Digital Learning News @ AB

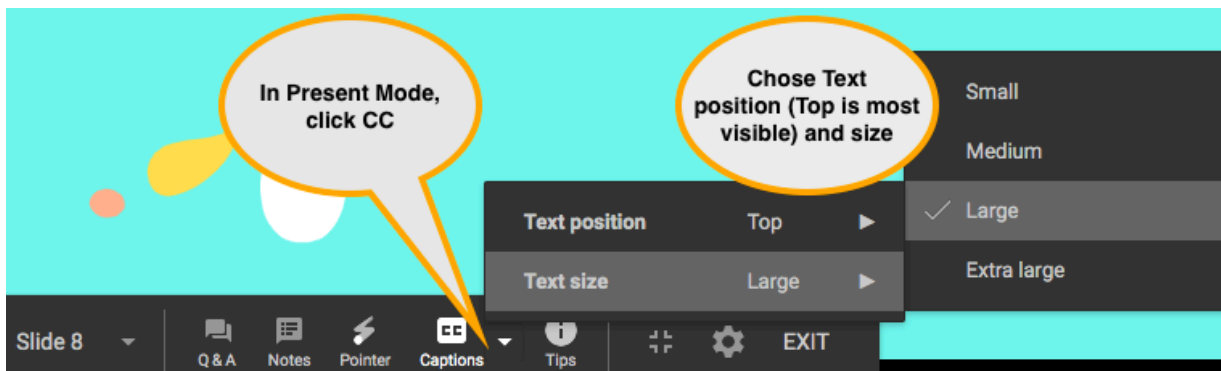## Digital Communication Tools

Bringing students into classroom conversations is a common goal that's not always achievable when class sizes are large and some students are reluctant to speak up or have learning differences that challenge their communication skills. Here are some relatively new digital tools that can help students access content through the power of text-to-speech and speech-to-text technology, and allow every student to share what they think, feel, and understand in multiple formats.

Communication
--the human
connection--
is the key
to personal and
career success

--Paul J. Meyer

Closed-Captioning Your Voice in Google Slides

This recently-added accessibility feature does a remarkably accurate job of converting the presenter's voice to text during a Google Slideshow presentation. Teachers can turn on the CC feature so that in addition to hearing their voice, students can read the words. As you talk, your computer mic will pick up your words and transcribe them in real time into text that will display either at the top or bottom of the slide. Providing closed-captioning can help improve accessibility to students with hearing loss, EL students, or anyone who finds it easier to process spoken words when accompanied by text.
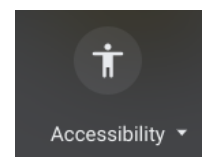

Chromebook Select-to-speak Accessibility Feature

Chromebooks include a range of built-in accessibility features that can be customized by students based on their unique needs, abilities, and learning styles. These features can all be found in the Advanced Settings menu. Here are instructions for accessing the Chromebook's built-in screen reader to hear parts of a page read aloud, a great strategy for students with reading challenges. You might also want to explore all the Chromebook accessibility features, including the screen magnifier, high-contrast mode, and others.
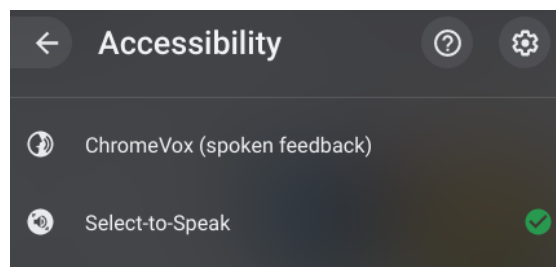
1. **Turn on Select-to-speak**
   - At the bottom right, select the time (Systems menu)
   - Select Settings ⚙ .
   - Select **Advanced**
   - Select **Accessibility**

- Enable **Always show accessibility options in the systems menu** (once this is enabled the systems menu will show instant access to Accessibility).
- Enable **select-to-speak**.

2. **Select and hear text**
   - Press and hold the Search key 🔍 on your keyboard and click a line of text.
   - Press and hold the Search key 🔍 and drag the pointer over an area of the screen.
   - Highlight the text and press the Search key 🔍 + s.
   - At the bottom right, near the time, select Select-to-speak. Then select a line of text or drag the pointer over an area of the screen.
   - Your Chromebook will read the section aloud and each word will be highlighted.
   - To stop Select-to-speak while it's reading, press Ctrl or the Search key

Jamboard

If you have ever used Padlet you will quickly recognize the value of Jamboard for collaboratively creating digital classroom bulletin boards. Jamboard was created by Google, so it fully integrates with all of the GSuite applications, including Drive and Classroom. Teachers can create unlimited Jamboards for free, on which you can post a prompt with a virtual sticky-note, and then ask students to respond with sticky-notes of their own, writing/drawing tools, and/or images. Once you create a board you can share it with students via email or Google Classroom, and control student editing privileges. Similarly to Padlet, all posts are anonymous, so while there are often benefits for collecting honest feedback, you will want to monitor the board closely.

FlipGrid

For 100% student transparency you might want to integrate this dynamic video-based collaboration platform that allows you to hear student voices and see their faces. Like Jamboard, FlipGrid can help encourage reflection and discussion so that all student voices can be heard, but with an engaging video interface. Teachers can create unlimited "grids" (typically one per class or subject) and within that grid post "topics" that prompt students to respond with a video that they can record live or upload. You determine the length of the video posts and approve the videos before they are posted. FlipGrid is free to educators and students and includes numerous resources for integrating video-based discussions in your classroom, including this "Getting Started Guide." The educational possibilities for capturing authentic student voice are endless, especially for World Language, EL, or any classroom that can benefit from students sharing their opinions and reflecting on their learning. To see FlipGrid in action, check out this FlipGrid, *Favorite Digital Learning Tools*, a collaborative effort by the AB Instructional Technology Team to share video-based technology tips.

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