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Free and Inexpensive Information and Communication Technologies Can Help Students with Learning Disabilities in College



For students with learning disabilities, the transition from high school to college is often difficult. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can help students succeed by providing tools to improve reading, writing, organizing, time management, and more! Despite this, many students with learning disabilities do not use potentially helpful ICTs because they believe that these are too expensive. Here we share some free or inexpensive ICTs that can help students succeed. More information about these is available on the Adaptech Research Network "downloads" page (www.adaptech.org).

Students with learning disabilities often prefer to listen to text instead of reading it. TextAloud3 is inexpensive easy-to-use software that does just that. It can open up any readable English or French PDF or Microsoft Word document, read it out loud, and save the audio as an MP3 file so you can take it on the go. A useful feature is that it can be used from right inside Word. TextAloud is also useful for proofreading your written work and it costs only \$30. Balabolka is free. It does much the same as TextAloud 3 except it does not work from inside Microsoft Word. It also works in English and French.

Sometimes PDFs cannot be read aloud by software. ABBYY PDF Transformer converts these while retaining the PDF's format. It can transform French and English PDF files into Microsoft Word, TXT, searchable PDF and more! So any file you scan or find online can be edited in Word or other software you use to edit your work and can be read aloud by TextAloud 3, Balabolka, or other screen reading software. It costs approximately \$60.

Echo Smartpen (\$120) is a ballpoint pen with a built-in microphone that records lectures while you



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take notes. Your written notes are linked to what the teacher was saying when you wrote the note. Pressing the Smartpen against any part of your written work plays back what was said when you wrote the note, so you can listen to parts of a lecture based on your notes. Downside: you need to buy the Smartpen note paper.

ICTs can be incredibly useful for students with learning disabilities. There are many other helpful ICTs. Check these out on our website at <http://www.adaptech.org/downloads>.

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Association québécoise des troubles

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