



University of Oklahoma (OU) Instructors' Preparedness for Providing Accommodations to Students with Hearing Loss

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INTRODUCTION

University students with disabilities are to be provided with accommodations in the classroom according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act (1990). Unlike in high school, university students must be proactive and register with the Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) on the University of Oklahoma (OU) campus in order to receive accommodations in the classroom.

Each term, instructors receive the accommodations to be provided to students in each course. However, no other information is provided. It is not known what instructors know about best practices for providing accommodations to students with hearing loss.

PURPOSE

To survey OU instructors' knowledge of, experiences with, and attitudes toward providing accommodations to students with hearing loss. It was also of interest to see whether size of class taught or familiarity with hearing loss could predict their knowledge on this topic.

METHODS

An email requesting participation in a survey of university instructors' knowledge of, experiences with, and attitudes toward providing accommodations for students with hearing loss was sent via the Deans of OU colleges on the Norman and Oklahoma City campuses. The email contained a link to a Qualtrics survey.

Access to Survey



Figure 1 A college classroom

RESULTS

Sample

129 instructors (Male = 41; Female = 86) participated in the survey. 80% (103/129) were between the ages of 35 and 64 years and 87% (112/129) were White. Academic rank was evenly distributed among assistant, associate, and full professor levels. Instructors had a range of experience teaching with 88.3% (114/129) having over 5 years of experience. Three-quarters of instructors taught class of 50 students or fewer (76%; 98/129)

Knowledge

- Less than half (46%; 54/117) knew that the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act (1990) ensured the provision of accommodations for students with disabilities
- Almost half (46.3%; 56/119) did not know appropriate sources of information about providing accommodations for a specific student
- About 30% (36/122) did not know how to appropriately contact a student about the accommodations to be received in the classroom
- About three-quarters (76.3%; 93/122) knew the best ways to ensure audibility in the classroom for students wearing hearing aids
- More than half knew what Computer Aided Real-time Transcription (CART) was

Experiences

- More than half (55.8%; 72/129) either had or had a family or friend who had a hearing loss
- More than half (60.7%; 74/122) had 0 to 2 students with hearing losses in their classes during the past 5 years
- A variety of accommodations have been provided to students with hearing loss over the past five years in these instructors' courses

Attitudes

The majority **agreed** with the following statements:

- "It is important for instructors to ask for clarification, if needed, on how students with hearing loss wish to receive their accommodations." (95.7%; 111/116)
- "It is necessary to seek resources on campus and to inquire about how best to facilitate and provide accommodations to students with hearing loss." (65.8%; 77/117)
- "It is important to keep discussion of the provisions of accommodations for students with hearing loss confidential." (93.3%; 107/115)
- "My willingness to provide accommodations to students with hearing loss will have an impact on their performance in my class." (81.1%; 94/116)
- "I would be willing to wear a wireless microphone while teaching in my classroom for my students with hearing loss." (100%; 116/116)

The majority **disagreed** with the following statement:

- "It is a hassle to have to use a microphone for students with hearing loss in my classroom." (89.9%; 104/117)

Regression Analysis

In addition, prior experience with hearing loss and size of class did not predict what instructors knew.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that although more than half either had a hearing loss or had a family member or friend that had one, they need additional knowledge to provide accommodations appropriately to students with hearing loss. They need information on federal laws and the importance of confidentiality of and appropriate ways to communicate about students' accommodations.

Lack of knowledge is not surprising considering that slightly more than half were familiar with hearing loss and most had limited experience in providing accommodations to students with hearing impairment. Fortunately, the vast majority held positive attitudes toward providing accommodations to students with hearing loss.

CONCLUSIONS

OU should provide mandatory training for faculty about providing accommodations to students with disabilities.

REFERENCES

Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, 104 Stat. 328 (1990).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. No. 93-112, 87 Stat. 394 (Sept. 26, 1973), codified at 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.