Kurzweil 3000 Stephanie Baker

Kurzweil 3000 is an amazing product! It is so versatile! I have a student who finds all reading difficult, but does not qualify for a reader. I have been reading her the appropriate text in our Science textbook so she can answer her questions. I wish I knew about the diverse capabilities of this program sooner as this would have saved me a lot of time! The trouble with the Science 10 textbook is that the vocabulary is quite advanced and there is an insane number of new words to learn for the course that are quite long and complex. The scanner option works very well so any document can be scanned into the program and saved. Words or sections can be highlighted for study or memory purposes. Double click on a word and the definition is spoken audibly. The text can be read to the student at a variety of speeds so can be adapted to the particular students’ needs. The voice does not sound overly digitized either and there are different options so students can choose their preferred reader.

This program can be used for classes as well as they have amazing study tools; a whole study skill toolbar! They have the following:

* Colors to highlight text
* Footnotes to attach notes anywhere in the document
* Yellow sticky notes to highlight important thoughts
* Text notes so as to add notes on top of the document
* Voice notes so as to attach spoken notes to the document
* Bookmarking so important pages can be easily found at a later time
* Column notes, which opens a secondary window, so as to take notes as a student reads or researches
* Note snippets (only when in writing mode) that opens a window that displays the column notes in a hierarchical format
* Floating word lists (only when in writing mode) that is used for self-correction when writing or editing drafts

There are a lot of options for students who have trouble with written output as well. There are a couple of wonderful options for organizational purposes for writing. To start with, there is a really neat brainstorm palette that is easy to use. It can be used as an outline to organize thoughts, for study purposes, etc. Secondly, the split screen view is a great tool for essay writing; on the left you can have an outline and then type on the right. For those who require more help with spelling, the word prediction tool is super handy. In the writing mode, word prediction can be pulled up on the side; as the student types, words come up that may be the word that the student is looking for as they are typing based on the letters present. There is also a synonym button on the toolbar for easy access to word choice and a spell check option. Toolbars can be customized for what the student is doing; there is a main tool bar, reading bar, writing bar and study skills toolbar available.

Overall this is a very diverse program with a lot of options. Kurzweil could be used for struggling readers and writers or it could be used in a classroom setting for all as a fantastic tool for organization for essays and research as well as a study tool. I would highly recommend!