

Interaction Between College Students with Physical Disabilities & Their Professors

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Date of Acceptance: February 4, 1987

Abstract

This study investigated the nature of appropriate and inappropriate interaction behaviors between professors and college students who have physical disabilities. Thirty-eight students with physical disabilities, 74 college and university professors who had taught disabled students, and 17 professors who had not done so rated the frequency and appropriateness of a variety of interaction behaviors by both professors and students. Professors also rated their level of comfort with disabled and with non-disabled students and indicated how interested they were in teaching students with specific disabilities in the future. Results show that a) approximately 75% of professors in Montreal colleges and universities had taught disabled students, b) professors are more comfortable with able-bodied than with disabled students, and c) that professors who had taught disabled students are more comfortable with such students and more interested in teaching them in the future. Appropriate behaviors were found to be more common than inappropriate behaviors and student initiated behaviors were seen as more desirable than professor initiated ones. Nevertheless, disabled students rated most student initiated behaviors, but not professor initiated behaviors, as less appropriate than the professors believed them to be. The implications of the findings for research and practice are discussed and concrete examples of appropriate behaviors by each group in frequently occurring interaction situations are provided.

College and university students with physical disabilities as well as educators view higher education as a means of realizing one's potential, enhancing the chances of finding work, achieving financial security, and becoming more self-supporting and capable of leading a more independent life style (McLoughlin, 1982; Penn & Dudley, 1980). Civil rights legislation has fostered laws aimed at enhancing the lives of people with disabilities. These new laws have resulted in improved educational opportunities; many discriminatory college admissions practices have been eliminated (DeJong & Lifchez, 1983; McLoughlin, 1982; OPHQ, 1984) and physical accessibility to numerous colleges and universities has been improved (Marion & Iovacchini, 1983). These changes have allowed increasing numbers of people with disabilities to attend institutions of higher education (Johnson & Rubin, 1982).

True access to higher education for those with disabilities, however, means more than mere admission to university and physical accessibility (Alexander, 1979; Fichten, in press). For example, a recent study showed that a variety of services, facilities, equipment, and resources are a necessity for many students with disabilities (Fichten, Bourdon, Creti, & Martos, 1987). Needed services include a center for students with

disabilities, a network of volunteers, assistance with transportation and financial aid, and a professional support system including counselors and academic advisors who are knowledgeable about disabilities. Facilities deemed necessary include: signage and elevator systems appropriate for students with visual impairments and wheelchair accessibility inside the institution: desks, studio, and lab equipment at a proper level to accommodate a wheelchair. A well-equipped college should also have typewriters and tape recorders available to students with disabilities as well as miscellaneous specialized equipment such as talking calculators, telephones with sound amplifiers, FM systems, and closed circuit video enlarging equipment.

Even when all of these extensive and often costly changes have been made, college students with disabilities will not succeed easily if they are taught by professors who are not prepared to teach disabled students, who share society's prejudices against those with disabilities, who are unaware of the problems faced by such students in their classes, and who feel uncomfortable with their students. People have a tendency to perceive those who have a disability negatively, focusing on their problems and limitations; constructive forces and creative solutions to problems are, unfortunately, often ignored (Wright, 1980). Problems between professors and students can arise because of professors' negative attitudes toward people with disabilities, apathy, and the fear of dealing with an unfamiliar problem. Lack of certainty on the part of both students and professors concerning what are and what are not appropriate ways to behave with each other also contribute to difficulties.

Professors about to teach a student with a disability for the first time are likely to confront a variety of emotionally laden problems. The following questions arise: "Must topics such as blindness, paralysis, or sexuality be avoided? Should any specific words be avoided? Will any changes in classroom teaching techniques be necessary? How can disabled students be tested? How will blind and wheelchair user students deal with their mobility problems? Will disabled students be able to meet term paper deadlines? How will the instructor communicate with a deaf student?" (Alexander, 1979, p.196).

Are students with physical disabilities responsible for educating their professors about these issues? Often the college experience is the first contact with a non-institutionalized environment for these individuals. If anything, they probably share society's view of the professor as someone who has all the answers.

Students also have concerns about how to relate to their professors. Should students with disabilities identify themselves to the professor before the course starts when other students do not do so? Should they ask the professor for extra office time when it is needed? How should a student remind a professor that promised adjustments have not materialized? What sorts of teaching and grading adjustments are appropriate for students with disabilities to ask the professor to make?

Effective teaching and learning cannot take place when professors do not know what to do or say to the disabled students in their classrooms and when students are similarly ignorant about the nature of appropriate behavior in the college context. Inadequate preparation of both professors and students with disabilities has been cited by many as a key problem (English, 1971; Gresham, 1982; Hirshoren & Burton, 1979; MacDougall, Munhall, & Destounis, 1981; Rauth, 1980; Reynolds, 1980). In the college context, a variety of compilations of suggestions for professors and disabled students concerning effective teaching and learning exist (e.g., Alexander, 1979; Evans, Bissonnette, Tessler, & Dorfman, undated; Kunc, 1981; Smith, 1982). While sentiments such as, "treat them like other students, within their limitations" and "behave like any other student whenever possible" are almost universally espoused, the key is knowing how to operationalize these notions. While the specific recommendations made by these authors are informed and well-meaning, many of the suggestions made are dramatically different from each other and sometimes even contradictory.

Since not knowing what to say or do increases discomfort and hampers effective teaching and learning, the objective of this study was to identify constructive, empirically based answers to questions such as those posed above. In addition, this study 1) investigates the frequency of various behaviors initiated by professors and by students with disabilities, 2) evaluates the appropriateness of numerous student and professor initiated behaviors, 3) compares the responses of students with disabilities and those of professors who had and who had not taught disabled students, and 4) explores professors' willingness to teach students with various disabilities as well as the effects of experience teaching such students.

Method

Participants

Participants were 37 college and university students with various physical disabilities, 74 college and university professors who had taught disabled students (experienced professors) and 17 who had not done so (inexperienced professors). All were participating in a larger study (Fichten, Bourdon, Creti, & Martos, 1987).

Students with disabilities were recruited through personal contacts, coordinators of services for disabled students, and associations for people with physical disabilities. The students

provided the names of professors who had taught them. These professors were contacted and asked to participate. An attempt was also made to obtain a matched group of professors who had no experience teaching disabled students. This was done by contacting, on a random basis, professors of the same sex from the same institutions and departments as the professors on the disabled students' lists. Since 62% of these "matched" professors had taught a disabled student, they were reclassified and asked to volunteer for the study. Although upsetting the systematic sampling procedure, this resulted in a larger, more diverse group of professors who had taught students with disabilities, thereby enabling more information to be gathered. Since this is a preliminary, exploratory study, the benefits of a larger sample of experienced professors appeared to warrant this decision.

Students. The average age of the 37 students who participated was 26 years (range = 19-37). They had been disabled for an average of 20 years. Twenty-four percent of the students were wheelchair users, 24% had a hearing impairment, 18% a visual impairment, 18% cerebral palsy, and 16% other physical disabilities (mainly neuromuscular). Thirty-two percent of the students attended junior/community college and 68% attended university.

Professors who had taught disabled students (experienced). Most of the 74 professors who had experience with disabled students had taught several students with disabilities; the average number of disabled students taught was three. Fifty-seven percent of professors had taught at least one visually impaired student, 32% a hearing impaired student, 30% a wheelchair user, 11% a student who had epilepsy, 12% a student with cerebral palsy, 12% with a speech impairment (some of these students may also have had cerebral palsy or a hearing impairment), and 36% taught students with other disabilities (mainly neuromuscular). Sixty-one percent of the professors taught primarily at a junior/community college and 39% at a university.

Professors who had not taught disabled students (inexperienced). Of the 17 professors who had not taught disabled students, 47% taught at a junior/community college and 53% at a university.

Procedure

All participants were mailed the same three-part questionnaire. Section 1 of the questionnaire was addressed to professors only. They were asked: "With the resources presently available in your institution, how interested would you be in teaching a student with the following: a) hearing impairment, b) visual impairment, c) cerebral palsy, d) wheelchair user, e) other mobility impairment, f) other muscular impairment." Professors responded on 10-point scales (1 = very uninterested, 10 = very interested).

In section 2, professors were asked to indicate how comfortable they were with disabled and with able-bodied students (1 = very uncomfortable, 10 = very comfortable). Students were asked to indicate how comfortable they were with their professors. Again, 10-point scales were used.

Questionnaire items for section 3 were generated from a comprehensive survey of the literature and interviews with six professors who had taught students with various physical disabilities, a college counselor who had extensive experience

with students with disabilities, three college and university coordinators of services to disabled students, and eight college and university students with different disabilities. Feedback on preliminary versions of the questionnaire was solicited both from the professors and from students with various disabilities. Since the questionnaire was intended to be a preliminary measure, psychometric evaluation was not conducted.

Section 3 listed 28 interaction situations grouped under the following headings: general issues, class activities, time issues, personal issues, third person involvement, special considerations, and grading issues. For each of the 28 situations, a variety of behaviors initiated by disabled students and by professors was listed [e.g., during the first few days of classes (i.e., before course change): a) professor asks student what help he/she will be getting from others, b) professor asks student about resources available for disabled students (e.g., equipment, centers, experts), c) student informs professor of the possible adjustments the professor could make in order to make the course more manageable for him/her (e.g., with regard to equipment, teaching style, course content), d) student asks professor whether he/she thinks that the course is appropriate for him/her.]. This part of the questionnaire included 196 behaviors, 74 initiated by disabled students and 122 by professors. All participants rated how frequently they believed each behavior occurred and how appropriate it was on 10-point scales.

Results

Professors

Two groups of professors completed questionnaires: experienced professors (those who had taught disabled students) and inexperienced professors (those with no such experience). It should be noted that the number of inexperienced professors was low and that significant differences existed in the ages of experienced ($M = 43.56$) and inexperienced ($M = 38.19$) professors, $t(89) = 2.71$, $p < .01$.

Interest in Teaching Students with Disabilities

Experienced and inexperienced professors agreed on the types of disabled students they would be willing to teach. The order from most to least preferred was: wheelchair users, students with mobility impairments, muscular impairments, visual impairments, cerebral palsy, and hearing impairments.

To evaluate the effect of experience, the interest scores of experienced and inexperienced professors were compared, as were the interest scores of those professors who had taught students with the disability in question and those who had taught students with other disabilities. Although the differences were not statistically significant on anything but hearing impairment, $t(68) = 3.53$, $p < .001$, the means, presented in Table 1 show that in all cases a) experienced professors were more willing to teach disabled students than were inexperienced professors, and b) that professors who had already taught students with a particular disability were consistently more willing to teach such students in the future than were professors who had not taught students with the disability in question.

Comfort During Interaction

While experienced ($M = 9.18$) and inexperienced ($M = 9.13$) professors did not differ in how comfortable they felt with able-bodied students, inexperienced professors were significantly less comfortable with disabled students ($M = 6.67$) than were experienced ($M = 8.08$) professors, $t(91) = 2.73$, $p < .01$. In addition, inexperienced professors were less comfortable with disabled than with able-bodied students, $t(15) = 3.67$, $p < .01$; this was not so for experienced professors.

The comfort scores of professors and students were compared to determine whether disabled students felt more comfortable with their professors than the professors felt with the students. Results show no significant differences between the students' ($M = 7.46$) and either the experienced ($M = 8.08$) or the inexperienced ($M = 6.67$) professors' scores.

Frequency and Appropriateness of Behaviors

Initial comparisons on the frequency and appropriateness scores of experienced and inexperienced professors yielded few significant differences. Therefore, given the small sample size and possible non-representativeness of this group, data from inexperienced professors were not included in further analyses.

To evaluate the appropriateness of frequently occurring behaviors, mean frequency and appropriateness scores were related. Results indicate that frequent behaviors were generally considered to be appropriate [Pearson r for student initiated behaviors rated by professors = .52 ($df = 72$); for professor initiated behaviors rated by students $r(121) = .87$].

The degree of agreement between students and professors about what are and what are not appropriate behaviors was determined by correlating students' and professors' mean appropriateness ratings. Results show that there was good agreement between these two groups [student initiated behaviors, $r(73) = .85$; professor initiated, $r(121) = .90$]. A manual (Fichten, Bourdon, Creti, Amsel, & Martos, 1986) provides frequency and appropriateness scores for each of the 196 behaviors. A synopsis of appropriate behaviors is provided in the Appendix; this reflects both students' and professors' views.

Initiation of Behaviors

To determine whether students or professors initiated more behaviors, a composite frequency score was calculated for the 31 behaviors for which there existed nearly exact parallels for students and professors. As Table 2 shows, students indicated that students initiated more behaviors than professors believed they did, $t(109) = 2.08$, $p < .05$. The comparison on professor initiated behaviors was not significant. In addition, students believed that students initiate more behaviors than do professors $t(35) = 5.12$, $p < .001$, while professors believed the opposite $t(72) = 4.85$, $p < .001$.

A similar pattern of differences was found upon examination of the composite appropriateness scores. Means in Table 2 show that student initiated behaviors tended to be seen as more appropriate by professors than by students $t(109) = 1.72$, $p < .10$, and that both professors, $t(72) = 5.20$, $p < .001$, and students, $t(35) = 2.71$, $p < .05$, believed that student initiated

Table 1
Professors' Interest in Teaching Students with Specific Disabilities

Disability	"Inexperienced"		"Experienced" Professors	
	All Professors Who Did Not Teach Disabled Students	All Professors Who Taught Students With Disabilities	Professors Who Taught Students With the Disability In Question	Professors Who Taught Students With Other Disabilities
Wheelchair User	7.00	7.37	7.59	7.27
Mobility Impairment	6.93	7.25	7.25	--
Muscular Impairment	6.83	6.93	6.93	--
Visual Impairment	5.67	6.01	6.48	5.60
Cerebral Palsy	5.40	5.44	5.89	5.40
Hearing Impairment	5.00	5.37	6.83	4.66

Note. 1 = very uninterested, 10 = very interested.

behaviors are more appropriate than professor initiated behaviors.

Specific Behaviors

Specific behaviors on which the mean frequency and appropriateness ratings differed significantly between student and professor respondents were also examined. Because of the large number of comparisons, only those results which differed at the .01 level of significance were considered.

Differences in frequency reported by students and professors were found only on eight of the 74 student initiated behaviors and on four of the 122 professor initiated behaviors. Students' ratings were higher in all cases, suggesting that differences were due to response set.

With regard to differences in the appropriateness of behaviors as perceived by students and professors, 18 student initiated behaviors and 34 professor initiated behaviors were found to differ significantly. Professors' ratings were consistently higher than students' ratings, but only for "appropriate" behaviors (i.e., behaviors where both groups' ratings were > 5 on the 10-point scales used for both student and professor initiated behaviors). For inappropriate behaviors, students' ratings were higher; this was true for both student and professor initiated behaviors. There were only two exceptions to this: students believed that it was more appropriate to use words related to the student's disability (M=8.06) than did professors (M=7.85), t(107)=7.80, p<.001, and less appropriate for professors to avoid using such words, (M=2.57) than professors believed (M=2.68), t(107)=9.44, p<.001. Since the pattern of the results on appropriateness, again, suggests that differences between the two groups are due to response set, these two exceptions are likely to be particularly important.

Discussion

It should be noted that this study has a number of limitations which could affect the generalizability of the results. Because the study was a preliminary, exploratory investigation, the number of variables examined was large. While

reasonable safeguards were employed, such as setting the alpha level to .01, the possibility exists that some of the results are due to chance factors. The second concern involves the sample. The group of professors who had not taught disabled students was small. Furthermore, while relatively large numbers of disabled students and professors who had experience in teaching students with disabilities participated in the investigation, the samples were by no means random and thus may not be representative of all professors or students with disabilities.

Table 2
Mean Frequency & Appropriateness of Student and Professor Initiated Behaviors

Behaviors	Rated By:	
	Students With Disabilities	Professors Who Had Taught Disabled Students
Frequency of Behaviors:		
Student Initiated	4.13	3.46
Professor Initiated	3.58	4.00
Appropriateness of Behaviors:		
Student Initiated	6.10	6.75
Professor Initiated	5.74	6.17

Note. The higher the value, the more frequent or appropriate. Maximum score = 10.

Comfort and Interest in Teaching Students with Disabilities

The results indicate that professors who had not taught students with disabilities are less comfortable with disabled students than are their experienced colleagues. Inexperienced professors are also less comfortable with disabled than with able-bodied students. These findings are consistent with the

results of a number of studies which show that prolonged contact with people who have a disability results in less anxiety and greater ease (e.g., Anthony, 1969; Rowlett, 1982; Rusalem, 1967).

The beneficial effect of contact with students who have disabilities is also suggested by the results on professors' interest in teaching students with disabilities in the future; these indicated consistent, although non-significant, differences in favor of the experienced professors. This was particularly evident in the case of hearing impaired students, a group considered by most educators both in this study as well as others (e.g., Murphy, Dickstein, & Dripps, 1960; Newman, 1976; Rickard, Triandis, & Patterson, 1963) to be particularly difficult to teach. It should be noted that in this regard teachers' evaluations generally differ from those of the population at large, who generally evaluate people with a hearing impairment, a non-visible disability, quite favorably (e.g., Semmel & Dickson, 1966; Siller & Chipman, 1967). For example, while both groups of professors were most willing to teach wheelchair users and students with muscular or mobility impairments and least willing to teach hearing impaired students, professors who had taught hearing impaired students were quite interested in teaching other such students in the future. As suggested by Alexander (1979), the experience of teaching students with disabilities appears to promote willingness to interact with and to teach other such students.

Frequency and Appropriateness of Behaviors

Students indicated that students initiate contact more frequently than do professors; professors also tended to see themselves as being the more frequent initiators of behavior. Such findings are hardly surprising given the different types of information available to people concerning their own and others' behaviors (Jones & Nisbett, 1972).

It was encouraging to find that, generally, appropriate behaviors by both professors and students were more common than inappropriate behaviors and that professors and students agreed on the nature of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors by both groups. Both professors and students indicated that student initiated behaviors were more desirable than professor initiated ones (e.g., the student should approach the professor to tell him or her about needed course adjustments rather than the professor approaching the student). Given these results, it was rather surprising to find that while professors and students agreed on what are and what are not appropriate behaviors by each group, the disabled students rated most student initiated behaviors, but not professor initiated ones, as less appropriate than the professors believed them to be. It appears as though the students are in a bind; on the one hand, they feel they should initiate most of the contact, on the other, they underestimate the appropriateness of the behavioral options available to them.

The results on students' ratings of the appropriateness of student initiated behavior are similar to findings on disabled and able-bodied students' ratings concerning interpersonal behavior with peers (Fichten & Bourdon, 1986), where both able-bodied and disabled students evaluated the behaviors of others like themselves more negatively than did those to whom the behaviors were directed. In the present investigation the students responded in a similar way.

Professors, however, did not follow this pattern, suggesting that the role and normative behaviors of "the professor" are more clearly defined than those of "the disabled student." Professors, while they may feel uncomfortable with students who have a disability, have an extensive storehouse of experience relating to students in general. This can make them feel more confident about the appropriateness of behaviors they initiate. After all, a student with a disability is, in the final analysis, just another student. Students with disabilities, lacking extensive experience and appropriate role models, may underestimate the appropriateness of student initiated behaviors which involve the impairment. Since having an impairment is not positively valued, students with a disability often do not wish to be singled out as different, a "handicapped student" (Newman, 1976). This can make students with disabilities view behaviors which involve the impairment as less desirable than others believe these to be.

Appropriate Student Initiated Behaviors

What, then, are appropriate behaviors for students with disabilities? The results indicate that students should take the initiative to establish contact and dialogue with their professors. Students should ask for a course outline before the term begins. During the first few days of classes, students should approach their professors either to tell them that no special considerations are needed or to discuss and suggest adjustments that the professor may make in lectures, assignments, or evaluation. Whether to invite a third person, such as a counselor or the coordinator of services to disabled students, to such meetings is optional. It is also desirable for students to let the professor know early in the term that it is acceptable to use terms related to their disability.

During the term, the student should request needed help and office time from the professor. Regular appointments may be made. If the professor has not made the adjustments agreed upon, he/she should periodically be reminded of this. While it is appropriate to discuss academic concerns with the professor, non-course related issues such as transportation, elevator keys, and social life are more suitable for discussion with other members of the college. Should help be needed from classmates, it is most appropriate for the student to make the arrangements.

It is appropriate to request permission to audiotape lectures or to bring equipment or an interpreter to class. Such requests should be favorably received by professors. Audiotaping of texts and assigned course materials, although not of exams, by visually impaired students should be arranged by the student. Frequent lateness is not appropriate unless it is absolutely unavoidable. In this case, the reasons for lateness should be discussed with the professor.

If the student cannot meet the course requirements because of the disability, it is appropriate to request alternate assignments or evaluation. If the requirements can be met, although with difficulty, it is generally not considered appropriate for the student to request special consideration. In this case, the student with a disability should be treated like any other student.

Appropriate Professor Initiated Behaviors

If the student has not taken the initiative to make contact,

it is appropriate for the professor to do so. If course or grading adjustments are agreed upon, these should, of course, be kept. Professors should be tolerant of students' reminders, for example, to face the class when talking, or to talk while writing on the blackboard or overhead. Permission should be granted whenever possible for audiotaping requests. In matters of class activities, assignments, and evaluation, professors should generally behave in accordance with their usual procedures. If this appears to be unreasonable, the professor should talk to the student. The professor may also take the time to reassure the student that he/she is available in case of questions or difficulties.

If the student cannot meet the course requirements because of the disability, the professor may make alternate grading arrangements or take motivation and effort into consideration before assigning a final grade. On the other hand, neither students nor professors believe that it is inappropriate to fail the student.

Conclusions

While the recommendations mentioned above appear to be "common sense," many students and professors, when actually in the situation, are not sure what to do. Professors, especially those who have no experience teaching students with disabilities, often are not comfortable with their disabled students. Similarly, students have few guidelines concerning what is and what is not appropriate to discuss with the professor. The best means of resolving interaction difficulties is to initiate and sustain dialogue between student and professor. While professors are the experts in their fields, the students are more knowledgeable about the way in which the disability affects their academic life. Discussion of possible solutions is clearly called for to optimize the teaching/learning process and to make both students and professors more comfortable. During such discussions it should be remembered that members of the "other" group are generally not highly sensitive and that acknowledging uncertainty about appropriate behavior is not pejorative for either students or professors.

Although the results of the present study provide a better understanding of how to operationalize notions such as "treat disabled students like other students, within their limitations" and "behave like any other student whenever possible," a number of important questions remain. These include: How do appropriate and inappropriate professor-disabled student interactions differ, if at all, from appropriate and inappropriate professor-able-bodied student interactions? Do people know what is the best thing to do in specific situations? If so, do they actually do the "best thing" or do they do something else? If the latter, what are the cognitive and affective reasons for doing so? Research designed to provide answers to these questions is urgently needed.

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This research was funded by a grant from Fonds F.C.A.R. pour l'aide et le soutien a la recherche. Reprints are available from Catherine Fichten, Dept. of Psychology, Dawson College, 350 Selby St., Montreal, Quebec H3Z 1W7.

Appendix

Synopsis of Appropriate Behaviors

BEFORE CLASSES START

It is appropriate for a student to approach the professor to ask for a course outline and requirements. It is also acceptable for the student to initiate no contact with the professor before the first class.

DURING THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF CLASSES

If it is relevant, the student should approach the professor to discuss course concerns related to the disability, adjustments which the professor could make to facilitate learning, and medical and safety problems that may occur in class. The student may also wish to inform the professor about help which he/she will be receiving from others (e.g., volunteers, note takers). It is also appropriate for the student to ask the professor about resources available to students with a disability. Students feel that it is only marginally appropriate to discuss one's disability in a conference or discussion group and neither professors nor students feel that the whole class should be informed. It is also appropriate for the professor to approach the student concerning the issues noted above or to merely announce that if anyone needs special arrangements or consideration to see the professor. Warnings about the course being too difficult for a disabled student are not considered to be appropriate by either students or professors. Students believe that explanations by the professor concerning why the course is not suitable for the student are only marginally appropriate.

DURING THE TERM

If a student needs help from the professor, it is appropriate to ask for this. Should course adjustments which the professor promised to make not be carried out, it is acceptable for the student to keep on reminding the professor. Neither students nor professors believe that students should stop requesting needed adjustments or drop the course because necessary adjustment have not been made. On the other hand, students should use needed equipment in class. It is appropriate for the professor to occasionally check with the student concerning how he/she finds the course and to remind the student of adjustments that the student is supposed to make. Of course, it is not appropriate for the professor to ignore promised adjustments. Implementation of course adjustments which pose a hardship for other students (e.g., leaving lights on during slide show so that a hearing impaired student may lip-read) is not considered appropriate.

CLASS ACTIVITIES

If the professor notices that the student is frequently absent, it is appropriate for him/her to approach the student concerning the absences; however, it is also acceptable to say nothing to the student about this. Should the professor notice that the student is not participating in class activities it is optional for him/her to speak to student about this. Although following one's usual procedure is the most appropriate course to take, it is also appropriate to restructure the class to facilitate participation by the student (e.g., small groups, working in pairs). Speaking to other class members concerning this issue is not appropriate. Should the student need help from classmates (e.g., note taking, reading), it is most appropriate for the student to make such arrangements or to ask the whole class for volunteers. Attempts by the professor to solicit volunteers is only marginally appropriate.

IN CLASS

It is appropriate for the students to seek out as much class and office time as do able-bodied students. When clarifications are needed, students should ask for these. It is appropriate for the professor to encourage the student to ask for needed clarifications and, perhaps, to devote somewhat more class and/or office time to a disabled than to an able-bodied student. If additional help is needed, it is appropriate for the professor to tell the student to see him/her after class for further explanations; a regular weekly appointment time may also be scheduled.

STUDENT-PROFESSOR INTERACTION

It is appropriate for a student to try to make the professor more comfortable by telling him/her that words such as see, hear and walk are acceptable; it is also appropriate for the professor to ask the student how he/she would respond to the student's disability. Students should not discuss concerns about social life, transportation issues, elevator keys and the like with the professor; such issues are best dealt with by other college personnel. Should the professor notice that the student has problems with inappropriate social behavior (e.g., continually interrupting others) he/she should tell the student directly and not count on someone else to do so. Should the professor notice that a volunteer helper is doing a poor job or that he/she is doing too much for the student, the most appropriate strategy is for the professor to speak to the student and the volunteer together.

CONSULTING A THIRD PERSON

Course adjustments could be appropriately discussed by either involving or not involving a third person such as a counselor or coordinator of services to students with a disability. It is also appropriate for the professor to consult a third person for his/her own information. A professor may ask the student about resource persons or centers that he/she can consult. However, it is not appropriate for a student to ask a third persons to talk to the professor on his/her behalf or, at least according to the students, for a professor to consult a third person concerning a student's failing grades (professors believe that this is appropriate).

USE OF TERMS RELATED TO A DISABILITY

It is appropriate for both professors and students to use terms such as see, hear, and walk and to discuss concepts related to disabilities which are part of the course material. It is inappropriate for both groups to avoid using such words or concepts.

IF A STUDENT HAS DIFFICULTY TAKING NOTES

It is appropriate for a student to request permission to audiotape lectures and for the professor to agree to this. The same is true for volunteer note-takers. Asking for the professor's notes is not considered appropriate by professors.

STUDENTS WITH A HEARING OR SPEECH IMPAIRMENT

If a student with a hearing impairment does not understand other students' comments in class, it is appropriate for him/her to ask the professor to repeat the other students' comments. The same is true when a professor, who understands a speech impaired student's comments, repeats these to the rest of the class who may not have understood. If a student doesn't understand the professor, it is appropriate for him/her to request that the professor modify his/her lecture style (e.g., speak louder, more clearly and slowly, face the class, use the blackboard or overhead projector, give handouts) and to ask the professor to paraphrase key lecture points. If needed, it is appropriate for the student to request permission to bring an interpreter to class and for the professor to grant such a request. If the student has a speech impairment and the professor "calls on" students to speak or read in class, it is most appropriate for the professor to check privately with the student whether he/she feels comfortable speaking in class. Should the professor not understand the student's speech, it is not appropriate for him/her to pretend to understand. Instead, according to the students it is appropriate for him/her to ask the student to repeat what he/she has said, to ask the student to summarize, paraphrase or write his/her comments.

STUDENTS WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

If a student needs to have texts or other non-exam materials audiotaped it is most appropriate for the student rather than the professors to arrange to have this done. It is also appropriate for students to request that the professor read everything he/she writes on the board or overhead.

STUDENTS WITH A MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT

While it is not appropriate for a student to be frequently late for class, it is acceptable for a professor who does not normally admit late students to admit a mobility impaired student who occasionally arrives late.

GRADING

When course requirements are difficult but **not** impossible for the student, the most appropriate behavior for a student is to request no special consideration. A request for reduction in work load or an exemption from certain requirements is not considered appropriate, nor are routine requests for extensions on assignments (a notable exception is the case of a visually impaired student who needs to obtain audiotaped references which take considerable time to arrive). Nevertheless, should the student request an extension, it is appropriate for the professor to grant this, especially if he/she also grants extensions to able-bodied students. If the student is experiencing difficulty, it is appropriate for the professor to recommend that the student go to a tutorial service or a learning center for extra help and/or to suggest extra readings to make up for what a student may have missed in class. If the student is doing poorly in the course, it is not appropriate for the professor to tell him/her that everything is OK and to just keep trying.

Should the student obtain a failing grade in the course where the course requirements were **impossible** for him/her to meet because of the disability it is appropriate for the student to request, and for the professor to grant, a make-up exam or additional assignments. While it is also appropriate for a professor to take into account the student's motivation and effort before finalizing the student's grade, it is also acceptable for him/her to assign a failing grade to the student. A request for a pass by the student is considered inappropriate as is the mere assignment of a passing grade to such a student by the professor.

If the student's final grade is a failure when the course requirements were not impossible for him/her to meet, the most appropriate course of action for the professor is to assign a failing grade. Make-up exams, extra assignments, taking motivation and effort into consideration in such a case is not considered appropriate by either professors or students.

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