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**DISABILITY RESOURCES IN NEW JERSEY AND DELAWARE COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES**

by
Samantha A. Mock

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Special Education Services/Instruction
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in School Psychology
At
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Thesis Chair: Dr. Terri Allen

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my parents, Stephen and Kimberly Mock, for their loving support and encouragement through this process.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Allen and Dr. Dihoff for their encouragement and guidance through this research process.

Abstract

Samantha A. Mock

DISABILITY RESOURCES IN NEW JERSEY AND DELAWARE COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES

2011/12

Terri Allen, Ph.D

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Master of Arts in School Psychology

The purpose of this study was to evaluate disability resources available in New Jersey and Delaware Colleges (n= 22) by surveying each school's Disabilities Department. The hypothesis of this study was there exists little consistency between colleges and universities in terms of accommodations provided between institutions, within the schools surveyed in New Jersey and Delaware. To come to this conclusion, a survey was mailed to New Jersey and Delaware Colleges and Universities asking what accommodations they provide from the accommodations listed on the survey. Results indicated that each school that participated in the study offered different accommodations, proving the hypothesis to be correct. This study provides an assessment for future research in the field of disability resource. The road that has led to students receiving accommodations, the process, and future research are discussed.

Table of Contents

Abstract	v
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Need for Study	1
1.2 Purpose	1
1.3 Hypothesis	2
1.4 Operational Definitions	2
1.5 Assumptions	4
1.6 Limitations	4
1.7 Summary	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	5
Chapter 3: Methodology	22
3.1 Participants	22
3.2 Materials	22
3.3 Design	23
3.4 Procedure	23
Chapter 4: Results	24

Chapter 5: Discussion	26
5.1 Limitations	27
5.2 Future Research	28
List of References	31
Appendix A Consent Form	33
Appendix B Survey	34

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1 Accommodation Percentages	25

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 1 Considerations	20

Chapter 1

Introduction

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, by law every public building needs to accommodate for the disabled. For public colleges and universities, they must have resources to accommodate anyone with a physical or mental disability. This includes everyone from a vision disability, to someone with a learning disability; they must have resources to help them succeed equally to those without a disability (U.S. Department of Justice).

Need for Study

In the years since the ADA was created, the definition of disability has branched out to include not only physical disabilities, but also psychological impairments as well. Although many colleges and universities may have a policy, there is little guidance given in terms of what types of accommodations may be provided (The Federation for Children with Special Needs, Inc). Inconsistency between institutions in terms of the type and delivery of services could impact the disabled student's ability to succeed within a higher education setting (Wilhelmus, 1996).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine via survey of colleges or universities in the states of New Jersey and Delaware, the types of accommodations provided.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is there is little consistency between colleges and universities in terms of accommodations provided between institutions, within the schools surveyed in New Jersey and Delaware. There will be variability in the services available to students with disabilities.

Operational Definitions

Types of disabilities:

Learning Disability- “Learning Disorders are diagnosed when the individual's achievement on individually administered, standardized tests in reading, mathematics, or written expression is substantially below that expected for age, schooling, and level of intelligence. Substantially below is defined as a discrepancy of more than 2 standard deviations between achievement and IQ. If a sensory deficit is present, the learning difficulties must be in excess of those usually associated with the deficit”

(DSM-IV-TR, 2000).

Mobility or Orthopedic Impairments- “Reduced function of legs and feet leads to users depending on a wheelchair or artificial aid to walking. In addition to people who are born with a disability, this group includes a large number of people whose condition is caused by age or accidents” (DSM-IV-TR, 2000).

Other Health Impairments- According to IDEA, an Other Health Impairment is defined as: “Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness,

including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that:

- (i) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or
- (ii) attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and adversely affects a child's educational performance [34 C.F.R. 300.7(c)(9)] (National Association of Special Education Teachers)".

Mental Illness or Emotional Disturbance-

Core Features (DSM-V Study Group Proposed Revised Definition)

- A. "A behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual,
- B. that is based in a decrement or problem in one or more aspects of mental functioning, including but not limited to global functioning (e.g., consciousness, orientation, intellect, or temperament) or specific functioning (e.g., attention, memory, emotion, psychomotor, perception, thought),
- C. that is not be merely an expectable response to common stressors and losses (for example, the loss of a loved one) or a culturally sanctioned response to a particular event (for example, trance states in religious rituals)
- D. that is not primarily a consequence of social deviance or conflict with society

Other Considerations

E. that has diagnostic validity on the basis of various diagnostic validators (e.g., prognostic significance, psychobiological disruption, response to treatment), and

F. that is helpful in diagnostic conceptualization, assessment, and/or treatment-related decisions.

G. No definition of ‘medical disorder’ or ‘mental (psychiatric, psychological) disorder’ perfectly specifies precise boundaries for the concepts or can provide consistent operationalization’s that cover all situations”.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the participants are knowledgeable in their field due to the fact they are advisors and/or directors of their school’s Disability Department.

Limitations

One limitation to this study was the sample size and a potential low response rate. Another limitation to the study was due the survey was mailed and not administered in person; the study relied on the fact that it is the director or administrator that is filling out the survey and not someone else.

Summary

The following Chapters will discuss the history of ADA, disability resources, and how this study was performed. It is important to understand how the Americans with Disabilities Act has come about and what it entails in order to conduct and understand this study. This study will give an idea of where we stand today in accommodating students with disabilities on the post-secondary level today and what interventions still need to be done to continue and improve this road to success.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Disabilities, and the people with them, today, have and are continuing to put up a fight for equal opportunity and rights as those without disabilities. To help protect these rights, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990 after several drafts of the Act had been brought forward a few years prior (U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission). According to Title II of the ADA “prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in state and local government services by state and local governmental entities, whether or not they receive federal funds” (Wrights Law). While the Americans with Disabilities Act has been in effect for the last 21 years, the definition and whom it protects has changed. Today legal interpretations are still at hand when inquiring specific sections of this law. One of the biggest examples of this questioning is the term “disability”. It was not until the revision of the ADA in 2007 that it became clear what the term disability meant, who classified as having a disability, and who was protected under this law. Under Section 902 of the ADA, the term disability is defined as follows: “(A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individuals; (B) a record of such an impairment; or (C) being regarded as having such an impairment”. In order to be a person covered under this law, a person must meet one of these requirements. This first part of the definition covers all persons who have an actual physical or mental impairment that can limit one or more major life activities. In order to be classified under this first part of the definition a person must establish three elements: (1) that (s)he has a physical or mental impairment (2) that

substantially limits (3) one or more major life activities. If the limitations a person has are the result of the disability then the limitations are a result of an impairment. This information can be found on The U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website <http://www.eeoc.gov>.

In the article written by Parks and Ranseen (2005), the debate between the ADA definition of “disability” and Mental Health practices involved the granting of testing accommodations for licensing exams. According to a number of testing organizations, accommodations have increased significantly since the enactment of the ADA. The primary increase of these accommodations for licensing exams has come from those with learning impairments such as a learning disorder (LD) or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD). The minority in this increase involves students with other impairments such as anxiety and mood disorders. Due to this large increase, many testing organizations are only granting accommodations if the student provides detailed paperwork demonstrating their diagnosis (Parks & Ranseen, 2005).

Mental health practitioners differ greatly on the legal definitions that are being put into place regarding the term disability. According to Parks and Ranseen (2005), perhaps the best middle ground is for mental health practitioners to become more knowledgeable on the legal definition according to ADA. Like any law that is in practice, there usually comes a history that explains the stages that led to its existence, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Ed Roberts had contracted polio at the age of 14 and needed 18 hours in an iron lung every day. In 1962 Roberts applied for admission to the University of California, Berkley and was refused. He quickly took the story to the newspapers and the University of California recanted their decision. Because the university could not house his iron lung, his counselor had arranged for Mr. Roberts to live in a wing in the university hospital. Due to Ed Roberts's courage and persistence, students with other disabilities soon followed and they formed a group known as "the Rolling Quads". The Rolling Quads soon developed into a support group for other students with disabilities (Meneghello & Russon, 2008).

While this support group was a great outreach for other students with disabilities, there remained a long road ahead in the movement for ensuring equal opportunities for the disabled. An example of this is the following narrative, a true story that took place in many universities and colleges leading up to the early 1970's. A visually impaired student was handed a sociology mid-term by his instructor. He was told to find a quiet place on campus to have the exam administered, with this in mind, he immediately thought of the library as being a quiet place for his exam to be conducted. Along with his reader, they went to the library and began administering the test. Shortly after they began, the librarian approached them and requested they leave the library because they were making too much noise and the library had a strict no talking rule. The student explained that he had nowhere to take the exam due of his disability but was still forced to leave. Finally the student took the exam in the reader's automobile. This became another issue because by the time they reached the car, it had already become dark and the reader had

to use the light on the inside of the car to conduct the examination. The issue for students of not being given definitive accommodations to conduct their studies and demonstrate their knowledge was a common occurrence for many students leading up the 1970's (Wilhelmus, 1996).

In 1973 Congress passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and it is seen today as the precursor to ADA (Meneghello & Russon, 2008). This law prohibits people who receive federal funds from discriminating based upon a disability. It was not long after this law was passed that the Carter administration attempted to make it difficult for the legality of this law to take effect. It was then that the disability community organized a sit in that took place across the country. However, it was the San Francisco office that continued this sit in for twenty-five days while other demonstrators in other offices left after only a few hours. The results of this sit in led to the HEW (today known as Health, Education and Welfare) Secretary Joseph Califano signing the regulations, and Section 504 finally became a law (Meneghello & Russon, 2008).

After the success of this sit in, the disabled community decided it was time to take their message to Washington (Meneghello & Russon, 2008). They believed they needed a law to protect their rights and prohibit discrimination from their employers and public facilities. Over the next thirteen years, the community did everything in its power to be heard, and educated millions on the importance of the need for this law to protect this minority group and their rights (Meneghello & Russon, 2008). Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. and Representative Tony Coelho presented a draft of ADA in 1988 and over

the following two years, changes were made and the draft was revised. During these arduous years there was one particular person who made the biggest impact on people with disabilities. Often thought of as the “Father of ADA”, Justin Dart Jr., who was confined to a wheelchair, traveled the country to hold public hearings and to educate people on the discrimination that was being performed to those with disabilities (Meneghello & Russon, 2008). After years of pleading, and people like Justin Dart educating people on disabilities, the year 1990 would set the tone for everyone’s hard work.

It was July 26, 1990 that George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Travis, 2011). It was a long haul to get this law into effect, and even today there is still much work that needs to be done. The stated purpose of the ADA is “to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate of the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities” and to “provide clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities” (Travis, 2011). In 1990, ADA was sometimes viewed as a “key moment in securing civil rights for people with disabilities” (Lafee, 2011). The signing of this law was the biggest accomplishment for those with disabilities, and it was due to their lobbying, educating, and fighting for their rights that painted a path for future Americans with disabilities. On July 26, 1992 the Americans with Disabilities Act went into effect (Lafee, 2011).

There have been many revisions to the ADA in the years since it was passed. The most recent changes became effective January 1, 2009 and are known as the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) (Travis, 2011). The main purpose of the revision is to “make it easier for people with disabilities to obtain protection under the law and to provide a broad scope of protective and expansive coverage to the maximum extent permitted by the act” (Travis, 2011). This means, people with disabilities should not have to jump through hoops to gain the support they need to succeed. With the term “disability” being a widely used term in the past, the passing of ADA and the revisions leading to ADAAA are to make this not only easier but clearer to understand (Travis, 2011).

Before the revisions to the ADA, there were several important court cases that lead to the revision and narrowing of the term disability. The first case, and one most commonly mentioned is Sutton v. United Air Line, Inc. (Travis, 2011). In this case, the two Sutton sisters attempted to get their piloting license but failed the eyesight requirements without corrective lenses. Without corrective lenses their eyesight was not 20/20, but because their eyesight was perfect only with corrected lenses, the court ruled they did not have a disability (Travis, 2011). The results of this case resulted in the Supreme Court deciding that one is not disabled under this law if the work itself is lightened to fix the problem. “The Court held that a person whose physical or mental impairment is corrected by medication or other measures (eyeglasses in this case) does not have an impairment that presently substantially limits a major life activity” (Baker, 2011). The Supreme Court also put restrictions on the realm of those who can be

considered for coverage under this law. After the ruling of the *Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. v. Williams*, it was decided that one may only fall under this category if the impairments in a work environment involve activities “central to daily life” (Parks & Ranseen, 2005). In this particular case Ms. Williams developed carpal tunnel syndrome during the course of her employment. The company had made several accommodations by changing Ms. Williams’s positions within the company. She was later terminated from her employment. The argument within this case became that although there was no doubt that Ms. Williams had developed carpal tunnel during her employment, she was still able to perform household duties as well as personal care duties (Travis, 2011). These cases have led to some of the revisions made to the ADA to help define who falls under protection with this act. The Courts’ focus lay within the interpretation of the definition of disability. By narrowing the term, they also pointed out that the part of the definition that includes “major life activities” should be defined as “the activities of central importance to most peoples’ daily lives” (Baker, 2011). Where do accommodations lay within the term disability when it comes to schooling or testing?

In an article by Scott Lafee (2011), he describes a girl with a disability and in the struggles she encountered. The following is a section from his article: “There was a young girl who couldn’t speak. Because nobody knew how to communicate with her, they assumed she didn’t have much to say and so her educational opportunities were limited. Finally, she was provided with adaptive technology that allowed her to communicate. Her first words: It’s about time” (55). Today roughly fourteen percent of children from Kindergarten to twelfth grade receive special education in the public school

system (Lafee, 2011). This includes students with physical disabilities as well as other psychological impairments such as learning disabilities. In an article from NASP Communique Online, from 1988 to 2000 it estimated that 6 to 8% of first year students in higher education institutions have a disability (Joyce & Rossen, 2006). According to an article written by Meneghello and Russon in 2008, approximately 54 million Americans have disabilities. This is about twenty percent of our population.

With the ADA in place and eliminating discrimination against people in education, we can now focus on the accommodations that are being placed in our school systems for those who need it. As important as the Americans with Disabilities Act is, it is equally important that we pay just as much attention to the forms of accommodations that are being held available for students to succeed. The range of accommodations can be endless and depends on the needs of the student. For younger students attending primary and secondary school, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is drawn up by a child study team to directly administer the needs of the child for success (Kids Health for Nemours). This IEP follows the student through their schooling with opportunities for the plan to change throughout the years (Kids Health for Nemours). However, what happens when the child leaves high school and attends a college or university? Students may receive accommodations through a Disability Resource Department, but what is being done to help aid our students in this transition?

Understanding learning disabilities and postsecondary education are very important for school psychologist. It is important for several reasons: first, school

psychologist provide transition planning goals in the high school evaluations, two, many colleges review the school psychologists evaluations when deciding if a student is eligible for accommodations, and finally, this makes it even more important in understanding the criteria for learning disabilities and accommodations is a little different than that of K-12 schools (Joyce & Rossen, 2006). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its revisions in 1997 and 2004 provides a mandate that school psychologists are required to provide transition planning that looks at postsecondary education goals for students with disabilities (Joyce & Rossen, 2006). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) was designed to align better with the No Child Left Behind “initiative”. This also mandated that postsecondary transition goals by age sixteen are reviewed annually. This was based upon the premise that “as the graduation rates for children with disabilities continue to climb, providing effective transition services to promote successful post-school employment or education is an important measure of accountability for children with disabilities” (Joyce & Rossen, 2006).

When a student is going through K-12, “interventions, evaluations, and accommodations are ensured by parent/teacher referrals, child study teams, and administrative procedures” (Joyce & Rossen, 2006). However, this differs for postsecondary education. Often it is the student’s responsibility to self-disclose their learning disability and to seek accommodations. It is the job of the school psychologist to educate both the student and parents what needs to be done for the student to receive accommodations. To aid in the transition to postsecondary schooling, the school

psychologist can encourage the student to attend their IEP meetings in high school. This can help the student in understanding the relationship between their own personal strength and weaknesses, and what they need in education (Joyce & Rossen, 2006).

There are also programs that have been developed to help students through the transition process. An example of these type of programs takes place at Eastern Kentucky University. According to Belluscio, Dezarn, and Sweet (2011), Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) has implanted a program to help students transition to life past high school. This program serves middle and high school students with disabilities including learning and attention disorders, Asperger's Syndrome, and mild mental conditions. The program is designed to help students develop a vision of what they want after high school, whether it be a vocational/technical school or a two or four year university. Developed in 2007, the transition team visits hundreds of students throughout the rural counties of Kentucky, 51 counties to be exact. It began with the universities Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities being awarded an Appalachian Tutoring Grant. There were three programs that were to be addressed:

- 1) Transition information for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities about opportunities in higher education, vocational school, community and technical schools, the workplace, or the military
- 2) A summer transitions program for high school students to become acclimated to a college campus as well as to discuss special transition issues
- 3) Academic coaching and individualized tutoring. (51)

A typical visit to a group of students would consist of a few things. It would begin with the students defining the term transition. Although many students know what

a transition is, having a student say it out loud and really think about the term can make a significant impact. After the students have defined the term, it would be discussed past transitions the students may have undergone, such as from elementary school to middle school, or middle school to high school. Then they would discuss where exactly a student would transition to from high school and what benefits would come from that transition (Belluscio, 2011). Also during these visits, information would be distributed to the students about local universities and their campuses. This information included what assistive technology there was for students and coaching and tutoring programs. Through the helps of EKU's program, students were also able to attend a summer program in which they were able to live in campus housing for two nights for a minimal ten dollars (Belluscio, 2011). There they could experience campus life, but through the camp they could also learn about student life, tutoring, financial aid, etc. It is through programs like these that students with disabilities are able to think past high school and ways they can be independent and succeed on their own, but with accommodations.

According to the United States Department of Labor, the timing of your disclosure of your disability depends upon when you need accommodations. They state there are five possible instances you may need to disclose your disability:

- 1) Prior to enrollment- you would disclose at this time if you needed accommodations during the application process.
- 2) At the time of enrollment- if you anticipate that you will need accommodations to complete your classes, it would be important to disclose at this point. Remember, you want to disclose your disability before you have trouble in a course due to lack of accommodations.
- 3) During your course of study- you would disclose at this point if you discover that you need accommodations while taking classes.

4) After being diagnosed- you want to disclose if you acquire a disability during your course of study and need accommodations to successfully complete the program.

5) Never- you may choose not to disclose your disability if no accommodations are needed or if you have decided to accommodate your needs personally (United States Department of Labor). Information can be found on the United States Department of Labor website <http://www.dol.gov>. Through this website, students with disabilities can find information on the steps to take after high school, what they need to disclose, when they need to disclose, and how to go about it.

According to Lehmann & Sahlen (2006), there are still several other important things to consider when deciding on accommodations in postsecondary schooling. To begin, you must clarify whether an institution needs to adhere to the rules of the federal law. If a school does not receive federal funding, they are not legally responsible to comply with the federal law. If they receive funds like Pell Grants and such, the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities are enacted (Lehmann & Sahlen, 2006). This became clear after the case of Grove City College v. Bell, Secretary of Education. As previously stated, it is the responsibility of the student after high school to do what is needed for access to accommodations in post-secondary schooling. Part of this responsibility includes making sure the student has had an assessment during the end of their high school. This can be expensive if you wait until after the student has graduated so it is best to be taken care of before graduation. The student must find out from the institution what documentation is needed to prove the disability. It is at that point that the student can apply for accommodations. If an institution receives federal funding and denies the student accommodations, the student may have grounds to “file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights” (Lehmann & Sahlen, 2006). Another consideration is the

“Context of the Student’s Request”. This request must include the student’s accommodation history. This history will help support the need for the accommodations in the postsecondary setting. The student can review what accommodations they received in high school and determine which they found helpful and which were unsuccessful or not helpful. This can be placed in the request. In the final request, the course request context is addressed (Lehmann & Sahlen, 2006). For example, if a student needs an audio computer, and a teacher believes it will alter the teaching strategies for that course, the student may not be granted the accommodation. This is an important concept to consider when applying for accommodations because if a situation such as this was to occur, that student would be left with no accommodation.

There are many forms of accommodations for students. Testing accommodations are the most common forms of accommodations. “A testing accommodation is any change in typical test procedures that allows students with disabilities to better show their knowledge” (Bolt, 2004). There are many aspects of a test that can be changed to accommodate a student with a disability. How the test is presented is one way. Second, how the student responds or answers. Third, test scheduling. And fourth, test setting (Bolt, 2004). These are just a few examples.

There are many strategies to consider for testing accommodations. First, you have to consider the specific needs of your child (Bolt, 2004). This includes giving a perspective on what supports your child needs in order to demonstrate what they know and understand. A parent can also ask the child what the child feels they need in terms of

accommodations. Second, find out if there are accommodations provided as a part of your child's classroom instruction (Bolt, 2004). Many times there are accommodations that are being provided to the child in the classroom that can also be provided during testing. Third, choose accommodations that do not "stray" away from the "standard conditions" (Bolt, 2004). The goal of accommodations is to accommodate the student so they can demonstrate what they know, but not doing so without altering the standard of the testing too much. Next, check and make sure the accommodations are working (Bolt, 2004). After a period of time with the accommodations, it is possible that the accommodation is not working and a different accommodation or approach needs to be taken. Finally, make sure that "all relevant professionals are part of the decision-making process" (Bolt, 2004).

According to Lovett (2010) in an article written in the *Communique Online*, extended test time accommodations are the most common form of accommodations. In this article Lovett describes the "double edged sword" that is extended time testing. He explains that if used correctly, extended time on testing can help a student with disabilities demonstrate their knowledge. However, extended time can also help students without disabilities as well, but this would be considered changing the standard in testing. According to Lovett, there has been past research that demonstrates the overuse of extended time for testing, and also research that demonstrates the significance it can have for students with disabilities. It is important for school psychologist and everyone involved in the decision making process for accommodations, to consider only choose

what the child needs for accommodations, without changing the dynamic of the standards (Lovett, 2010).

To better break down these considerations, the following chart was provided in Lehmann & Sahlen’s (2006) article titled “Requesting Accommodations in Higher Education”.

Table 1 Considerations

Consideration 1: Legal Responsibility of the postsecondary institution	Characteristics inherent to the postsecondary setting (e.g., whether the postsecondary institution is private or public) that clarify the institution’s legal obligation
Consideration 2: Legal responsibility of the student	Characteristics related to the student’s disability label (e.g., documentation and qualifications)
Consideration 3: Context of the postsecondary institution’s request	Institution’s compliance efforts, including written policies, history of granting accommodations, and good-faith efforts to address the specific case
Consideration 4: Context of the student’s request	Student’s record of requests for accommodations, including the degree to which the accommodations were beneficial
Consideration 5: Course Request Context	Faculty report describing whether the accommodation substantially lowers standards of learning or fundamentally alters the curriculum

A transition from high school to postsecondary school is a big change for a student with a disability. More responsibility falls on their shoulders, and while there are a few programs and websites available to help guide a student in that transition, the

accommodations they receive may be different from high school. It is important to look at what accommodations are being provided today in local colleges and universities, as well as what accommodations seem to be the most used among students with disabilities. The results in this study will help gain insight as to what is being provided for students, but what also still needs to be improved.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Participants

All colleges and universities in the states of New Jersey and Delaware were surveyed (n=65). Of the 65 surveys that were mailed, 59 were from New Jersey and 6 were from Delaware. This included both public and private schools, and four year and two year schools. The number of participants that returned the survey, showing their participation, included 19 from New Jersey and 3 from Delaware. It can be assumed the participants who answered the surveys were educated in the field of disability resources. It can also be assumed that all participants were English speaking as well as male and female since gender was irrelevant to this study. All responses to the survey were to remain anonymous since the name of the participant and the school they were associated with was not relevant. The setting of the schools ranged from 4.5 % being rural, 77.3% suburban, 13.6% urban, and 4.5% did not answer; 54.6% were a public school while 36.3% were private school. There were also two cases in which the schools were neither a four or two year private nor public school but were a Health and Science University and a Seminary. The population, in terms of the number of students who attend each school ranged. The size of the schools included 9.1% from a population of less than 1,000 students, 31.8% from 1,000-5,000, 27.3% from 5,000-10,000, 22.7% from 10,000-15,000, and only 9.1% from 15,000-20,000 students.

Materials

A survey was mailed to the colleges/universities with a self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed as well to allow the survey to be mailed back at no cost of the participant. An informed consent explained the purpose of this survey was to evaluate the most common accommodations that are being provided to students with disabilities in post-secondary settings. The first page of the survey asked what state the school was located in, the population of the college/university, the setting of the school (urban, rural, suburban), and if any, what programs were available for students with disabilities (i.e. academic coaching, faculty mentors, tutors, workshops, etc.). The second page of the survey included a spreadsheet with a list of disabilities across the top and twenty types of accommodations down the side.

Design

This study was an assessment to gain knowledge on the most common accommodations that are being used in post-secondary settings as well as to gain knowledge on the inconsistency of accommodations are and are not being provided.

Procedure

A list of colleges/universities in New Jersey and Delaware were collected along with their contact information to each school's Disability Offices. Each envelope included an informed consent, a two page survey, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. If the participants mailed the survey back completed, then the data was collected.

Chapter 4

Results

In terms of accommodations, there was not one accommodation that had 100% of the participants answer yes in terms of having that accommodation. Each accommodation had yes and no answers from the participants. The following is the percentage that answered yes for each accommodation in terms of offering that accommodation to their students: Alternative Testing Arrangements (95.5%), Note taker (81.8%), Audio Books (77.3%), Electronic Format for Assignments (50%), Flexible Attendance (54.5%), Brail (45.5%), Interpreter (77.3%), Enlarged Notes (68.2%), Use of Aids such as calculators (68.2%), Preferential Seating in Classroom (77.3%), Extended Test Time (95.5%), Priority Registration (40.9%), Frequent Breaks (68.2%), Adaptive Lab Equipment (59.1%), Large Print Handouts (72.7%), Written Directions (31.8%), Reduced Course Load (36.4%), Alternative Assignments (22.7%), and Tape Recorded Lectures (86.4%). The following charts help demonstrate the statistics.

Below is a chart representing the percentages of schools that offer the specific accommodations that were represented on the survey (see figure 1). Although several percentages of schools that offer specific accommodations were high, none of the accommodations are available at 100% of the schools that participated.

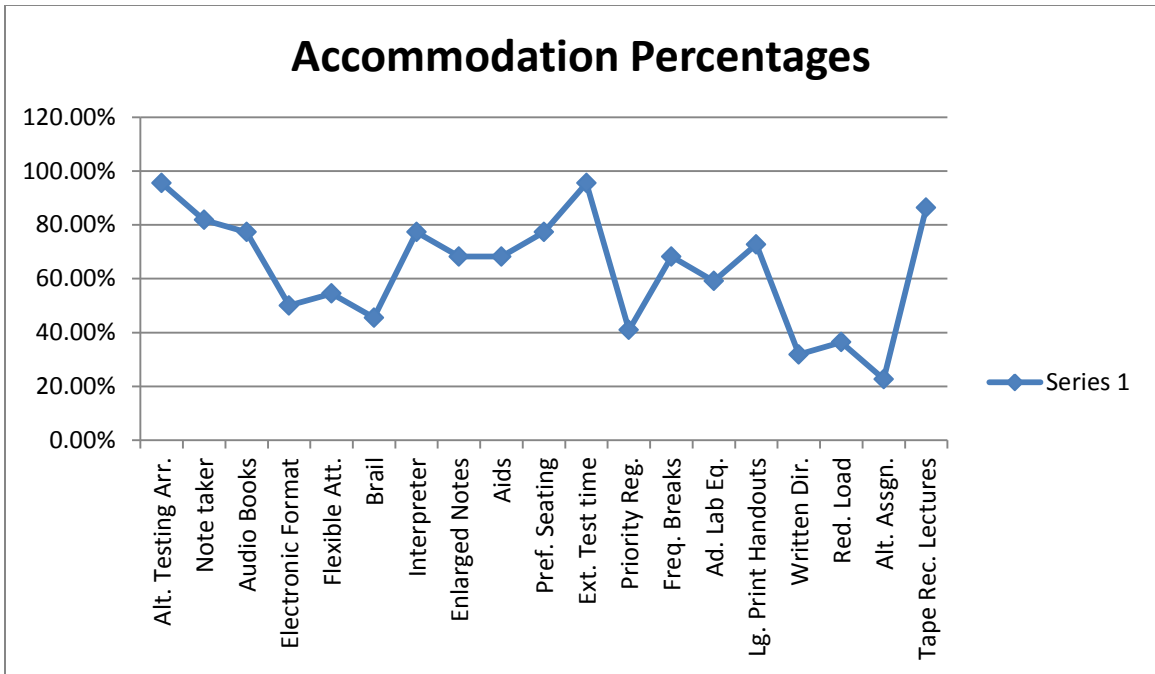


Figure 1 Accommodation Percentages

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study was developed as a needs assessment to view where we stand in terms of post-secondary education and accommodations for students with disabilities. The passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act made huge leaps and bounds for people with disabilities, but there are still inconsistencies in terms of actual practice. The hypothesis for this study was supported in that no single accommodation was endorsed by 100% of participants. However, 95.5% of the schools participants stated they offer extended test time. According to an article written by Benjamin Lovett, extended time is among the most common testing accommodations given to students with a wide range of disabilities. He argues that extended test time will increase not only students with disabilities performance, but students without disabilities as well. Does this mean that this accommodation is overused?

In an article co-authored by Dawn Flanagan (2010), the lack of standard practice suggested by this study is noteworthy given research linking academic and cognitive processes to specific evidence-based intervention. For example, research on the Cattell-Horn-Carroll (CHC) theory has led to significant improvements in measurement and interpretations of a student's cognitive strengths and weaknesses (Flanagan et. al, 2010). According to Flanagan (2010), in considering the identification of specific learning disabilities, assessment of a student's processing strengths and weaknesses may determine:

“(a) why certain methods of instruction or intervention were not effective; (b) what interventions, compensatory strategies, and accommodations might be more effective; and (c) the most promising means of delivering instruction and implementing intervention” (739).

Given that a well-researched theory can help identify cognitive strengths and weaknesses, schools may be better able to determine what specific accommodations will best suit for students. This may be a stepping stone to showing that although the ADA has helped to bring equality to people with disabilities in the workforce and education; there are still issues that need to be addressed.

Limitations

The overall demographics of the participants in this study varied, which helped the diversity of sample size who participated in the study. In other words, although this study was performed only within two states, results may be generalizable to a larger sample size. However, the study was limited by a low response rate in that only 22 schools completed the survey.

In addition, the current study may have been limited by participants interpretation of accommodations and programs. When participants were asked to check off any programs that were available to students with disabilities (i.e. academic coaching, tutors, workshops, faculty mentors, etc.), many participants checked off more than one program and even added programs that were not listed. These programs are used in addition to accommodations for students. When determining what accommodations to include on the survey, it was decided to take the most popular accommodations from each type of disability to make a combined list of twenty accommodations. These impairments

included Learning Disabilities, Mobility or Orthopedic Disabilities, Mental Illness, Hearing Impairments, Visual Impairments, Language Impairments, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Further research could include these accommodations as well as other accommodations under these disabilities.

Future Research

According to NASP Communique (2006), from 1988-2000 it was estimated that 6 to 8% of first-year students in higher education had a disability, that was twelve years ago. Today it is estimated that 63% of those entering community college and 40% entering a college or university will need remedial work. Most of these students will need continuing accommodations throughout their post-secondary education

(Joyce & Rossen, 2006). It is important to school psychologist to have information on college and university disability resources and what accommodations are being provided because often times the school psychologist provides a transition plan for students transitioning into higher education. Future research might better determine commonalities between college and universities in terms of provision of accommodations, which might enable a smoother transition from high school to college, as well as providing consistency if a student transfers from one college to another

Future research should also expand to more states, within different areas of the country. Additionally, improvements on the format of questions may yield more meaningful data. For example, a school may not have ever had a student who needs an interpreter, if they never have had that, they may answer no that they do not provide that

accommodation. A suggestion would include forming the questions in a way that the schools can be asked “if a student ever needed an interpreter, would they be able to provide it?” This would help gain informative knowledge on if the school actually provides the accommodation or not. This also is important because even if a student has a disability, they have the choice to disclose that disability to the college/university. Therefore, a college/university may actually have someone with a particular disability and in need of a particular accommodation, but if the student has not disclosed their disability, the school does not know about it.

When a student enters a college or university, it is up to the student to be responsible for going after the accommodations they need to succeed. If future research can help present knowledge and information to people with disabilities on what is available for them in post-secondary education, it can help the transition and success of students all over with disabilities.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate what are the most common accommodations that are being provided to students with disabilities. The research, entitled "Disability Resources Available in Colleges/Universities in New Jersey and Delaware," is being conducted by Samantha Mock of the School Psychology Department, Rowan University, in partial fulfillment of her M.A. degree in School Psychology. For this study you will be required to fill out a brief survey. Your participation in the study should not exceed 20 minutes. There are no physical or psychological risks involved in this study, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

The data collected in this study will be combined with data from previous studies and will be submitted for publication in a research journal. Your responses will be anonymous and all the data gathered will be kept confidential.

By taking this survey you agree that any information obtained from this study may be used in any way thought best for publication or education provided that you are in no way identified and your name is not used. Participation does not imply employment with the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal investigator, or any other project facilitator.

If you have any questions or problems concerning your participation in this study, please contact Samantha Mock at (856) 625-1631, or her faculty advisor, Dr. Roberta Dihoff, dihoff@rowan.edu.

Appendix B

Survey

For the following, please check all that apply:

State: New Jersey Delaware

Please check:

4 year Public College/University 4 year Private

College/University

2 year Public College/University 2 year Private

College/University

Setting:

Rural Suburban Urban

Population of University:

0-1,000 1,000-5,000 5,000-10,000

10,000-15,000 15,000-20,000 20,000 +

Please check off the following programs available for students with disabilities at your school.

Academic Coaching Faculty Mentors Tutors

Workshops Other

*If you checked other, please list these programs below:

For the following spreadsheet, please check under each disability which accommodations your department provides.

Thank You for your time in participating in this survey! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Samantha Mock at 856-625-1631 or emails mocks43@students.rowan.edu

	LEARNING	MOBILITY OR	HEALTH	MENTAL	HEARING	VISUAL	SPEECH	
ACCOMMODATIONS	DISABILITIES	ORTHOPEDIC	IMPAIRMENTS	ILLNESS	IMPAIRMENTS	IMPAIRMENTS	IMPAIRMENTS	ADHD
Alternative Testing Arrangements								
Notetaker								
Audio Books								
Assignments in Electronic Format								
Flexible Attendance Requirements								
Brail								
Interpreter								
Enlarged copy of notes								
Use of aids such as calculators								
Preferential Seating in Classroom								
Extended Test Time								
Priority Registration								
Frequent Breaks								
Adaptive Lab Equipment								
Large Print Handouts								
Written Directions								
Reduced Course Loads								
Alternative Assignments								
Tape Recorded Lectures								

