

Product Review- CEP 882

Amy Uptigrove

The name of the program that I am evaluating is software tool called WriteOnline. This particular program has nine different key features:

- **Word processor:** This word processor look much like the Microsoft Word, but it has several unique features. It provides immediate speech feedback to students in a clear voice. You can personalize the speech feedback so that it only reads back when you push a button on the tool bar or after the punctuation at the end of every sentence. You can also highlight individual words to hear those words spoken out loud. As discussed in this week's content, the speech feedback tool can help student to find errors more accurately. Another unique feature is that when using spell-check to edit your document you can highlight the replacement word before you select it and it will be read out loud. This will also help to improve the common spell check errors that have been discussed this week.
- **Word predictor:** The word predictor allows the student to start typing and a list of prediction words will come up either on the side of the screen or next to the cursor, depending on where you want it. You can right click on the prediction word to hear it spoken out loud and left click on it to get it into the document. This tool can speed up the writing process and is especially good for students who are dyslexic, who have limited physical access to a computer, or are ESL students. You can personalize the predictor so it predicts by topic or phonetically.
- **Word Bar- Word Banks:** This feature adds a word bar with a word bank based on the topic that you are writing about. You can add your own words into the word banks based on the assignments.
- **Word bar- writing frames:** This feature provides scaffolding to guide students through an extensive writing project. You select a topic and the word bar provides words or phrases based on the topic. Some of the words proved a definition if you click on an icon next to it. There are numerous topics to choose from, and you can have more than word bar opened at one time.
- **Creating a Personalized Word bar:** You can create your own word bar easily by clicking on the tool bar. You can do it three ways: from a template, custom layout, or from a text (the easiest). To do it from a text you enter your piece of text, from a document or a website. It then creates a word bar using words from the text you entered. You can also customize it by clicking on the tab on the tool bar.
- **Work Space:** This feature allows you to create a graphic organizer. You can plan your writing before you begin; it automatically creates shapes when you type. You can then

link the objects together. You can color code it very easily to better organize work. You can listen to the words that you type by clicking on them or easily add a hyperlink if needed. You can then split the screen so you can type a document while your visual organizer is still on part of the screen, or you can turn your organizer into a word bar. This allows you to use your graphic organizer while writing your paper.

- **Accessibility:** This feature provides numerous different options for students with varying disabilities. For users that are visually impaired you can contrast colors to make it easier to discriminate between texts. For students that cannot access a keyboard there is an on screen keyboard you can pull up with a push of a button. It also hooks up easily to a single or double switch which can be used for scanning.
- **Document Analysis:** This feature is made for the teacher. It allows you to analyze a document to find areas that are need of development. It can show how long a student spent on a specific writing task. It shows if text has been pasted from outside source and how many times. It also shows what words were corrected using spell checker. This features help to create appropriate spelling interventions. You can also add comments to a student's document.

While looking for research on the effectiveness of the WriteOnline program I did find some reviews on their web-site. There were numerous reviews that wrote things like: "amazing product" and it will "knock your socks off". One thing I read repeatedly is that students can access the software from anywhere. It is not installed on a computer, it is an online program. All of the feedback I could find had very positive comments about the WriteOnline software. I could not find any negative feedback. When searching for videos on the product I could only find what I had already viewed on their website.

This is such a neat program. I was trying to decide what I thought was the most important component of the program and I cannot just pick one. I really like the accessibility for students with varying disabilities. It is compatible with switches and provides an online keyboard, these are features I can use in my current classroom. I also love how easy it is to create and color code a graphic organizer; these can be so helpful for struggling writers. From an educator standpoint I believe the document analysis feature is important. It can tell you how much time a student put in on an assignment, maybe it took too long and that could show that they may need extra support. The pricing of the product is the one area that may be tough to get paid for. It varies based on how many subscriptions and users you want. It starts at \$200.00 for a single user for a year or you can get 30 users for 3 years for \$900.00. Overall, I rate this program a 4, I could not find a feature that I did not like.