

Using Assistive Technology with Older Students



**In- an- Hour Workshop
November 2009
Presented by Amy Mintz**



High School and Transition to Post-Secondary (whatever that may be)

- The efficient and effective use of assistive technology can be as basic a skill for students with disabilities as reading, writing, and arithmetic.
- The use of technology can go a long way toward circumventing the limitations of a disability and providing students with disabilities with a "level playing field" in every area of life accomplishment.



Who is Using AT?

- AT is not just for students with “severe” cognitive or physical challenges.
- The use of AT can also help many students with typical HS work and who could be “college bound” if only he/she could _____(you fill in the blank)
- The use of assistive technology enhances function and increases skills and opportunities for independence
- Though a student may be dependent upon a particular device in order to perform skillfully, denying the device denies the student an opportunity ever to achieve success at the level of his or her potential.



When is using AT appropriate?

- Enables an individual to perform functions that can be achieved by **no other means**
- Enables an individual to **approximate normal fluency, rate, or standards--a level of accomplishment** which could not be achieved by any other means
- **Provides access for participation in programs or activities** which otherwise would be closed to the individual
- **Increases endurance or ability to persevere and complete tasks** that otherwise are too laborious to be attempted on a routine basis
- **Enables an individual to concentrate on learning or employment tasks,** rather than mechanical tasks
- Provides **greater access to information**
- **Supports normal social interactions** with peers and adults
- Supports participation in the **least restrictive educational environment.**

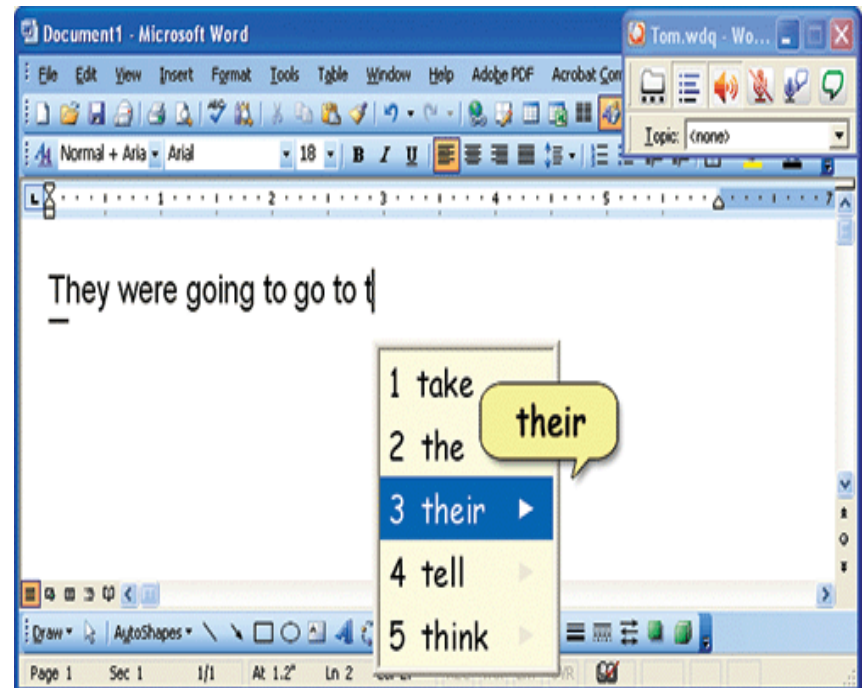
A Crutch?

- Assistive technology should be used as support for access, learning and performing daily tasks.
- If assistive technology is necessary for a student to have access to educational opportunities or to benefit from education, then it is not a "crutch," but a legitimate support.



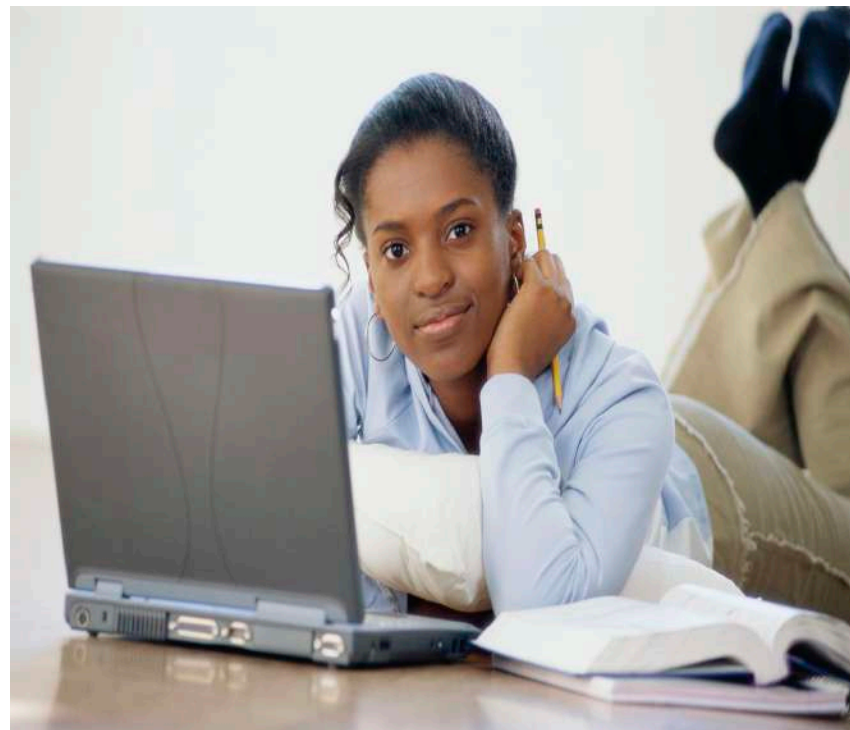
What is WordQ?

- WordQ is **reading** and **writing** AT software
- WordQ can assist with:
Word documents
Internet searches
and E-mailing
- It provides assistance to students during prewriting, drafting, and publishing.



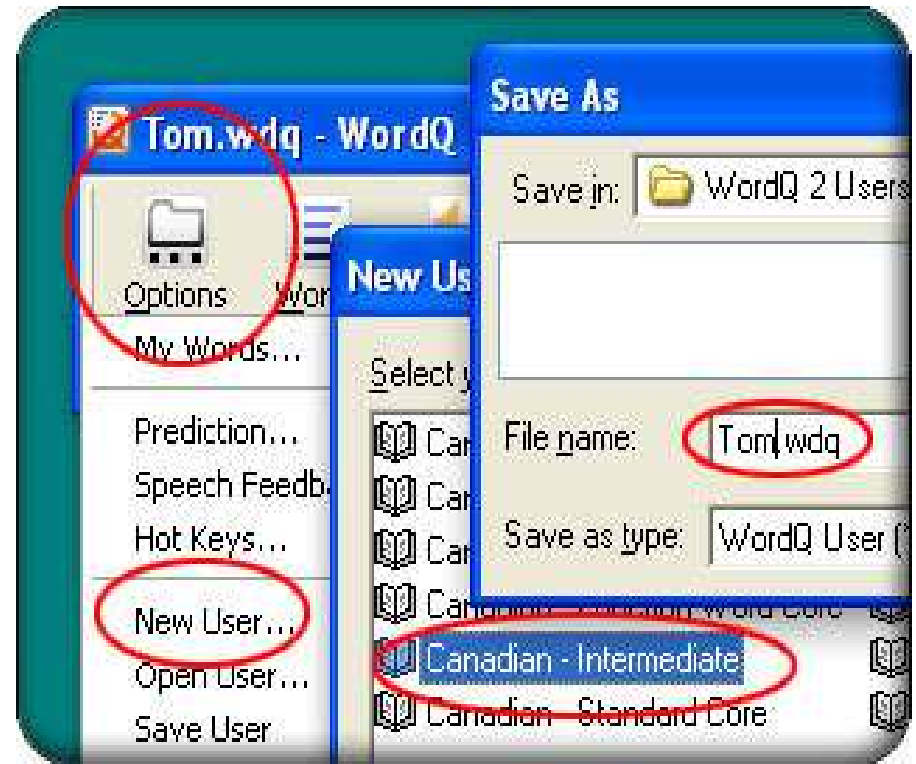
WordQ – Reading

- WordQ can also assist with reading.
- Students can highlight 1 word, a confusing sentence, or whole paragraphs – and **WordQ will read it aloud to them.**



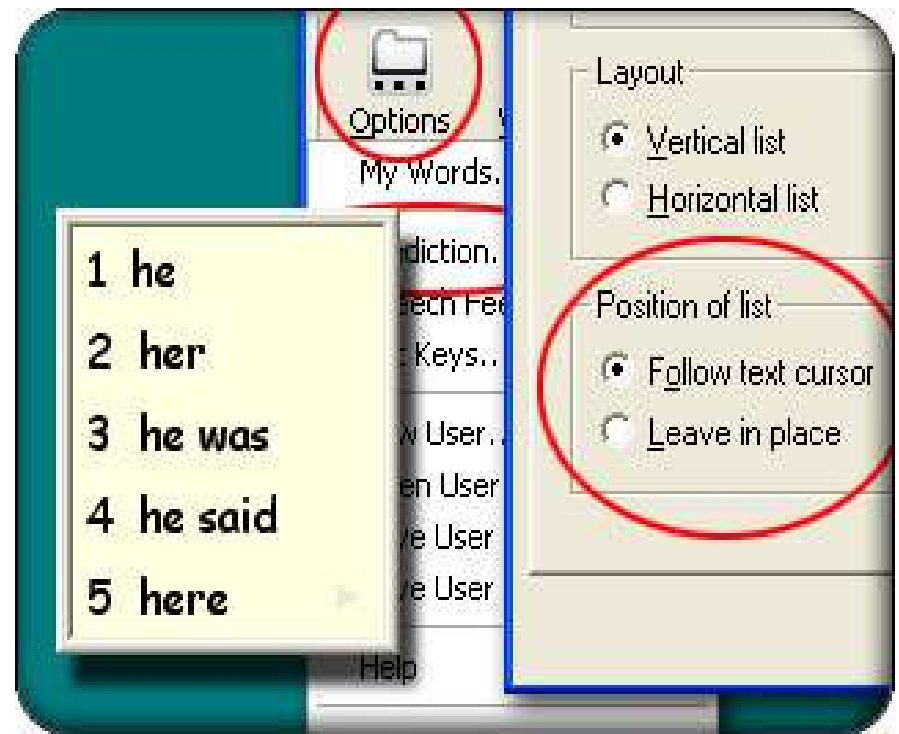
Setting Up New Users

- **WordQ** is very easy to use.
- www.wordq.com
- When saving a student's profile:
 - Save to Thawspace
 - Have Tech. Support person take off deep-freeze or
 - Save to USB memory stick



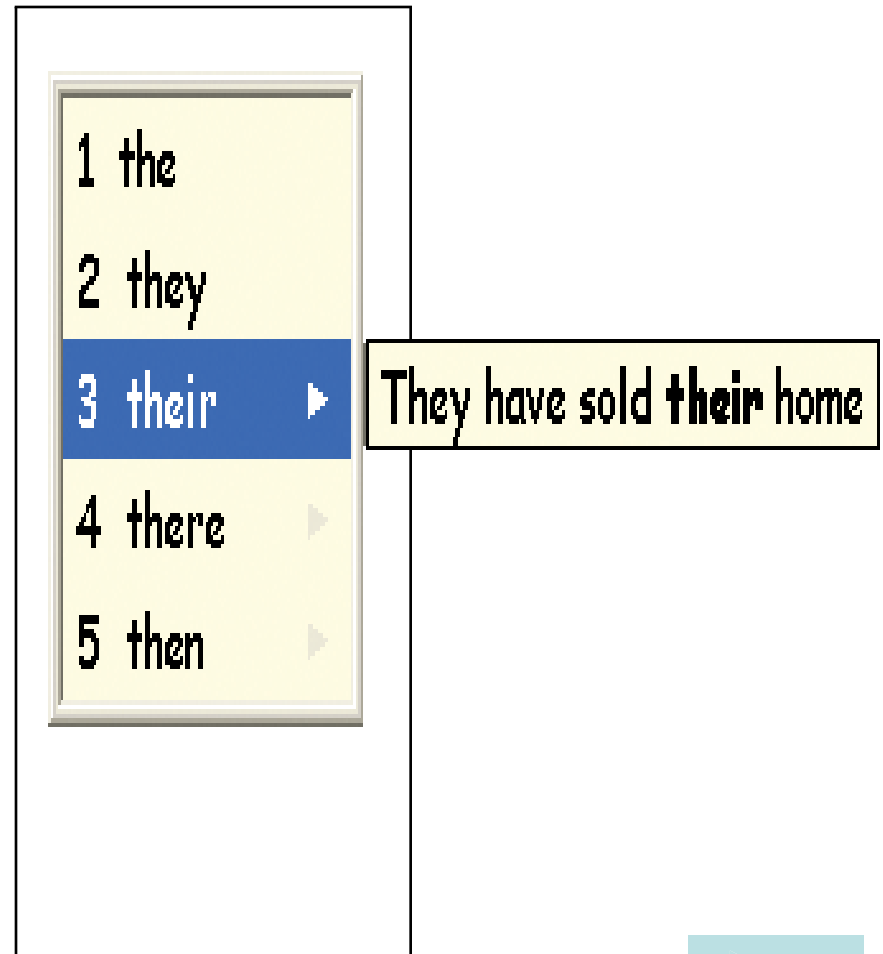
www.wordq.com

- The WordQ website offers easy to follow teacher instructions and suggestions on how to set-up and train users.
- The **Options** tab displays ALL profile choices.



Word Prediction

- WordQ/SpeakQ uses a **floating toolbar** that sits quietly in the background.
- When the first letter is typed, WordQ starts to give predicted word choices to assist with spelling.



Word Prediction (con't)

- Then, it will read the word choices!
- For commonly confused words, WordQ will offer usage examples.
- Teachers and/or students can set-up and save content specific vocabulary.



Spell and Grammar Checker

- WordQ can be set-up to speak each letter, each word, or each sentence.
- **Many students like it set to read each word right after they hit the space bar and each sentence after they type a an endmark.**
- **As it speaks they can hear grammatical errors more readily.**



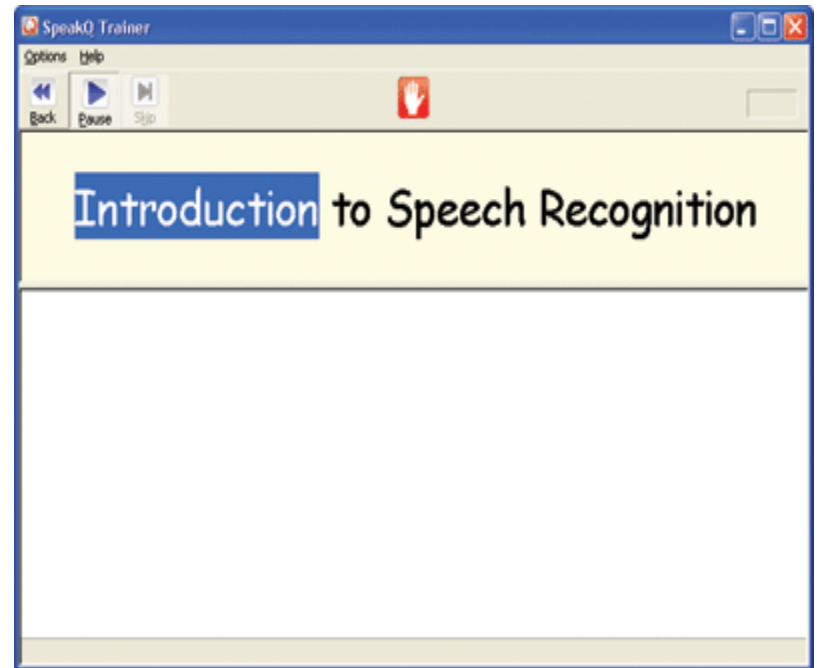
Words, Words, Words, ...

- WordQ has most words found in a dictionary already programmed in.
- If you want to add a difficult to pronounce word or a person's name, you can do this by typing in the phonetic equivalent and hearing it say it back to you until you are satisfied



What is SpeakQ?

- SpeakQ can assist students by allowing them to dictate into the computer.
- Dictation program helps:
 - Students with writing problems
 - Students who can voice ideas but get stuck writing
 - Students with eye-hand coordination difficulties
 - Students who have difficulty using the keyboard.....**MORE** to follow @ slide #15



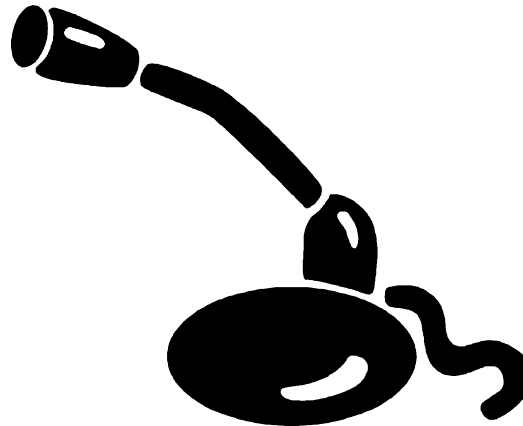
SpeakQ

For best results:

- Complete the speech recognition training **SEVERAL TIMES** using the same microphone



SpeakQ will then recognize, the student's voice and they can dictate directly into a document.



SpeakQ (con't)

- Choose Speak and Select or Speak Continuously options
- Speak clearly and at a slower pace than normal conversation
- Dictate in short chunks and include punctuation marks.



Other AT @ MHS

- MS Word – Accessibility Options
- Colored overlays (low tech)
- Franklin spellers and Franklin talking dictionaries
- Portable Word Processors – Writers/AlphaSmarts/Dana
- Start-to-Finish books (Shakespeare, biographies, mysteries)
- Calculators (mid-tech)
- Reading Pens (2) – print text-to-speech (mid tech)
- LiveScribe Pulse Pen – more info at www.livescribe.com
- Faculty WebPages
- Free reading support – www.readplease.com
- Bookshare.com – etextbooks and literature

Additional Information

- *MTSD Pupil Services, AT WebPage (under construction)*
- *Adaptive Tech. Center for NJ Colleges at TCNJ*

Thanks for coming and please let me know if you would like more support in your classrooms.

