

## **Session 6 Learn: Matching Technology Tools to Learning Needs**



In this section, you will view a PowerPoint presentation that gives an overview of some of the software tools available in MCPS and how the specific features of those tools can overcome learning barriers. You will also explore some of the tools just enough to decide what you'd like to learn more about.

### **Matching Technology Tools to Learning Needs**

It's not the tool, it's how you use it. It is tempting to think of technology accommodations as items that fit certain student labels. For example, you may have had a parent ask for a student to be given a calculator because he or she is behind in math. But a calculator will do no good for students unless they can understand the math concepts, but have trouble with the rote memory required to calculate with fluency.

When thinking with a UDL lens, it is important to recognize that technology tools are not meant to be "cheats." There are three important reasons to use technology:

1. **Technology tools can be an alternative to learning content or demonstrating one's knowledge.** Thoughtful application of these alternatives means that technology is leveraged to meet the learning preferences or needs of the students in the class.
2. **Technology tools can overcome learning barriers** that are inherent in the curriculum materials. For example, printed text can be provided in a digital format with text reader software. In this way, a student who has a reading disability can engage in the same social studies reading passage as the rest of the class.
3. **Technology tools can provide or increase independence,** thus deepening the learning potential of an activity. For example, a student who uses word prediction software to spell instead of a scribe is engaging more fully in the writing process, and therefore learning more from the task.

Now view the PowerPoint presentation on technology tools commonly used in MCPS. Think about features that the tools have in common. As you review the various software programs, decide which one you would benefit from learning more about in the future.

- [Technology Tools and Features \(pdf\)](#)
- [UDL and Technology](#) (CAST website)
- [UDL Guidelines – Version 2.0 Examples and Resources](#)

## **Session 6 Discuss: Technology Activities vs. Tools**

### **Discussion and Reflection:**

*What do you think the difference is between using technology as an activity and using technology as a tool? Support your answer with ideas from what you've learned about UDL so far.*

### **Responses to Colleagues**

*In your responses to colleagues, build on their answer to take the discussion deeper.*