Sometimes when I proofread my own papers, I don’t catch all my mistakes. It helps me to hear it read aloud, but when I do that I read it the way I *wanted to* write it and not necessarily the words that are there. I don’t always have someone around to read the paper to me, so text-to-speech software does that. It helps me to hear how the paper will sound to others and know where to make revisions and edits.

I do a better job at telling my ideas than writing them. Sometimes I just hit a road-block when I try to write papers, or my ideas flow faster than I can write them. Speech-to-text software lets me just talk out my ideas and they go right to my document. Then, all I have to do is organize and edit.

Recording the teacher lecture portions of my classes gives me the opportunity to listen to the lecture again, fill in any notes I missed, and hear the material that s/he explained a second, third, or fourth time. Sometimes I have a hard time keeping up with notes in class and paying attention. I still take some notes in class, but the pressure is off to get every word down – and in writing that I’ll be able to read later. During my homework time, I listen again and make sure my notes are complete. This is also a great way to study while the information is Still fresh in my mind.

I use Dragon Naturally Speaking when participating in a chat room in my online class (or when we are all expected to be in the chat room at the same time). Sometimes I cannot compose/type my responses fast enough to participate in the discussion. When I finally have a response drafted to the teacher’s questions and am ready to post it, s/he has moved on to another question. Speech-to-text software enables me to speak my ideas and keep up with the discussion. I also don’t have to worry about spelling errors going up for all the class to see.

When I came to college, my weekly reading demands increased dramatically. Suddenly, I needed to get through larger amounts of text each week, and text that had more detail, content, and vocabulary than I experienced in High School. Text-to-speech software really helped. It would be a good idea to get used to listening to a computer read books aloud to you while in middle school and high school. That does take some getting-used-to. But – it could be a lifesaver in college.