

Support for Access to Learning Disability Assessment and Best Practices in Online Instruction

FACCC Advocacy and Policy

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- 1) OVERVIEW
- 2) LD DEFINITION & LD SPECIALISTS
- 3) HISTORY OF LEARNING DISABILITY(LD) SERVICES
IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
- 4) ISSUES AND ACTIONS
- 5) BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION

PLEASE PUT QUESTIONS IN CHAT

LD Specialists

- Learning Disabilities Specialists
 - LD evaluations
 - Expertise in learning and information processing (text, lecture, visuo-spatial representation, memory, test-taking, problem solving)
 - Instruction and counseling on strategies for studying and learning
 - Focus on community college students
 - Certification in California through CCCCO

Learning Disabilities

- Learning Disabilities definition (5 CCR § 56036)
 - Average to above-average intellectual ability
 - Significant processing deficit
 - Aptitude-Achievement discrepancy
- Who can evaluate students for LD? How?
 - LD Specialists, Psychologists
 - Standardized tests avail only to licensed/certified professionals
(regular updates require training, consultation for implementation per
APA ethics guidelines)

HISTORY OF LD SERVICES

- 1976 Disability Support Offices established with funding
- Early 80s Department of Finance identifies inconsistency in LD definition and assessment processes across programs
- Early 1980s LD Field Advisory Group (LDFA) created for collaboration on program policy, procedure, and problem solving for consistency in state
- California Association on Education and Disability Professional Association (CAPED) established
- LDFA: Research based LD assessment model and required training established
- LDFA: Model Reviews confirmed no bias or overidentification
- LDFA oversight processes for 30,000 per year served for LD with half first assessed in college
- Access to assessment is an equity issue at all colleges

ONGOING LD ISSUES (pre-COVID)

- LDFA dissolved by CCCCO despite vigorous objection from field
- Dissolution resulted in no avenue for leadership or communication as required for ethical professional practice and testing updates
- CAPED LD CIG Chairs created a Representative Council as a temporary solution to lack of LDFA
- The CCCCO has not provided guidance or a permanent solution for colleges where students have no access to an LD Specialist
- Result will be problems for transfer or high stakes testing

ONGOING LD ISSUES (pre-COVID), cont.

- No Equity and Access for students at colleges with no LD Specialists or LD Specialists not allowed to test
 - Annually 15,000 students are newly identified with LD in our CCCs by LD Specialists
 - Cost to student is \$3-7,000 for private evaluations
 - Equity disparities often impact First Generation, BIPOC, ESL students
 - Bright, hard working students who are unable to demonstrate their learning on tests due to unidentified LD

LD COVID ISSUES

- Colleges closed with no LD testing until safe
- CCCCO offered no consistent guidance for qualifying students for temporary services when they seek LD assessment
- Colleges using inconsistent practices
- Members researched guidance of APA, AHEAD, CSU/UC
- Members working with CSU/UCs to accept accommodations for transfers until testing restarts

STATEWIDE DSPS ISSUES & YOUR COLLEGE

- CCCCO dissolved the Regional Coordinators (RC) Advisory Group without consulting the field
 - DSPS Coordinators required by Title 5
 - Like LDFA, the RCs began with DSPS to ensure timely communication, problem solving, and guidance to field on legal, Title 5, and office needs
- Pattern of elimination of DSPS communication channels
- Creates inconsistency in services between colleges and potential legal problems (e.g. CVC-Exchange)

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

1. For Equity every college needs a FT or PT LD Specialist
 - Share need with faculty, administrators and contact your legislators for legislation to require an LD Specialist at every college
 - Reach out to DSPS Office. If no LD Specialist, ask when a part-time LD Specialist will be hired as “as-needed”
 - Bring issue to agenda of Academic Senate and Equity Committee
2. Ask DSPS if LD Specialist uses CAPED Guidance for Temporary Accommodations during COVID
 - If not, request that they use the Guidance and refer DSPS to LD CIG Regional Rep for help

Best Practices for Online Instruction: Design

1. Universal Design for all students
2. Course design for participation with no modification
 - a. 12 or 14 point font minimum
 - b. Tagged pictures, videos, visuals for screen readers
 - c. Provides guidance for errors in selections
 - d. Multi-modal flexibility and options, i.e, can listen or see video
 - e. High consistent contrast: Not pretty but best

Best Practices for Online Instruction

- Build in roadmaps, checklists, redundancies with reduced complexity
 - Avoids student frustration finding info and getting lost
 - Create overviews, reviews
 - Provide checklists, to-dos
 - Hide functions that won't be used
- Consistent modular structure and organization
- Instructional options for learning, resources (i.e, Khan Academy)

Best Practices for Online Instruction: cont.

- Options for Evaluation of Learning:
 - Tests: Multiple choice, essay or short answer; research paper; presentation to class or instructor
 - Options: Student can go back to answer and proofread
 - Opportunities for test corrections and re-takes
 - Low stakes testing, e.g. multiple smaller quizzes with re-takes to build mastery and reduce anxiety and impact of one poor grade

Best Practices for Online Instruction, cont.

- Syllabus: Daily schedule with key topics for lecture, readings, test content
- ID methods of communication/private conversations and turnaround time (24 hrs), complete sentences
- Consistent office hours
- Self-deprecating humor, set students at ease
- Set students up for flexibility, things will go wrong, options for recovery

Best Practices for Online Instruction, cont.

- Slides
 - Add more explanatory detail than a term, vocabulary, concept - not all students process auditory info well
 - Post slides or notes with blanks to fill in, in advance of lecture
- Short videos (10 min or less)
- When you find students ghosting you: email, phone with warm message

Best Practices for Online Instruction: Instruction

- Orientation with Scavenger hunt prior to first class
 - Try out the hunt yourself or someone else
- Locus of Control: Motivation and Accountability
 - Create a community of learners who support each other, emphasize diverse strengths and weakness
 - Give students control over their learning by using syllabus to preview learning, communicating questions early, creating study groups, sharing of tips and resources with each other

ACTIONS

For Student Equity every college needs a FT or PT LD Specialist for testing students for LD.

- Contact your legislators, ask for legislation to require an LD Specialist at every college to ensure access to testing
- Reach out to DSPS Office. If no LD Specialist, ask when a part-time LD Specialist will be hired as “as-needed”
- Bring issue to agenda of Academic Senate and Equity Committee, Share need with faculty, administrators

Please advocate for Learning Disabilities
Assessment on behalf of our students!

Thank you!!

Your friendly Learning Disabilities Specialists...

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