

Tap Your Strengths with Assistive Tech

Do you like to “talk out” your ideas? Would you rather listen to information instead of reading it on the page? Do you prefer using colour and shapes to emphasize how facts fit together?

Check out some handy assistive technologies that could revolutionize your life as a student. Assistive technology includes options like dictation software, screen readers, concept mapping software and much more! Many students use tools like these to address specific barriers to learning. But, you might benefit from some assistive tech options even if you don’t have any identified barriers.

| Do you learn best by...? | You could try.... |
|---|---|
| <u>Seeing the big picture</u> Making connections between ideas Using colour, shapes and arrows to learn | Concept mapping software <i>Example: Inspirations</i> |
| <u>Talking about ideas</u> Thinking aloud | Dictation software (also called speech-to-text) <i>Examples: Dragon Dictate, Google Docs voice typing</i> |
| <u>Learning by listening</u> Consuming the same information in different ways (i.e., hearing the words spoken aloud, and seeing them on the page at the same time) | Screen reading software (also called text-to-speech) <i>Examples: Kurzweil, DreamReader, Apple’s VoiceOver</i> Notetaking software <i>Example: LiveScribe</i> |

**See the next page for links to demos and how-to resources. **Some students registered with the CAL might be eligible for grants to help with the costs of assistive tech. Speak to your advisor for more information.*

Things to Consider When Using New Tools

1. Embrace the Learning Curve

- Try new tools in a low-pressure situation. For example, you might find it stressful switching to dictation software the night before your assignment is due.
- Give yourself enough time to get comfortable with new software and new ways of doing things.
- Find out how other people use the tools, and if they have any tips.

2. Develop Strategies for Using Assistive Tech

- Know the basics about what a tool can and can't do before you invest time, energy and possibly money.
- Make a plan. How will you need to use the new technology? In a quiet, distraction free environment? Will you need internet access? How will the tool fit in your study routines?
- Practice good file management. You might end up with new file formats, or information stored in new places. Develop a system for labeling and storing documents so you can find them later.

3. Reflect on *How* You Use the Tools and *Why* They Work for You

- Make some time to track how you use the tool across multiple projects. Do you see any themes or do you notice any changes? How can you build on those?

| Assistive Tech Links | | See it in action |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Dragon | www.nuance.com | http://bit.ly/23sXdNO |
| Kurzweil | www.kurzweiledu.com | http://bit.ly/1WcowNF |
| DreamReader | http://www.voicedream.com/reader/ | http://bit.ly/1O0yuhY |
| Inspirations | www.inspiration.com | http://bit.ly/1rx0KyJ |
| LiveScribe | http://www.livescribe.com/en-ca/ | http://bit.ly/1nUt1L4 |

*In the interests of space, we've selected a few popular tools to share. Check out these and some other options through the web pages at the Centre for Accessible Learning:

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/programs/technology/index.php>

Are you using other assistive tools you think other students should know about? Let us know! Email learning@uvic.ca or call 250-721-8743.

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