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Text to Speech Enables New Orleans Teacher to Help Students Speak English Naturally

Foreign Language Students Pronounce English Words Faster and More Naturally, Thanks to Innovative Use of TextAloud

CLEMMONS, NC – **David Kosofsky** is a longtime teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL) to foreign-born students in the Western Suburbs of New Orleans. His students are fast learners, and most quickly learn to read English with surprising ease; however even with superb reading skills, many encounter a final hurdle in the language study process -- the pronunciation itself. Even after mastering written English, speaking it clearly and understandably remains a difficult task for many of his students. To teach his kids correct English pronunciations more quickly, and at their own pace, Kosofsky found a unique software tool in *TextAloud*, the PC software from the Text to Speech leaders at **NextUp Technologies (http://www.NextUp.com)**.

TextAloud is an easy and affordable PC program that downloads and installs in minutes, and enables computer users everywhere to easily listen to their favorite reading, study material, or even language lessons as natural (and non-robotic) human-sounding speech. The program enables users to listen to text from virtually any imaginable source – from eBooks and textbooks, to e-mails, websites, magazine articles, and more – in speech files that can be listened to virtually anywhere, from the computer, CD, iPod, iPhone or other portable device.

"*TextAloud* is a great way to help my students overcome those pronunciation difficulties," comments Kosofsky. "I have them select a text they find interesting, and that they are able to read and understand. I will then have them read it over to themselves a few times until they feel they have mastered the vocabulary and grammar. Then, I have them simply listen to the text as it

is read by *TextAloud*." This approach enables Kosofsky's students to hear the proper pronunciation of words they are unsure of how to pronounce, and in a way that is easy and allows for infinite repetition.

"The best thing about using *TextAloud* and Text to Speech in this way is that students are in control," adds Kosofsky. "This way, they're able to highlight sections of the text and repeat them over and over until they have learned the proper pronunciation, and they're able to do so specifically wherever they need the most help, word for word or phrase for phrase." This kind of assistance is something that would be exceedingly difficult for a teacher to do, especially in a live, classroom situation involving multiple students. *TextAloud* means that each student is able to pick and choose the pronunciation help they need, as needed.

Kosofsky has been in the ESL field for well over a quarter of a century, with a career that has spanned everything from teaching, to training, textbook authorship, and curriculum design. In addition, he has been advising several language schools in New Orleans as well as the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. area. "The capability to render written text as English speech, and with a high degree of phonetic accuracy, is the key to using *TextAloud* as an ESL tool," he adds. "In addition, the easy switching among different voices with different accents helps students with fine-tuning their ears so they really learn and retain the nuances of the often challenging English pronunciations."

For his own leisure reading, meanwhile, Kosofsky prefers to use his eyes, at least where his native language of English is concerned. But that doesn't stop him from maximizing *TextAloud* in his personal language studies. "I have found the product enormously helpful and enjoyable when I use it for French," he adds. "French, for me, is a second language that I command with skills roughly comparable to the English skills of the students I currently work with, and using *TextAloud*, I find that in addition to increasing my listening comprehension, it really helps my pronunciation as well." Using *TextAloud* enables Kosofsky -- just like his students -- to take careful note of the correspondence between the written language and the way the sounds are produced.

TextAloud offers a number of unique features that Kosofsky recommends to others, but for him its most unique and powerful feature is the one enabling users to change the rate of speech as they listen, as needed. "I would encourage foreign language students to play with that feature in order to find a speed at which they find comprehension fairly easy," adds Kosofky, "and then to gradually increase the speed as they improve." Kosofsky also recommends that those using *TextAloud* for their language studies do so using several different voices, changing among them frequently so that the ear is attuned to a variety of voices and accents when language learning.

"*TextAloud* has ultimately made my work easier, while at the same time it has made my students' learning experiences richer and more stimulating," he adds. "As anyone who has taught for a long time can tell you, the current generation of students is totally at home with digital technology, and by integrating it into the classroom, teachers can maintain student interest and also raise the comfort level in a situation -- mastering a foreign language -- that is so often fraught with challenge and insecurity."

About *TextAloud*

Highly useful for students, scientists, writers, business people, students and people from all walks of life – *TextAloud* has been featured in *The New York Times, PC Magazine, Writer's Digest*, on CNN, and more. Hailed by critics and users alike, *TextAloud* is priced from $29.95, and is compatible with systems using Windows® 98, NT, 2000, XP and Vista. *TextAloud* also works seamlessly with iTunes, for easy synching with iPod®, iPhone™, or other iTunes-compatible portable audio players. The program is available for fast, safe and secure purchase via **http://www.NextUp.com**.

NextUp.com also offers *TextAloud* with optional premium voices from **AT&T Natural Voices™, Nuance®, Acapela®** and **Cepstral®** for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. Available languages include U.S. English, U.K. English, Indian Accent English, Scottish Accent English, Arabic, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Belgian Dutch, Faroese, Finnish, French, Canadian French, German, Icelandic, Italian,

Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Russian, Castilian (European) Spanish, Latin American Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish.

About NextUp.com

NextUp.com, a division of NextUp Technologies, LLC, provides award-winning Text to Speech software for consumers, professionals, businesses, educators, and those with visual or vocal impairment, or learning disabilities.

In addition to *TextAloud*, NextUp.com markets other innovative Windows software designed to save time and deliver vital information. NextUp *Talker* is an easy and affordable program that allows people who have lost their voices to use the latest in high-quality computer voices to communicate with others.

Evaluation copies of *TextAloud* are available upon request. For more information on NextUp.com or *TextAloud*, or for other case studies involving users ranging from writers, editors, and teachers, to actors, students, entrepreneurs, firefighters, doctors, lawyers, truck drivers, musicians, and more, please contact publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or via *Admitchell@Nextup.com*.

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