

Bridging the Gap: Contextualizing Accommodations from K12 to the Higher Ed Perspective

Eileen B. White, M.S.

Purdue University Senior Access Consultant

We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects...

Access and Inclusion

and

Civility and Respect

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.

Outline

- Welcome and Survey
- Managing Expectations from Stakeholders
- Defining Terms
- Identifying Barriers
- Connecting Requests and Conditions Responsibly
- Reasonable or Restrictive Accommodations
- Seeking More Information
- Conclusion

Objectives

Identify barriers that are institutionally created versus personal/internal barriers

- Interpret IEP information and 504 Information to identify when an accommodation was for access or success



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#)

Defining Terms

- **Least Restrictive:** An Accommodation that promotes the highest level of independence while mitigating the barrier.
- **Most Restrictive:** An accommodation that requires additional coordination or support and limits student independence.
- **Conditions:** A Diagnosis from a qualified provider.
- **Disability:** An impairment of the mind/body that substantially limits one or more major life activity.
- **Barrier:** Any element that limits a student's full participation in a given setting.

Welcome to College!

• Family Expectations

- Parents have had the final say
- Students may not have a full understanding of their condition or accommodations
- K12 uses a Success Model and the school has a duty to identify and support struggling students.

• University Expectations

- Students are adults and legally in charge of seeking supports
- Student monitors their own progress
- Student utilizes all available resources and asks questions
- Accommodations are for equal access, not student success.

The Disconnect

K12 is a Success Model

- IDEA mandates schools to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education.
- Schools have a duty to identify students with disabilities and provide FAPE
- The Multidisciplinary Team looks at every aspect of the student's history to identify or rule out causes of the student's struggles.
- Every effort is made to keep students in their Least Restrictive Environment



Higher Education is an Access Model

- The university follows the ADA and 504, not IDEA.
- College is a choice, it is not compulsory.
- There is no duty to identify and intervene for struggling students.
- Students are not removed from their Least Restrictive Environment—there are no other options.
- Students initiate requests for accommodations, parent choice is not considered



FAPE under IDEA

- 2-Door Basic Sedan versus a Bugatti
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act guarantees a Free and Appropriate Public Education.
 - FAPE does not mean that we throw in every available feature of an Individualized Education Plan.
- Accommodations vs. Modifications
 - Accommodations: Supports the student learning on grade level content
 - Modifications: Alters the expectations of the student's curriculum

Identifying Barriers – K12

- Academic
 - Demonstrating Academic progress via scores/testing
 - Instructional Methods (Multi-modal/built-in breaks/1:1)
 - Standard Deviations + State Definitions for eligibility
- Physical
 - Emergency protocols/health service plans/etc
 - Architecture/lighting/sounds
- Behavioral
 - Removal from classroom time
 - Impact on peer education

Identifying Barriers Responsibly

- Internal vs. External Barriers
- How does the condition interact with the institution's requirements?
 - What symptoms and impacts prevent the student from engaging in the course expectations?
 - How often are those impacts happening, and how long do their flares last?
 - What does the syllabus policy already account for with regard to health and student athletes who may be absent more than is typically allowed?
- What resources are available to the student within the university that may address their concerns?

Check-In

- Share with the people around you 1-2 of the hardest accommodations to implement that *parents* discuss
 - What makes this accommodation hard?
 - How do you explain it to them?
 - What does the student say?

Connecting Requests to Barriers Responsibly

What supports does the student need to participate at the same level as their peers?

Is this a skills deficit (they don't know how), or a performance deficit (they know how, but they can't do it independently yet)?

Is this an Institutionally-Created Barrier that specifically locks this student out of the same opportunity as their peers?

Least Restrictive Considerations

K12's Least Restrictive Environment

- Must establish why the level of support selected matches the student needs
- Must establish why more/less would not be appropriate for the student
- Must consider the harms. THERE ARE ALWAYS HARMS IN K12.

Higher Ed Least Restrictive Supports

- Must establish why we selected that accommodation
- Why wouldn't a lesser accommodation meet the present need?
- How would this both remove the barrier and maximize the student's independence?

Accommodation Options in College

Least Restrictive

- Student can manage independently
- The accommodation works without delaying access
- Examples: Breaks During Class, Preferential Seating, E-pubs and fully automatic doors (Target)

More Restrictive

- Some external support may be needed
- The accommodation provides access with minimal negative impacts
- Examples: Microphones/T-Coils, Notetaking Technology, Extended Testing Time

Most Restrictive:

- Requires another person to provide access
- Student cannot participate without this level of support
- Examples: Lab Assistant, Interpreters, Remote Considerations

Identifying Barriers – Higher Education

- Academic
 - Disability + Course Design (Timing/Materials/Syllabus)
 - Available Resources (tutoring/study groups/VR)
- Physical
 - Entrances/seating/lighting
 - Housing/Dining/Parking
- Behavioral
 - Breaks during class
 - Minimizing triggers

Triangulation Considerations

- K12
 - School Diagnostics from M-team
 - Family/Faculty Statements
 - Professional understanding of Educational Needs
- Higher Education
 - Student Narrative
 - Professional/3rd Party Documentation
 - Professional Judgement

What drives accommodation decisions in K12

- Success-driven
- Specific data-tracking
 - School-wide testing
 - State-wide testing
 - Progress Monitoring
- Staffing realities
- Caseload realities
- Scheduling interventions
- Accommodations vs. Modifications vs. Exemptions

“Reading Between the Lines”

Sections to Know

- Present Levels of Performance (PLOPs or PLPs)
- Accommodations and Modifications
- Least Restrictive Environment + Instructional Minutes
- Re-evaluation Considerations

Scenario 1

- Mississippi Freshman, SLD
 - Reading below grade level
 - Math below grade level
 - Behavioral Interruptions/Suspensions
 - Instructional Accommodations listed are for Extra Time, Focus Cues, and Preferential Seating.
 - Testing Accommodations listed Extra time *through the end of the day* and either text-to-speech or a human reader

Scenario 1 Questions

- If this student provided their IEP and asked for extra time on writing homework, what questions do you have?
- If they wanted 200% time, what other information do you need to know?
- How would you tell a parent why you are denying one of the requested accommodations if “they’ve always had that!”

Example 2

- Texas Kindergartener, ASD
 - Qualified for a student with Autism, in a separate classroom away from non-disabled peers
 - Needs support for communication and writing
 - Has eczema and has occupational therapy for fine motor skills
 - Accommodations include specific instruction/cueing/clarifying
 - Supervision during transitions, time outs, frequent feedback
 - Alternative Curriculum, never in a general education class

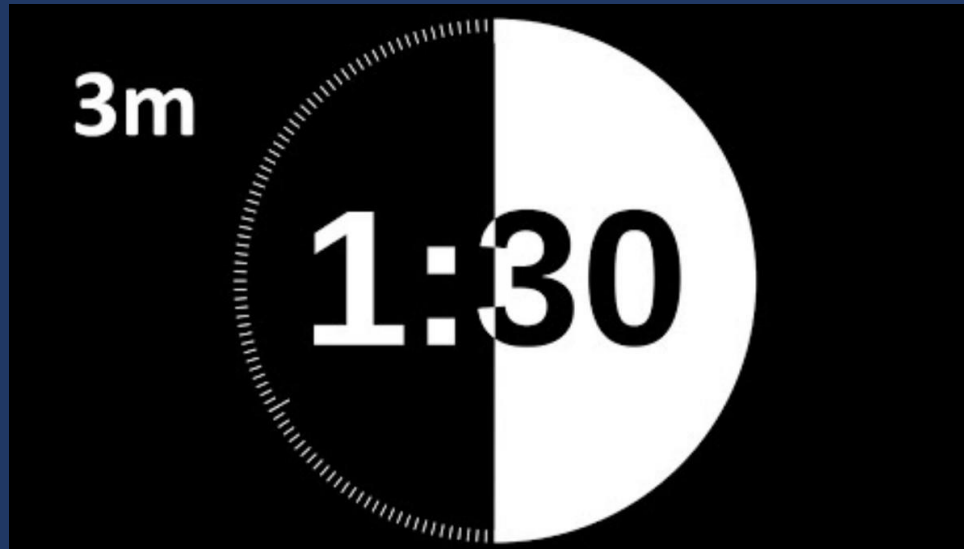
Scenario 2 Questions

- If this student requested a private room due to their communication differences from Autism, how would you address their documentation?
- If they requested additional testing time, what more would you need?

Explaining the Differences

- Success Model made sense when school was compulsory.
- Now it's a choice.
- More barriers were created by the structure of the school week in K12.
- Access Model provides equal access, not extra access.
- Students have the choice to take more/less classes to manage their conditions and impairments.

Final Turn and Talk



- Consider your trickiest accommodation. What would provide the student with the most independence and opportunity to learn like their peers?
- How would you explain your Yays and Nays now?

Final Takeaways

- Our job is to determine reasonable accommodations to provide equal access.
- K12s job was to provide instructional supports through targeted interventions.
- Transitioning students to more independence means we need to better understand what skills they still need, and how to emphasize the role of accommodations in their academic life.
- Lean into campus partners to provide those skill-building opportunities so we can continue to provide access without confusing our roles.

Thank you!

- Find me on LinkedIn: [Eileen B. White](#)
- Email me: ebwhite@purdue.edu



Session Evaluation

tiny.cc/8zu1101

Thank you for attending!

Your feedback helps shape future programming.

