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Edu4ALL

Disability as diversity: The inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education

Deliverable D1.3.3	Edu4ALL – The Committee of Practice Meetings on Accommodating Students with Hearing Disabilities at PTC

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WP Leader	Irbid National University
Task members	Al-Ummah University College/ Palestine. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens/Greece Irbid National University/ Jordan. Palestine Technical College-Deir Elbalah/ Palestine. Palestine Technical University -Kadoorie/ Palestine. The University of the Basque Country/Spain The University of Jordan/ Jordan. Int@E UG Germany
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Project partners

Palestine Technical University Kadoorie
Palestine
Coordinator

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Greece

The University of the Basque Country
Spain

Irbid National University
Jordan

Partners for Sustainable Development
Palestine

The University of Jordan
Jordan

Al-Ummah University College
Palestine

Palestine Technical College
Palestine

Int@E UG
Germany

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Contact

Project Coordinator	Dr. Eman Daraghmi, Associate Professor
Address	Palestine Technical University Kadoorie, Applied Computing Department, Kadoorie Circle 7, PS - 20030 Tulkarm West Bank, Palestine
Phone	+970-595765601
email	e.daraghmi@ptuk.edu.ps
Project Website	https://www.ptuk.edu.ps/projects/edu4all/

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List of Acronyms

This table shows the acronyms used in this deliverable in alphabetical order.

Acronym	Description
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
PC	Partner Countries
PTC	Palestine Technical College-Deir Elbalah

1 Executive Summary

This report summarizes the meetings of the Committee of Practice to discuss issues concerning the students with disabilities at Palestine Technical College – Deir El-Balah (PTC). The primary objective of the meetings was to identify the specific needs of the students and to develop an action plan to ensure the student's full participation and success in the academic program with focus on appropriate accommodations for students with hearing disabilities by ensuring equitable access to digital content and create a conducive learning environment for them. The committee reviewed the current situation of students with disabilities at PTC, explored the challenges they face, and evaluated available lab equipment. Based on these discussions, the committee concluded that recruiting a Sign Language Interpreter for the deaf would be the most suitable solution to enhance the students' ability to access and navigate digital content. There are six female students with hearing disabilities who were enrolled in the academic year 2022/2023 in the fashion design and clothes manufacturing two-year Diploma program at PTC.

2 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide details of the Committee of Practice meetings and achievements. The meetings aimed to discuss and identify the accommodation needs of students with hearing disabilities who wish to pursue their studies at PTC. This report covers the discussions and findings from the meeting, including the challenges faced by the students, potential solutions, and the evaluation of available lab equipment to determine the most suitable accommodation solutions.

3 Objective of the deliverable

The objective of this report is to document the findings and decisions made during the Committee of Practice meeting concerning enrolled students with disabilities who wish to pursue their studies at PTC. It aims to outline the challenges encountered by these students, assess the suitability of available lab equipment, and determine the most appropriate accommodation solutions to facilitate

a seamless learning experience. Additionally, this report will highlight the action items and next steps necessary for implementing the accommodation solutions.

4   Committee of Practice Meeting Report

The committee hold regular meetings before the start of the semester:

Date: 15-09-2022 **Time**: 10:00 AM **Location**: Small Meeting Room
Date: 1-02-2023 **Time**: 10:00 AM **Location**: Small Meeting Room
Date: 21-09-2023 **Time**: 10:00 AM **Location**: Small Meeting Room

Attendees:

- Aisha Abumiri, Chairperson
- Mansour Alayoubi, Committee Member
- Ezzaldeen Edwan, Committee Member
- Mohamed Elnaggar, Committee Member
- Badran Awad, Committee Member
- Shatha Abusalim, Committee Member

5   Agenda:

1. Introduction and welcome
2. Review of current situation of students with disabilities (SwD) at PTC
3. Identification of challenges faced by SwD
4. Discussion of potential solutions and interventions for a student with Hearing Disability who would like to join PTC
5. Review and discuss the student's accommodation needs.
6. Determine the appropriate accommodation solutions.
7. Action Plan and next steps

6   Introduction and Welcome

The Committee of Practice at PTC convened to review the current situation of students with disabilities (SwD) at PTC, identify the challenges they face, discuss potential solutions, and evaluate the additional needs for suitability. The goal is to provide a comprehensive accommodation solution tailored to the needs of hearing disability who wishes to pursue their studies at PTC.

7   Review of Current Situation of SwD at PTC

In the review of the current situation of students with disabilities (SwD) at PTC, the Committee of Practice discussed the diverse needs and challenges faced by these individuals. The committee emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment that accommodates various disabilities, such as hearing difficulties. They examined the extent to which lab equipment and teaching materials are accessible and tailored to the specific requirements of SwD. The committee's focus was on ensuring that each student's unique circumstances are considered, fostering a supportive academic environment that facilitates equal opportunities for all.

8   Identification of Challenges Faced by The Enrolled Students with Hearing Disability

In discussing the challenges faced by the enrolled students with hearing disability, the Committee of Practice highlighted several key issues. Students with hearing disabilities at higher education institutions face significant challenges, including communication barriers, limited access to information, inadequate assistive technology, and social isolation. They may also encounter academic difficulties, attitudinal biases, complex administrative procedures, and environmental obstacles such as poor acoustics and background noise. Addressing these issues requires enhanced accessibility, supportive services, awareness, and an inclusive campus culture..

9 Discussion of Potential Solutions and Interventions

To support students with hearing disabilities, the practice committee reached a conclusion that d a sign language interpreter should be recruited to provide a real-time captioning and note-taking assistance, and ensure all materials are accessible. The interpreter prepares a sign language manual for terms used in study material to assist in face-to-face communication between students. Enhancing classroom technology, offering faculty training, promoting social inclusion, and adapting assessments are crucial. Additionally, simplifying accommodation processes, raising awareness through sensitivity training, and improving classroom acoustics will foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

10 Review and Discuss the Student's Accommodation Needs

During the meeting, the Committee of Practice reviewed and discussed the accommodation needs of the students with hearing disability. The committee emphasized the importance of providing tailored solutions to meet the student's specific requirements, such as:

1. Communication Support:

  - Sign Language Interpreters: Required for all lectures, discussions, and campus events.

  - Real-Time Captioning: Needed for live classes and recorded lectures to ensure accessibility to spoken content.

  - Note-Taking Assistance: Essential to help students focus on understanding lectures without the distraction of taking notes.

2. Access to Information:

  - Captioned Audio-Visual Materials: All video and audio materials must be captioned.

  - Transcripts: Provide transcripts for all spoken content, including lectures and meetings.

3. Technological Needs:

  - Assistive Listening Devices: Provision of devices such as FM systems and hearing aids.

  - Classroom Technology Enhancements: Installation of induction loop systems and other supportive technologies.

4. Academic Support:

  - Accessible Study Materials: Ensure availability of textbooks and other resources in accessible formats.

  - Adapted Assessments: Modify assessment methods, such as providing written exams instead of oral ones.

5. Social and Environmental Support:

  - Inclusive Activities: Ensure participation in social and extracurricular activities with necessary accommodations.

  - Acoustic Improvements: Enhance classroom acoustics and minimize background noise.

  - Seating Arrangements: Optimize seating for clear sightlines for lip-reading and sign language interpretation.

6. Awareness and Training:

  - Sensitivity Training: Conduct regular training for faculty, staff, and peers to raise awareness and understanding of hearing disabilities.

Discussion

The primary goal is to create an equitable and inclusive learning environment for students with hearing disabilities. Implementing the proposed accommodations will help address communication barriers, ensure access to information, and provide the necessary technological

and academic support. Additionally, fostering social inclusion and improving environmental factors will contribute to the students' overall well-being and academic success. Regular awareness training for the campus community is essential to maintain a supportive and understanding environment..

11 Sign Language Is An Appropriate Accommodation Solution

Based on the review of the students' needs and the available resources, an appropriate accommodation solution for students with hearing disabilities at PTC, considering being a newcomer to this field, is to recruit a sign language interpreter between students and lecturer for the following reasons:

- Comprehensive Communication Support: A sign language interpreter provides real-time translation of spoken content into sign language, enabling students to fully participate in lectures, discussions, and campus events.
- Immediate Access to Information: Unlike technological solutions that may have limitations or require time for implementation, a sign language interpreter can immediately bridge the communication gap.
- Enhanced Learning Experience: Interpreters facilitate better understanding and engagement with course materials, contributing to academic success.
- Flexibility: Interpreters can adapt to various settings, including classrooms, labs, and extracurricular activities, ensuring consistent support across all areas of campus life.
- Personalized Support: Having a dedicated interpreter allows for a more tailored and responsive approach to each student's unique needs and preferences.

12 Action Plan and Next Steps:

12.1 Recruit Sign Language Interpreters

- Responsible Party: Human Resources Department.

- Timeline: Before each semester starts.

- Steps: Announce for position, interview, hire, and onboard interpreters.

12.2 Train Faculty and Staff

- Responsible Party: Professional Development Office.

- Timeline: Ongoing.

- Steps: Develop and conduct training workshops on inclusive practices.

12.3 Ensure Accessible Materials

- Responsible Party: Academic Affairs and IT Department.

- Timeline: Before the start of each semester.

- Steps: Caption and transcribe all audio-visual content.

12.4 Enhance Classroom Technology

- Responsible Party: Facilities Management and IT Department.

- Timeline: Ongoing

- Steps: Install assistive listening devices and induction loop systems.

12.5 Establish Student Support Network

- Responsible Party: Student Affairs Department.

- Timeline: Ongoing

- Steps: Create peer mentoring programs and provide counseling services.

12.6 Monitor and Evaluate Accommodations

- Responsible Party: Quality Assurance Office.

- Timeline: Ongoing, bi-annual reviews.

- Steps: Conduct surveys, collect feedback, and adjust accommodations as needed.

13 Photos

Figure 1. Students with hearing disability during a meeting with practice committee chair

Figure 2. Sign language interpreter in a traditional lecture within a follow-up visit from practice committee

Figure 3. Enrolled students in a traditional classroom

Figure 4. Committee of practice members in a training activity

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Figure 5. Committee of practice member in training activities with sign language interpreter

Figure 6. Committee of practice members within audience including SwDs in training activities

Figure 7. Committee of practice members in a meeting with SwDs

الرقم الأكاديمي	اسم الطالب	س.م.	م.فصلي	م.تراكمي	اللغة الإنجليزية 3	مقدمة في الحاسوب 3	تاريخ الأزياء 2	رسم حر ١ 2	دراسات في الفكر العربي الإسلامي 3	تكنولوجيا الخياطة 3	مبادئ تصميم الأزياء 2
2248161001		18	76.83	76.83	65	80	81	88	76	74	80
2248161002		18	89.00	89.00	68	97	85	98	95	88	96
2248161003		18	69.61	69.61	52	80	75	74	71	72	65
2248161004		18	85.00	85.00	84	81	90	89	83	84	88
2248161005		18	60.00	60.00	56	70	69	57	51	65	51
2248161006		18	96.83	96.83	98	98	99	96	99	92	96
2248161007		18	69.11	69.11	54	81	68	85	71	72	52
2248161008		18	89.83	89.83	80	95	94	94	88	90	91
2248161010		9	96.33	90.50			99	98		93	97
2248161011		18	60.06	60.06	57	81	53	62	63	54	43
2248161012		18	77.22	77.22	77	93	79	76	72	80	57
2248161013		18	60.00	60.00	60	77	45	74	39	68	55
2248161014		18	53.78	53.78	55	71	61	61	57	35	35
2248161015		18	70.11	70.11	54	81	79	86	63	74	58
2248161017		18	76.39	76.39	65	86	89	88	74	72	65
2248161018		18	72.06	72.06	57	86	72	85	66	72	70
2248161019		18	65.72	65.72	64	83	58	62	64	70	50
2248161020		18	70.50	70.50	69	80	76	61	80	62	61
2248161021		18	67.17	67.17	55	70	75	75	68	70	60
2248161022		9	91.56	76.24			94	96		88	90
2248161023		18	72.39	72.39	84	83	70	89	64	62	53
2248161024		18	78.39	78.39	80	87	85	73	80	82	54
2248161025		18	76.78	76.78	75	81	78	88	73	73	72
2248161026		18	85.00	85.00	83	97	88	80	87	83	72
2248161027		18	69.44	69.44	51	80	76	81	61	76	66

Figure 8. Academic results for entire semester courses of SwD are highlighted

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