

AT Glossary:

Audio books: are books that have been transformed from their original written format into spoken words. Traditionally, audio books refers to works read by actors but in some cases they can be produced from text-to-speech software, using synthesized voices.

Computer-based assistive technologies for learning: refers to any software, online tools, handheld devices or apps that facilitate a student's comprehension, memorization, organization, and engagement with the curriculum by focusing on the student's strengths instead of their weakness.

Concept mapping software: see Mind Mapping software

Digital voice recorder: like their traditional counterparts, these recorders can record your own voice or that of a teacher; and because they are digital, they allow you to upload the voice files to your computer. In some cases, these files can be imported into speech-to-text software that will transcribe the spoken words into written notes.

Digital format (text): refers to documents that have been digitized (i.e. transformed into a format recognized by the computer). Written documents must be in digital format if you want to use text-to-speech software to have the document read aloud.

Digital libraries: are collections of digitized materials available to teachers for their students.

Electronic text: see Digital Format

Graphic organizer software: see Mind Mapping Software

Interactive whiteboard: often called "Smart boards," these tools function as large computer monitors that allow the teacher to interact with computer software by simply touching the screen instead of using a mouse. This technology can help teachers efficiently model the use of AT to the class.

Keyboard overlays (used with specialized keyboards): one form of AT comes in the shape of a specialized keyboard that can be combined with various overlays, depending on the student's needs and the curriculum. In our student video on "Math and Science," we demonstrate how math overlays can help some students succeed.

Topic glossaries: allow students to verify the meaning of course-specific terms, and how to use them. For example, math glossaries could remind a student what the term "the mean" signifies, and how to calculate it.

Mind mapping software: software that allows individuals to organize ideas visually using text bubbles, arrows and images. Popular versions of such software are *Smart Ideas* and *Inspiration*.

Multimedia software: a general term that refers to any type of software that is used to create or edit content in multiple formats such as photographs, videos, animation, etc.

Optical character recognition (OCR): a function that allows images of text (such as scanned pages) to be understood as written words. This conversion is necessary for certain ATs, such as text-to-speech software.

Online collaboration tools: internet-based tools that allow students to create and edit the same document in real-time. There are a wide variety of tools, from word processors to mind mapping applications (many of which are free) that can be accessed online by multiple users.

Pre-reading: a learning strategy that is used to make reading more effective by engaging the reader in active reading.

Smartpen: a digital pen that not only records the audio (e.g. voice of the teacher) but also links it with the words being written simultaneously by the listener on the special paper. By using a smartpen and its accompanying paper to take notes, a student can later play back the audio associated with any desired segment of his/her notes.

Specialized Keyboards: see keyboard overlays

Speech recognition: software that transforms the user's voice into written text. Popular software of this kind includes: *Dragon Naturally Speaking* and *Speak Q*.

Speech to text: please see entry for "speech recognition"

Voice recognition: please see entry for "speech recognition"

Storyboarding software: software that helps students translate an idea into a sequence of visual segments, similar to a comic strip.

Talking calculator: works like a regular calculator, but with audio feedback, so you can hear the numbers being pressed as well as hear the answer.

Topic dictionaries: organized under topic headings, these "dictionaries" are lists of words that students refer to when writing, allowing them to find new ways of saying things and expanding their vocabulary. These can be particularly helpful when used in combination with word prediction software.

Text to speech software: allows students to select text and hear the computer read it out loud.

Video conferencing: refers to popular online tools that allow instant two way video and audio sharing.

Visual organizer: see Mind Mapping Software

Voice recognition: see Speech-to-Text

Word prediction software: a tool that helps with spelling and typing by offering a list of possible words based on the first few letters typed and the context of the text. The student chooses the desired word from the list of “predictions” and it is automatically inserted into the sentence.