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Bloomz is sponsoring today's show, they are my favorite tool for engaging parents in the classroom. And at the end of the show I'll tell you about a free webinar they're sponsoring where I'll teach you five habits you can start now to help your classroom thrive in the fall. Stay tuned to the end of the show.

Jennifer Cronk:

"Every learning disability manifests it in a different way per child."

Vicki Davis:

The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: So on our recent show you heard from Jennifer Cronk and I promised you that she would come back and we would talk about Ed tech tools for special Ed. Thank you, Jennifer for coming back on the show. And what is your first treasure for us for special needs kids?

JENNIFER: My favorite of all time is something I still use all the time. It's anything that has to do with speech recognition. You want to free up a child from being restricted by mechanics to allow their creativity to come through then you need to give them the opportunity to express themselves without having to deal with any fine motor issues or reading disability or comprehension.

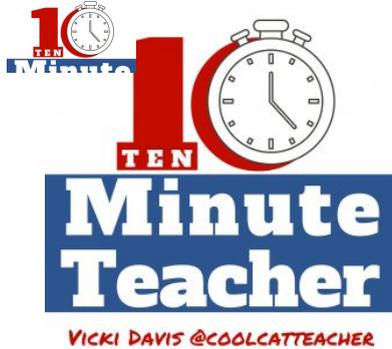
So I love speech recognition, probably my favorite type of speech recognition is in Google Docs and it is the add-on speech recognition. <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/speech-recognition/idmniglhlcjfkhnsgbiiecmianekpneh> Now, I'm aware that Google has rolled out voice typing <https://support.google.com/docs/answer/4492226?hl=en> which is under tools but there is a significant delay in that and it can be quite frustrating for students. So I still stand by going to the add-ons and putting on speech recognition. It is also very sensitive and you can select different languages and dialect.

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So I've also had my foreign language students test their articulation by turning on speech recognition and speaking in their target language.

VICKI: So we want to teach them how to do speech recognition which that can be a challenge because I have to say punctuation and they have to say other things but it can be taught. Okay, what's your second one?

JENNIFER: My second one has a lot to do with accuracy. When you're dealing with somebody like me, like I have a learning disability, I have dyslexic and I find that



it's very difficult for me to track especially on digital format, my text. That has not much to do with my comprehension but tracking is really important. So I like to smash a couple of extensions together for that. One I line is BeeLine Reader <http://www.beelinereader.com/> which uses a color gradient to help guide your eyes from one end of a line to another.

Sometimes I'll superimpose [Visor](https://github.com/nverba/visor) <https://github.com/nverba/visor> which is another extension on top of that which restricts my field of vision, this is really useful when you have kids that have reading disabilities, you have kids that have attention issues just to be able to focus what's happening. And Visor will put a color overlay on top of the page too which can also filter out a lot of distracting things that might set off kids that are out to have their attention go different ways, kind of with my daughter.

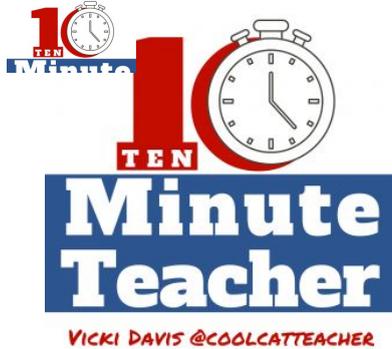
VICKI: Okay. What else?

JENNIFER: [Dyslexia Reader] Chrome <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/dyslexia-reader-chrome/npfbahgomdenajejiopcfbggcpkcani?hl=en-US> is one extension that I do like. It is just the current spacing, the font style and puts the color overlay on top of text and that will make it supposedly more visually digestible for students who are dyslexic like myself. And there's other simple things too. I'm not sure if you've seen when somebody turns on the accessibility section of a Chrome Book, <https://www.asus.com/support/faq/1007477> one of the things that comes up is you have this big gigantic mouse. I prefer to use Crafty Cursor <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/craftycursor/giponoohlplibjdnjnbnhbiljffpkkok?hl=en-US> to help track the mouse, if I'm dealing with visual issues. Like Crafty Zoom is another if I have a student that has any kind of visual problems where they need to have some kind of magnifier. I find that to be a really useful extension as well. (*See all of the Crafty Extensions - <http://www.crafty184.com/>*)

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VICKI: So you teach kids about of these and then you let them chose what works for them?

JENNIFER: Oh yeah. I believe so strongly in student agency. Nobody could tell me what app or extension or technique I going to work best for me unless they sat in my shoes. So every learning disability manifests itself in a different way per child. So me, for example, I have a really hard time with numbers and my calendar. So for example, for an adult, for what I've done to modify for myself, I'm in a lot of different districts, I actually take myself out of the equation. People actually go to my booking calendar and they book time for me. Because if I am constantly fielding all these emails and trying to schedule times, I mess it up all the time.



So I had to remove that mechanic to be able to have that workflow be something that would work well for me. So that's what I try to do for students and for teachers as I try to figure out where are the mechanics that are tripping up the kids and how can I improve that process with technology?

VICKI: So what are some of the other most transformational – why don't you give us as many as you can in the next few minutes?

JENNIFER: All right. Speak it <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.dhristov.si&hl=en> is another great extension that's great to have a website read to a student. My favorite of all time is the Read-Write tool by my Text Help. The Read-Write toolbar <https://rwchrome.texthelp.com/drive/Support/Start> is like going to Walmart. I love the Read-Write tool bar, the simple fact that it has word prediction on there, that if a child doesn't know a word they can go to a dictionary or picture dictionary to get contextual tools. It will read the document to them if they needed to. It will actually read the document and create MP3 of the whole document read so the student can listen to it on their device.

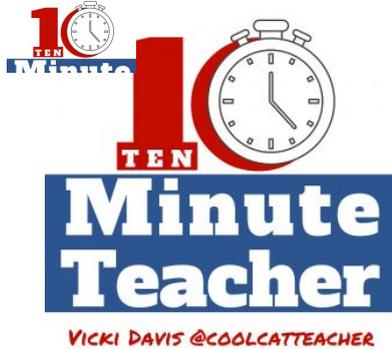
I also like when you bring it to a PDF or you bring it to a website, you can use a summary function and it all boil down a long piece into smaller snippets to make it easier for teachers. Like, I can't say enough about the Read-Write toolbar.

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VICKI: I love that tool and I've talked about it at lots of conferences. (See <https://goo.gl/Cn1ujk> and my 15 favorite add ons for Google Chrome - <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/best-google-drive-add-ons/>) And do have to disclose, I've done some work for them. The teachers will exclaim and go, "Oh my goodness." And then they just want to leave and just go set it off, you know.

JENNIFER: It's kind of like, nearly everything. My only thing about the Read-Write toolbar I don't like is its voice typing is almost exactly the same as the one in Google Docs and there is a delay. And so I still hold firm that speech recognition add on is way faster and more sensitive. But another one that I also really liked that I just started playing around with is the Talking Comment Extension. <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/talk-and-comment-voice-no/djnhkfljnimcpelfndpcjcgngmefaobl?hl=en> So one of the things that I say to my teachers is whenever we're leaving feedback for students especially with special needs or a child that has any kind of issues- when I'm grading a child's paper or essay, I'm leaving my annotations on things they need to approve.

Nine times out of ten that student is going to come back to me and ask me what I meant. It always happens, I never have a child just take look at my annotations and say, okay, so I need to make this change. My special needs kids don't do that. They always ask for my clarity. So I love using talk-in-comment or



you can use Read-Write toolbar or you could use Screencastify <https://www.screencastify.com/> which is also pretty powerful as well. And I will actually leave voice comments on documents for my kids and I find it to be faster for me, it is a faster workflow for me to give them feedback.

And not just are they getting feedback, they're getting that one-to-one coaching. So the kids don't have a relationship with my text they feel picked apart by my text when I'm telling them what they need to change.

But when they hear my voice and they hear me say, "Hey, I know you got this. We worked on this class. You has a fabulous hook, what happened to that? Let's go back to that. Come back to me if you still need help." That is a whole different way of interacting with students.

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I also like using along that same line of thought. I love using [Screencastify](#) and I would actually screencast myself going through students document. After I'm done with this it's on my Google Drive, I grab a Google link, I leave it in the comment and the student's document and no have a video of me leaving feedback for them. And again, it's me coaching them, they're just not trying to decipher my annotations about what they did wrong. They're hearing my voice telling them what is right about what they did.

VICKI: So Jennifer Cronk has given us so many fantastic ideas. Remember, check the show notes, go get the transcripts with all of the links. There's so many fantastic resources. And as a mom of two with learning differences, it is about empowering our students to really empower themselves and be self-advocates and know what tools to pick for themselves because this is their life. They don't want us to do for them, they want us to empower them and that is truly a remarkable way because as mom who never has given up on my own children – and I have one graduating from Georgia Tech on May 6th and I didn't even know if he could get out of 3rd grade with his learning differences. And we empowered him with technology. It's made all the difference and we can do this.

Thank you Bloomz for sponsoring today's show. It is my favorite tool for parent engagement in the classroom. Just go to [bloomz.net](#). Now, they are sponsoring the April free webinar on Thursday April 27th at 6pm Eastern. I'll be sharing five habits you can start now to help your classroom thrive in the fall. There are things you can do now to have a better classroom. So join me by going to [cctea.ch/bloomz-spring](#) to register for the webinar. Or just go to the show notes are [coolcatteacher.com/podcast](#) for the link.

Thank you for listening to the Ten-minute Teacher Podcast. You can download the show notes and see the archive at [coolcatteacher.com/podcast](#). Never stop learning.



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