

Wright State University Continues Leadership in Academic and Student Services by Implementing Smartpen Technology

Wright State University is recognized as a national leader for student-centric initiatives, including focused programs for students with disabilities. Wright State's Lake Campus, located in Celina, is the focal point for educational and cultural development in West Central Ohio. As the state's fastest-growing regional campus, it is focused on advancing scholarship opportunities and promoting continuing education for its more than 1,400 students.



Accommodating All Students through Service and Technology

Lake Campus' Technology, Academic/Instructional Programs and Services (TAPS) division provides free assistance to all students including tutoring, study sessions, and individualized instruction. TAPS also provides services for students with disabilities, including note-taking and reader services, extended testing arrangements and test proctoring.

TAPS' mission is to give the Lake Campus community a competitive advantage for successful teaching and learning, future employment and lifelong achievement. A central feature of TAPS' strategy is to provide individualized technological assistance to students and faculty so they become comfortable with a number of tools that ensure successful learner-centered experiences. One such tool that is facilitating immense educational success is the Livescribe smartpen.



What Is a Smartpen?

During a lecture, the smartpen records the professor's voice and captures the student's words, scribbles, symbols and diagrams, syncing everything they write to what is said. Later, with a tap anywhere on their notes, they can play back what was said at that exact moment in time – as many times as they need to hear it.

Students can tap on their paper to easily replay the recorded audio, slow it down, speed it up and bookmark key information.

Whether the professor moves too fast or speaks too softly, students can be confident they will never miss a word.

Students can also transfer all their notes and recordings to a Mac or PC to create custom, virtual notebooks to better organize their notes.⁽¹⁾ Students can also access an interactive version of notes and audio on-the-go with their Apple® iPad®, iPhone® or iPod Touch®.⁽²⁾



Smartpen Loaner Program



Dr. John Wolfe

After learning about the smartpen, TAPS Director Dr. John Wolfe obtained a grant from the Ohio Board of Regents and The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission to purchase 200 smartpens. These initial smartpens were given to selected participants, and since then, TAPS has implemented a smartpen loaner program, allowing them to accommodate more than half of their participating students.

Dr. Wolfe identifies candidates for the smartpen accommodation during the student's initial interview, which allows him to learn more about a student's learning style and determine which TAPS services are the most appropriate.

Dr. Wolfe's goal is to place technology in the hands of students who need it the most - students with disabilities. The department recently hired a retention/technology specialist to help students using the smartpens and other TAPS resources.

Responses to the smartpen loaner program have been overwhelmingly positive. "The smartpens have provided tremendous support for our students, faculty and staff" said Bonnie Mathies, Dean of Lake Campus. "We have been hearing testimonials from each group about how much they appreciate them."

(1) Livescribe paper required. Don't record without permission.

(2) Mobile device access requires the free Pencast Player App or Flash® enabled web browser.

Smartpens Reduce Anxiety and Increase Confidence

Students who struggle to keep up in lecture feel the effects not only on their academic performance, but also on their level of confidence. Dr. Wolfe notes, “Tools like the smartpen allow these students to face their fears and to realize that their struggle had nothing to do with their intellectual ability at all, but only to do with how they learn.”

The smartpen allows students to explore which type of note-taking suits their individual learning style. Whether students take copious notes or just diagrams and scribbles, the smartpen captures the entire lecture and syncs everything that is said to what the student writes. As Dr. Wolfe explains, “it’s hard to learn when you’re anxious about the very process of learning. Students become better note-takers themselves when they become less anxious about it.”

The smartpen is a flexible accommodation tool that can reduce anxiety across a variety of student challenges and preferred learning styles. While students with attention deficit disorder (ADD) may choose to take additional notes while playing back the lecture audio, those students with limited motor skills may choose to simplify their note-taking to a single word or image to describe each part of a lecture, then later play back those sections at their convenience.

Dr. Wolfe says that whatever the learning style, the smartpen allows students to develop better note-taking skills for themselves. “[With the smartpen], many students are becoming more self-reliant, which has increased their confidence. They are now finding they can operate more effectively without relying on others to assist them.”

Rachel Niekamp: A Student Perspective

Rachel Niekamp is a graphic design major who learned about the smartpen while working at TAPS. As a note-taker for students with disabilities, she takes notes with her smartpen and shares a digital, interactive version of the lecture notes and audio, called a pencast, with fellow students. Rachel has witnessed firsthand how the smartpen has helped students with disabilities. “It is awesome to see students succeed through utilizing the smartpen.”

A student herself, Rachel says that the smartpen “opened a whole new world of learning through technology,” and has greatly influenced her college experience. The smartpen allows her to play back lessons multiple times and better prepare for giving speeches and presentations. Rachel plans to use the smartpen in meetings and conferences when she transitions to the workforce.



“The smartpen presents exciting abilities and opportunities - it has helped me to become more confident.”

- Rachel Niekamp

Smartpen Advantage over Laptops and Tablets

Compared to laptops and tablets, the smartpen holds a clear advantage in math, science, and chemistry classes, where information is often diagrammed or set in unfamiliar formulae that can be difficult to transcribe on a keyboard. Because the smartpen digitizes all types of handwritten notes, complex formulae are easily captured along with their verbal explanations. In addition, The smartpen is both lightweight and portable, serving as a discrete accommodation solution for those students who do not want to call attention to themselves. Given these advantages, Dr. Wolfe plans to automatically give students an opportunity to purchase a smartpen or borrow one through the TAPS smartpen loaner program when they sign up for mathematics and science classes.

Student Benefits

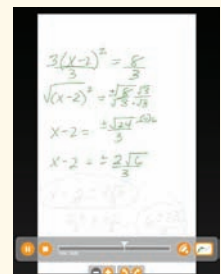
- Tool for Education and Workforce
- Facilitates Learning
- Reduces Stress and Anxiety
- Builds Confidence
- Discrete Disability Solution

Faculty Uses

“The faculty at Lake Campus take a lot of initiative to ensure that students succeed,” says Wolfe, “and many are very passionate about technology.” TAPS encourages faculty to share their lessons in the form of a pencast, an interactive, digital version of their recorded notes and audio captured with a smartpen. “Students may just need to review the material presented for an extra five minutes,” Wolfe says, and so he encourages teachers to make a pencast about the most difficult parts of class. Many faculty have noted that using the device has also been helpful for students to keep up with classes if they happen to miss a lecture.

Faculty Spotlight: Lecturer Marjorie Hess

Marjorie Hess teaches mathematics and first heard about the smartpen at a training hosted by TAPS. She uses the smartpen to record explanations of homework problems and posts these explanations on her course website as pencasts for all of her students to access. When doing their homework or preparing for tests, students find it immensely helpful to listen to Professor Hess explain a problem step-by-step as many times as needed, whenever it’s most convenient for them.



“With smartpens, they don’t have to wait until the next class to ask questions and get the help they need. It gives them another resource to be successful in class.”

- Marjorie Hess.

Smartpens Create Lasting Student Success

TAPS’ primary goal is to empower all students to succeed now and in the future, and the Livescribe smartpen is providing that empowerment to many of its students. “The likelihood of them having someone with them at all times on the job after college is pretty slim,” said Wolfe. “We want them to be as successful as possible in the real world. This might help them be more independent in the workplace.”

Take the Next Step

Purchase an Individual Smartpen (Non-Tax Exempt)

Visit the Livescribe online store: www.livescribe.com/store

Purchase Individual or Multiple Smartpens (Tax Exempt)

For bulk purchases, email our Education Sales team for further information.

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