Apple Accessibility Features for Inclusive Learning

Eagle Spark for VAST Train-the-Trainer | iPad & Mac

These built-in Apple features help support students with varying learning, physical, and sensory needs. You can find them in:

- **iPad**: Settings → Accessibility
- **iMac / MacBook:** System Settings → Accessibility

For Students with Visual Impairments

- **VoiceOver** – A screen reader that narrates everything on screen. Students can navigate using touch and gestures.
- **Speak Screen / Speak Selection** – Reads selected text or an entire page aloud to support comprehension.
- **Magnifier** – Turns the camera into a digital magnifying glass, useful for printed text or objects.
- **Zoom** – Enlarges content on the display for better visibility.
- **Display & Text Size** – Adjusts contrast, color filters, and font size for comfort.
- **Reduce Motion** – Limits animations to reduce sensory overstimulation.

For Neurodivergent Students (Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, etc.)

- **Guided Access** – Locks the device into one app to reduce distractions.
- **Focus Mode** – Filters notifications and content based on the activity (e.g., "Class Time").
- **Background Sounds** – Plays ambient noise such as ocean, rain, or white noise to promote focus.
- **Speak Screen & Typing Feedback** – Reads text aloud and provides verbal feedback during typing.
- **Color Filters** – Eases visual stress or dyslexia-related strain.
- **Shortcuts / Siri Commands** – Automates repetitive tasks and supports executive functioning.

For Students with Hearing Impairments

- **Sound Recognition** – Detects sounds like alarms or doorbells and provides on-screen alerts.
- **Mono Audio & Balance Control** – Routes sound to one ear or adjusts audio balance between ears.
- **Subtitles & Captioning** – Enables closed captions and sound descriptions in videos.
- **LED Flash Alerts** – Uses the camera flash to signal notifications visually.
- **Live Captions (macOS / iPadOS 17+)** – Provides real-time text captions for FaceTime and media.

For Students with Motor or Physical Disabilities

- **AssistiveTouch** – Adds an on-screen control panel for taps, gestures, and shortcuts.
- **Switch Control** – Allows navigation using adaptive switches or external devices.
- **Voice Control** – Lets users operate the device entirely with spoken commands.
- **Pointer Control (Mac)** – Adjusts mouse and trackpad sensitivity for easier use.
- **Customizable Keyboard Settings (Mac)** – Includes sticky keys, slow keys, and alternative input methods.

How Faculty Can Use These Tools

- Create a **"Calm iPad" profile** using Guided Access and Background Sounds for focus.
- Use **Pages + Speak Screen** for reading and writing support.
- Demonstrate **VoiceOver** to teach empathy and inclusion.
- Allow **GarageBand or Voice Memos** as an alternative for written reflections.
- Enable **Dictation** for students who struggle with typing or fine motor skills.

Explore More:

Apple's full Accessibility Resource Hub – https://www.apple.com/accessibility/