



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Making Learning Accessible

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Many assistive devices originally developed for people with disabilities benefit everyone.



For example, automatic doors provide easy access for all people not just those in wheelchairs.



The Challenge

In today's schools, the mix of students is more diverse than ever. Educators are challenged to teach all kinds of learners to high standards.

Assistive technology can help to level the playing field for all students.



What is assistive technology?

- Assistive technology is any technology that increases, maintains, or improves the functional capabilities of an individual with special learning needs.

But.....

- It can help to open the door to enhanced learning opportunities for all students.



Research Based Benefits

- Assistive technology can effectively help all students to:
 - Build on individual strengths
 - Gain motivation
 - Accomplish higher rates of learning and improved achievement
 - Complete academic tasks independently



Assistive Software for Reading

Available in DDSB Schools



Assistive software for reading may:

- reduce frustration in decoding and allows for more complete comprehension of text
- allow students to adjust the rate of read-back
- improve word recognition and decoding skills
- improve spelling skills
- allow students to access the print in textbooks, and thereby access the curriculum
- increase student motivation to read



Examples of Assistive Reading Software

- Premier Accessibility Suite – Scan/Read Pro, Universal Reader, E-Text Reader
- Kurzweil 3000 (license must be purchased)
- ReadPlease

Assistive reading software can be helpful for students who have relatively few problems understanding spoken language, but have difficulty reading text independently.



Internet References

- Premier Accessibility Suite

- www.readingmadeez.ca

- Kurzweil

- <http://www.kurzweiledu.com/>

- Read Please

- www.readplease.com



Assistive Software for Writing

Available in DDSB Schools



Assistive software for writing may:

- speed up the writing process
- reduce spelling mistakes
- assist with proofreading
- reinforce coherence in written work
- aid in planning and organization of ideas
- enhance overall appearance
- allow students to create longer, more complex compositions
- foster independence in writing



Examples of Assistive Writing Software

- **Word Prediction**
 - WordQ
 - Premier Accessibility Suite- Talking Word Processor
 - Kurzweil 3000 (license must be purchased)
- **Planning and Organizing**
 - Smart Ideas
- **Spell-check**
- **Text-to-Speech**
 - Write OutLoud
 - Premier Accessibility Suite- Talking Word Processor
 - Kurzweil 3000 (license must be purchased)
- **Speech-to-Text**
 - Dragon Naturally Speaking



Internet References

- WordQ
 - www.wordq.com
- Premier Accessibility Suite
 - www.readingmadeez.ca
- Kurzweil
 - <http://www.kurzweiledu.com>
- Smart Ideas
 - www.smarttech.com
- Write OutLoud
 - <http://www.donjohnston.com>
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
 - <http://www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking>



In Closing...

Imagine that students who have always been left behind finally have the opportunity to learn—and to love learning. Universal Design for Learning is bringing the hopes of tomorrow alive in today's classrooms

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) Website