

GLS10 Unit 1: Learning Skills

Activity 5: Using Community Resources and Technology

Overview

Students will identify various community resources that can be accessed to assist with success at school, such as guidance staff, librarians and tutors. Some assistive technology will also be reviewed, with the goal of increasing students' understanding of how reading, writing, study skills and research projects can be enhanced by the application of the appropriate software.

Lesson

Getting Help When you Need It



Sometimes students feel as if there are very few places to turn to for help with school work. In fact, there are many resources available, but they need to be understood and used effectively.

For example, the library is a great place to start. At school, the **librarian** can guide students to specific books or other resources that will supply specific information on a given topic. Librarians can also help to narrow down the scope of a research topic if it is too broad.

The **Internet**, of course, is another great place to search for information. Students should be very specific about their searches and use key words that will result in the best 'hits' on what they are looking for. By using a variety of websites, a better scope of the topic will be seen, rather than a single viewpoint.

Many schools have **tutors** available to support learners during study periods or before and after school. Tutors can guide students through a variety of tasks, such as making and organizing notes, studying for tests and completing larger assignments.

Other school personnel, such as **Guidance Counselors**, can help students set individual goals towards gaining certain credits, as well as assisting with long-term planning towards post-secondary education or the world of work.

Teachers in each department at school can be approached to provide guidelines for their specific courses. They should be prepared to discuss the expectations and goals of each course they teach, as well as helping to find ways to help students be as successful as possible in their classes.

Assistive technology is another area to consider as helpful in being successful at school. Depending on the students' needs, there is software available to assist in many areas.

If the issue is a large amount of reading that needs to be done, or there is material that is difficult to read, a '**scan and read**' software would be useful. By using this software, the student can take any text, whether it's from a magazine, newspaper or book and scan the contents to create a digital file. This file



can then be read out loud to the student using headphones or speakers. Some people find it much easier to listen to information than to have to read it themselves. Check out Kurzweil 3000 as one example of this type of software.

Similar programs exist for the challenges of writing. Many people find writing difficult and tiring. **Voice-to-text software** will create print from a voice recording. The user must first train his or her voice using voice recognition technology. This enables the computer to recognize individual voice patterns and convert them to text. The text can then be printed off as a written piece of work. Look for SpeakQ/WordQ or Dragon Naturally Speaking to learn more about this technology.

There are also **software programs that can help students to organize their writing**. By providing writing templates and sentence prompts, the writer has help in getting the introduction, main ideas, supporting details, and conclusion in a format that makes sense and has a good, easy-to-follow structure. One such program is DraftBuilder.

Overall, students should search for the resources that can help them the most. Success in school is an interactive process, so students must learn to help themselves learn!

Assignment

1. Other than your teacher, who are three people you can turn to for help within a school? Provide an example for each person/situation.
2. Identify and describe 3 types of Assistive technology. Provide an example for each type.
3. What do you think is the most useful technology for helping students learn? Explain your answer within 1 paragraph.
4. Go online and find some images of the early computers from the 1940s to the 1960s. Now find images of some recent smartphones. Now compare what you see. How is computer technology different today from what we had in the past?