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Transcription Jodi Copeland-Ayles

Introduction: A video in which Jodi Copeland-Ayles of NBCC talks about her experiences in accommodating students with Dysgraphia.

How did you accommodate a student with a disability in your class?

Dysgraphia is a handwriting issue sometimes and it can affect someone's ability to write out notes, or write a paper, or put their thoughts into words, and so technology is a great thing to help somebody in the classroom. This year, I had a student that had a handwriting issue and she had a smartpen and that was really beneficial for her because a smartpen is a voice-to-text tool that she could write some notes herself on the special paper and it would also be recording when I was speaking, and so she wouldn't miss anything. It really helped her keep up with her note taking. There's all kinds of apps out there, things about how to spell words and Dragon Speak and all kinds of things that can really help someone not have to handwrite. Even for test taking, for her, I allowed her to have the paper test but she typed out her answers and they were printed off. She emailed them to me as soon as she was done and it was all good, so technology I think really can help someone overcome that issue.

How was the experience from your perspective?

It's a good experience when things go well. When you see students frustrated because they're not able to keep up, because their handwriting is keeping them back, and note taking and to see their frustration, they give up sometimes quite easily. They've struggled with this all their life, so self-esteem is affected. It's great when you can help them turn that around and see that handwriting is not that important. Once you get out of high school, most things are typed and let's work on those skills, so that's great.

What would you say to a colleague who will have a student with a disability in his or her class?

Find out about the technology. There's just so much out there and there's new things coming out every day. There's a lot of apps that an iPad could use and they can be really, really beneficial in the classroom. Students come with their laptop, that person with dysgraphia doesn't stick out in the college setting and you kind of have to think about it as everybody has a disability and it just so happens that handwriting is that person's.