**Recommended Tech Options for the Dyslexic Student**
**(Susan Barton:  Bright Solutions)**

**The SmartPen**
At Stanford University, incoming freshmen who have dyslexia or other learning disabilities that make taking notes during lecture classes difficult, are encouraged to get and use a Pulse SmartPen.

That's where Susan Barton first heard about this new technology tool. Susan purchased one, tried it, and absolutely LOVES it.

Susan Barton, who has no financial ties to this company, will now be demonstrating it at all her professional development courses, and at all her presentations on Classroom Accommodations for Dyslexic Students.

It is very easy to figure out and use. It is the first practical, affordable -- and really cool -- solution to taking notes -- whether you're in a classroom, a lecture hall, a business meeting, an interview, or even an IEP eligibility session.

To watch short video clips of this amazing new tool, go to:
www.livescribe.com


**Naturally Speaking**
Naturally Speaking is voice recognition software. You talk into its microphone, and the software types what you said into the computer -- spelled correctly. The software will then read out loud what it typed in. If you want to change anything, just grab your mouse and edit it -- as if you had typed it in yourself.

Finally, dyslexic children and adults can get their wonderful thoughts onto paper without first having to learn how to type and spell. They can even use this software to send and receive email. When a new email arrives, Naturally Speaking can read it to them. They can then click on Reply, talk in their response, and click on Send.

Summer is a great time to install and learn to use Naturally Speaking. Then, when school starts, they will be able to do much more of their homework independently.The Premium edition of Naturally Speaking costs only $ 199, and runs on Windows-based computers.

To learn more, or purchase it online, go to:
http://www.nuance.com/for-individuals/by-product/dragon-for-pc/premium-version/index.htm

The same company also offers a version for Macintosh computers.


**Screen Reader**
Text-to-speech software for Windows. This easy-to-use software with natural-sounding voices can read to you any text such as Microsoft Word files, webpages, PDF files,.and E-mails.  It is free -- as long as you do not need any other features.

http://www.naturalreaders.com/pc_nr12.php


**Type To Learn**
Most children with dyslexia also have dysgraphia -- extreme difficulty with the physical act of handwriting. For them, handwriting is slow, tedious, and painful (from using too much pressure) -- and it is difficult to read their handwriting.

One solution is to get rid of as much handwriting as possible, and allow them to type their work. Typing will allow them to produce written work faster, and the results will be much easier to read. But it will take a dyslexic child longer to master typing than most children because it requires two weak areas: memorization and directionality. So start teaching them now. If they practice typing 10 minutes a day during the summer, they can become a decent typist by September.

Susan Barton's favorite typing program is called Type To Learn - Version 3, published by Sunburst Software. It runs on both a Mac and a PC, and it is not expensive. You can purchase it at most computer stores, or directly from Sunburst Software by going to: http://store.sunburst.com/ProductInfo.aspx?itemid=176646

The current version is 4, but version 3 is much better.  So if you can find it on eBay or Amazon.com, Susan recommends Version 3. To prevent a child from looking down at the keyboard, you might also want to purchase a removable key-cap cover, which costs about $ 5.  After installing Type To Learn, make sure it won't frustrate a child with dyslexia by changing its settings to Low Vocabulary, Large Font, 8 words per minute, and 70% accuracy.When a student has gone through all the lessons once, change the settings to Medium Vocabulary, Medium Font, 20 or 25 words per minute, and 85% accuracy. That will make the lessons look entirely new. Other typing programs that work well with students with dyslexia include:

**Ultra Key 5.0**
And a workbook called **Writing Skills:  Keyboarding** by Diana Hanbury King, a well-respected pioneer in the field of dyslexia.

Most students will be able to type at least 25 words per minute by the time they've gone through the lessons a second time.  At that point, a child with dyslexia should be allowed to type all school assignments. For in-class assignments, they can use an Neo portable keyboard (which used to be called the AlphaSmart Pro keyboard). These battery operated keyboards weight about a pound, fit easily in a backpack, are very sturdy, and the Neo version costs only $ 169. To learn more, go to:
www.neo-direct.com/


**Audio Books and Textbooks**
Students with dyslexia can learn what's in the textbook, even if they cannot yet read at grade level, by listening to the textbook.

Learning Ally (which used to be called Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic) has over 200,000 textbooks already recorded. Parents can sign up for a membership, and then download their child's textbooks as audio files, recorded by a human.  You can listen to them on a iPad, iPhone or iTouch or Android tablet using their app.

To learn more, go to:
www.LearningAlly.org

Here are some other sources of books on audio:
Recorded Books rents current best sellers, classics, and leisure books recorded by professional actors.
www.recordedbooks.com

Books on Tape also rents current best sellers and classics.
www.booksontape.com

Check with your local librarian. Many classics are available through inter-library loan. You can also download e-books -- the text from books. Then, if you have screen-reading software, the computer can read the book to your child.

For a list of sources of e-books, go to:
www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=1117


**Texthelp:  Read & Write Gold**
This program is fabulous !!  It has so many features it is hard to name them all.  So I recommend you watch two videos that provide a quick overfew of some of its major features.

Here is a short video that gives you an overview of some of its features.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beBcydiQT4o&feature=share&list=PL942D07588DD28062

To see a list of all of its features, and watch a short video demo of each feature, go to:
http://www.texthelp.com/north-america/support/videos/#PCVideos

This program works on Windows and Mac desktop computers, on Google Chromebooks, and on iPads as well as Android tablets.

For more information, go to:
http://www.texthelp.com/North-America/Our-products/Readwrite/features-pc

# If you have an iPad, here is a list of Susan Barton's favorite iPad Apps.

### Audio Books
Learning Ally (formerly Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic) has over 200,000 **textbooks** recorded by humans in digital format. Once you become a member and buy their app, you can download their audio textbooks directly to your iPad. You can listen to them out loud or through earbuds. You can speed up or slow down the voice without distorting it. And you can also jump to specific pages or chapters. Their app is free, but you must be a member to download their audio books.Free Books has audio recordings of many great books read by volunteers.

Tales2Go has recordings of professional storytellers sharing great books aimed at children in Elementary school. There is a small monthly fee to access these recordings.

### Speak Selection
When this free built-in feature is turned on, it reads text or webpages to you with very good voices. To turn it on, press the Home button to go to your Home screen (your desktop). Then find Settings and tap on it. In the Settings column on the left, tap on General. In the General column on the right, scroll all the way down to Accessibility, and tap on it.

In the Accessibility column on the right, find Speak Selection, and turn it on. Then use the slider bar below it to adjust the Speaking Rate. Then press the Home button to Home screen. To use that feature, open an email or a webpage. Gently press and hold on any word until a row of choices appears. Either choose Select All or drag the handles. Then choose Speak.

### vBookz PDF Voice Reader
Speak Selection does not work on PDF files. But the app called vBookz PDF Voice Reader reads them to you with an excellent voice, and highlights each word as it is read. That app is $ 4.99.m Some people strongly prefer the app called **Voice Dream**. You can also import PDFs into iBooks and then use Siri to read the text.

### Dictation
If you have an iPad 3 or later, you can dictate into any app because the dictate button (the microphone) is right next to the space bar each time the keyboard appears. But if you have the original iPad or iPad2, download the free app called Dragon Dictation. When you open that app, follow the directions to tap and dictate. Then, with Speak Selection turned on (see prior article), the iPad can read it back to you. Just click on the tiny keyboard at the bottom of the screen (to make your keyboard appear), then gently press and hold on any word until a row of choices appears. Choose Select All, then choose Speak.

To edit that text, make the keyboard disappear, then make your changes. To insert a few words, click where they should appear, then tap the Record button at the top of the screen. To delete a word, just tap on it, then choose delete. You can then have the iPad read it back. You can repeat that editing process as many times as you wish. When you are happy with it, tap on the icon in the upper right corner, which allows you to copy that passage (to paste into a different app), or to email it to someone, or even post it on Facebook or Twitter.

By the way, Dragon Dictation also works on iPhones.

## AudioNote

This is a great solution for students who have a difficult time taking notes in class. This app boosts the internal microphone so you can record the teacher while you are writing, drawing, or typing on its pad of paper. Later, when you bring up that pad of paper, you can touch anything on the page to hear what was being said at that time. All of that for only $ 4.99. And you can try it out for free by downloading AudioNote Lite.

## How do you spell . . . ?

Go to www.Google.com. Click inside the Search box (to make the keyboard appear), tap of the Microphone button next to the Spacebar, then say, "How do you spell ..." followed by the word you need.

## Math

If your child has dysgraphia, which makes it hard to line up numbers, use the **free** app called **ModMath**.
http://www.modmath.com/

And the brand new, and free, **Photo Math** app is great for multi-step math problems, fractions, algebra, and more.
http://vimeo.com/109405701

## Texthelp:  Read & Write Gold

This program is fabulous !!  It has so many features it is hard to name them all.  So I recommend you watch two videos that provide a quick overfew of some of its major features.

Here is a short video that gives you an overview of some of its features.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beBcydiQT4o&feature=share&list=PL942D07588DD28062

To see a list of all of its features, and watch a short video demo of each feature, go to:
http://www.texthelp.com/north-america/support/videos/#PCVideos

This program works on Windows and Mac desktop computers, on Google Chromebooks, and on iPads as well as Android tablets.

For more information, go to:
http://www.texthelp.com/North-America/Our-products/Readwrite/features-pc

For Kindergarten, first or second graders in **Level 2**:

## Sound Beginnings

A fun way to practice spelling. Hint: tap on the picture first to hear the word.
To download this free app, go to:
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/sound-beginnings/id541898864?mt=8

For older students, in any level:
## A+ Spelling

A tutor can enter and record the words on Spelling Tests in her own voice.  Students can either practice those words using three different built-in activities, or they can take the spelling test independently and email the results to their teacher or tutor.
To download this free app, go to:
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/a+-spelling-test/id501211008?mt=8

## Spelling City

Some tutors prefer this app because it offers more activities per word list, and the activities are more game like. But it is much more complicated to enter your own list.
Students can either practice those words using three different built-in activities, or they can take the spelling test independently and email the results to their teacher or tutor.
To download this free app, that has extra cost features, go to:
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/id538407602?mt=8

**Many more apps**

Apps are introduced faster than Susan Barton can possibly review them. Jamie Martin, Coordinator of Assistive Technology at Kildonan School and an AT consultant to other schools, does keep up with the latest, and he has a great website:
http://www.atdyslexia.com/assistive-technology/

Also, a bright teenager with dyslexia has created a wonderful blog with **great reviews** (both on video and in writing) of assistive technology tools he feels are useful for those with dyslexia.

To view his blog, go to:
http://www.bdmtech.blogspot.com/