

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Demonstration of Meeting the 2014 Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related
Educational Programs Core and the Student Affairs/College Counseling Specialty Standards via
One Major Artifact

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Abstract

Demonstration of Meeting the 2014 Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs Core and the Student Affairs/College Counseling Specialty Standards via One Major Artifact

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The purpose for the following major artifact is to address a selected 2014 CACREP standard. Each selected CACREP standard focuses on knowledge and application for diverse students in higher education. The major artifact includes student population themes and applicable theory that resulted in student support. Through my experience in writing this major artifact, I have increased my competency in the Social and Cultural Diversity CACREP standard. In addition, the major artifact has contributed to my professional development when working with students by becoming aware of their needs and how their needs can be appropriately supported.

The major artifact for Core 2 – Social and Cultural Diversity focused on students with learning disabilities (LD) and self-advocacy. In order for students with LD to self-advocate, they need to accept their disability, understand what their disability is, and how to communicate it to others. Sanford's Challenge and Support Model (1966) can apply to students with LD. Institutions challenge students with LD in their learning as they seek for campus resources such as accommodation, and explain their disability for additional support. Through the access of

transitional social support programs, faculty, peer mentoring, and career training, LD students learn to overcome their challenges through their self-advocacy.

Major artifacts are part of a larger project that also includes reflections demonstrating my competence with the 2014 CACREP standards. As a counselor-in-training and paraprofessional, I have developed an awareness and understanding of the different factors contributing to a student's academic, career, and personal development. With the knowledge and skills that I have gained in the College Counseling and Student Services Program, I am confident in my abilities to provide the necessary tools and support for students to succeed.

Students with Learning Disabilities and Self-Advocacy

Students with learning disabilities (LD) make new discoveries about themselves as they transition from high school to college. Before students with LD transfer to college, these students are supported through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is responsible for detecting students with disabilities in the K-12 education system and providing them with the necessary procedures and resources to accommodate their needs (Brinckerhoff, McGuire, Shaw, & Brinckerhoff, 2002). Some LD students in K-12 schools also have parents and teachers advocating on their behalf (Troiano, 2003).

Having parents providing the advocacy instead of the student may prevent LD students from developing their own advocacy skills to succeed in their academics upon entering the post-secondary environment (2003). In addition, LD students may lack knowledge of postsecondary education and available services, making their transition a challenge (Gil, 2007). When LD students attend college, institutions support these students through the responsibilities outlined by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) (2014). The ADA supports individuals with disabilities by requiring the provision of appropriate accommodations to ensure equity in academic, vocational, and other settings. In order to receive ADA support, college students with disabilities need to self-advocate for these services by informing their institutions about their disabilities, submitting documentation, and working with the institution's support services. This also applies in the work setting (Brinckerhoff et al., 2002).

Sanford's Challenge and Support Model (1966) explains that students grow when they are challenged and assisted in their academic, career, and overall development (Sanford, 1966). As faculty and institutions challenge and support LD students, these students are most likely to successfully develop self-advocacy when they understand their disabilities and are able to ask for

appropriate assistance (Sanford, 1966). Therefore, through universities' application of Sanford's Challenge and Support Model, LD students can be helped to increase their self-advocacy when receiving help from educators and other members of transitional support programs, as well as support from career training in future employment.

Students with Learning Disabilities

According to the American Psychological Association (2013) specific learning disabilities (SLD) have different characteristics. Individuals may experience difficulty with reading, writing, reasoning, and mathematical skills. For example, individuals struggling with math may struggle to remember numbers and equations. Auditory processing disorder, dyslexia, and dyscalculia are some types of SLD. SLD make it difficult for individuals to do well in their academics, work environments, and other activities without the appropriate accommodations. LD students who accept and learn about their disabilities, self-advocate, and use their resources to work with their disabilities during high school are better prepared for their transition to college (Garner, 2008).

Research supports these claims. For example, Garner (2008) described common themes of three male students with LD who successfully completed high school and pursued college. During high school, these students learned about using strategies and resources that helped with their disability. A student who had a reading and writing disability would have test accommodations. He was an auditory learner so he did best with oral exams. Accommodations for two students with a writing disability included having a tape recorder, a note taker, and tutors for support. The third student had difficulty with math, so he used note cards as a strategy, as well as tutors (2008). Although the study was limited to three students, these students

demonstrated that they learned about themselves and academic study strategies to support their learning process (2008).

However, some high school students learn how to self-advocate after they begin college. Triano (2003) conducted a study that focused on nine full-time students with LD, examining their social interactions and life experiences regarding their academics and disabilities. Participants explained that their parents would manage their academic needs. However, once entering college, participants realized that they needed to take control of their academic goals. These students with LD expressed the need to understand their disability. If students do not understand their disability, it can be difficult for them to manage and cope with their LD. In addition, participants explained that they needed to describe and communicate their disabilities to others in order to be understood. How participants described their LD was based on their experiences; for example, being upset with not being able to complete tasks quickly is how a participant was able to define his disability. Researchers also found that participants would disclose their disabilities to academic professionals, but often did not disclose to peers or in social situations. This was due to the fear of stereotypes or stigma. Overall, participants emphasized the importance of LD students learning how to accept their disability, self-advocate, and utilize their strengths (2003).

Lock and Layton (2001) conducted another study of students with LD. This study included a sample of 30 full-time college freshmen in an urban university, all of whom had LD, to identify their needs and the accommodations they received. Researchers used the Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Inventory (LDDI) to measure behaviors of LD. The study indicated that 30% of the participants had difficulty with reading and writing, 23% struggled with math, 17% were challenged in writing, and 7% were struggling with listening, speaking, and reasoning.

Researchers found that students who only had difficulty with reading needed more accommodations than students who had writing difficulties. An accommodation for students who had difficulty with reading was to record their class lectures because the current information that was given by the professor was too much for the student to write. Individuals who had difficulty with math had some accommodations, but often did not require them. Students who had difficulties with both reading and writing often had the most accommodations. For example, these students often had a note taker as well as alternative exams, such as oral exams.

Participants in the Lock and Layton (2001) study expressed the importance of being aware of their disabilities and self-advocating for their accommodations. It is important for LD students to self-advocate and help professors understand why having accommodations is necessary. Self-advocating meant that they also had to explain their disabilities to their professor in order to receive additional support (Lock & Layton). Student with LD increase their self-advocacy when they to learn to take control of their disabilities, express their concerns, and ask for support.

Challenge and Support Model

According to Sanford's Challenge and Support Model (1966), students need to have an even amount of challenge and support in order to foster their development. Sanford explains that when students receive excessive support, they may become dependent on others and may not develop in their learning. When students receive excessive challenges that prevent them from progressing towards their learning development, students may become psychologically distressed and frustrated, which can lead to dropping out. Sanford also explains that students need to be ready to encounter challenges. As students with LD are challenged with new academic courses, settings, and policies, they need to become their own advocates by seeking support from faculty

and mentors, as well as accessing available accommodations and support programs. For example, when curriculums challenge students to demonstrate their learning, appropriate accommodations are offered as a balance to support LD students in their processing needs. Transitional programs, faculty communication, and career training can offer challenge and support to LD students during their academic and career development, helping these students develop and increase their self-advocacy skills (1966).

Transitional Social Support Programs

Students with disabilities may not be aware of the general services that are offered on college campuses, which can limit students' self-advocacy (Gil, 2007). Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte, and Trice (2012) note that high school students with LD have support services that are automatically arranged to meet their needs. Once they become college students, they need to become advocates and seek out their own academic services; however, they often do not use their time to search for disability services in their institutions. When LD students gain access to participate in transitional programs, they are more likely to become knowledgeable about the services that they can utilize (2012). Transitional programs focus on motivating and informing students, including students with LD, about college expectations, course scheduling, documentation policies, campus resources, as well as living skills (Brinckerhoff et al., 2002). Transitional programs provide the assistance and support for students with LD to self-advocate as college students.

Students with LD who participate in transitional programs become knowledgeable about their student ADA rights, which motivates these students to self-advocate (Rothman, Maldonado, and Rothman, 2008). LD students become more informed about taking appropriate and reasonable actions to meet their LD needs. Through the support of transitional programs,

students with LD become confident in learning that they cannot be discriminated against due to their learning disabilities (2008). Students with LD are also introduced to variety of services offered at the institution (Rothman et al., 2008). For example, students learn about financial aid services. LD students in transitional programs also begin to socialize with other LD students who have similar concerns, allowing them to develop a sense of belonging. When LD students transition to a new academic setting and role, it is important for LD students to grow in their self-advocacy. LD students receive support in transitional programs to ease their process of adjusting from high school to college (2008). With assistance, LD students become confident in self-advocating and challenge themselves to express their concerns.

In addition, LD students become more comfortable about their transition when hearing the stories of other students with LD (Kato, Nulty, Olszewski, Doolittle, and Flannery, 2006). By hearing other LD students explain their challenges and the support they receive, LD students develop strategies for managing their college experiences. In addition, LD student panels share useful information about planning for college, such as utilizing accommodations and suggestions for self-advocacy. Transitional programs that offer peer mentoring support and student panels provide useful information on college courses, departments and programs, and disability resources to motivate LD students to self-advocate (2006).

LD students also increase their self-advocacy when transitional programs teach them about their disabilities. By learning about their disabilities, LD students can better explain their needs to others when advocating for support. Chiba and Low (2007) conducted a study on how a transitional development course influences the adjustment of students with learning disabilities and ADHD. This study took place at a university in the San Francisco Bay Area and consisted of 50 participants who had taken the course between fall 2002 to fall 2004. Participants received an

open-ended questionnaire by mail and were asked to answer questions addressing their understanding of their disabilities.

Chiba and Low (2007) state that participants became more aware of what their disabilities were and how to describe them. They also learned about communication skills, learning skills, and learning styles. Finally, by learning to accept their disability, they also gained the confidence to strive in their academics and increase their advocacy skills. Before the course, 13% of participants stated that they moderately understood their disability. After the course, 46% of participants moderately understood their disability. For example, a participant said, “Having to focus and talk about learning disability makes it all much concrete which helps me to understand and accept it” (Chiba & Low, 2007, p.50). Students felt better able to identify words to express what they were experiencing. This also included 47% of participants reporting greatly benefitting from peer support. In addition, participants learned how professors can assist them if they talk to them about their disabilities and how their disabilities affect their learning skills and style. A participant said, “ I learned how to express in words what was going on with me and people including professors could assist me” (Chiba & Low, 2007, p.50). Having discussions with professors meant that professors became knowledgeable of how to accommodate LD students. Although a limitation for this study may be that ADHD students were also included in the transitional program, this study demonstrates that transitional programs can successfully provide LD students with an introduction to resources and strategies for them to develop their self-advocacy skills.

LD students who communicate with faculty increase their self-advocacy skills. According to Skinner (2004), knowledge of how to associate with professors through social skills is needed in order for LD students to become comfortable with asking for help. As LD

students seek support from instructors, their self-advocacy skills continue to grow. Mythkowicz and Goss (2012) conducted a study in a 4-year college in the Northeast with 14 LD students who had participated in one to six semesters of their institution's LD/ADHD support program. In order for participants to take part in the study, participants needed to have a GPA of 2.7 or higher. Through the use of open-ended questions, Mythkowicz and Goss found that participants felt that they were in a safe environment in the support program. Within the support program, there were several services offered that allowed students to become self-aware of their potential in academic success and self-determination (2012).

Mythkowicz and Goss (2012) stated that the LD support services provided LD students with professors to help in their assignments and challenged their way of thinking by not allowing them to doubt themselves. A participant expressed her thoughts on a faculty member by saying, "She has a very firm but gentle guiding hand. And that's what I needed - having someone push you because you are either not strong enough or you are too scared to do it alone" (Mythkowicz & Goss, 2012, p.351). Relationships in the support program were meaningful for the motivation of these students. Professors were viewed as friends and mentors, allowing LD students to become comfortable in expressing their needs (2012). Self-determination occurred when there was communication between LD students and faculty.

Mythkowicz and Goss (2012) indicate that LD students communicated their barriers in the support program; this allowed students to speak up and provide feedback to improve their services. By doing so, Mythkowicz and Goss state that the support program educates their faculty through LD educational training workshops and conferences. Participants were satisfied with the support program since they gained a sense of managing their disability and feeling comfortable advocating for their needs. Although a limitation was that participants may have

been resistant to exposing negative viewpoints about the program because the researchers were faculty members who provide services in the LD/ADHD support program, overall, LD students became comfortable with the characteristics of their disabilities, communication skills, and advocating for themselves (2012).

When students with learning disabilities have access to transitional programs, this increases their knowledge of how to self-advocate for their needs. Transitional programs offer support to LD students by educating them about their disabilities, skills, and accommodations (Chiba & Low, 2007). In addition, previous experiences with LD students assists with building confidence in other LD students during their transition. Campus resources and information are available in transitional programs for LD students. According to Sanford (1996), as LD students are challenged, they become independent, responsible, and advocates of their needs in order to receive accommodations and support. In addition, as LD students are challenged in their curriculum, they also need support from faculty for their academic development (1966). By educating and communicating with professors, LD students are able to advocate for their needs by sharing their knowledge on their disabilities and building a supportive relationship (Getzel &Thoma, 2008). Together, this demonstrates that students with learning disabilities have access to improving their self-advocacy skills through the availability of transitional social support programs and with guidance from faculty, peer mentors, and other services.

Career Training

Similar to LD students needing to be aware of their skills when doing academic work, they also need to become aware of how to use their skills and advocate for their needs in work settings. Satisfaction with employment for LD individuals occurs when their career choice accommodates their strengths and weaknesses (Madaus, Zhao, & Ruban, 2008). Often, LD

students who participate in career training will pursue a career that fits their competency (2008). As LD students develop knowledge about their disabilities in relation to their career development through career training, these students build confidence in their self-advocacy beyond the academic setting.

Hitchings, Luzzo, Riston, Horvath, Retish, and Tanner (2001) conducted a study on 97 undergraduate LD students about their thoughts on employment. This included 54 females and 43 males between the ages of 18 to 51 from a university in the Midwest. Being able to describe a disability in a work setting is important for additional support and understanding. When participants were asked to describe their disabilities, some knew how to communicate what their disabilities meant, whereas others were unsure of how to define them. Researchers found that one third of participants expressed having fear of not having future employment based on their need for accommodations in college and their uncertainty about how this would be seen by employers. Thirteen participants thought they would not have an issue with employment due to their occupational choice not being limited by their abilities, and 54% did not know what would happen. Participants expressed needing transitional programs from college to work to better support their preparation for future employment. In addition, they expressed needing more vocational training to increase their self-determination (2001).

Jahoda, Banks, Dagnan, Kemp, Kerr, and Williams (2008) interviewed two focus groups to obtain information about their job related activities. Participants included 35 individuals with intellectual disabilities. These participants were involved in an 18 month study with eight interviews. Researchers found that seven of the participants described not being able to complete tasks even with accommodations, whereas nine participants felt that there was no problem with their work activities. In addition, eight participants stated that there were some

employers who did not give appropriate accommodations to support their work performance. Researchers found that participants who did receive appropriate accommodations enjoyed them, but felt that they needed additional support. Some participants experienced anxiety about the job. Researchers also discovered during follow-ups that a quarter of participants lost their work placement. However, many participants expressed a self-worth and a positive experience with their work placement (2008).

In order for LD students to feel comfortable in the work setting, they can receive support from career training programs to help them through their preparation. Skellen and Astbury (2004) developed a study on LD students and their experiences with employment. The study focused on eight students between 16 to 25 years old participating with a career training program called Meaningful Opportunities for Realistic Employment (MORE) project and its collaboration with a community college. The study also included five college educational professionals, five parents, and five employers working with the project; consent was required. Researchers found that parents were concerned about the LD son or daughter because of potential negative social encounters and wanting to shield them from getting hurt. The student participants were used to having ongoing support from their parents, however, educational professionals and employers were going to be the supporters of the LD students. Employers and educators motivated and guided LD students, as well as give them the opportunity to develop their academic, career, and personal independence. Skellen and Astbury found that LD students benefitted from this intervention. Students expressed being satisfied for completing tasks independently and having self-advocacy opportunities. Having the opportunity to be independent in their work tasks was important for these students because they often were dependent on others to complete

assignments. LD students learned about money, social relationships, networking, and self-advocacy with career training (2004).

As students with learning disabilities participate in career training, they receive career preparation to develop work self-advocacy. In a similar study, Olszewski, Benz, Slovis, Flanney, and Lindstrom (2009) focused on a Vocational Rehabilitation Service collaborating with four community colleges. The career training program was designed to contribute to the success of academics and occupational development for LD students. LD students were given an orientation about career planning. Vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors supported students with LD by understanding the skills they offered and connecting those skills to occupations that LD students wanted as well as where the LD students wanted to be in the future. Through this process, the VR counselor, employment specialist, and other faculty decided if each student would be an appropriate candidate for the program. Job shadowing and career assessments were used to assist students with career planning and advocacy. College faculty worked with employers to find positions that would meet the students' career goals and provide a training course for students; therefore, students would complete coursework and hands-on training (2009). By doing so, the training provided LD students with skills to take control of their career. Olszewski et al. (2009) stated that an additional support was given to LD students with resume writing and job search. During follow-ups, researchers found that students with disabilities who completed this program were more likely to be hired compared those who had not. Overall, students who participated in this program were able to challenge and support themselves through this short term training as they built confidence and advocacy for other future employment opportunities (2009).

Many LD students become worried about their employment. Through the access of career training, students with disabilities can learn to advocate for their career futures as they learn

about their disability skills and how they can apply them to their work settings. A limitation of these studies is that they lack details about self-advocacy and some study sample sizes are small. However, it is safe to say that LD students received support. In order for students to develop in their careers, they must learn about their career skills and abilities. These students are challenged and supported through their coursework and training so they can be more competent in occupations. LD students are supported by employment specialist and other faculty members that challenge LD students in their career training (Olszewak, 2009; Sanford, 1996). As LD individuals develop career skills and learn how to adapt their disabilities to their work sites, they become self-advocates when seeking work accommodations. With a balance of challenge and support, LD students develop self-esteem and personal growth (Sanford, 1966).

Implications and Conclusion

Based on research, LD students increase their self-advocacy when they learn how to explain their disabilities. Sanford's Challenge and Support Model (1966) applies to LD students. As LD students are challenged by their disability in their academic and vocational development, they become supported. Communicating with professors and learning about campus services provide the support they need for their transitional adaptation to their academic and career development. As LD students learn about their ADA rights and accommodations, LD students can advocate for alternative tests, note-takers, tutors, and other appropriate accommodations. A possible intervention to help LD students increase their advocacy skills, as well as incorporate Sanford's Challenge and Support Model (1966), is by assigning all LD high school students to a college student mentor who has a similar disability before finishing high school. Mentors can help LD students learn about their disabilities as they challenge the LD high school student to practice explaining their disability. By doing so, mentors are able to provide LD students with

feedback and suggestions on the described disability. In addition, mentors can provide insight to LD high school students about ADA accommodations and provide strategies to succeed in college. Having an assigned mentor may also serve for LD students interested in working right after high school. Overall, Sanford's Challenge and Support Model (1966) should be incorporated when working with these students. LD students who participated in transitional social support programs and career training increased their self-advocacy.

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