TATE:
Training Assistive Technology in the Environment
Training Toolkit

Section I
Introduction

The **Introduction** emphasizes the importance of training assistive technology for cognition (ATC), including the *Why is Training ATC Important?* video along with the *Top Ten Training Tips* written by a survivor of brain injury. This section also includes the *Survey of Technology Use* for trainers to help gauge their own experience and comfort with technology in preparation for helping others learn to use ATC.
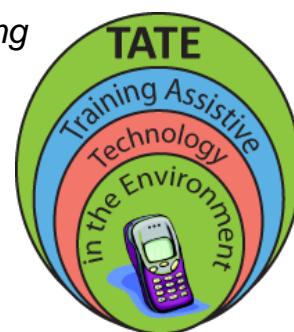
Introduction to the TATE Training Toolkit

ATC Training Toolkit: Overview

ATC—What is it? Assistive technology for cognition (ATC) refers to the use of technology to compensate for cognitive challenges. ATC includes low-tech aids such as notepads, calendars, and clocks. It also includes more complex electronic aids that allow for repeated entries and provide alerts to help people remember when to do something. Commonly used electronic devices include tablets, simple cell phones, and smartphones. This Toolkit will focus mainly on electronic devices. However, many parts of the Toolkit can be used for assessing and training low-tech aids as well.

With technology always changing, why use this toolkit? Although the names and features of electronic devices change rapidly, two needs remain constant: (1) a systematic **needs assessment** process that matches the individual to the technology most appropriate to his/her abilities and goals; and (2) systematic **training** so a user can effectively use the technology. The goal of this manual is to address these constants.

Trainers? Who are they? Trainers (instructors, coaches) include caregivers, family members, job coaches, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and volunteers—anyone in a position to help someone with a brain injury learn to use ATC.

This **ATC Training Toolkit** is designed to make it as easy as possible for trainers of all experience levels to help clients with brain injuries to:

- o Develop meaningful goals that can be supported by the use of ATC.
- o Select a device and applications (apps) well-matched to the client's needs and preferences.
- o Train ATC skills and routines to ensure they "stick" and are useful in supporting the client in achieving his or her goals.

This Toolkit was informed by the latest research on how to assess, select, and train ATC for individuals with cognitive impairments due to acquired brain injury.

NEXT STEPS:
Move on to **Why ATC**.

Why ATC?

Purpose: Like prescription glasses or hearing aids, ATC is an important tool that helps people complete activities more independently, helping them reach personally meaningful goals.

Directions: This is a simple but important exercise. Read through and take time to think about each item below. As a trainer, think about how important it is **for you** to feel fulfilled, independent, be a part of a community, etc., and then think about what these concepts might mean to **your client.**

Top 5 Reasons for Learning and Using ATC

1. FULFILLMENT: Clients will have a tool that can help them complete daily tasks important to achieving their goals and dreams. ATC increases fulfillment.

2. INDEPENDENCE: Clients will be able to rely less on others telling them what to do. ATC increases independence.

3. SELF-ESTEEM: The client will get more done and be less frustrated. This increases self-esteem.

4. COMMUNITY: The client will be more a part of our digital society and can use technology to be part of a social network. This increases participation in one's community.

5. STIMULATION: Clients will have an engaging tool that helps structure their time and offers interesting activities (e.g., games). This increases overall stimulation, a sense of well-being, and fun.

NEXT STEPS:
Watch the ***Why Is Training Important?*** video to better understand the importance of systematically training ATC.

Why Is Training ATC Important?
A Video Introduction

Purpose: To provide trainers with a clear rationale for why systematic training of ATC is important.

Directions: Look for the *Why Is Training Important?* video on the DVD contained within this Toolkit. Watch the video, then fill in the blanks below.

1. Following a brain injury, activities that were once easy are now _____.

2. One mistake people often make when introducing technology to a person with acquired brain injury is _____.

3. Systematically training ATC is likely to result in _____.

Time: 5 minutes

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Notes:
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NEXT STEPS:
Move on to ***Top Ten Training Tips from a Survivor***.

Why is Training Important?
Training Tips From A Survivor

Purpose: Who better than a survivor of brain injury to recommend what trainers should keep in mind when training? Read these Top 10 Training Tips from a brain injury survivor with memory and organizational challenges. She uses ATC to increase her independence at home and work.

Directions: Read the training tips below. Several of these tips—such as high amounts of practice and review—have been researched extensively and proven effective. Make copies to hand out to family members and anyone else who will be helping with training.

Top Ten Techniques for How to Teach Me, the Survivor

1. Slow is good. The rate of speed that many people use to communicate is too fast, and I don't hold on to the details if it's too rapid or the volume of information too much.
2. Patience is a virtue. I sometimes need to be told things more than once or twice or even three or four times, so humor me and try not to lose your patience with me.
3. Repeat it until it sticks. Repetition is vital.
4. Begin our session in a relaxed, informal manner, giving me time to acclimate and get myself organized.
5. A good place to start is by reviewing the last session. I probably can't remember what we did last session, so review is good and makes me feel less lost and more in control.
6. Showing me as well as telling me how to do something new is beneficial. In fact, watching someone do the task on video is especially helpful and can be referred to countless times.
7. Making information or tasks personal has a bigger impact on me and will be more retrievable at a later date. Sometimes even making a story out of some information will make it easier to retrieve later.
8. At first, a quiet, low traffic area is best for me to learn, absorb and retain new information and skills. Interruptions and others' conversations cause me to lose track of what I've been working on, and make it difficult to stay focused. Later, once I feel more confident, it helps to practice in more distracting, real-life environments.
9. Offer breaks often, or at least check in with me to see how my energy level is doing. Information overload is my enemy.
10. Positive reinforcement and positive energy are very welcome and vital to me as I may be feeling self-conscious and afraid.

NEXT STEPS:
Move on to *Survey of Technology Use (For Trainers).*

Survey of Technology Use (For Trainers)

Purpose: To provide the **trainer** with an opportunity to assess his or her own comfort with technology before beginning to work with the client. As a trainer, it may be difficult to assess and teach something you are not comfortable with—but it's not impossible. Teaching someone to use and integrate ATC into his or her daily life can be hugely rewarding! Filling out this form will help you get the most out of this manual.

Directions: Fill out the following survey to reflect on your own experiences and feelings about using technology. Also, realistically evaluate the time you have available to assess and train ATC.

Time needed to complete assessment: 3-5 minutes

Notes:

Survey of Technology Use (For Trainers)

Name _____   **Today's Date** _____

SECTION A. TECHNOLOGIES YOU FREQUENTLY USE:

Check all that apply:

For General Purposes	For Memory/Organization (ATC)
❑ ATM /cash machine	❑ Watch with a programmable alarm
❑ TV	❑ Electronic calendar or PDA (e.g., Palm Pilot; iPod Touch)
❑ Remote control for my electronic devices such as my TV, DVD player	❑ Audio recorder
❑ Game console (e.g., xBox, Nintendo Wii)	❑ Cell phone (e.g., alarm function)
❑ DVD/VCR player	❑ Smartphone (e.g., iPhone; Droid)
❑ CD/tape player	❑ Digital camera
❑ Portable music player (e.g., iPod, MP3 player)	❑ Computer—Used for?

❑ Portable game device (e.g., Gameboy, Nintendo DS)	○ Work
	   ○ Pleasure
	   ○ GPS

❑ Answering machine or voice mail	❑ Other:
❑ Cell phone or smart phone for call only	❑ None

	Yes	**No**		**Yes**	**No**
Do you use general technology now (in the last week)?	❑	❑	Do you use ATC now (in the last week)?	❑	❑

Notes:

Survey of Technology Use (For Trainers)

SECTION B. OVERALL FEELINGS ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

Answer all the questions below by circling the option that you agree with most. There is no right or wrong answer. This helps you understand your feelings about technology.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am comfortable with technology.	1	2	3	4
Using technology comes easy to me.	1	2	3	4
Technology helps with my creativity.	1	2	3	4
I enjoy using technology.	1	2	3	4
Technology brings me together with people.	1	2	3	4
Technology raises my opinion of myself.	1	2	3	4
Technology helps me achieve my goals.	1	2	3	4
Other people encourage my technology use.	1	2	3	4
My experience with technology is positive.	1	2	3	4
I can solve problems with technology.	1	2	3	4

Total the points received

A score of 10-20 indicates a generally positive view of technology.
A score of 21-20 may indicate mixed feelings about technology.
A score of 30-40 indicates a generally negative view of technology.

Notes:

This section is from the *Survey of Technology Use* and is used with permission from the Institute for Matching Person & Technology, Inc. (Section B)

NEXT STEPS:

1. If you use both General Technology and ATC (Section A) and/or scored between 10-20 points (Section B), move on to *Section II: Needs Assessment*.

OR

2. If you use only General Technology and rarely or never use ATC (Section A) and/or scored more than 20 points (Section B) consider the following before continuing with this manual.
   - Ask your peers and/or family members who are comfortable with ATC to show you their devices and to let you practice with these.
   - Visit stores that sell these devices to show you how these are used.
   - Look for on-line training videos and other materials. (See Resources section of this manual).
   - Consider whether there might be someone in your agency with more experience with ATC who could work with you as you train your client or train the client himself or herself.