

Part II:

Activities and Outcomes

WORK ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS AND STRATEGIES

Lucy and her counselor agreed a combination of Assistive Technology (AT) and non-AT adaptations would be most effective in allowing her to continue to perform the essential functions of her teaching position. Lucy was pleased to learn that under The Americans Disability Act of 1990 she has a right to request adaptive devices for her work setting at no personal cost. All options for assistance with the cost of the cochlear implant are being explored, and it appears her medical insurance will at least pay a portion of this surgery, pending the pre-evaluation.

Lucy was referred to a reputable audiologist to evaluate the appropriateness of her current hearing aid and make recommendations for upgraded equipment, if indicated. She was also referred to a mental health practitioner that specializes in counseling hard of hearing clients, to help Lucy accept her hearing loss and become more proactive in taking steps to improve her ability to communicate. Lucy was beginning to understand the negative repercussions of not addressing these issues and taking control of the accommodation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following accommodations were recommended for Lucy.

1. An **alphanumeric pager** was provided by the school, which allows Lucy to get messages from student's parents without delay and can include a brief message regarding the purpose of the call, storing up to 20 messages per day. A paper archive is also available.
2. The school also purchased an **in-line amplifier**, which was installed between the handset and base of the office telephone. A slide bar adjusts the volume and a volume gain of 20-40 dB was achieved. Lucy can now make and return calls during her breaks, rather than delaying calls until she returns home.
3. The school also provided an **Assistive Listening Device (ALD)**, which enables an individual who benefits from amplification to focus directly on the sound source, reducing distractions from background noise that can make it difficult to concentrate on conversation. An **induction loop device** was selected for both faculty meetings and for use in small classroom groups. This system uses electromagnetic transmission to send sound through a loop of wire surrounding a seating area. The system selected adds the flexibility of a **FM wireless microphone** to the standard micro loop system. A **FM system** uses specific radio frequencies to carry sound from the transmitter to the receiver. This system weighs less than 3 pounds, is easily transported and connects to the public address system.

4. Lucy purchased a **Personal Amplification System** to use in both work and personal settings for one on one communication and home media use. The **Sound Wizard** selected provides directional amplification and allows Lucy to focus on the conversation she wants to hear. This can help eliminate the negative impact of background noise or conversation.

Lucy had already made many non- AT adaptations in her teaching style and methods. For example, she leads small reading groups of three or four children while the other students are working with the aide. Students learn not to whisper and that speaking in a strong, clear voice yields the best response from their teacher, with fewer requests to repeat their comment or question. The children are assigned “buddies” on the playground, so a playmate can contact Lucy in case of conflict or emergency if the child isn’t within view.

COST ANALYSIS

The following is a summary of items recommended for Lucy. All equipment is available from Ameritech at Ameritech.com. The employer paid for all technology except the Sound Wizard, paid for by Lucy as her income exceeded the financial eligibility index for DVR. The Sound Wizard is portable and can be used in non-work settings.

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| The Communicator- a pager with a four-line display | \$ 89.95 |
| Dialogue XL30, an advanced amplified phone | \$199.95 |
| Microloop II-FM System, a loop ADL system with wireless Lavalier VHF Microphone | \$549.00 |
| Sound Wizard, a personal amplifier | <u>\$149.00</u> |
| | \$987.90 |

Lucy’s medical insurance will pay for the audiologist visit and hearing aide, a limited number of counseling sessions and a portion of the cochlear implant evaluation and surgery, if recommended.



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