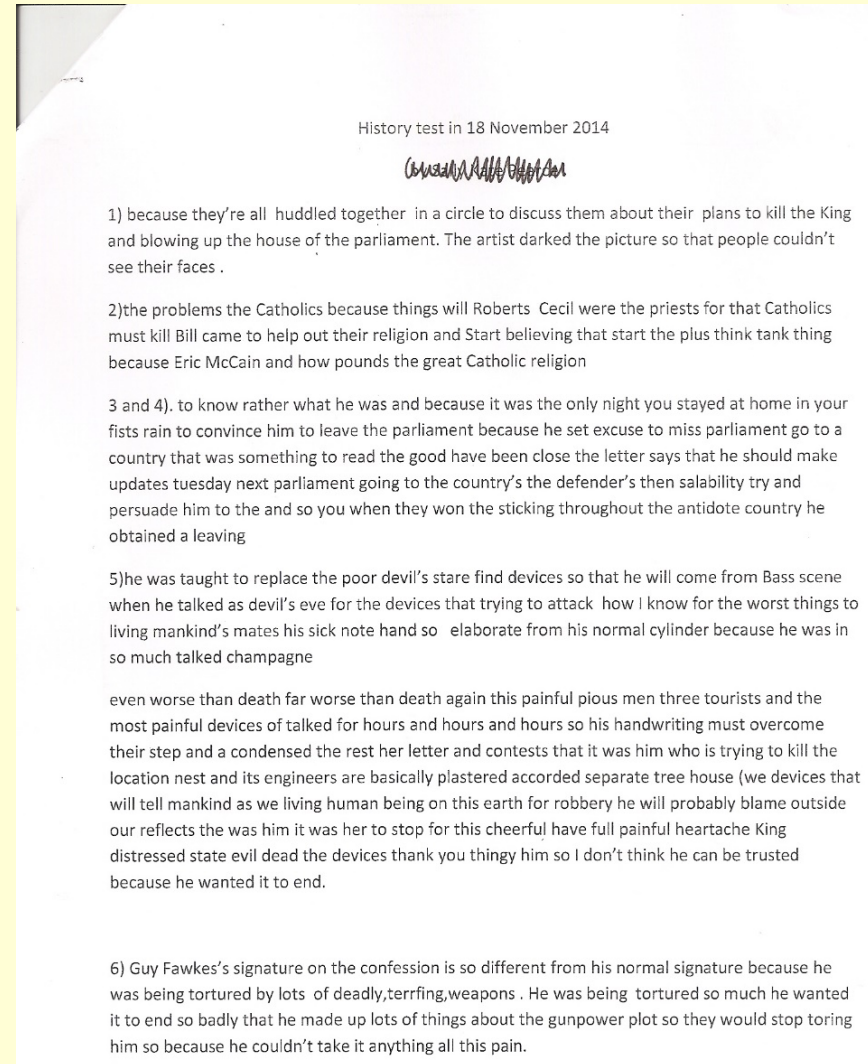
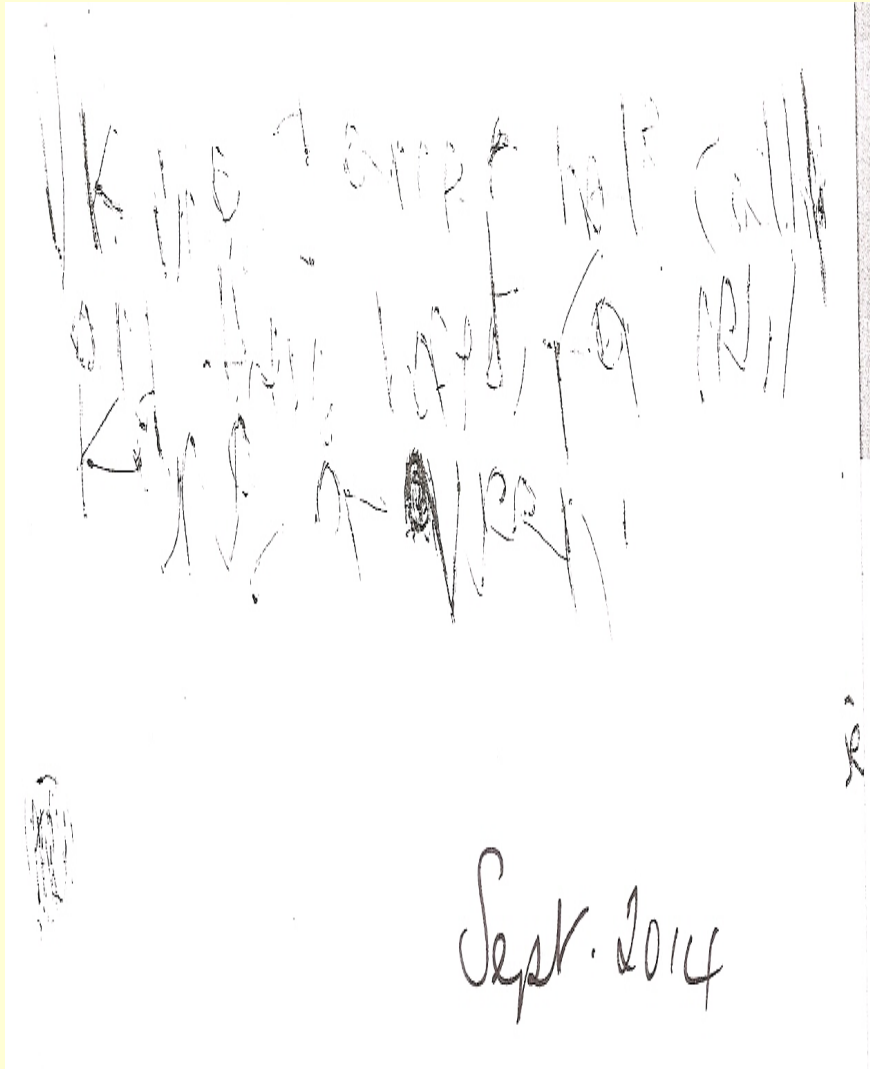
**Amsel & Byrnes,(2002)** identified that there is a complex relationship between written words and spoken words, this metacognitive skill is about understanding what a word is and how words are used in their context.

# The motivation to write or Not?

If a child were **able** to write in a natural way then it becomes more meaningful and authentic, nurturing a student's positive belief in writing and creating a positive emotional feeling leading to satisfaction in the classroom environment. (*MacArthur et al 2008*).



- Independent learning
- Life skills
- Meet government targets (NEET)



## (Cont.) Dyspraxia & ASD student preparing for GCSE:

CC is a year 10 student with dyspraxia and ASD, who, although touch types, has spelling and organisational difficulties. When using Speech Recognition Software she becomes more of an independent writer and her thoughts become clearer as she is not in cognitive overload from the effort of spelling and composing a sentence etc., she becomes more analytical, and her N/C grades went from a **3c** to a **5c** in a term.

**The training programme I used**  
**Over 12 weeks the grades of the student started to improve**  
**and his self-esteem grew and the motivation to write and**  
**take part in activities improved.**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total weeks of dragon training</b>	<b>Total number of hours 1:1</b>	<b>Total independent hours</b>
English	10/3/14	2a	1	4	0
Creative writing	17/3/14	3c	2	8	0
Homework	24/3/14	3c	3	12	2
Classwork	14/4/14	4b	4	16	6
Homework	16/5/14	5a	6	24	14

# **84% of teachers thought that it was important that they are trained in teaching children with dyslexia.**

- The number of children who passed GCSEs including maths and English with a good grade between 2007 and 2011 rose from 10% to 22% according to special educational needs act.
- Macarthur, Graham and Fitzgerald (2006) argued that academic achievement is seen through being able to write essays and exams. Macarthur, et al., (2006) discussed the power of writing and how it conveys knowledge and ideas.

# 20% of children in the UK are classified with SEND

- Technology will help the government in its aim of reducing the proportion of children classed as SEND by helping those children with their learning. “There is a need for the use of Assistive Technology to keep people out of the special category” *Mark McCusker chairman of BATA and Texthelp.*
- Effective use of technology relies on teachers with the skills to make best use of it. However, despite initiatives to improve teacher training in this area there are still inadequacies. *Ability Issue 94 2014*



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# Are we are failing those with SEND when it comes to assessment?

Working age people not holding formal qualifications:

Non-disabled	6.5%
Disabled	19.2%

(Labour Force Survey, Q2, 2012; Office for Disability Issues)

Candidates achieving 5+ A\*-C including maths & English:

All Candidates	65.5%
All SEN	27.9%
SEN without a statement	32.0%
SEN with a statement	11.3%
Action + Physical Disability	29.4%

(GCSE Attainments 2013/14, DfE 2015)

**In 2015 Assistive Technology was allowed to be used in GSCE and A level exams.**





# Evidence Requirements:

(to be kept on file) will vary between arrangements, but in all cases:

- Evidence of need from an appropriately qualified professional
- Normal way of working
- History of need and provision
- JCQ inspectors will visit all centres and will need to be shown evidence

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# Normal way of working

- Means that students must show that they can use Assistive Technology in the classroom to access their curriculum.
- This shows the normal way of working. SENCO' s are now working with the exam officers in schools, to arrange access arrangements for students taking exams.

What does this mean?

# Access Arrangements



## **Assistive Technology for SEND in exams:**

- Duty of awarding bodies to allow reasonable adjustments to Access Assessment
- Access Arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with their duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'
- Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable depends on a number of factors.  
The candidates and their suitability for assessment

# Research shows why there is a lack of use of assistive technology in exam:

- Lack of access to technology – must be the usual way of working. Now most schools & colleges have A.T.
- Lack of transparency in the exam process & using AT in exams
- Lack of confidence that AT will work

## **STAFF TRAINING & CONFIDENCE IS KEY**

### Benefits are:

- **Students are more confident and independent**
- **Reduced cost for schools due to removing scribe / reader costs.**

## **Access Arrangements available include:**

- Reader/Computer Reader
- Scribe/Voice Recognition Technology
- Oral Language Modifier
- Bilingual Dictionary
- Bilingual Dictionary with up to 25% extra time
- 25% Extra Time
- More than 25% Extra Time
- Prompter
- Word Processor

# Access Arrangements available include:

- Read Aloud/Reading Pen
- Supervised Rest Breaks
- Transcript
- Colour naming for colour blind candidates
- Modified papers
- Live Speaker (for Hearing Impairment)
- Practical Assistant
- Sign Language Interpreter

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## Access Arrangements available include:

- Amplification equipment
- Braille
- Closed circuit TV / OCR scanners
- Coloured overlays
- Low vision aids /magnifier
- Alternative Accommodation (away from exam centre)

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# The challenge

The challenge created by change in the political landscape is for schools and teachers to keep abreast of the technology so that they can give advice on its use in the classroom. A student typically sees something that will help them and they are up and running in seconds, but teachers need a much more strategic view of how it will fit in and help with the lesson plan.

Mark McCusker is Chairman of the British Assistive Technology Association (BATA) and CEO of Texthelp:  
[www.bataonline.org](http://www.bataonline.org)