Notetaking accommodations and Technology – Beyond the Technical Tools

# Introduction

* Who is in the room?
* Purpose/Overview
  + Notetaking accommodations are among the most commonly used strategies in disability support, but it seems neglected as a topic
  + Default is to provide peer notetakers and increasingly give students technology to try without a comprehensive plan
  + This talk is intended to briefly look at the student experience, what research tells us, and suggestions to improve the management of notetaking accommodations
* Key Points/Learning Outcomes
  + Understand the underlying processes of notetaking
  + Increase awareness of best practice for providing/facilitating notetaking accommodations
  + Know how to assess notetaking services

# Common Student Concerns

* Type only (FOMO/Transcription)
* Write nothing (idealistic focus, no anchor/synthesis)
* Combo (Revisit audio/video afterward – no prioritization)
* Play with information (Rewrite/retype, reorganize)
  + Some is useful, but be aware of productive procrastination

# Research on Notetaking

* “Handwriting is better”
* It’s all about synthesis
* Notetaking is a learning process and you can’t shortcut it
* Provides an anchor

# Common Student Assumptions

* Debunk the myth of perfect notes
* Novice skills/experience (e.g., too slow, wrong info, don’t help later)
* Conflating notetaking skills and study skills

# Interactive process

* Use questions to understand the student today – most have not reflected on this so your questions may be the first real prompt to do so
* Example questions:
  + How do you take notes now? Why?
  + What works? What doesn’t?
  + How do you feel your notes compare to other students?
* Accommodations should only supplement the amount of notes necessary for access because notetaking is critical to the learning process – method influences retention

# Suggestions

* Sharing context about expectations and debunking myths empowers students to learn
* Independent notes are better than dependent notes
  + History of peer notes impacts expectations and skills today
  + Some student do require and benefit from peer notes
  + Faculty PowerPoints are not necessarily a replacement for peer notes
* Share various tools that meet their first preference for notetaking
  + handwriting vs digital
  + audio recording
  + organization features (layout, important files, color, saving)
* Coach on strategies to make the most of the options you share and how to engage after class
  + Liking a format/option doesn’t make it appropriate for every situation/content
  + Have a backup plan (e.g., pen/paper for drawing things)
* Don’t forget efficiencies (playing with information vs engaging information)
* Consider communication with student and faculty
* OWN THE PROCESS – responsible for effective accommodations
* Assess your work!

# Assessment Tips (sort of a tangent)

* Needs Assessment (what does your environment/context need)
* Quantitative – count the units
* Methods (surveys, focus groups, interviews)
* Recurring (use cyclical intervals)
* Don’t ask questions if you don’t want the answer

# Common tools

* BE SKEPTICAL
* Traditional (multicolor pens, digital recorders, organizational techniques)
* Smartpens (LiveScribe, Neo/Moleskine)
* Mobile Apps (OneNote, Notability, Evernote, others)
* Laptop Apps (OneNote, Sonocent, others)