Lesson 1: Introduction

PURPOSE

This course has been designed to help you learn strategies for fully including students with disabilities in academic activities.

You will also have access to case studies and read answers to questions faculty members frequently ask about accommodating students with disabilities in their classes.

Please select at least one of your existing courses as your own case to review in light of the issues presented during this course. For your selected course(s) you will examine access issues for students with disabilities, explore accommodation strategies, and consider modifications that would make it more accessible to students with a variety of disabilities.

The best accommodations for students with disabilities in higher education are unique to the individual and developed from a cooperative relationship between the faculty member and the student, with the assistance of the Office of Disability Support Services at the University of Central Oklahoma.

COURSE OUTLINE

This course consists of the following mini lessons:

1. Introduction
2. Rights & Responsibilities
3. UCO’s Disability Support Services
4. Universal Design of Instruction
5. Hearing Disabilities
6. Visual Disabilities
7. Mobility Disabilities
8. Health Disabilities
9. Learning Disabilities
10. Psychiatric Disabilities
11. Adaptive Technology
12. Computer Labs
13. Web Accessibility
14. Distance Learning
15. Resources
16. Evaluation

Each lesson includes a purpose, question to reflect upon while reading the content, content, summary, possible discussion, and further information.
The federal definition of a disability includes a person who:
- Has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities;
- Has a record of such impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

In a recent study, the number of postsecondary undergraduate students identified as having disabilities in the United States was 428,280, representing 6% of the nation's total student body. The types of disabilities reported by these students were:

- 45.7% Learning disabilities
- 13.9% Mobility or orthopedic impairments
- 11.6% Health impairments
- 7.8% Mental illness or emotional disturbance
- 5.6% Hearing impairments
- 4.4% Blindness and visual impairments
- 0.9% Speech or language impairments
- 9.1% Other impairments

(Source: An Institutional Perspective on Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Postsecondary Education Quick Information System, August 1999).

At the University of Central Oklahoma, 68 students registered with Disability Support Services during the Summer 2011 semester, representing 1.08% of the total student body for Summer; 284 students registered with Disability Support Services during the Fall 2011 semester, representing 1.65% of the total student body for Fall; and, 257 students registered with Disability Support Services during the Spring 2012 semester, representing 1.62% of the total student body for Spring. The types of disabilities reported by these students were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Summer 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Spring 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADD/ADHD</td>
<td>11 (16.2%)</td>
<td>35 (12.3%)</td>
<td>37 (14.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual Disability</td>
<td>7 (10.3%)</td>
<td>20 (7%)</td>
<td>12 (4.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brain Injury</td>
<td>3 (4.4%)</td>
<td>10 (3.5%)</td>
<td>10 (3.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing Disability</td>
<td>4 (5.9%)</td>
<td>13 (4.6%)</td>
<td>10 (3.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental/Emotional/Psychiatric</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (0.7%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Disorder</td>
<td>10 (14.8%)</td>
<td>19 (6.7%)</td>
<td>17 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic/Mobility</td>
<td>7 (10.3%)</td>
<td>26 (9.2%)</td>
<td>22 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
<td>10 (14.8%)</td>
<td>75 (26.4%)</td>
<td>58 (22.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autistic/Aspergers</td>
<td>5 (7.4%)</td>
<td>11 (3.9%)</td>
<td>9 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/Language Disability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Disability</td>
<td>8 (11.8%)</td>
<td>53 (18.7%)</td>
<td>49(19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>4 (1.4%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtesy Services</td>
<td>1 (1.5%)</td>
<td>15 (5.3%)</td>
<td>26 (10.1%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In this course we will discuss issues and strategies related to students with the following disabilities:

LEARNING DISABILITIES are documented disabilities that may affect reading, processing information, remembering, calculating, and spatial abilities.

MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS may make walking, sitting, bending, carrying, or using fingers, hands or arms difficult or impossible. Mobility impairments result from many causes, including amputation, Polio, clubfoot, Scoliosis, spinal cord injury, and Cerebral Palsy.

HEALTH IMPAIRMENTS affect daily living and involve the lungs, kidneys, heart, muscles, liver, intestines, immune systems, and/or other body parts (e.g., cancer, kidney failure, AIDS).

MENTAL ILLNESS includes mental health and psychiatric disorders that affect daily living.

HEARING DISABILITIES make it difficult or impossible to hear lecturers, access multimedia materials, and participate in discussions.

BLINDNESS refers to the disability of students who cannot read printed text, even when enlarged. LOW VISION refers to students who have some usable vision, but cannot read standard-size text, have field deficits (for example, cannot see peripherally or centrally but can see well in other ranges), or other visual impairments.

A disability may or may not AFFECT the participation of a student in your class. In postsecondary settings, students are the best source of information regarding their special needs. They are responsible for disclosing their disabilities and requesting accommodations through Disability Support Services.

To create a welcome environment, include this statement in your class syllabus.

Flexibility and effective communication between student and professor are central in approaching accommodations. Although students with similar disabilities may require different accommodations, it is useful for you to be aware of typical strategies for working with students who have various types of impairments. With this basic knowledge you will be better prepared to ask students to clarify their needs and to discuss accommodation requests.

Throughout this course, you will be asked to consider access issues and accommodation strategies presented in this course, in relation to modifications you might make in your own course. You are not alone in this venture; you are part of the team.
POSSIBLE DISCUSSION

Please share the name and a brief description of the COURSE you will use as your case study during this course. In addition, give a short BIOGRAPHY about yourself including your name, college, department and any experience in working with students with disabilities.

This lesson has been developed in part by © 2001 DO-IT at the University of Washington where permission has been granted to copy material for educational, non-commercial purposes. The information has been edited as needed by the University of Central Oklahoma Disability Support Services’ Staff (2012) in an effort to meet UCO’s need, purpose, and intent of faculty development regarding students with disabilities.