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Transcription Andrew Daley, Assistive Technologist

Introduction: A video in which Andrew Daley, Assistive Technology Coordinator with UNB Fredericton Libraries, talks about assistive technologies that are available for students with disabilities.

My name is Andrew Daley, and I am an Assistive Technologist and Learning Strategist, Certified. I work here at UNB, employed through the library system. And I work in conjunction with the Student Accessibility Centre in Marshall d'Avray Hall to accommodate students with disabilities once they're identified. So my role in particular is to read medical documentation and verify that there's a need for a specific type of technology. So, I take that information and I ask them what it is that they struggle with and I compare that self-analysis with the documentation and then, based on all of that information, I recommend specific technologies, whether that's text-to-speech, or screen magnification, or other hardware devices from pencil grips to CCTV devices for the visually impaired. Once those recommendations are made, proposals are made to funding agencies and then equipment is purchased for use within the classroom and out. So some of the technology specifically would be Kurzweil, which is a commonly used piece of software used here and Kurzweil is a text-to-speech software which takes lecture notes and PowerPoint slides and PDFs and everything and converts them to audio or reads them aloud and the great thing about the software is that if you have a textbook, say, that's electronic, when they're looking at it in Kurzweil, it looks just like the textbook. They can adjust the speed up and down, and the voice tempo and so on, and really customize it to them, so it becomes a way to interact with not just the reading material in the classroom but online material for reading through Desire2Learn and other avenues such as the Reserve Desk at the Harriet Irving Library. Oftentimes there's electronic documents that are linked to our library reserves and collections as well, journal articles and so on, and all of that can be read aloud by Kurzweil.

Another really common piece of software is dictation software, which allows students to speak and it types for them. It's a fantastic piece of software in operating systems like the Mac OSX and it's built-in and it's free, and just as of recent it's available offline. Up to this point it was something only available with an Internet connection but that's not the case now. On the PC there is a narrator dictation software that's available for free but it's not so good. Dragon NaturallySpeaking is of course the preferred version, or Dragon Dictate on the PC now, and it's most commonly what students will employ in the classroom if they're not on the Mac. If they're on the Mac, they're using the dictation software that's built-in.

Another piece of software that's commonly being used is ZoomText, which is a screen magnification software for students who are visually impaired. This software enlarges the entire desktop, not just the specific parts of the desktop, the whole thing, and it allows them to mouse around different areas while the magnification is at a preset size.

I think the last piece that I'd talk about would be the Smartpen. New innovations have come as of recent with respect to the technology, the Smartpen 3, or the Livescribe 3, which will allow for a student to take notes while a student who is receiving the notes can be sitting next to them with an iPad and as

they write on their notepad it's being translated in real time to the iPad to the student next to them. So not only is the student who is receiving note taking services able to get the notes electronically, right on the fly, but can participate as the class goes on so that they can be reading along with the notes as the person next to them continues to write with the pen. They can be I think within 30 feet of one another. And as a person with a Livescribe 3, the new one, is doing that, they're actually writing, and it's capturing that and it's displaying it on the iPad in real time, so that becomes are really great piece of technology in the classroom setting. But they're rare. Classroom setting technology is not something that often gets employed because there isn't a lot of it. Most of what happens with assistive technology happens after the classroom. I guess it's where the prof can really help with respect to assistive technology is making sure their class notes are available electronically if not the day of, the day after the class has taken place, so someone with a disability who maybe has a mobility impairment, who can't get to class can read those with the assistive technology.