Perceptions of Access and Disability Services in Relation to Implementation and Usage of Assistive Technology in a Post-Secondary Institution

Sarah Ahmed, OTS, Melissa Avila, OTS, Stephanie Bruns, OTS, Anne Kaczkowski, OTS, Kaitlyn McMullen, OTS, and Ashley Surgeon, OTS
Faculty Advisor: Daniel Rortvedt, OTD, OTRL

Elmhurst College, Master of Occupational Therapy Program

Implementation of Assistive Technology

➢ Adequate training results in students who are better equipped and more willing to use their device (Larsen, Putthom, & Chalipit, 2015).
➢ ODL increase in campus-community participation, and better outcomes are improvements students make when they’re familiar with AT device use (Jacob, et al., 2017; Schreuer & Sachs, 2014; Woods-Grove, Hua, Ford, & Nall, 2017).

Individualized Accommodations

➢ Students’ accommodations need to be individually tailored. GPA and participation in student experience is improved with a uniquely tailored accommodation plan (Schreuer & Sachs, 2014).
➢ Perelmutter, Mcgregor, & Gordon (2017), found “assistive technology interventions can be helpful for adolescents and adults with learning disabilities, but interventions need to be carefully compared, and customized to the individual.”

Satisfaction

➢ Hadley (2017) found that a participant was accustomed to having a professional note-taker and much more hands-on accommodations during high school. This indicates why a student may be dissatisfied with the accommodations they are receiving in college because their high school accommodations were more involved or elaborate.
➢ Another study discovered that most students disclosed visiting student disability services only to establish their accommodations, leaving many other services unused (Abreu, Hillier, Fyre, & Goldstein, 2016). Further, these students recommended expanding the office’s location, hours, availability of the staff, and increased awareness of available services.
➢ For students to make the most out of the services provided to them, the reviewed literature emphasizes the need for faculty expertise as well as understanding students’ perspectives.

Collaboration

➢ Faculty involvement in their students’ accommodations and collaboration with disability services within schools is an essential component for the best outcomes for promoting equal opportunities within the classroom.
➢ One study found that students with learning disabilities who received accommodations for school, reported more contact with faculty outside of class time (McGregor et al., 2016).
➢ A study in Texas found that teachers reported needing more education regarding the use of assistive technology, ongoing support, and to recognize the importance of assistive technology devices. Teachers stated that they did not have the proper resources to obtain this knowledge about the technology being used (Ajwun, Kalene Meeks, Griffith-Shirley, & Okungu, 2016).
➢ These studies emphasize the need for effective collaboration to exist along with proper training across staff in order for better understanding and implementation of service delivery.

Methods

This Participatory Action Research study utilizes a convenience sampling of post-secondary students and faculty members. An anonymous online survey will be administered to students and faculty who have received (students) or implemented (faculty) educational accommodations. Data from open-ended responses will be coded and analyzed using an approach resembling content analysis described by Krippendorff (2004). Approval to complete this study has been received through the Elmhurst College Institutional Review Board (IRB), informed consent will be obtained from participants upon beginning the survey.

Conclusions

This study aims to provide better insight on the experiences of both students and faculty on their usage and guidance in accommodations provided. This includes assistive technology and aiding disability services in enhancing their delivery to achieve the most meaningful and effective student outcomes in academia.

Key References


