



Kurzweil 3000 Implementation Tips

If you plan to make Kurzweil 3000 part of your assistive technology (AT) toolkit, here are some helpful tips from school systems throughout North America that are active users.

★ Chart your course

Start with a carefully thought out implementation plan that states your broader AT goals as well as the required steps and timeline to get there. It provides a way of thinking through the process of implementation as well as a vehicle for sharing goals with other stakeholders who need to support and promote it.

★ Determine who talks to who

Establish clear lines of communication. Decide which departments and persons within the school system need to be involved in the plan and its implementation and whether mechanisms are in place for them to communicate on an ongoing basis around critical decisions such as upgrading hardware and software.

★ Position the program

Gain the interest and support of administrators as well as special and regular education staff by presenting Kurzweil 3000 as a tool for improving access to content across grades and the curriculum, not just as an accommodation for special education students.

★ Get stakeholder buy-in

Success depends on support both at the top and the bottom. Teachers and parents need to understand how Kurzweil 3000 can help address issues of importance to them. Administrators such as the Special Education Director, department chairs, principals, and the IT staff also need to be informed and convinced that the project will benefit students in the district.

★ Establish a core group of experts

Start by training a group of technologically sophisticated teachers and support staff that can provide ongoing support for others as the implementation proceeds. Most school systems find that in addition to initial training, the majority of their teachers need regular access to staff that can troubleshoot, model use of the program with students, and offer additional training before the teachers start actively and effectively using Kurzweil 3000.

★ Choose a project leader and a project champion

Critical to the success of the project is choosing a person, or persons, to be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the project and maintaining interest and support in the wider community. The project leader regularly visits schools, maintains close contact with teachers, monitors the assessment process, and assures that the project is running smoothly. The champion, who may or may not be the project leader, keeps the various stakeholders informed and enthusiastic about the project.

★ Stock the cupboard

Providing teachers and students access to digital and scanned materials is critical to their successful use of Kurzweil 3000. The more digital and scanned texts available at the start of the project and on an ongoing basis, the more successful the project will be.

Kurzweil 3000 Implementation Tips (cont'd)

★ Start small in the classroom

Most successful projects start small and grow. Begin by selecting a small group of students to utilize the software or by selecting specific educational tasks to complete using the software. This allows staff to gain greater expertise with the software and iron out kinks during the initial implementation. Sharing your successes is also effective promotion. Word of mouth among teachers, parents and administrators is a great way to build interest and support for growing the project. Look for other ways to share your successes with all your stakeholders as well.

★ Training is NOT optional

Training is necessary for your project's success. Appropriate training should be available for all involved—including IT, teachers, parents and students. Be sure to provide numerous opportunities for training including, summer workshops, as well as early release day, late start day, after-school and weekend sessions.

★ Make training relevant

In addition to learning the mechanics of Kurzweil 3000, effective training includes assisting teachers with the planning and preparation of a lesson and providing in-class support to ensure that the lesson goes smoothly. The more teachers understand how the program can make curriculum accessible to a broad range of students, the more motivated they will be to use it in their classrooms.

★ Carrots can help

Providing incentives to teachers to attend training can be a good way to encourage initial interest in Kurzweil 3000. Incentives can include stipends, free software, CEUs/PDPs – even a laptop computer.

★ Stay connected

If you are planning to purchase five or more licenses, get the network edition of Kurzweil 3000. The network edition makes the software more accessible to a greater number of students. It also provides the greatest flexibility and ease of administration for student use, growth, and upgrading software.

★ The hardware's worth it

Getting the right equipment is important. Work closely with your local reseller or Kurzweil Educational Systems representative to make sure your hardware purchases are compatible with Kurzweil 3000. Also, while a bit more costly, high-speed scanners save time and significantly increase scanning productivity.

★ Keep track of results

Establish specific evaluation criteria—for students, teachers, school and district—to measure project success and collect the data accordingly. Review the results periodically and share student progress with all stakeholders to secure their ongoing support.

★ Think ahead

When planning your budget, think beyond your first year of implementation. For example, software will need to be upgraded. Teachers will continue to need technical support and ongoing training. New teachers will need equipment and training, and more software will be needed to support additional grades, buildings and students as the implementation grows.

★ Have patience

Change always takes time; however, with ongoing support and encouragement you will see results. Once teachers and students become active users, they will continue to find creative ways to expand the use of Kurzweil 3000.