Supports for Increased Screen Time

The shift to remote work and education has led to increased usage of computers and other screens for learning and participating in college life. Many students, faculty, and staff have experienced difficulties with so much screen time, resulting in eye strain, migraines, and blurry vision. Below are just a few of the many free resources and tools that may be useful for anyone experiencing these affects. Many of these are used by students with disabilities, and can be of benefit to anyone, as they support access.

If you have a student experiencing a difficulty with accessing and participating in your course due to the impact of a disability, please refer them to the Disability Resources and Services application. The PVCC HR department supports employees with accommodation needs.

Taking breaks from the screen

- Build in break times around meetings where you can step away from the computer
  - Try the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.
- Talk with your manager about meetings--can some be done over the phone or without screens on to give your eyes a rest?
- Mindfulness/meditation opportunities give you an opportunity to rest and relax your eyes
  - Rest your eyes guided meditation
  - Relaxing your eyes after computer use guided meditation

Voice Typing

Voice typing can help reduce the amount of time you have to look at the screen while writing and can be useful if brainstorming an idea or trying to think through how to express a thought. You will still need to edit after utilizing these, but they can be a helpful starting point:

- Google Docs Voice Typing is built into Google Docs
- Dictation for Gmail Chrome Extension turns your spoken word into text in emails
- There are a variety of Google Chrome extensions, including Speech Texter
- Microsoft Word Speech Recognition
- Windows 10 Voice Recognition
- Microsoft Office Speech Recognition
- Voice Dictation on Mac

Screen Lighting

- Using software such as F.lux can reduce the blue light coming from your computer. It makes the color of your computer's display adapt to the time of day, warm at night and like sunlight during the day, easing the strain on your eyes.
- If you have Windows 10 and are interested in softening the light coming from your computer screen try the following Display Settings for the Night Light. There are also screen brightness and font size options.

We gratefully acknowledge Elsbeth Pollack, Disability Resources and Services, Paradise Valley Community College, who created this document. Used with permission.

- Here's how to change the [screen brightness on your Mac](#).
- You might consider investing in blue light glasses

Text-to-speech programs

Text-to-speech programs will read the text on a web page or document aloud. There are also screen readers which rely on a full keyboard navigation system for non-sighted users, but these are not included on this list..

- [Kurzweil](#) is a web page reader that is free for all Maricopa students (and employees) to use. You will have to set up a Username and Password at this [website](#). Make sure to register with your Maricopa email and select Paradise Valley as your main campus. Once completed, the screen will show your log-in information.
  - Make sure to save your log-in information in order to log-in. You will receive an email to your Maricopa email from Kurzweil Education Customer Service with instructions for your login information.
  - After you receive a Kurzweil username/password, you will want to [install the Chrome Read the Web](#) extension to be able to read the web just using the Kurzweil toolbar, which also works well with Canvas. Here is a [link to Read the Web](#) in the Chrome store.
- [Read Write for Microsoft](#) is another free web reader option available.

Audio and Video Notes

When you're in a meeting, at a lecture, Q&A session, or interview and you know you won't be able to type notes fast enough or need to reduce your screen time, you can use [OneNote](#) to record audio or video notes. If you take notes in OneNote during the recording, they'll be linked to the audio and video created with OneNote. This way you can [Search notes in OneNote](#) and find specific parts of the audio or video recording. Best practice is let people know that a recording will be happening.