

This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, learning coaches and teacher leaders or as a self-paced study to explore how technology can support student success.

Levelling the playing field with assistive technologies

Use this conversation guide with the video clip, [Levelling the playing field with assistive technologies](#)



General synopsis

In this brief video, Dr. Christopher Lee, a leader in the field of learning disabilities and adaptive technology, talks about how technology is increasingly embedded in all aspects of life and creating positive changes in the classroom and workplace. He believes that although assistive technologies don't solve every education issue, they can help level the playing field for many students

Key understandings

- Universal design is about making sure environments are accessible for everyone.
- Universal design is increasingly embedded in all aspects of life and is changing everyone's everyday experience. For example, automatic doors help people in walkers and wheelchairs, but also people carrying groceries or luggage.
- Universal design for learning is guiding the development of more flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences.
- People embrace technology because it makes life easier. People now expect technology to assist them, in school and in the workplace.
- Technologies that assist in education, such as speech recognition, are increasingly common outside the classroom, which helps make students more accepting of them. For example, students use speech recognition on their smart phones and in other ways.
- Assistive technologies are learning tools that can help students learn more independently and succeed at school, in their social lives and in their chosen careers.

Questions for reflection and discussion

- Dr. Lee shares his personal journey from a child who felt stupid because he talked and learned differently to a successful graduate who relies on assistive technologies in many areas of his life. Does this story change how you view assistive technologies? If so, how?
- Dr. Lee talks about his personal need to use technology to be more independent. Why do you think independence is so important to him? Do you think independence is an important need for most students?
- Since many students are becoming more familiar with assistive technologies such as speech recognition in their everyday lives, do you see a role for students helping other students to use these technologies to succeed in the classroom? Why or why not?
- How would you respond to a student, parent or another educator who said the use of assistive technologies in the classroom is somehow cheating the system, unfair to some students or simply misguided?
- Current research shows that there is a relationship between student engagement and learning. How can assistive technologies such as speech-to-text improve student engagement?

For more information visit:

<http://www.learningtechnologiesab.com/>

Acknowledgement:

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