Questions Parents Frequently Asked

What is the Text-to-Speech project?
Our project, Steppingstones: Phase 2 Text-to-Speech Study, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Steppingstones to Technology from Oct. 1, 2010 to Sep. 30, 2013. Our project goal is to measure the effectiveness of text-to-speech software as a reading intervention for improving overall reading skills, academic performance, and aspirations of high school students with reading difficulties.

What is a text-to-speech software?
It is software that can read any text on the computer out loud such as Microsoft Word documents, web pages, and emails. Some of the software's features include the ability to adjust reading speeds, choose reading voices, and use built-in study tools such as dictionaries, highlighting, note-taking, and text extraction. For this project, we will be using Kurzweil 3000™ text-to-speech software.

How will the project benefit my child?
Through this project, the project staff will teach your child how to use the text-to-speech software (i.e., Kurzweil 3000™) for reading class materials. Any reading material from your child’s class can be scanned into the computer. Once scanned, the computer will be able to read the material back to your child. Potential benefits for your child includes improved reading skills, higher "in-school" academic performance, and increased academic aspirations.

Will someone be there to help my child with the program?
Yes, your child will be trained by University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa project staff at the beginning of the semester on how to use the software. In addition, a graduate assistant from the university will be assigned to each participating school to provide additional help for the participating teacher and all the students in the class including your child.

Will my child have to pay to use the software?
No, your child does not have to pay to use the software in school. If you are interested in purchasing the same software for home use, please visit the software’s official site at http://www.kurzweiledu.com/kurz3000.html.

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