**Notetaking as an Accommodation**

Notetaking assistance is a common accommodation used by students with a variety of disabilities such as:
- Students with visual impairments that can’t see the projection screen or boards.
- Students with hearing impairments who can’t hear or have difficulty following the oral presentation or discussion.
- Students who are unable to write due to a physical limitation (permanent or temporary).
- Students who have trouble processing both the written and auditory information in an efficient manner.

Depending on the content and format of a class a variety of different accommodations (or combination of accommodations) can be applied to assist the individual with the disability. The key point is to make sure that the student with the disability **has access to the information that they need**.

1. **Copies of PowerPoints / Overheads**
   Many instructors already post outlines or presentation slides on their course websites.
   - If these are detailed enough to summarize the lecture content (and in an accessible format), a student may not need additional note taking assistance.
   - If copies of overheads are limited or just a basic outline, the student may still need additional resources.
   - If an instructor does not want to share their presentation slides or overheads, then they should help facilitate access to the information in another manner.

2. **Copies of the instructors / presenters notes**
   - Instructors may, at their discretion, choose to share their personal lecture notes or the outline they use to lecture from as a note taking assistance tool.

3. **Copies of notes from another student / participant (volunteer notetaker)**
   - When presentation outlines are not available or much of the information discussed is written or drawn on the board, a copy of another student’s notes may be the needed accommodation.
     
     i. Sometimes the student will make arrangements with another student they know in the class to get copies of their notes.

     ii. When the student needs help identifying a notetaker, the student should talk with the instructor and then the instructor should ask the class if a student would be willing to share their notes with a student that needs assistance.
        1. Sharing copies – depending on how notes are taken by the volunteer notetaker a number of options may be available such as:
           a. E-mailing typed notes directly to the student.
           b. Making copies (at the Disability Services office or instructor’s office)
           c. Scanning handwritten notes to PDF (at an Open Access lab) and then e-mailing to student or copying to portable media (USB drive, etc.).
           d. Using carbonless copy paper (obtained from Disability Services) to make a duplicate page while taking notes during class.
2. Have a back-up plan.
   It may be helpful to identify more than one note taker to share notes to be sure
   the student gets notes in the notetaker misses a class or just be able to review
   two different sets of notes.

   iii. When the student (or instructor) has difficulty identifying a volunteer notetaker in the
        class the student should contact their Access Coordinator to discuss the situation and
        look at possible alternative options.

4. Audio Recording of the lecture / presentation

   Audio recorders are a legitimate auxiliary aid to supplement or substitute note taking for some
   students with disabilities. Individuals that record class lectures typically will go back and re-listen to
   the content to fill in any missed information in their personal written notes - or - just as a review of the
   information discussed. There are a variety of recording devices available which range in cost due to
   the memory size and other features.

   • Students that need training in using or assistance in selecting a recorder should ask to meet
     with an Adaptive Technology (AT) specialist to learn more about the options and how to use the
     recorders to enhance or supplement their notetaking.
   • Disability Services also has audio recorders that can be loaned out to students on a trial basis or
     by the semester (for students that can't obtain their own devices).
   • Instructors may request students to sign a recording agreement that outlines the expectations
     for the purpose and use of the audio recordings. It also discusses when recordings may be
     prohibited and potential alternatives. Available at http://disability.tamu.edu/forms.

5. Other available technology to assist with notetaking

   Many other products and tools are available that can be used to enhance notetaking and may be able
   to help students who need notetaking assistance.

   Some examples include, but are not limited to:
   • Use of a computer to type notes instead of writing by hand.
   • Notetaking programs with audio recording (Microsoft OneNote, Microsoft Word)
   • Smart Pens -- Special pens that when used with special notebooks, can record the lecture and
     allow the notetaker to go back to a specific place in the notes and re-listen to the audio
     content.
   • Tablet Applications
     i. iOS apps such as: OneNote, Notability, Evernote, Sound Paper, Pen Ultimate, Auditorium
        Notes
     ii. Android apps such as: Extensive Notes, Evernote, Catch Notes

Consultation & Training
Students that need advice on or want to learn more about other available technology for notetaking should
ask to meet with an Adaptive Technology (AT) specialist to learn more about the options and resources
available.

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