Successfully Making Decisions About the Use of Scribing and Speech-to-Text
Sheryl Lazarus and Kathy Strunk
2019 CEC Convention, Indianapolis
Overview –

• Introduction and background information
• Findings of a state policy analysis
• Current and emerging issues surrounding the use of speech-to-text for all students
• Strategies for making and implementing speech-to-text decisions
• Discussion
Forum on Speech-to-Text and Scribing

• Pre-session to the 2018 National Conference of Student Assessment
• More than 45 participants: representatives of state departments of education, school districts, testing companies, other educational organizations

Forum on Scribing and Speech-to-Text, Continued

- Purpose of forum: To develop greater clarity on the implementation of speech-to-text for all students, and to discuss the issues surrounding the use of speech-to-text for all students
- Looked at issues from three perspectives
  - Research
  - Vendor
  - State
Purpose:
To provide a snapshot of how accessibility features and accommodations using speech-to-text technology on assessments are included in state policies.

- Analyzed reading/English language arts (ELA) and math content assessments
- 2017-18 school year
# Terminology in Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech-to-Text</td>
<td>Speech-to-Text technology that has confirmed functionality with the assessment prior to the test, e.g., use a practice test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech-to-Text – Student’s own device or software</td>
<td>Non-Embedded Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech-to-text converter</td>
<td>Speech-to-text does not interact with test platform – requires human scribe who follows scribing protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice recognition software</td>
<td>Student uses own device in and outside classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disable connection to internet</td>
<td>Scribe may keyboard or write student responses during the test or transcribe responses after test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converts student’s voice to text</td>
<td>Student must review, edit, correct and finalize independently or with human scribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student must review, edit, correct and finalize independently or with human scribe</td>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable permission mode prior to test</td>
<td>No smartphones!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test company recommends pre-trial, simulation, infrastructure test</td>
<td>Student dictates response or gives commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Tiers of Accessibility

Universal Features
for all students

Designated Features
for students who need them as identified by an educator in advance

Accommodations
for students with disabilities; in some cases, ELs are also eligible
## 2017-18 State Assessment Accessibility Policies

*Speech to Text: Reading/ELA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Tier</th>
<th>Reading/ELA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student with Disability (includes ELs with disabilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Tool</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated Feature</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STT not Allowed or Info not Available</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NCEO Preliminary Findings: Report Forthcoming

*includes DC

50 States + DC
# 2017-18 State Assessment Accessibility Policies

## Speech to Text: Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Tier</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>EL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student with Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NCEO Preliminary Findings: Report Forthcoming

*Includes DC*
Common Characteristics of States’ Speech-to-Text Policies

- Speech-to-text is a non-embedded accommodation
- Students may use their own familiar, frequently-used assistive technology speech-to-text device
- Device/software must interact with test platform
- Student given opportunities to practice with the test platform (practice tests, infrastructure tests)
- Internet connection must be appropriately disabled
Common Characteristics of States’ Speech-to-Text Policies, Continued

- If speech-to-text does not interact with test platform, student may be tested separately using two stations (one to access the online test and one to use the speech-to-text software or device)
- May require human scribe to transcribe student responses word for word either into the online test or on paper
- Test content must be deleted from device
Common Characteristics of States’ Speech-to-Text Policies, Continued

- Requires student to use writing conventions, e.g., capitalization, punctuation, spelling and make corrections, if needed
- Human scribe must be trained and follow test security guidelines, which may include many activities, i.e., department approval, use acceptable scribing practices, allow student to review/correct transcription, print and then shred student responses, sign security forms, etc.
English Language Proficiency Assessments

- WIDA-Access and ELPA21 for ELs
  - Speech-to-text is available as a non-embedded accommodation for ELs with disabilities, i.e., students with IEPs or 504 plans
  - For ELs with disabilities, best practice is for the IEP teams to be multidisciplinary
    - at least one person is an expert in English language acquisition
    - speech language pathologists understand how to differentiate between limited English proficiency and a disability
Example - Arizona: State Policy for Speech-to-Text in a State with Some Non-consortia Assessments

- **State General Content Assessment (AzMERIT)**
  *The use of speech-to-text is prohibited.*

- **Alternate Assessment (MSAA)**
  *Students may use assistive technology devices to respond to the assessment.*

- **English Language Proficiency Assessment (AZELLA)**
  *The use of speech-to-text is prohibited.*
When to Use Speech-to-Text: State Policy Example

“In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators should consider whether the student has:

● A physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student’s motor process of writing through keyboarding; OR

● A disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.”*

Strategies

• Ensure the student is familiar with the software and has had many opportunities to use it in daily instruction.
• Learn about and prepare ahead for coordination of voice recognition software, test platform, and computer browser.
• Communicate frequently and well in advance with everyone involved in the student’s use of speech-to-text on the assessment.
Discussion Questions

• What suggestions do you have to help students use speech-to-text effectively?
• What suggestions do you have for communicating with parents about students’ use of speech-to-text?
• What other general strategies can you share with the group or what questions would you like to ask the group?
Contact Information

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For more information, see https://nceo.info/