

## **Breaking Barriers: Utilizing Innovation to Improve Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities**

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**Abstract :** As the number of students worldwide requiring speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and mental health services during their school day increases, innovation is becoming progressively more important to meet the demand. Telepractice can be used to reach a greater number of students requiring specialized therapy while maintaining the highest quality of care. It can be provided in a way that is not only effective but ultimately more convenient for student, teacher and therapist without the added burden of travel. Teletherapy eradicates many hurdles to traditional on-site service delivery and helps to solve the pervasive shortage of certified professionals. Because location is no longer a barrier to specialized education plans for students with disabilities when teletherapy is conducted, there are many advantages that can be deployed. Increased frequency of engagement is possible along with students receiving specialized care from a clinician that may not be in their direct area. Educational teams, including parents, can work together more easily and engage in face-to-face, student-centered collaboration through videoconference. Practical strategies will be provided for connecting students with qualified therapists without the typical in-person dynamic. In most cases, better therapy outcomes are going to be achieved when treatment is most convenient for the student and educator. This workshop will promote discussion in the field of education to increase advocacy for remote service delivery. It will serve as a resource for those wanting to expand their knowledge of options for students with special needs afforded through innovation.

**Keywords :** education technology, innovation, student support services, telepractice

**Conference Title :** ICSE 2017 : International Conference on Special Education

**Conference Location :** Zurich, Switzerland

**Conference Dates :** July 27-28, 2017