Accessible Learning

Kim Linek, M.S.W.
Disability Support Specialist,
Georgia Highlands College
Accessibility Defined

“...a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally integrated and equally effective manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.”

Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education
Access is Crucial to Success

• The first step towards student success is access.

• The mission of Disability Services is to facilitate physical, academic, and programmatic access for students with disabilities in higher education.
What is a disability?

• The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

• A clinical diagnosis is NOT synonymous with a disability.

• An individual must demonstrate that his/her diagnosed condition meets the definition of a disability.
Categories of disabilities

• Acquired Brain Injury
• ADHD
• Autism Spectrum Disorder
• Blind and Low Vision
• Deaf and Hard of Hearing
• Learning Disabilities
• Mobility
• Psychological
• Speech
• Systemic and Chronic Health
Barriers to access are not the same for everyone.

• One size does not fit all when it comes to accessibility.

• Access needs vary between:
  • categories of disability
  • individuals within the same category
  • course format
  • technology requirements
Accessible for who?
Example 1

• Deaf
  • Sign Language Interpreter or real time captioning
  • Videos with captions and transcripts available
  • Clear masks

• Blind
  • Course materials in a digital format with JAWS or braille
  • Course materials with navigation and alternative text descriptions
  • Videos with audio description
Accessible for who?
Example 2

• Learning Disability
  • Electronic textbooks with screen reading software
  • Access to instructor lecture notes or power points
  • Extended time on tests

• Mobility
  • Adaptive equipment – alternative types of keyboard and mouse
  • Text to speech software and private testing room
  • Elevator malfunction may require class relocation
Creating Access

• Since barriers to access are not the same for every student, solutions for access are not all the same.

• We need a variety of tools, strategies, resources and teamwork.
Partnerships for Accessibility

Disability Services works with others on accessibility:

- within Georgia Highlands College
- community agencies
- systemwide
Takeaways

• One size does not fit all when it comes to accessibility

• Teamwork is Key – across departments, schools, programs, campuses and the USG
Thank You!

For questions, please contact:
Kim Linek, klinek@highlands.edu