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Students With Specific Learning Disabilities; Perceptions of Postsecondary Accommodations, Barriers, and Self-advocacy

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Students with Specific Learning Disabilities:

Perceptions of Postsecondary Accommodations, Barriers, and Self-Advocacy

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Abstract

Once students graduate from public education, the supports for individuals with disabilities change significantly. The law requiring school districts to support students with disabilities no longer applies upon graduation. As the familiar support structure no longer exists, the transition for students with disabilities is very difficult. The purpose of this qualitative case study will be to learn the perceptions of students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) in regard to accessing accommodations from the Office of Disability Services in a public community college setting, identifying barriers, and utilizing self-advocacy skills.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Connor, Riley, Jeff, Mom, and Dad. You have made a lifelong dream come true. Without your support, guidance, gentle, and stern conversations, it would have simply been unattainable. Thank you for the love, the gift of time by finding activities to occupy your time while I was finagling to find that specific sequence of words, and providing those much needed power text messages. Thank you to Bethel Cohort DEK/DEM for the extraordinary grace, respect, and encouragement to continue this forward progress.

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Thank you to the participating students, colleges, and the Office of Disability Services. I've learned an incredible amount about the systems in higher education and the level of services offered. Thank you to Bethel University, and especially the Bethel Cohort DEK/DEM for being involved in cultivating our skills through our three years of online coursework and summer seminars. I'm very grateful to the DEK/DEM Facebook group. This was a fantastic tool to see how each of us is working through this difficult yet completely fulfilling process. Thank you all!

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List of Abbreviations

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

ADAAA: Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act

Birth-21: In the public educational system, special education services may begin as soon as a child is born and may continue up to the age of 21.

ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act

FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

GPA: Grade point average

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Act

IDEA '97: Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997

IDEIA: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

IRB: International Review Board

LD profile: Learning Disabilities profile

NCLB: No Child Left Behind Act of 2002

ODS: Office of Disability Services

P.L. 94-142: Public Law 94-142 is the Education for All Handicapped Children

RtI model: Response to Intervention model

Section 504: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

SLD: An identified disability in the area of Specific Learning Disabilities

U.S.: United States of America

Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

Since the 1800's, the United States government has created a public educational system with student success in mind (Younkins, 2001). For students to achieve, the system involves adjustments, modifications, supports, and enhancements. However, not all students have been treated the same. Yell (2012) states prior to 1975, students with disabilities were not receiving similar accommodations, modifications, supports, and enhancements as students without disabilities had automatically received. This changed due to Congress passing three laws, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Section 504 protects the civil rights of individuals with disabilities and ensures equal access through the use of appropriate accommodations (Gormley, Hughes, Block & Lendmann, 2005). Section 504 paved the way for the next law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 also known as P.L. 94-142 to protect the education of individuals with any type of disability (Kavale, Spaulding & Beam, 2009; Pepnet.com, 2012; Yell, 2012). P.L.94-142 provides students with disabilities a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) and includes specialized instruction, special education services, accommodations, and modifications based on the needs of the student as they relate to the disability (ED Pubs.gov, 2010). In 1990, the federal government renamed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and required public educational systems to incorporate transition skills for students with disabilities by the age of 14 years old (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; DaDeppo, 2009; Janiga & Costenbader, 2002).

There is significant difference between these first two laws. Section 504 supports individuals with disabilities at any age but doesn't provide the defined supports identified in IDEA (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). IDEA provides prescriptive supports for students that are written on a report to be directly followed. Failure to do so, can lead a school into mediation or lawsuits. Once an individual with a disability graduates, IDEA ends and Section 504 remains in place to support and maintain the civil rights of an individual with disabilities (Gormley et al, 2005). The third law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is enacted when an individual self discloses a disability to the college or place of employment (Solovieva & Bock, 2014). Shaw & Dukes III (2013) state "ADA requires individuals with disabilities who are 'otherwise qualified' be provided an equal educational opportunity". In 2009, ADA was renamed to the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and "identified additional major life activities of learning, reading, concentrating, and thinking as areas defining a disability" (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2008). This extends the spectrum of individuals qualifying for services but still does not provide the specificity to the degree of IDEA (Georgallis, 2015). Section 504 and ADAAA provide a broader scope of civil rights and protections for individuals with disabilities but not as defined, structured, and prescriptive, as IDEA. The broader scope of Section 504 and ADA does significantly impact an individual with a disability when enrolling in a postsecondary institution (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Gregg, Coleman, Lindstrom & Lee, 2007; PepNet.com, 2012; Solovieva & Bock, 2014). The concern is students with disabilities assume the supports they received in high school will continue into postsecondary education or employment (Mellard, 2005; Whitney, Lovewell & Moeller, 2012).

To improve access to the educational supports for individuals with disabilities in a college setting, a deeper understanding is needed regarding individuals with disabilities perceptions of the transition to college, accessing the accommodations, and the barriers. If students from the secondary setting had awareness of the differences in the laws, how these differences change access to accommodations, and understanding how the process of self-disclosure of a disability allows for college supports, then more students with disabilities would have the opportunity to be successful in the college setting.

Background of the Study

The public educational system provides instruction for students with disabilities from the first day of birth to the age of 21 years old (Fiore, Nimkoff, Munk & Carlson Westat, E., 2013). The special education services in public education are divided into three age categories. The first category may begin that first day of birth and continue to the age of two. The second category may continue from the previous category or begin at the age of three up to the age a student begins kindergarten. The third category may continue from the previous category or begin at the age the student begins kindergarten and continue up to the age of 21 (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015).

The Legal Information Institute (2016) states for students to begin receiving special education supports in the public education system, school districts are required to screen students. If there is suspicion of a disability, the school district provides an evaluation for disability identification (Research Department of the Minnesota House of Representatives, 2014). When a disability is identified, the next step is to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This plan involves a team meeting to discuss and create a plan documenting the need for special education services. When students are supported through special education, the

student can receive additional services such as special transportation, family education, accommodations, and modifications providing access to a free and appropriate public education (Legal Information Institute, 2016).

Upon graduating from the secondary setting and entering the postsecondary setting, there are several significant differences in the delivery of services for students with disabilities (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). The first difference is the system changes from requiring school districts to find students with disabilities to requiring students to self-disclose a documented disability in order to receive accommodations and supports from the college. Students needing to physically or virtually locate the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to provide the documentation of the disability is the second difference. The third is that college requires the student to pay for the evaluation if there is suspicion of a disability (Gormley et al, 2005). In the secondary setting, the school district pays for the evaluation. A fourth difference is the college requires students with disabilities to self-disclose their disability status to each instructor and provide documentation they have accessed the colleges ODS (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010). Having to repeat this self-disclosure to each instructor may be viewed as stigmatizing as they are continuously reminded of being different. Duranczyk, Higbee & Lundell (Eds.) (2004), suggested students should be allowed the opportunity to self-disclose privately or in writing to ease the level of discomfort. The fifth difference is several research studies report college level accommodations are selected and approved by the college ODS in order to meet the needs of the disability (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Georgallis, 2015; Hollins & Foley, 2013; Lindstrom, 2007; Newman et al., 2011). In the secondary setting, accommodations are provided for all classes (DaDeppo, 2009). A sixth difference is that college level accommodations are based on the identified disability and selected on the expectations of the course, whereas secondary

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accommodations are written into the IEP to support the student in all classes and all disabilities (Shaw & Dukes III, 2013). When students with disabilities move from the secondary setting to the college level, another frustration may be that the change of previously known accommodations listed for all classes in the secondary setting are now predetermined for each course and specific to the identified disability. Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte, & Trice, (2012) state because of these changes and the need to inform instructors ahead of time, the majority of students reported a lack of time to seek services. Lastly, the largest difference for supports offered at the postsecondary setting is that modifications are no longer provided for students with disabilities. Modifications change the coursework by reducing the rigor of the expectations (Richman, Rademacher & Maitland, 2014). Accommodations do not change the rigor but provide adjustments in the delivery of the course or access to the physical structure (Federal Register, 2006).

Several studies have identified incongruities between the supports within the secondary setting and the postsecondary setting (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Conley, 2007; Williams, 1998). These studies analyzed the accommodations between the secondary setting and four-year universities and found that only extended time on tests and copied notes are the two most commonly utilized (Duranczyk et al. (Eds.), 2004). There is little research regarding the accommodations for students with disabilities at the two-year public community college setting. Accommodations offered at two-year public colleges may be different than those offered at four-year postsecondary institutions, beginning with the two-year public colleges offering increased student-to-instructor contact (Janiga & Costenbader, 2002).

The largest category of students with disabilities is students with Specific Learning Disabilities (Summers, White, Zhang, & Gordon, 2014). The largest identified group with

disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education is students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) at approximately 29% of the students self-disclosing a disability (Costello & Stone, 2012). Milsom and Dietz (2009) state despite the fact that more students with SLD are pursuing education at two- and four-year colleges, many do not complete their degrees. According to Cortiella, Candace, Horowitz, Newman, and Kaye (2014), the college completion rate of students with SLD is 41% compared to 52% of the general population (p. 28). As enrollment for students with SLD continues to rise and completion rates do not, it appears there is a need to prepare students for college readiness. In regard to the two-year public colleges, there is a significant gap in identifying accommodations and barriers for students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). Students with SLD and the Office of Disability Service Specialists at two-year public colleges will be interviewed for this study. Two-year public college programs can range from earning a certification to obtaining the Associate of Arts two-year degree. Two-year public colleges encompass technical colleges and community colleges. For this study, the two-year public colleges accessed are the community colleges and will be identified as public community colleges.

Students attending public community colleges may start their program in August and others in January depending on their completing the process of the entrance application and acceptance to a selected program. This research will help to learn about students with SLD and their perceptions of supports, barriers, and self-advocacy skills. Secondly, this research will identify specific insights into determining when the students with SLD need to be aware of the differences in supports. Lastly, this research will identify areas for continued growth in responsibility of educational systems prior to college enrollment.

Statement of the Problem

There are significant differences between secondary special education services and postsecondary disability services. The first difference is the accommodations offered to students within the secondary setting compared to those offered in a public community college setting. The second difference is the comparison of access to accommodations. In the postsecondary educational system, it is the responsibility of the student to seek out supports and self-disclose they have a disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) mandates particular accommodations for instruction and physical access for postsecondary institutions receiving federal funding (Solovieva & Bock, 2014). These accommodations may vary from the supports and accommodations students with SLD received in the birth to age 21 public educational system (Authenticated US Government Information, 2002). As adults, individuals with SLD have to be knowledgeable about their "LD profile", meaning the identification of strengths, needs, and supports that create success, knowing the process of self-disclosure, and understanding the provisions of the ADA for personal benefit (Price, Gerber & Mulligan, 2007, p. 341). The third difference will be the students' perceptions of access to accommodations and their perceptions of the differences between the secondary and public community college accommodations.

In comparing the differences between high school and postsecondary education, there is a significant discrepancy with how students with SLD access academic supports. Students with SLD in the high school setting are familiar with the staff initiating contact to provide the supports outlined in the student's IEP, making adjustments, and the accommodations for the most appropriate educational experience (Georgallis, 2015; Janiga & Costenbader, 2002; PepNet.com, 2012; Solovieva, & Bock, 2014). In the high school setting, rather than students initiating this process, the law mandates the staff make contact with students, develop

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programming in compliance with the IEP documentation, and inform parents of student progress (Kaehne & Beyer, 2009). Once students graduate, students are expected to self-disclose, locate postsecondary disability support systems, and self-advocate for their specific needs within each course (Janiga & Costenbader, 2002; Mellard, 2005; Orr & Goodman, 2010; Sparks & Lovett, 2013). Many studies analyze the postsecondary ODS' perception of students needing accommodations and supports (Banjaree, Madaus & Gelbar, 2015; DaDeppo, 2009; Hadley, 2007; Murray, Flannery & Wren, 2008; PepNet.com, 2012). However, there are limited studies regarding student and Office of Disability Specialists perceptions of accommodations and supports in the two-year public college setting (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Garrison-Wade, 2012; Hughes & Carter, 2011; Milson & Dietz, 2009). Most postsecondary accommodations research for students with SLD is at the four-year postsecondary institution level (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Raue, Lewis & Coopersmith, 2011; Schrader & Brown, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study will be to learn how students with SLD and ODS staff perceive the academic supports, barriers, and self-advocacy skills at public community colleges in a mid-western state. The intent will be to provide awareness to secondary case managers and postsecondary personnel about the gaps between accommodations and supports in the secondary and public community college educational systems. Supports offered at the postsecondary level may be similar, different, reduced, or disability and course specific.

The intent of the study will be to provide additional information to the secondary case managers to better prepare students with SLD for increased self-advocacy skills, postsecondary education supports, and anticipated barriers. Secondary students with SLD may perceive postsecondary education supports will be similar to those offered in the secondary setting.

Learning from the experiences of current students with SLD in the postsecondary setting would behoove current secondary students to better prepare for their postsecondary experiences. In addition, providing these insights to secondary special educators about the changes in laws and postsecondary accommodation expectations offers opportunities to utilize a backward design for transition curriculum resulting in more preparedness for transition age students.

The intent for the postsecondary personnel working with students with SLD will be to provide awareness of the gaps and differences from the secondary level accommodations compared to the postsecondary accommodations. The increased awareness of these differences will be advantageous to promote systemic change for the colleges and students with SLD.

Rationale

As more students with SLD enroll in postsecondary educational institutions, continued efforts to support the students preparing for their postsecondary education impacts secondary educational settings. This study adds to the research on transition age curriculum in a secondary setting as well as the research in postsecondary institutions. Research on the accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy has focused on students transitioning to four-year postsecondary institutions and little research addresses the needs of students within public community college institutions.

Research Questions

This study will investigate the following research questions:

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to what is received at the public community college?

RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?

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RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study will be to ensure secondary special education teachers are aware of the need to develop curriculum to better prepare students to identify, self-advocate, and access future accommodations in the postsecondary educational setting. These findings will benefit secondary case managers and public community college personnel in understanding the differences in expectations and the hesitancy the students with SLD may have when seeking support at the public community college setting. One major reason for the significant discrepancy of accommodations offered between secondary and postsecondary education is that IDEA is no longer available for students with disabilities once they exit the secondary educational system (Legal Information Institute, 2015). When students with disabilities enter college, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) (Legal Information Institute, 2015), Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008 (ADAAA) (Smith & Cherry, 2008), and Section 504 (U.S. Department of Education, 2014) provide less structure for accommodations in order to receive federal funding. These mandates provide general and vague accommodations regarding instruction and physical access. IDEA offers specific, and diverse accommodations based on student needs (Legal Information Institute, 2016). Many studies have identified the postsecondary accommodations for students with disabilities will vary between institutions because of the less rigorous requirements from ADA, and ADAAA (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Getzel, 2005; Summers et al., 2014). One opportunity to change this dynamic is to require public education special education transition curricula to specifically focus on understanding

ADA and ADAAA in the most authentic, research based manner possible for students to experience success with transitioning to the postsecondary setting (Georgallis, 2015).

Definitions of Terms

Accommodations. Accommodations do not change the rigor but provide adjustments in the delivery of the course or access to the physical structure (Federal Register, 2006).

ADA. The Americans with Disabilities Act was established in 1990 and is the standard by which a person is determined to have disabilities and based on a comparison with the "average abilities of most persons" and guarantees only that individuals who are otherwise qualified for employment or educational programming (i.e., college enrollment) are not denied access simply because of their disability. (Legal Information Institute, 2016).

ADAAA. Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act seeks to significantly expand the class of individuals who may bring claims under the ADA by (1) changing the definition of what is considered a "major life activity"; (2) changing the way courts interpret the term "substantially limits"; and (3) requiring courts to ignore the "ameliorative effects of any mitigating measures" an employee uses to cope with his or her impairment when determining whether the employee has a disability (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2008).

Birth-21. Birth to age 21 is the range of public education special education services offered for students qualifying and may start at a child's birth up to the age of 21 (House Research Department, 2002).

ESSA. Every Student Succeeds Act was passed in 2015 to require schools to ensure high academic standards for every student to be prepared for careers and college (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

FAPE. Free and Appropriate Public Education is defined to allow students with disabilities the

ability to qualify for special education services under IDEA and entitles them to

specifically designed instruction and services to meet their unique educational needs

(Legal Information Institute, 2015; Research Department of the Minnesota House of

Representatives, 2014).

FERPA. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides students who are aged

18 or enrolled in a post secondary institution educational rights to "control the disclosure

of personally identifiable information" (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017).

Educational information is available to the student unless a release of information is

signed to provide access for named individuals. College officials can access the

information if there is a 'legitimate educational interest' to the information (Family

Policy Compliance Office, 2017).

IDEA. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides federal funding to states and

school districts for expenses incurred in providing special education and related services

to children with disabilities covered by the act. To be eligible for this funding, states

must provide a "free and appropriate public education". IDEA of 1990 added transition

services for students' ages 14 and older (Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990,

Section 602(a), 20 U.S.C. §1401a).

IDEIA. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 defined changes

in the Individualized Education Plans, discipline, and identification of students with SLD.

IDEIA requires all special education teachers to be certified in special education and

meet the highly qualified teacher requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

(Summers et al., 2014).

IEP. The Individual Education Plan is defined as the written plan created for students attending

school in the public educational setting. The students identified with a disability receive

written documentation providing present levels of performance, goals, objectives,

services, accommodations and modifications, and the least restrictive environment. If

students are aged 14 or older, transition programming is also included in this plan (Eckes

& Ochoa, 2005).

Modifications. Modifications change the coursework by reducing the rigor of the expectations

(Richman, Rademacher & Maitland, 2014).

NCLB. No Child Left Behind Act required school districts to bring all students up to state

standards in reading and math and to close the achievement gap for specific subgroups

including students with disabilities (Schifter, 2011).

Section 504. Section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act is defined as "No otherwise qualified

individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 7(20), shall/solely

by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, denied the

benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving

federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive

agency or by the United States Postal Service" (U.S Department of Education, 2014, (p.

2).

SLD. Specific Learning Disability is a disability that affects students' ability to process

information in the academic areas of reading, math, writing, a combination of the two or

three areas, as well as an informational processing delay (U.S. Office of Education 1977).

Assumptions and Limitations

This study is limited by the size of the population, the method of data collection, and the variation in accommodations offered at the selected public community colleges. This study is limited to students with SLD accessing disability support services and the Office of Disability Service Specialists. The study is further limited to students with SLD attending public community colleges in a mid-western state and not reflective of responses from locations throughout the country. Students not applying for disability support services will not be considered for the study. An additional limitation in this study is the selected population of students with SLD who are encouraged to attend or decided to attend a public community college. An assumption is students with SLD have higher self-advocacy skills and are willing to self-disclose their disability in order to access disability support services. This study will rely on students with SLD self-disclosing the disability. Another limitation is the student's primary disability is identified as SLD. Secondary disabilities will be acknowledged but will not be included in the study. The interviewing of students may limit the response rate. The interviewing of Office of Disability Service Specialists may limit the response rate. The Office of Disability Service Specialists follow the laws of ADA and Section 504, which may limit understanding of student perceptions operating under IDEA expectations. To access participants, an email will be sent to the Office of Disability Service Specialists at the public community colleges located in the mid-west. The participant's sensitivity to a disability prior to the interview could impact the results. Researcher bias may limit the study as "the human instrument has shortcomings and biases that might have an impact on the study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15).

Nature of the Study

This study will utilize a qualitative case study approach to learn how students with SLD and Office of Disability Service Specialists perceive accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills in a public community college setting. The study will interview students with SLD regarding the length of time a disability has been identified, the accommodations previously accessed in the secondary educational setting compared to current college accommodations, the current barriers, and student self-advocacy skills. The interviewing of ODS' will provide their perceptions of the current accommodations, their role in supporting students with disabilities, barriers they encounter, interpretations, and expectations of student self-advocacy skills.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The increase in students with disabilities attending postsecondary education has resulted in more requests for accommodations (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). According to Summers et al. (2014), "the number of students with disabilities enrolling in postsecondary education rose from 27% in 2003 to 57% in 2009". The largest identified group with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education is students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) at approximately 29% of the students self-disclosing a disability (Costello & Stone, 2012). As the population of students with disabilities attending college continues to rise, the need for access to accommodations, supports, guidance, and awareness is in demand. Milsom and Dietz (2009) state despite the fact that more students with SLD are pursuing education at two- and four-year colleges, many do not complete their degrees. According to Cortiella, Candace, Horowitz, Newman, and Kaye (2014), the college completion rate of students with SLD is 41% compared to 52% of the general population (p. 28). As enrollment for students with SLD continues to rise and completion rates do not, it appears there is a need to prepare students for college readiness.

Conley (2007) indicated college readiness is not merely about the GPA, test scores and achievement scores; college readiness is about the ability to synthesize, organize, self-advocate, and the group dynamics. When students with disabilities enter the postsecondary setting, assumptions are made that the supports and accommodations from the secondary setting will remain the same. Mellard and Shaw (2004) state the students and their parents are often surprised to find the IEP that served to guide accommodations in high school is not sufficient documentation in postsecondary institutions. A postsecondary institution is required to provide "appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure that it does not discriminate on the

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basis of disability", however the institution is not mandated to provide the accommodations "if it produces undue burden financially or alters the program significantly" (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2007).

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (2014) states there is no requirement for high schools to conduct or update evaluations in order to provide additional information to support postsecondary institutions. Several research studies have argued this is a frustration for postsecondary personnel as the requirement for students with disabilities to meet criteria and qualify in the postsecondary setting is to have an intellectual and academic assessment completed in the last three years to indicate there is a disability (de Vries & Schmitt, 2008; Shaw & Dukes III, 2013; Summers et al., 2014). Rather, the federal law requires only a summary of performance to provide a description of current student progress on goals, academic achievement within the school setting, functional progress, and recommendations for future plans (de Vries & Schmitt, 2008). These future plans are identified as transition areas regarding home living, jobs and job training potential, postsecondary education, community participation, recreation and leisure (Georgallis, 2015). There are no requirements in the summary of performance to document the criteria or specific detail needed for a student upon exiting secondary education, which may lead to additional concern for providing supports to students with disabilities in the postsecondary setting (de Vries & Schmitt, 2008).

Students with disabilities graduating from the public educational system of birth-21 have received special education services under the IDEA law. Upon graduation IDEA ends, Section 504 remains and a third law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), provides support for individuals with disabilities. The catch with ADA is it doesn't activate until an individual discloses a disability, and provides documentation of the disability (Gormley et al, 2005;

Lindstrom, 2007; Shaw & Dukes III, 2013). If a student does not have the appropriate

documentation, and requests services, the student pays for an evaluation to identify a disability

(Agran et al., 2002; Price et al., 2007; Yell, 2012).

The ability to access accommodations in a postsecondary setting is initiated by the

student locating the disability service center, proclaiming a disability, and providing

documentation regarding the disability. In the secondary setting, students with disabilities have

not had to proclaim they have a disability. IDEA mandated it is the school district's

responsibility to find children with disabilities, evaluate, then proceed with providing the

supports, and accommodations (Cawthon & Cole 2010; DaDeppo, 2009; Janiga & Costenbader,

2002; Newman et al., 2011).

There is a significant gap between the accommodations in secondary and postsecondary

settings (Cortiella et al., 2014; Madaus & Shaw, 2004). This literature review provides

information on the three laws for individuals with disabilities, differences in accommodations

between secondary and postsecondary settings, barriers encountered in the postsecondary setting

for students with disabilities, self-advocacy skills, and the need for continued research on

improving access for students with disabilities in the postsecondary setting.

Laws affecting Students with Special Education Needs

According to Yell (2012), the first federal civil rights law protecting the rights of

individuals with disabilities was Section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act of 1973. This law

provided anti-discrimination protection for individuals with disabilities to access federally

funded programs, educational institutions, and employment (U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services Office for Civil Rights, 2015). Two years later, the Education of All

Handicapped Children Act of 1975 provided a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to

all qualified students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 18 (Kavale et al, 2009; PepNet.com, 2012). By September 1, 1980, the federal government changed FAPE to provide all students with disabilities up to the age of 21 (Gormley et al, 2005; Research Department of the Minnesota House of Representatives, 2014). Once the federal government stipulated public education is provided up to the age of 21, transition skills training was incorporated into the special education curriculum (Gormley et al, 2005; Research Department of the Minnesota House of Representatives, 2014). In 1990, the name changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and mandated secondary educators via the IEP team to include a transition goal in the IEP the year a student turns 14 years old (Kaufman, 2005). This law mandates secondary educators create a plan for students with disabilities regarding preparation for post high school life including education and work related skills. With the passage of IDEA '97, the law changed to define public education curriculum as "referring to the same curriculum as for nondisabled students and that it is expected so that disabled students educational programs will be derived from this general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the child" (Agran et al., 2002, p. 123).

In 2004, the name was changed to the Individual with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA) and included appropriate measureable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, and employment to assist the child in reaching these goals (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005, p. 8). IDEIA 2004 is geared to "improving the academic and functional achievement" to facilitate the child's movement into postsecondary education or other post school activities (Smith, 2005; Zirkel, 2006). These laws ensure individuals with disabilities an education in the least restrictive environment in agreement with same age peers (National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition, 2005).

In 2001, the federal government wanted to improve education for all students; therefore the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law in January of 2002, (Bowen & Rude, 2006, p. 24). This act required the school districts to bring all students up to state standards in reading and math and to close the achievement gap for specific subgroups including students with disabilities (Schifter, 2011). According to Yell (2012), it was felt "if students with disabilities were not included in the accountability they would be excluded and not receive the academic instruction they deserved". The passage of IDEIA 2004 aligned special education supports with NCLB so students with disabilities would be allowed the access to benefit from the standardized curriculum (Collins et al., 2005). Bowen and Rude (2006) state "NCLB proponents argue that all children, including those with disabilities, are held accountable to the high outcomes and the academic potential of students with disabilities be held as high a priority as typically developing students" (p. 25). In an effort to create higher outcomes and academic rigor for students with disabilities, standards-based IEPs have been developed to create goals reflecting alignment with the standards established for grade level curriculum. NCLB offered students with disabilities inclusion in assessment reporting for each school. NCLB and IDEIA included students with disabilities in testing and standards-based curriculum to improve academics so all students would have the possibility to enroll in postsecondary education. In 2015, NCLB received a name change to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and an upgrade by informing schools to ensure high academic standards for every student to be prepared for careers and college (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). ESSA's key points are the alignment of academic standards to college entrance exams, preparing students for the world of work and including protections for vulnerable students (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017).

Additional protections involve Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as an overarching

civil rights law that safeguard individuals with disabilities and can assist in an education setting

to provide accommodations (Anderson & Wylie, 2008). " (2012) states Section 504 offers the

direction of supports" for individuals with disabilities but does not have the strict requirements of

IDEA (p. 52). According to Madaus and Shaw (2004), unlike IDEA, Section 504 is "outcome-

neutral" and focuses on promoting access to individuals with disabilities. Services "are not

required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for handicapped and non-

handicapped persons, but must afford handicapped persons equal opportunity to obtain the same

result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement…" (p. 82).

At the postsecondary level, ADA defines the accommodations and supports for

individuals with disabilities. ADA, amended in 2008, renamed the Americans with Disabilities

Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) provides a broad range of qualified areas and impacts the access

to employment, accommodations made in a postsecondary setting, accommodations to

instruction and the accessibility to buildings (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Newman et al., 2011;

Sparks & Lovett, 2014). This law does not involve modifying curriculum or adjusting a timeline

for withdrawing from a class, which are supports students may have received in the birth-21

educational system. In navigating postsecondary education, students with SLD need to be

prepared to locate the support services and self advocate (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Getzel, 2012;

Madaus & Shaw, 2004).

Zirkel (2007) states as students with disabilities look towards their future, public

education special education teachers are obligated to start this conversation with students aged of

14 and older. To improve the transition to accessing postsecondary academic supports for

students with disabilities, Price et al., (2007), suggests teaching and preparing students during

their last years of high school, training professionals about disabilities and the ADA, and informing individuals with disabilities and parents about their rights under ADA. For almost three decades, Hughes and Carter (2011) state "the in- and post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities have provided an important gauge of the quality and relevance of special education and transition services" (p. 177).

These different laws reflect a progression of advocacy for individuals with disabilities. From the detailed and directed IDEIA laws within the birth-21 educational system, individuals with disabilities are given opportunities to access accommodations and modifications for success in the academic setting. Section 504 provides anti-discriminatory language, improving accessibility, and offering protections for individuals with disabilities. NCLB provides access to the standards-based curriculum and increasing the rigor of academics benefitting all students. Once a student graduates from the birth-21 educational system, the IDEIA and NCLB laws no longer apply. Section 504 and ADAAA offer civil rights protections and accommodations. ADAAA qualifies individuals with disabilities in a broader sense, which may result in someone previously identified as having a disability in the secondary setting to no longer qualifying with a disability in the postsecondary setting (Pacer Inc., 2013; Shaw & Dukes III, 2013; Smith & Cherry, 2008).

Postsecondary Education and Students with Disabilities

The ADAAA provides access without the discrimination and removal of barriers for students with disabilities (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005). Unlike the birth-21 laws, ADAAA requires self-disclosure of a disability and federal law prohibits agencies from seeking this information about disabilities. According to Price et al., (2007), "if individuals with SLD do not disclose their disability, then the protections laid out in the ADA are moot". Leake and Stodden (2014)

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state "the admission of one's disability has an associated stigma". Anderson and Wylie (2008) suggest there may be a fear that classmates perceive unfairness if an individual is given "extra time to complete a time-pressured, high stakes tests". For personal reasons, students may decide not to disclose their disability, thereby putting themselves in more of a predicament, as they may not receive the necessary accommodations (Orr & Goodman, 2010). Another difficulty may be the process to obtain services, as the individual with a disability needs to seek out the disability service center at the postsecondary level, whereas in high school, it was the obligation of the school district to find students with disabilities and provide the services (Summers et al., 2014).

Student Barriers to Accessing Accommodations

Supports offered for individuals with disabilities in the postsecondary setting may be similar, different, or course-specific compared to the secondary setting (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010; Summers et al., 2014). Students with SLD know there will be accommodations and supports at the college setting, but it is difficult to identify which college will offer which supports, as there is a lack of consistency between colleges (Cortiella et al., 2014). According to Murray et al., (2008), research is focusing on understanding the supports and accommodations offered in the postsecondary setting.

In the postsecondary setting, accommodations are provided to students with disabilities after they self-disclose and provide the documentation identifying the disability. Another barrier is students with SLD may have a difficult time providing postsecondary required documentation as the requirements of secondary evaluations are changing. School districts are required to evaluate a student with a disability every three years. After obtaining three evaluations that document valid and reliable results of intellectual ability and academic achievement of a student, the evaluation team is no longer required to evaluate. The evaluation team may review the

information provided from the current academic progress to determine if the student continues to demonstrate a continued need for special education services in the identified disability area (State of Minnesota, 2015). At the secondary level, a student with SLD may continue to meet special education criteria based on their current academic progress and not receive additional assessments to identify intellectual ability. Postsecondary education relies on the most current evaluation reports to determine the discrepancy between ability and achievement. If public education had not assessed within the students high school education, postsecondary may request that the student pay for a current evaluation (Gormley et al, 2005; Shaw & Dukes III, 2013). Once a student has provided the documentation, is accepted as having a qualified disability and can access the Office of Disability Services (ODS), accommodations accessed are based on the course work, student need, and availability (Banjaree, Madaus & Gelbar, 2015, Hadley, 2007; Orr & Goodman, 2010).

One barrier that may impact a student with SLD is the change of support systems from being assigned a specific case manager at the secondary level to an ODS Specialist at the postsecondary institution (Garrison-Wade, 2012). Access to the ODS may be on a more limited basis due to the needs of all students with disabilities on campus. Another barrier may be the shift of responsibility from the school district and parent to the student with SLD (Garrison-Wade, 2012). The last barrier postsecondary ODS' have identified as a need for students with disabilities is the continued difficulty in navigating the expectations of a postsecondary setting (de Vries & Schmitt, 2008; Garrison-Wade, 2012).

Self-Advocacy of Students with SLD

According to de Vries and Schmitt (2008), there is a noticeable gap between the self-advocacy skills of students with SLD in the birth-21 public school education and postsecondary

systems. Hughes and Carter (2011) state, "that despite many gains over the years for students in special education, every available indicator still suggests that young people with SLD are not thriving, as they should during this transition to adulthood". Researchers state an increase in self-advocacy skills for students with SLD increases the likelihood access to accommodations will occur (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Getzel, 2012). Many researchers suggest the high school transition teams need to provide students with disabilities a better understanding of their strengths, areas needing improvement, recognition of disability, and the specific accommodations accessed (Eckes & Ochoa, 2005; Garrison-Wade, 2012; Getzel, 2012; Janiga & Costenbader, 2002). Janiga and Costenbader (2002) stress the importance of students with disabilities understanding the differences between the laws and the effects those differences have on the ability to access accommodations.

Research needs

Due to the changes from IDEIA to ADAAA, there are several challenges in educating students with SLD to transition from the secondary to the postsecondary setting. The first need is identifying the supports accessed in the secondary setting, and comparing these to the accessed supports in the postsecondary setting. The second need in supporting the transition of students with SLD would be for a research team to follow a group of students with SLD from the start of their high school career to the second year of postsecondary. According to Schrader and Brown (2008), by understanding the entry characteristics of new college students and their developmental experiences, we will be better equipped to facilitate student development and growth. The third need is many of the studies have been conducted by a phenomenological or case study approach of students with SLD navigating four-year college disability services, and very few have been conducted in a public community college setting.

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A fourth need is "listening to the student voice" as one way to identify how students learn (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Research is needed for students with disabilities in expressing their interpretations of the coursework, instructors, and institutional supports. Finally, the research on "in- and out-of-class experiences regarding academic and social skills, learning and thinking strategies," is needed to identify the full postsecondary education experience (Schrader & Brown, 2008, p. 313). Anderson and Wylie (2008) state, "it is time to develop specific practices to help students with disabilities bridge that gap whether or not they have a legal right to invoke the ADA" (p. 10).

Chapter III: Methodology

Philosophy and Justification

A qualitative case study was used to identify the perceptions of Office of Disability Service Specialists and students' with SLD accessing accommodations in a public community college setting compared to previously accessed accommodations in the high school setting. Research on accommodation differences between high school and four-year postsecondary institutions is comprehensive, but little research has been conducted regarding students with SLD perceptions of public community college accommodations. Identifying the perceptions of Office of Disability Service Specialists and students with SLD accessing public community college accommodations would benefit students with SLD prior to high school graduation, secondary special education case managers comparing high school accommodations to college accommodations, as well as college instructors' and the college Office of Disability Service Specialists understanding of the incoming students' knowledge and expectations. The college Office of Disability Service Specialists (ODS) and the students with SLD attending public community colleges were the target populations for the study. The public community college's Office of Disability Service Specialists (ODS) will be contacted to explain the purpose of the study, and request permission to interview both ODS' and students with SLD currently accessing college ODS services. A semi-structured interview was utilized as "it allows for the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 2009, p. 90).

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to what is received at the public community college?

RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?

RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?

Theoretical Framework

Once a student with a disability graduates from the birth through age 21 public educational system special education law changes in regards to accessing accommodations. This study was conducted by using a qualitative case study approach to explore Office of Disability Service Specialists (ODS) and students with SLD perceptions of the access to accommodations in a postsecondary educational setting, the barriers encountered, and self-advocacy skills revealed. Merriam (2009) states "a case study might be selected for its very uniqueness, for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge to which we would not otherwise have known" (p. 46). The purpose of the study is to discover the perceptions of ODS Specialists and students with SLD in regard to the differences between the secondary and postsecondary accommodations, the barriers encountered, and the self-advocacy skills needed in a public community college setting.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to examine how students with SLD navigate the postsecondary setting when the supports that had previously been in place have changed.

Some questions around emerging themes were:

- Suppose I needed to navigate the college system to access accommodations, how would the ODS be able to help?

- Would you describe the differences between secondary and college accommodations?

- Any advice you would like to give to incoming students?

- At the secondary level, the case managers would self-advocate for the student, how is this different in college?

- Would you say there are specific self-advocacy skills needed in the college setting to access ODS services at the public community college? What are these self-advocacy skills?

Another objective was to gain insight from the Office of Disability Service Specialists as to how to inform the secondary case managers of the changes in law and how best to prepare students for the changes so they are not frustrated or floundering when they move to the postsecondary setting. Janiga and Costenbader (2002) stress the importance for students with disabilities is to understand the differences between the laws and the effects those differences have on the ability to access accommodations.

Research Design Strategy

A qualitative methodology was used in this study. Creswell (2009) states, "in utilizing qualitative methodology, the researcher seeks to establish meaning of a phenomenon from the views of the participants" (p. 16).

Purposive sampling was utilized to select students with SLD and Office of Disability Service Specialists located at public community colleges in a mid-west state. Creswell (2009)

suggests, "purposefully selecting participants or sites will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p. 178). The interview questions located in Appendix B provided the information needed to answer the research questions in this dissertation. Student participants were invited to be interviewed and for their efforts were offered a $40.00 gift card. A choice of face-to-face, video conferencing, or phone interviews was conducted based on the preference of each participant.

Instrumentation and Measures

A semi-structured interview mode was utilized to gather data on Office of Disability Service Specialists and students with SLD perceptions of accommodation access, barriers, and self-advocacy skills in public community colleges. Sixteen questions in a semi-structured interview were employed to offer the opportunity to support the interviewee in any direction the conversation flows. Merriam (2009) states "in a semi-structured interview either all of the questions are more flexibly worded or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions" (p. 90). This allowed for a freer form of interview by offering guiding questions and key points to ponder. Table 3.1 provides a visual of the research questions and connection to the key literature themes and participant interview questions.

Table 3.1 Student Participant interview questions

Research Question	Themes	Interview Questions
RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to	Perceptions of students with SLD of accommodations at the public community college	1. In high school, a case manager plans the supports or services to help with academics.

what is received at the public community college?		What types of supports or services did you receive in high school?
		2. How did high school prepare you for college?
		3. Can you describe any differences between high school and college?
		4. What types of accommodations or services are you receiving in college?
		5. Any advice you would like to share for incoming students?
RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?	Self-advocacy skills	6. Please walk me through the process of applying for assistance at the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) and discussing SLD?
		7. Please describe self-

		advocacy skills needed to access accommodations at college.
		8. How have you communicated your accommodation needs regarding your Specific Learning Disability to your instructors?
		9. How has accessing disability support services made you stronger?
RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?	Interpretation of barriers	10. What were the most difficult aspects of advocating for college services?
		11. In high school, the case managers would advocate for the student, how is this different in college?
		12. Regarding accommodations at

		college, is there one thing you would like to see changed?
		13. Is there anything else you would like to share?
Demographic questions	Differences between demographic information and accessibility access	14. What is your ethnicity?
		15. What is your gender?
		16. How many years have you been diagnosed with SLD?

The interview questions were field tested by one Office of Disability Service Specialist to assist with determining the length of time needed for the interview questions. The researcher had field, and pilot tested the interview questions to establish reliability and validity. After Bethel University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study, a pilot test was conducted. This pilot test was used to determine content validity by disseminating the interview questions to two Office of Disability Service Specialists working at public community college located in the mid-west. The Office of Disability Service Specialists provided feedback regarding the simplicity, length of time to participate in the interview, and clarity of the questions. Internal validity was determined by multiple methods of data collection (Merriam, 2009). The convenience sample of two public community colleges in a mid-western state was used to increase validity. The field test and pilot test increased the reliability of the interview questions

through repeated measurement (Mujis, 2011). The interview consisted of open-ended questions to provide insight into each of the three research questions. There were five interview questions providing information to the first research question of the accessed accommodation differences between the high school and the public community college setting. Four interview questions related to the second research question of how self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college setting. Four additional interview questions offered insight into the third research question of any barriers when accessing public community disability services. The demographic information were the last three questions to identify gender, ethnicity, and years identified with SLD to determine if a difference exists between demographic information and accommodation access. Open-ended questions were used for participants to relate experiences in high school and college, describe the barriers, self-advocacy skills, and additional information students decide to share. According to Mujis (2011), open-ended questions allow respondents to formulate their own answer (p. 40).

Table 3.2 Office of Disability Service Specialist interview questions

Research Question	Themes	Interview Questions
RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to what is received at the public community college?	Perceptions of students with SLD of accommodations at the public community college	1. How does one apply for assistance at Office for Students with Disabilities? 2. In your experience, what are some major differences between

		accommodations in high school vs. college? Are incoming freshman aware of these differences? 3. Who determines the types of accommodations students are eligible to receive?
RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?	Self-advocacy skills	4. There are differences between secondary and college accommodations, how can a secondary case manager prepare students for these differences? 5. Any advice you would like to give to incoming students? 6. In what way are students informed that they need to self-advocate for their accommodations? 7. During a child's high

		school years, parents have played an integral part in their child's advocacy, what has been your experience with helping a family work through this adjustment?
RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?	Interpretation of barriers	8. Are there any accommodations that students may receive in high school that may not carry over to the college environment? 9. What is one thing about college accommodations you would like to see changed? 10. Is there anything else you would like to share?
Demographic questions	Differences between demographic information and accessibility access	11. What is your job title? 12. How many years have you been working with

		students with disabilities in this role?
		13. What is your ethnicity?
		14. What is your gender?

To obtain reliability and validity regarding accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed in a college setting, Office of Disability Service Specialists at public community colleges were interviewed in regard to their perspectives. Their insight equated to an additional source of data to increase internal validity. The convenience sample of two public community colleges in a mid-western state was used to increase validity. The ODS interviews consisted of 14 open-ended questions to provide additional insight into each of the three research questions. There were three interview questions offering information into the first research question of the accessed accommodation differences between the high school and the public community college setting. Four interview questions related to the second research question of how self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college setting. There were three interview questions providing insight into the third research question of any lingering barriers after accessing public community college disability services. The demographic information were the last four questions to identify gender, ethnicity, job title, and number of years working with students with disabilities to determine if a difference exists between demographic information and perceptions of access. Open-ended questions were used for participants to relate their perceptions of working with students recently graduated from high school and currently in college, to describe barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed in the

college setting as well as additional information they decided to share. According to Mujis (2011), open-ended questions allow respondents to formulate their own answer (p. 40).

Sample

The sample was students with SLD and Office of Disability Service Specialists at two public community colleges in the state of Minnesota. Invitation emails (Appendix B) were sent to the Office of Disability Service Specialists at the two public community colleges (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2014a). The ODS Specialists identified students with SLD at their college and volunteer sampling was implemented to invite students with SLD to be interviewed. The hope was to have up to six students and four ODS Specialists participate in the study.

Each Minnesota public community college has a separate Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee process. Prior to researching the students with SLD at the two public community colleges, this study was sent to the Bethel IRB for approval of the study, was then sent to the two public community college IRB committees. Participation in the study was a volunteer sampling of students with SLD. After obtaining permission to conduct the research, an introduction to the study was sent by email to two of the public community college Office of Disability Service (ODS) Specialists for dissemination to students with SLD (Appendix C). The consent form for each individual to participate was included in the email invitation. The ODS Specialist was contacted one time each week by email for two consecutive weeks with the number of participants responding to be interviewed. After the second week, the invitation process closed and the researcher sent an email to the ODS Specialist with the updated number of participants and a request for an anticipated week to schedule the interviews. The selection

process for student participants was based on a first-come, first-served basis. The Office of

Disability Services at a public community college is a relatively small office and employs a

Director, an Accessibility Specialist, an Accommodations Specialist and an Administrative

Assistant. To participate in the study as ODS personnel, the hope was to have a Director, an

Accessibility Specialist and an Accommodations Specialist from each participating college. One

public community college (BNC) shared the role of an Accessibility Specialist arranges intake

meetings, discusses reasonable accommodations, helps students with time management skills and

the role of an Accommodations Specialist implements any accommodation for students and

assists with organizational skills.

Setting

The setting for this study was two public community colleges within the state of

Minnesota. Public community colleges are defined as public colleges awarding students with

certifications, and/or Associates of Arts degrees. Students with SLD accessing ODS services

and accommodations as well as ODS Specialists were the participants.

Data Collection Procedures

Permission to conduct research began by receiving approval from the Bethel University

IRB and from the two selected Minnesota public community college IRB committees. Research

ethics and human subject protections were integrated by first providing detailed information of

the study and informed consent to Bethel's IRB prior to obtaining permission to proceed with the

study. The IRB process involved submitting the approved study proposal to the IRB committee

to determine if there was detrimental impact to human subjects. Once Bethel's IRB committee

approved the study, the researcher was able to proceed with seeking IRB approval at the public

community institutions. Each public community college had an IRB process in which the process was to submit the proposed study to the public community college for review. Once approval from each public community college IRB was received, the ODS Specialist at the public community college was emailed the purpose of the study and the need for research. A notification on the introductory email informed the ODS Specialist and study participants that a summary of data specific to each college was to be shared upon the study's completion. Once permission was granted to conduct the research, a contact at the ODS was identified and emailed the consent to interview.

The email invitation and consent to participate was sent to the public community college ODS Specialist with the request to forward to the students with SLD. The email included a brief introduction of the purpose of the study, information that the interview was audio recorded, and an attached consent to participate. Once the initial email was sent, a weekly update was sent for two consecutive weeks to the ODS Specialist in regard to student consent to participate. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. At the time of the interview, a pseudonym was assigned to each participant. The participants were informed to allow for up to 45 minutes to complete the interview. The researcher asked permission to audio record the interview. Merriam (2009) states "this practice ensures everything said is preserved for analysis" (p. 109). If a participant declined audio recording, the researcher had taken notes during the interview. The location of the interview was on campus in a public area or participants were given a choice of videoconferencing or phone interview. At the completion of the interview, the student received an envelope with a $40.00 gift card. In the event, the decision was to interview by videoconferencing or phone, the $40.00 gift card was mailed to the ODS with directions to

forward to the participant or the student consented to receive a direct payment of $40.00 from an online Paypal electronic transfer service to the cell phone number used for the phone interview.

Any identifying information was removed and each participant's initials were recorded on the electronic documents. Initials of the participants name were used to keep the information separated. The audio recordings were transcribed and sent to the participants at the end of the study. Each audio recording, transcription, and electronic file was kept on the researcher's password-protected computer. A copy was placed on an external hard drive. Any notes or hard copies of information were kept in a locked file cabinet and only accessed by the researcher. Once the findings have been presented and defended, the confidential electronic information was deleted. After defending the study, the notes or hard copies were shredded. Participants were contacted to determine if they were interested in receiving a copy of their individually transcribed interview session and that transcription was mailed to the college Office of Disability Service Specialists in a package. Each transcribed interview was placed in it's own pre-stamped envelope for the ODS to address and mail to the interested participant. The two colleges were given a pseudonym as well.

Data Analysis

Merriam (2009) states "the overall process of data analysis begins by identifying segments in your data set that are responsive to your research questions" (p. 176). The data from the interview sessions, related to access to college accommodations, supports, obstacles, barriers, and strategies used for students with SLD, were the anticipatory themes. The data was organized and hand coded into themes by the researcher. According to Merriam, (2009), triangulation affords a more reliable qualitative study (p. 215). There were two triangulation methods of

internal validity employed for this study. The first, investigator triangulation occurs by

involving another researcher to analyze the data, an inter-coder with experience in qualitative

methodology will identify and code independent themes for comparison (Creswell, 2009). The

second form of triangulation involved multiple interview participants by interviewing students

with SLD in regard to their perceptions of accommodations, barriers, self-advocacy, and the

Office of Disability Service Specialists who work with students with SLD to provide access to

accommodations.

Limitations of Methodology

The use of an interview for a qualitative methods study does have limitations. Sample

size was limited to the voluntary participation by the students with SLD attending two public

community colleges in the state of Minnesota. A limitation may be bias from the participants or

the researcher (Vogt, 2007). The participants may exhibit "social desirability bias meaning

respondents give answers by trying to predict what the researcher is seeking" (Muijs, 2011).

Bias from the researcher may be "experimenter expectation", as the researcher expects a certain

outcome from the experiment (p. 65).

Limitations of this study included the various accommodations students with SLD

accessed in high school and at the public community college. Different terminology may

describe previous or current accommodations. Verbiage from the interview questions may have

unfamiliarity for the student with SLD to comprehend based on different terminology. Other

limiting factors may be the students with SLD participated in similar research, or could have

been newly identified with SLD prior to the interview. The impact of positive or negative

experiences with accessing the accommodations in college may influence the students with SLD perceptions of the interview questions.

Lastly, the interview was limited to the small geographical boundary of one state. Limiting the interview to the State of Minnesota "may reduce the generalizability to the rest of the United States" (Vogt, 2007). Access to accommodations for students with SLD in Minnesota may be different compared to access in other states.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics and human subject protections were integrated by first providing detailed information of the study and informed consent to Bethel's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to starting the study. Permission from the public community college Institutional Review Board's was obtained prior to participant invitations. An email with the explanation and invitation to the study was provided to the public community college ODS with instructions to forward to the students with SLD. Results of the interview were anonymous. Data was collected and stored on the researcher's password protected laptop and an external hard drive.

The research on accommodation differences between the high school and four-year postsecondary institutions is comprehensive, but little research has been conducted regarding the students with SLD perceptions of public community college accommodations. This qualitative methods study interviewed the Office of Disability Service Specialists and students with SLD to learn about perceptions of accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills in a public community college setting. The next chapters provided the results and summarize the findings of the study.

Chapter IV: Results

Nature of the Study

A qualitative study was utilized to investigate how students with SLD and ODS staff perceive the academic supports, barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed at two public community colleges in a mid-western state. The intent was to provide awareness to secondary case managers and postsecondary personnel about the gaps between accommodations and supports in the secondary and public community college educational systems. Supports offered at the postsecondary level were similar, different, reduced, or disability and course specific when compared to secondary supports.

The intent for the study in regard to secondary case mangers was to provide information to better prepare students with SLD for increased self-advocacy skills, postsecondary education supports, and anticipated barriers. Secondary students with SLD may perceive postsecondary education supports to be similar to those offered in the secondary setting. Learning from the experiences of current students with SLD in the postsecondary setting may better prepare current secondary students for a postsecondary experience. In addition, providing these insights to secondary special educators about the changes in laws and the expectations of postsecondary accommodations results in more preparedness for transition age students.

The intent for the postsecondary personnel working with students with SLD was to provide awareness of the gaps and differences from the secondary level accommodations compared to the postsecondary accommodations. The increased awareness of these differences is advantageous to promote systemic change for the colleges and students with SLD.

Purposive sampling was utilized to select six students with SLD and four faculty members of the Office of Disability Service office located at two public community colleges in a mid-west state. Creswell (2009) suggests, "purposefully selecting participants or sites will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p. 178). The two public community colleges each assigned one faculty member to be the contact person to arrange for the interviews of students and faculty members. The researcher sent the study invitation email, which is located in Appendices E and F, to the assigned faculty member. The faculty member then forwarded that email to ODS colleagues and to the students actively receiving accommodation support from the ODS office. Six students and four ODS faculty members responded to participate in the interviews.

Setting

The setting for this study was two public community colleges within the state of Minnesota. Public community colleges are defined as public colleges awarding students with certifications, and/or Associates of Arts degrees. ODS faculty members and students with SLD accessing ODS services and accommodations were the participants. The two public community colleges participating in the study were given pseudonyms, the first being ANH located in a northern suburban city of Minneapolis, and BNC located in a southern suburban city of Minneapolis. ANH student population is almost 11,000 students with 200 accessing the ODS services and accommodations. BNC's student population is almost 15,000 with a range of 450-600 students accessing the ODS services and accommodations. ANH offered a private conference room located within the library for face-to-face interviews. BNC suggested phone interviews as participant work schedules required more flexibility.

Findings

The following three research questions guided the study to examine the perceptions of Office of Disability Service Specialists and students with SLD utilizing accommodations, identification of barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed at a public community college. A total of ten participants completed the study, five students from ANH, one student from BNC, two ODS specialists from ANH and two ODS specialists from BNC. Students were identified as student participants and ODS specialists were identified as faculty participants. Each student participant was coded by a pseudonym with the first three letter abbreviations of the college and the letter of the alphabet to indicate the order of being interviewed. Faculty participants had the first three letter abbreviations of the college and the letter of the alphabet to indicate the order of being interviewed as well as the numeral one added behind the alphabetical letter to further distinguish them from the student participants. Before the interview started, participants gave consent to have the interview audio recorded.

The audio recordings of the interview were transcribed one week after each interview, kept on a password protected laptop and an external hard drive. One week after each transcription was completed, the researcher read the transcription through one time, printed them out, read them a second time and coded each section. The researcher had asked a colleague to be an inter-rater. This inter-rater recently earned his doctorate by researching a similar topic. The inter-rater independently read and coded two transcripts. The researcher reviewed the inter-rater codes and made adjustments to the coding approach for the rest of the transcripts. Themes and sub-themes were identified to further code the data.

The results for each research question were presented in the sequence of the student

participants' first, followed by the results from the faculty participants. Final summary of
themes were presented based on the results of the student participants and faculty participants.
Table 4.1 is an overview of the students as student participants involved in the study. Table 4.2
is an overview of the ODS specialists as faculty participants involved in this study.

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received
in the high school to what is received at the public community college?

RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at
the public community college?

RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability
services at the public community college?

Table 4.1 Overview of Students as Research Participants

Student Participant	Gender	Years Diagnosed with SLD
ANH A	Male	2
ANH B	Female	15
ANH C	Female	3.5
BNC D	Female	12
ANH E	Female	12
ANH F	Male	22

Table 4.2 Overview of ODS Specialists as Research Participants

Faculty Participant	Gender	Number of years as ODS

ANH A1	Male	4
ANH B1	Female	2
BNC C1	Female	3
BNC D1	Female	16

Table 4.3 illustrates the student participants experience with high school and college level accommodations.

Table 4.3 Student Participant Comparison of Accommodations in High School and College

Student Participants	High School Accommodations	College Accommodations
ANH A	Minimal Supports	Extended time on tests, note taker, audio books, Kurzweil [a screen reader].
ANH B	None received	Audio books, private room for testing, extended time for tests, preferential seating, extended time for assignments due to medical, Kurzweil [a screen reader].
ANH C	Didn't need them as injury occurred after high school.	Recording class lectures, note taker, extended time for tests

		and at times for assignments due to absences, Kurzweil [a screen reader], accommodations for physical activity in PE classes.
BNC D	Had extended time on tests and extra time for writing papers.	Extended time on tests
ANH E	Extended time on tests, private testing room, note takers, use of notes on tests, audio books and audio tests	Time and a half on tests, private testing room, audio books and audio tests, preferential seating in front, note takers, Kurzweil [a screen reader]
ANH F	Extended time on tests	Extended time on tests, Kurzweil [a screen reader], audio books

Interview Procedure

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions to provide insight into each of the three research questions. Responses to the first research question were received from student and faculty participants by answering a separate set of interview questions. Student participant

questions were in regard to the high school experience with a case manager, the types of support or services received in high school, whether or not high school prepared them for college, the differences between high school and college, and the current accommodations received in college. Faculty participant questions focused on the process of applying for ODS services, major differences between high school and college accommodations, incoming student awareness of these differences, and the responsible party for determining college accommodations for students.

The study consisted of 16 interview questions for the student participants. There were five interview questions related to the first research question of the accessed accommodation differences between the high school and the public community college setting. Four interview questions related to the second research question of how self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college setting. Four interview questions offered insight into the third research question of any barriers when accessing public community college disability services. The last four questions focused on demographic information seeking to identify gender, ethnicity, and years identified with SLD to determine if a difference exists between demographic information and accommodation access. The faculty member's aligned to support the study had been given three interview options to present to the study participants, the first being a face-to-face interview, the second was a phone call, and the third was a videoconference. The faculty members at each college determined the first option of face-to-face interviews to be beneficial. The first college, ANH, had arranged for three days of interview opportunities and one student was interviewed over the phone as that student had returned home for the summer. The only difficulty had been arranging the interview times

around finals. The first interview at ANH was with the ODS director to learn more about the services, to arrange the interview times for the students, and one additional ODS Specialist. At ANH, the ODS director had reserved a private conference room for the interviews. This private conference room was located in the library. At BNC, due to finals and student work schedules all interviews were arranged over the phone. The ODS Specialists were first to be interviewed, and the last interview was the one student from BNC.

The ODS faculty interview consisted of 14 open-ended questions to provide additional insight into each of the three research questions. There were three interview questions related to the first research question of the accessed accommodation differences between the high school and the public community college setting. Four interview questions related to the second research question of how self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing ODS services at the public community college setting. Three interview questions provided insight into the third research question of any lingering barriers after accessing public community college ODS services. The demographic information comprised the last four questions to identify gender, ethnicity, job title, and number of years working with students with disabilities to determine if a difference exists between demographic information and the perceptions of access.

The faculty participants expressed their knowledge of secondary and postsecondary accommodations in Table 4.4. The faculty participants stated their understanding of secondary accommodation knowledge was based on conversations with secondary educators, information received from current college students, recent high school graduates entering the college, and the high school graduates parents. Two faculty participants had experience working in the special education field prior to their college positions.

Table 4.4 Faculty Participant Comparison of Accommodations in High School and College

Faculty Participants	High School Accommodations	College Accommodations
ANH A1	Accommodations and Modifications, minimal AT for those who qualify	Accommodations, and AT
ANH B1	No audio books	Kurzweil [a screen reader], Learning Ally [audio program], audio books
BNC C1	Flexibility on assignment deadlines, extended time on tests, flexible attendance policies	Case by case specific to class or instructor for assignment deadlines and attendance flexibility. Typical is extended time on tests, audio books
BNC D1	Extensions on assignments, using notes and book on tests, seeing the questions on the test prior to taking the test.	Extended time on tests usually time and a half, some situations double time. Case by case situation for disability related absences.

Findings for RQ1

 RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to what is received at the public community college?

Student Participant Question 1

 In high school, a case manager plans the supports or services to help with academics. What types of supports or services did you receive in high school?

 Three students had not been identified in high school and were able to qualify for ODS services in college. Two of these students stated if they would have known about the accommodations in high school they would have most likely been a better student. One student, who qualified in college, had been in a motor vehicle accident three years before and shared that prior to the motor vehicle accident, life had been without a need for supports. After the motor vehicle accident, the supports were necessary in providing access to relearn life. The student stated, "I basically had two lives, one before the accident and this one." Three students had been on IEPs in high school, one student stated there was a lot of interaction with the case manager and two had stated there had been limited interaction with their case managers. All three were aware of the accommodations accessed in high school and listed them quickly. One student stated some of the accommodations in high school such as extended time on assignments and the use of notes and books on tests did not transfer to college. For the six student participants, 50% qualified in high school for IEP supports, and accommodations and 50% were able to qualify for accommodations in college.

 Themes from Student Participant Question 1:

- Even though the three students stated they had minimal communication with their high

  school case manager, all three students were able to list their high school

  accommodations.

- Students were unaware that some accommodations may not transfer from high school to

  college

- Three students were not aware of access to accommodations prior to receiving them in

  college

Student Participant Question 2

How did high school prepare you for college?

Three students stated they felt high school did not prepare them for college. Student

ANH A replied, "college prepared me for college". Three other students stated high school

definitely prepared them for college, as one had been homeschooled up to tenth grade, then

during this student's junior and senior years had attended a private college preparatory charter

school. Two students who had received accommodations in high school stated that high school

had provided opportunities to tour colleges prior to graduation. The tours were felt to prepare

them for the college experience. During the tours, the students shared the campus personnel

provided information about orientation, offered suggestions to apply for support and discussed

the location of the campus Office of Disability Services. Upon registering for college, these two

students immediately applied for ODS services.

The theme from Student Participant Question 2:

- Three students felt high school prepared them for college and three felt their college

  experience prepared them for college

- Touring the college campus when in high school helped two students apply for ODS services

Student Participant Question 3

Can you describe any differences between high school and college?

The majority opinion was high school had more supports in place and was a lot easier. There were several statements of "more leniency" in high school compared to college. They stated high school allowed for extended time on assignments as well as being able to use books and notes on tests. College is different in that "you have to locate the supports". "If you miss an assignment in college, you missed it, there are no second chances." One student stated the structures and rules in college are a lot different than in high school. This student felt there were more leniencies in high school, yet liked the structure of college better.

Themes from Student Participant Question 3:

- For several students, high school was felt to be more lenient with assignments and accommodations than college
- Different systems between high school and college

Student Participant Question 4

Please walk me through your experience of applying for support from OSD?

Three students had been attending a different college prior to attending ANH. They shared that first experience was difficult and not successful. Upon starting ANH, all three decided to head straight to the ODS for support prior to registering for classes. This decision greatly improved their success in completing coursework expectations. Student ANH C, having been hospitalized and recovering from the motor vehicle accident, recognized help was needed.

This student's previous college experience had been successful without supports and the realization that support was needed was an adjustment. This student stated several times that the support was greatly appreciated but does not allow for anonymity.

Several students stated it was nerve-wracking to ask about ODS services. Telling someone about their disability wasn't something they would typically share with others upon first introduction. The fear of being embarrassed or stating "I need help" was difficult. Student ANH B stated, "Everyone who knows me, will tell you that I'm not the person who will ask for help. I'm stubborn, but then I was dedicated to being at school. So when I asked for help, I was happy that I did."

Themes from Student Participant Question 4

- Students felt uncomfortable or embarrassed when seeking support services
- Admitting the need for help is difficult to do

Student Participant Question 5

What types of accommodations or services are you receiving in college? Are these different than those received in high school?

The majority of students stated college accommodations were extended time on tests up to one and a half times, note takers, audio books and audio tests. Two students stated private rooms for testing, and preferential seating in the front. Two students stated leniency for disability related absences. One student had extra time for assignments, recorded lectures, and physical activity accommodations when taking a PE class. Many stated Kurzweil, a screen reader, and Learning Ally, an audio book program, were very helpful.

Overarching accommodations:

- Extended time on tests

- Audio books and audio tests

- Note takers

The responses to these five questions provided insight into the student perceptions of accommodation differences between high school and college. The themes that emerged from the five questions for student participants were even though there was minimal interaction with high school case managers, all three students were able to list their high school accommodations, high school was more lenient with assignments and accommodations than college, students were unaware that some accommodations may not transfer from high school to college, three students were unaware of access to accommodations prior to receiving them in college, three students interviewed felt high school prepared them for college and three felt their college experience prepared them for college. Five students of the six had feelings of being uncomfortable or embarrassed when seeking support services, and these five admitted that stating they needed help was a difficult thing to do. One student felt that accessing accommodations was not a problem and stated, "As a person with a disability, it helps to use the accommodations to your advantage".

For students who had been identified with a disability in high school and were receiving special education supports, the access to accommodations was appreciated. The students who had received the high school accommodations mentioned there was not a lot of interaction with their case managers, however it didn't appear to be an area of concern. Three students stated high school had prepared them for college and three stated high school had not prepared them for college. It is interesting to note, the three students who were receiving special education services

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in high school stated they felt high school had prepared them for college. Two students who had not received special education support in high school stated college was an adjustment due to the struggles with managing coursework, receiving failing grades, and then recognizing there was a need for the additional support.

For several students, high school was felt to be more lenient with assignments and accommodations than college, as the students who had received special education support in high school stated the systems in high school and college were different which meant there was an adjustment due to the changes in accommodations. Another change for students who had received special education services in high school was they were used to someone else taking care of the accommodations. This was indeed an adjustment, as they needed to be the one in charge of arranging their own accommodations, "the only way to prepare for college was to go to college" stated by ANH A.

The feelings of being uncomfortable or embarrassed when seeking support services and admitting to needing help seemed to be two large hurdles to overcome. However, once over those hurdles, there was a significant appreciation for the ODS and college accommodations. The student participant themes and sub-themes for RQ 1 are:

- Even though there was minimal interaction with high school case managers, all three students were able to list their high school accommodations
- Different systems between high school and college
    - High school was more lenient with assignments and accommodations than college

- Touring the college campus when in high school helped two students apply for ODS services

- Students were unaware that some accommodations may not transfer from high school to college

- Three students were unaware of access to accommodations prior to receiving them in college

- Three students felt high school prepared them for college and three felt their college experience prepared them for college

- Five students had feelings of being uncomfortable or embarrassed when seeking support services

- Admitting to needing help is difficult to do

This next section is the Faculty Participant questions in regard to Research Question 1.

Faculty Participant Question 1

How does one apply for assistance at Office for Students with Disabilities?

Students can call, email, drop-in with questions prior to registering with the college. As students are interested in attending college, they will want to take the Accuplacer Placement test. If students are in need of accommodations, they meet with someone from ODS. No documentation is required to obtain accommodations for the Accuplacer, however once students receive their score from the Accuplacer and they place at least at pre-college level in reading and writing, they can enroll in classes. Once students enroll in classes, then ODS will need documentation of a disability. An IEP or Section 504 plan is helpful, but is not the documentation ODS needs to make the determination for accommodations. ODS prefers to have

the three year evaluation report identifying the disability that qualified a student to receive

support in the secondary setting. Other types of accepted documentation are a medical diagnosis

from a physician or any type of documentation that would drive an IEP or Section 504 plan.

Once these documents are obtained by ODS, a formal interview with a small application are the

expected next steps. During the formal interview, the student answers questions related to the

current diagnosis, previous accommodations, areas of strength, and areas that need assistance in

order to create an accommodation plan. The emphasis is placed on "reasonable"

accommodations in the college setting. While reasonable accommodations level the playing

field, they do not alter the education in any way.   BNC C1 states, "The formal interview is to get

to know the student better, to review the paperwork, and to figure out what kind of

accommodations the student would receive.

Parents can attend the formal interview if the student signs a release of information to

authorize consent. When a student enters the college setting, the student is the person all college

personnel will interact with, parental interaction is very limited and defaults to student consent.

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 1:

- Criteria to receive ODS accommodations

    o Documentation of a disability is needed in order to qualify for college ODS

      services

    o Formal interview for ODS to identify student needs and develop an

      accommodation plan

Faculty Participant Question 2

In your experience, what are some major differences between accommodations in high school versus college? Are incoming freshman aware of these differences?

The major differences between accommodations in high school and college are that in high school, students could receive extended deadlines on assignments or be able to have their notes and books available for tests. Some students have stated they could review the test the day before, then use notes and books on the test the next day. In college, these types of accommodations are very rare and may be determined on a case-by-case situation when students may be able to use notes on their tests. Some instructors will have open book tests, which are for every student. BNC C1 stated, "Reasonable accommodations in college are so that each student is expected to meet the same expectations as everybody else."

The need for student self-advocacy was strongly emphasized by all of the faculty participants. ODS members stated, they have found that students coming from high school are used to having someone else advocate for them, either a case manager or parents. In college, the advocate is the student. This provides a new opportunity for students to be able to make their needs known. ANH A1 suggested, "Guiding thoughts are to have students learn the difference between accommodations and modifications in high school, and to learn more about being independent in high school." ANH A1 also shared a hard copy of the Postsecondary Resource Guide for students with disabilities that Minnesota State Colleges and Universities compiled to provide the needed information for students to prepare for college (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2014b). This resource guide provides many answers and checklists for students to utilize before registering for college. BNC C1 suggested, "Students should advocate for the accommodations they will receive in college to be reflected on their senior year IEP so they

become familiar with the structure and type of accommodations before actually experiencing them at the college level."

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 2:

- Students need to be aware of high school and college accommodation differences

- Intake process to determine student need and develop an accommodation plan

- Reasonableness of accommodations and identify differences between high school and college accommodations

Faculty Participant Question 3

Who determines the types of accommodations or services to be received in college?

There are broad accommodations for all. More specific accommodations are determined by the director of ODS or the Accommodations Specialist for each student based on the review of the IEP, and the three-year evaluation from K-12. BNC D1 stated, "If a student doesn't have an IEP, then the three-year evaluation or whatever is driving the need for accommodations is helpful in how we determine the college accommodations." BNC D1 also shared she worked with a consortium which included a secondary transition consultant from the Minnesota Department of Education to create the resource guide that would help prepare students and special educators for the transition to college (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2014b). As BNC D1 states, "this guide answers the majority of the questions students will have prior to applying for college" (2014b). ANH A1 stated, "The first few months, we try to implement as many reasonable accommodations as possible in our college setting so the student feels comfortable and then we will wean some of those as the student is more successful." BNC C1 stated, "The student will know what the initial accommodations are once the intake meeting

is completed." At any point, these accommodations can be adjusted based on student need and course specific requirements.

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 3:

- Paperwork required to identify a disability that will need accommodation support

- Reasonable accommodations are offered that fit within the college rigor

- Intake meeting to inform student of college expectations and to learn about students needs and develop an accommodation plan

The themes from faculty participant responses are primarily focused on the need for students to provide the necessary documentation of a disability to support accessing accommodations in the college setting. The intake meeting is a way for the ODS faculty to formalize the process by interviewing the student to ask about the student's strengths, areas that need support, and any additional life events that may hinder or delay a student's success. The faculty participants stated an overarching concern is if a student has received a lot of accommodations in high school then part of their role is to discuss with the student that some formerly accessed high school accommodations may not be offered at the college level.

The faculty participant themes for RQ 1 are:

- Accommodation differences
    - Students need to be aware of high school and college accommodation differences
    - Reasonable accommodations are offered that fit within the college rigor

- Intake process
    - Documentation of a disability is needed in order to qualify for college ODS services

- o Formal interview is required for ODS to identify student needs and develop an accommodation plan

- o Intake meeting is offered to inform the student of college expectations, to learn about the student's needs and develop an accommodation plan

- o Paperwork is required to identify a disability that will need accommodation support

The responses to these three questions offered insight into faculty perceptions of accommodation differences between high school and college. Two of the ODS faculty participants had special education careers in the K-12 system prior to their move to higher education. These two were able to think through the accommodations in K-12 special education system and compare them to the college accommodations. The other two ODS faculty participants had only experienced offering college accommodations yet they understood the accommodations at the college level were different than those offered in the K-12 system. The need for a documented disability drives the accommodation process. Faculty participants were specific on the need to see what is identified as this allows for them to determine the accommodations to best support student success. When the documented disability is presented, a formal interview offers additional information to identify how the disability will present itself throughout the college experience. In contrast, students identified in secondary education qualify for as many accommodations in every subject area. This has created the confusion amongst students when transitioning from secondary education to post secondary. The accommodations previously accessed in high school may no longer apply in college or are course specific versus the global usage in the secondary setting.

Findings for RQ2

      RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?

Student Participant Question 6

      Any advice you would like to share for incoming students?

      All students replied to seek the help immediately. Three learned the hard way as they waited and ended up with failing grades. Two students stated, "know yourself, know your strengths and areas that need the support". The majority of students were very encouraging with "don't be afraid to speak up", "if you need the help, then you say, I need help." One cautioned that it is hard work and that the hard work will pay off, but to also "take time to relax and have some fun."

Themes from Student Participant Question 6

- Know your own abilities by identifying strengths and areas that need improvement

- Seek assistance as soon as possible such as before enrollment or before a class starts

Student Participant Question 7

      Please describe self-advocacy skills needed to access accommodations at college.

      Some suggestions from students were to create a support group, work with other students who either receive accommodations or when receiving the notes from a fellow classmate to befriend that person so you create a study group. Student ANH C stated even though a note taker supplies the notes, "I still show up to class, and I still put my best effort into that class." Being flexible and understanding assists when sometimes the accommodations don't work with a schedule timeline. For instance, Student ANH C stated the schedule for a note taker had to be

changed due to work constraints so Student ANH C had to change the class schedule in order to attend the same class. Student ANH C stated "It was a huge inconvenience as appointments and other scheduling conflicts needed to be switched, however, in order to receive this accommodation the flexibility had to happen to receive the support."

Themes from Student Participant Question 7:

- Flexibility is needed as schedules may change to meet a student's accommodation needs
- Perseverance is needed in continuing to go to college when working through difficulties

Student Participant Question 8

How have you communicated your accommodation needs regarding your Specific Learning Disability (SLD) to your instructors?

At both colleges, students stated an email from ODS is sent to the instructors in regard to accommodations for each student. This allows for the student to start the conversation right away to inform the instructor of the accommodations the student is entitled to receive. Some students stated initially, they waited until an instructor approached them as they were unsure how to start this conversation. Once that initial conversation occurred, then all of the students found it a lot easier to inform other instructors. Student BNC E stated, "don't be afraid to tell your instructors, otherwise they wouldn't know about it because it's confidential information." As students continue to inform instructors they receive accommodations, they've described approaching the instructors as "just something they do". If the student does not inform the instructor then the student doesn't receive the accommodations. The students have the choice to utilize the accommodations or not. Student BNC E stated, I have the ability to use extended time on tests, but due to the test anxiety class I haven't needed to use that accommodation yet."

Student BNC E states, "That's one of the biggest differences between high school and college; in high school they basically do a majority of it for you and in college they will help you but you've got to do it. They're not going to come to you."

Themes from Student Participant Question 8:

- Once ODS sends an email to instructors about the appropriate accommodations for a student, the student needs to communicate with the instructor either verbally or through email outlining which accommodations that student will utilize for the class and for each test.

Student Participant Question 9

How has accessing support services made you stronger?

All students stated it has improved their self-esteem. They see the supports as leveling the playing field and not something that is a "crutch". Student BNC E stated, "Just being able to say I need extra time has helped me to feel so much stronger." ANH A stated the accommodation supports have "increased my desire for bettering myself as well as giving me more care and compassion for my peers. I can see other people as if they have something going on within them that they are not communicating with me." Student ANH B stated, "I'm not stubborn anymore, it has built up a lot of confidence and it's made me realize, its ok to need help." Student ANH C stated, "I would not be successful if I didn't have the support system. On the days the note taker is absent, I don't do as well on those sections."

Student Participant Question 9 themes:

- Improved student self esteem by using ODS services

- Increased compassion and understanding of other people having issues or concerns

The student participant responses to these four questions offered insight into how self-advocacy impacts students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college. The two themes are to know abilities by identifying strengths and areas that need improvement and communicate needs and accommodation supports. The sub-themes of know yourself by identifying strengths and areas that need improvement are having flexibility as students may need to adjust their course schedule in order to receive some accommodations, perseverance as the drive to continue to want that college degree even though there may be times quitting would be easier. As students talked about becoming stronger, there was more self-confidence infused throughout the conversations. As students were successful in their coursework they talked about feelings of positive self-esteem and empowerment. Student ANH A discussed that self realization of one's own disability allowed for being compassionate towards others as they may have some struggles too.

The sub-themes of communicate needs and accommodation supports are suggesting students seek assistance as soon as possible, to use the accommodations as much as they feel are needed and to inform the instructors right away. Four of the six students stated they waited to talk to the instructors because they were unsure as to how to approach the topic.

The Student Participant themes and sub-themes for RQ 2 are:

- Know your own abilities by identifying strengths and areas that need improvement

    o Flexibility is needed as schedules may change to meet a student's accommodation needs

    o Perseverance is needed continuing to go to college when working through difficulties

- o Improved self esteem by using ODS services

- o Increased compassion and understanding of other people having issues or concerns

- Once ODS sends an email to instructors about the appropriate accommodations for a student, the student needs to communicate with the instructor either verbally or through email outlining which accommodations that student will utilize for the class and for each test.

This next section discusses the Faculty Participant questions in regard to RQ2.

Faculty Participant Question 4

There are the differences between secondary and college accommodations, how can a secondary case manager inform students of these differences?

Faculty participants stated there are a lot of materials online for special education teachers to access and learn about college accommodations. The most popular suggestion was to contact the college of student interest and inquire about process for accessing the college ODS services. It may be that the ODS director or a college group could visit with the student at the high school or the student could attend an open house at the college prior to registering for college. The ODS faculty members stated a lot of parents start this initial contact by calling and asking about the types of accommodations that would be provided for their child who has "x" diagnosis. The response typically is that general accommodations could be a, b, c, but until the student is at the college with the documentation the exact accommodations are difficult to state as each person is different and handles their disability in different manners. BNC C1 stated,

"Every person is different, they have different barriers and strengths so that's why an intake meeting is needed."

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 4:

- Students and secondary case managers should contact the college to learn about college supports

- Students and secondary case managers should investigate online college resources

Faculty Participant Question 5

Any advice you would like to give to incoming students?

Recommendations from ODS faculty are to have students start learning about Assistive Technology such as screen readers and audio books as they have found this helps students immensely. Using organizational apps are helpful too as these will help to keep track of assignment due dates, tests and finals. The organization apps are also helpful when a student needs to schedule reminders for arrange for testing time as it is recommended to give ODS three to four days notice to provide the accommodations needed for that test. BNC D1 stated, "Informing students there are a lot of skills needed in preparation for college, such as motivation, executive functioning skills, time management, understanding one's own capabilities, areas of strength, time needed to complete assignments, looking at one's whole life which means work schedule, family time, planning and arranging for daycare or child care, and if there is a need for the student to be responsible to provide for the family." As the college environment is geared differently with students being in charge of managing their own schedules, this change can allow for greater time to postpone the completion of assignments. In high school, student schedules are every day of the week for six and one half hours a day. In college, the student schedule can

vary from two to three hours one day to no class on another day. This type of schedule can create large opportunities to fill in that time with other interests or the 'I'll do it tomorrow' thought process. When a deadline for an assignment hits at college, there is no extension and this can be a difficult lesson to learn when starting the college experience.

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 5:

- Students need to increase technological skills related to learning applications

- Self awareness of the student's capacity to learn and balance the rest of life experiences is needed

Faculty Participant Question 6

In what way are students informed that they need to self-advocate for their accommodations?

Once students enter the college, they are informed right away that ODS staffing is limited. ANH ODS staff works with 200 students and BNC ODS staff work with a range between 450-600 students. The intake provides that initial opportunity to locate the ODS office and inform students of the accommodations the student can access as well as the limitations the ODS office has in meeting every student's needs. Students receive an hour intake meeting to answer questions, learn about ODS services, receive an accommodation list, learn about the limits of ODS and the student's role as a person with accommodation needs at the college. Students are informed their instructors will receive an email describing the accommodations needed in the classroom. The beginning ODS meetings provide training for students in using the technology for audio books, and tests.

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 6:

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- Due to the limited ODS staffing, students need to be prepared and organized with accommodation requests, so ODS is able to follow through with the request.
- Student are responsible for requesting the use of their ODS accommodations to instructors either verbally or by email

Faculty Participant Question 7

Parents have played an integral part in their child's advocacy, what has been your experience with helping a family work through this adjustment?

ODS staff stated they have not had too many issues with parents. The key is to communicate the laws and regulations that may be different than what was previously known. BNC C1 stated, "Some parents are a bit mystified that ODS is not able to provide information over the phone even with a release of information. They offer that the parent can stop into the office and speak with an ODS faculty member if the student gives verbal permission at that same time and the student is present."

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 7:

- ODS actively communicates privacy laws and student information to family members once student permission is obtained

The responses to these four questions provided insight into how self-advocacy skills will impact students with SLD accessing ODS services at the public community college. The three emerging themes were communication of privacy laws and student information to family members, limited ODS staffing, and student responsibilities of communicating accommodation needs to instructors. Communication had a sub-theme of contacting the college immediately when there is student interest. Limited ODS staffing means students need to be aware that

appointments are necessary to meet with ODS staff. The student responsibilities sub-themes are to investigate online college resources, increase the use of technology from the standpoint of academia related, and to improve self-awareness so a student will know their strengths, areas to improve, and areas that need support.

The Faculty Participant themes and sub-themes for RQ 2 are:

- ODS actively communicates privacy laws and student information to family members once student permission is obtained

- Students and secondary case managers should contact the college to learn about college supports

- Students and secondary case managers should investigate online college resources

- Due to the limited ODS staffing, students need to be prepared and organized with accommodation requests, so ODS is able to follow through with the request.

- Student are responsible for requesting the use of their ODS accommodations to instructors either verbally or by email

  o Students need to increase technological skills related to learning applications

  o Self awareness of the student's capacity to learn and balance the rest of life experiences is needed

Findings for RQ3

RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?

Student Participant Question 10

What were the most difficult aspects of advocating for college services?

The most difficult aspects were perceptions of being different, that receiving accommodations would lessen the rigor of college, and isolation due to receiving accommodations. Student ANH B had to wear a patch over one eye and was blinded in that eye for a bit. So the assumption was made that support services were due to the patch over the student's eye. Student ANH B stated, "I joked about it, so that eased some of the embarrassment." Student ANH D's experience was different as this was a new injury from a motor vehicle accident three years earlier. The difficulty was "admitting how much help I needed and I had to learn to speak up for myself". "Also, there's more of a need on college campuses to recognize there are more students with non-apparent disabilities and illness. As a person with a non-apparent disability I hear, 'you seem fine', and I've had the opportunity to talk with the higher-ups on Campus to share my situation."

Themes from Student Participant Question 10:

- Students felt stigmatized when seeking support services
- Students own perceptions of what others may think if they use accommodations

Student Participant Question 11

In high school, case managers would advocate for a student, how is this different in college?

For those students who had a case manager in high school, they explained that it was a very big change to have someone else advocate and then once in college having to self-advocate for items or specific supports. Student BNC E summarized it by stating, "I have to say it was a big change, because I could talk to my friends and I could talk to the teachers I've known for years, but having a new professor every semester and having to explain it to them each time was

different and challenging. So I think having to explain it to other people for myself was helpful

because I had never done that before".

For the students who only received accommodations in college, they explained that it has

helped a lot to have the supports, and with that help they feel valued and accepted. Student ANH

B stated, "normally I would have let an issue slide, and not spoken up about it but this was eating

me up, so I said I'm going to email and included my advisor on the email."

Themes from Student Participant Question 11:

- Students need to have the self-determination to seek accommodations and to use them

- Self confidence improved when students saw continued success

- College is an adjustment with the continual need to inform instructors of
  accommodations

Student Participant Question 12

Regarding accommodations at college, is there one thing you would like to see changed?

Students really thought about this question and suggested a support group, a way to

interact with others going through the same thing although recognizing there are confidentiality

constraints to meeting others identified with a disability. At one college, note takers are

volunteers therefore at times there are no note takers. Some students suggested more funding for

the note takers, as this accommodation is very helpful. The other college pays students to be

note takers and that was a successful way to ensure note taker availability. Others stated that all

of the accommodations received are wonderful and very much appreciated. Two students stated

the college experience was different at their previous school and it was felt that colleges should

keep the policies and procedures consistent.

Themes from Student Participant Question 12:

- Funding should increase to support more opportunities for access to accommodations

- Colleges lack consistency with accommodation procedures

Student Participant Question 13

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Students shared they really appreciated having the opportunity to receive

accommodations as this has greatly helped to keep them in college. They applaud the strong

connections with the ODS staff and have accessed the courses and workshops ODS has offered.

Student ANH B stated, "Don't be afraid." Student ANH F stated there have been some issues

with some professors and he is working through the perceptions and understanding of college

guidelines and expectations.

Theme from Student Participant Question 13:

- Students expressed appreciation for ODS services

The student participant responses to these four questions provided insight into the

remaining barriers for students with SLD after seeking disability services at the public

community college. Three themes emerged from the student participant responses. The first is

stigma as the fear of the reaction of others when they found out about a disability. A sub-theme

of stigma was the adjustment the student made to overcome the feeling of being stigmatized.

Determination was the next theme, as students identified barriers they demonstrated motivation

by communicating with the appropriate college staff to assist with solving the problem. Two

sub-themes emerged from determination by being consistent with the use of the accommodations

and ODS services, students increased their success with each course. Each student expressed

appreciation for the support that assisted with alleviating barriers. Most students see the benefit for ODS services and expressed a desire to have funding increased to support more students. The Student Participant themes and sub-themes for RQ 3 are:

- Students felt stigmatized when seeking support services

    o Students own perceptions of what others may think if they use accommodations

    o College is an adjustment with the continual need to inform instructors of accommodations

- Students need to have the self-determination to seek accommodations and to use them

    o Self confidence improved when students saw continued success

    o Consistency with college procedures in regard to accommodations

- Funding increase to support more opportunities for access to accommodations

    This next section is Faculty Participant questions in regard to RQ3.

Faculty Participant Question 8

Are there any accommodations that students may receive in high school that may not carry over to college environment?

The ODS faculty members stated they have heard examples from students of receiving extended time on assignments, flexibility with attendance, use of notes and books on tests, see the tests the day before, prepare for the test and take the test the following day. From a college perspective, these examples are not reasonable college accommodations as they change the rigor of the work. BNC D1 stated, "College is different as you don't have to go to college, there isn't an altered college diploma. When you inform someone you received accommodations at college, that means you did all of the work, but the playing field was leveled." Some

accommodations will transfer such as extended time on tests. There are limited accommodations that may be transferrable from high school to college for a specific student taking a specific class.

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 8:

- Few accommodations transfer from high school to college
- Specific accommodations not available for college are the use of notes and books on tests and the ability to preview the test prior to the actual test date
- In case by case situations, colleges have allowed extended time on assignments due to a disability related absence

Faculty Participant Question 9

What is one thing about college accommodations you would like to see changed? Accommodations are established and OSD is always looking to tighten up the delivery systems. They review case law, hear about different ways things are being tried at other colleges, trying to work with secondary settings to educate and build supports on both sides. OSD faculty members have noticed that students are coming in more informed and prepared for college than they have seen before. One thing to see as an improvement would be more funding for better resources such as offering more detailed training for the screen readers. At this time, ANH A1 stated, "They can teach the basics of the screen reader but would really like to be able to inform students as they are using the full potential of the application." Note takers at ANH are a volunteer only position. ANH B1 states, "Advocating for more note takers as they are on a volunteer basis and sometimes there aren't any volunteers." There continues to be a stigma with requesting accommodations. BNC C1 states, "Students continue to have this fear that if I come into ODS

and get connected with accommodations that in some way or some form means I've failed and I would love if this perception changed for the students." When students attend the intake meeting, they are informed the information is private. BNC C1 states, "I don't go around and show their file to everybody. But it's not confidential because I do have the right to talk to an instructor, co-worker if there is a legitimate need to do that." The disability related absence process has changed over the 16 years of one professional's career, as BNC D1 stated, "the process we currently have in place is nothing like the process we had 16 years ago." "I think when we see a change needs to be made, we change it."

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 9:

- More funding would be helpful to enhance resources supporting incoming student needs
- ODS services will change the delivery of accommodations as needed to enhance student success

Faculty Participant Question 10

Is there anything else you would like to share?

The two colleges stated they look at their programming constantly and try to infuse new options when they are able to do this or when there is funding. At ANH, they are piloting a new program, Sonocent, which will visually color-code blocks of sound, can break apart sentences and color-code it. This had been piloted at Augsburg, a Minneapolis four-year college, with great success (Sonocent, 2015). Sonocent stated during the pilot at Augsburg, the use of note takers has been significantly reduced. Both colleges have been in communication with Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and discussed transition from secondary to postsecondary education. They continue to reach out to secondary schools to inform and invite

students, staff and MDE professionals to discuss processes and ways to make adjustments and improvements.

Sometimes, students worry that they will be approached by an ODS faculty member outside of the office. BNC B1 assures that, "Because it is private, and literally anywhere outside of my office location, I need to pretend I don't know them. I'm not trying to be rude or disrespectful, but I have to uphold the right to privacy and that's another major difference between high school and college."

Themes from Faculty Participant Question 10:

- ODS staff express a continued desire to improve supports

- Privacy laws in regard to access to college student information complicate relationships with students

The responses to three questions provided insight into the research question of the remaining barriers students with SLD experienced after accessing disability services at the public community college. Three themes emerged in regard to accommodations, delivery model, and privacy laws. The accommodations theme had two sub-themes of differences and changes constantly. The ODS faculty participants stated the accommodations at the college level are different than ones students are familiar with if they received accommodations in the secondary setting. There is an adjustment period for students when they shift from the familiar to something different. ODS faculty are constantly looking for ways to improve. One barrier ODS faculty participants see is student advocacy. After applying for ODS services, some students have a difficult time preparing themselves for the amount of time needed to study for classes. If

a student needs a lot of time to read the coursework and process the information, it would behoove that student to create a timeline to prepare and manage the workload.

The delivery model is the second theme and the ODS faculty participants stated they would love for additional funding to enhance the resources they provide to students. They are finding that students would benefit from more organizational classes, technological support, tutoring and offering more intensive classes to students who would need more organizational or tutoring support. The second sub-theme is a continued desire to improve supports. They are constantly reviewing how accommodations and supports can best be delivered to students. They make these changes as soon as they are able.

The third theme is privacy laws. For privacy laws, colleges operate under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which means all educational records transfer to the child upon the 18th birthday or if enrolled in a postsecondary institution (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). The student has the "right to control the disclosure of personally identifiable information" (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). This applies to parents requesting information if their child has enrolled in courses or is seeking ODS services. Educational information is only available to the student unless a release of information is signed to provide access to named individuals. College officials can access to the information if there is a 'legitimate educational interest' to the information (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). To inform students of these laws prior to entrance to college would benefit students and their families. Another key aspect of FERPA is the only information shared with instructors is the accommodation information that pertains to the classroom. Any accommodations that are offered for the student within the ODS are not shared with the instructors.

The Faculty Participant themes and sub-themes for RQ 3 are:

- College accommodations compared to high school accommodations

    o Few accommodations transfer from high school to college

    o There are specific accommodations not available for college such as the use of notes and books on tests and the ability to preview the test prior to the actual test date

    o In certain case by case situations, colleges have allowed extended time on assignments due to a disability related absence

    o ODS services will change the delivery of accommodations as needed to enhance student success

- ODS staff advocate for the continuum of supports

    o More funding would be helpful to enhance resources supporting incoming student needs

    o ODS staff express a continued desire to improve supports

- Privacy laws in regard to access to college student information complicate relationships with students

Conclusion

Chapter four presented the study results in an organized format by research question and the order of the participants. Detailed responses to the questions were provided to help facilitate an understanding of the perceptions of students with SLD and ODS staff that support students with accommodations. Themes and sub-themes organized the data to provide an overall portrait

of the academic supports, barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed in a public community college setting.

Chapter five discusses how the data previously described related to students with SLD and ODS staff perceptions of accommodations, barriers and self-advocacy skills in a public community college. It will draw parallels between this research and the citations. Discussion of the themes and sub-themes is organized by the research questions the study sought to examine.

Summary of Findings

Throughout the student interview process, the Student Participant's reflection on college accommodations and supports was very positive. Three out of six students stated their high school experiences had not prepared them for the college experience as well as they would have liked. One student stated high school had truly prepared her for college. The students stated all of their instructors have been very easy to approach and discuss the need for accommodations. The two colleges have worked hard by supporting students who are in need of accommodations and informing instructors about the variety of accommodation supports.

Throughout the ODS faculty interviews, the Faculty Participants were very positive about the services they provide to students. The systems in place are designed with student success in mind. Each Faculty Participant expressed a strong desire to supply students with all the accommodations they would qualify to receive. The privacy laws are protections for the students and also reinforced the comfort that the information students share will not be shared with anyone who doesn't need to know. The only accommodations shared with instructors are ones that pertain to their specific classroom.

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

Overview of the Study

The purpose of the study was to learn how students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) and Office for Disability Services (ODS) staff perceive the academic supports, barriers, and self-advocacy skills at two public community colleges in a mid-western state. The intent was to provide awareness of the perceptions of the accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills to secondary special education staff, postsecondary personnel, as well as current secondary students identified with SLD on navigating accommodations within a postsecondary institution. In addition, providing the insights to secondary special educators about the changes in laws and postsecondary accommodation expectations offers opportunities to enhance transition curriculum that may result in more preparedness for transition-age students. Learning from the experiences of current students with SLD in the postsecondary setting may better prepare current secondary students for a postsecondary experience. Secondary students with SLD may perceive postsecondary education supports to be similar to those offered in the secondary setting. Supports offered at the postsecondary level were described as similar, different, reduced, or disability and course specific.

For postsecondary personnel working with students with SLD, the intent was to provide awareness of the gaps and differences from the secondary level accommodations compared to the postsecondary accommodations. The increased awareness of these differences is advantageous to promote systemic change for the colleges and students with SLD.

The message gleaned from the study is that students with SLD are more informed than they have been in years past. However, there continues to be a need to inform students of the

differences with accommodations and supports between the two educational systems.

Restatement of the problem

There are significant differences between secondary special education services and postsecondary disability services. The first difference is the set of specific accommodations offered to students within the secondary setting compared to those offered in a public community college setting. The second difference is the method of accessing accommodations. In the postsecondary educational system, it is the responsibility of the student to seek out supports and self-disclose they have a disability. The third difference is the students' perceptions of access to accommodations and their perceptions of the differences between the secondary and public community college accommodations.

Research Design

A qualitative case study was used to identify the perceptions of Office of Disability Service Specialists and students' with SLD accessing accommodations in a public community college setting compared to previously accessed accommodations in the high school setting. Merriam (2009) states "a case study might be selected for its very uniqueness, for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge to which we would not otherwise have known" (p. 46).

Purposive sampling was utilized to select students with SLD and ODS Specialists located at two public community colleges in a mid-west state. Creswell (2009) suggests, "purposefully selecting participants or sites will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (p. 178). The interview questions located in Appendix B provided the information needed to answer the research questions in this dissertation. Student participants were invited to be interviewed and for their efforts were offered a $40.00 gift card. A choice of

face-to-face, video conferencing, or phone interviews was conducted based on the preference of each participant. The ODS forwarded the email to all students who were accessing ODS services. Student participants volunteered to participate in the interviews. A semi-structured interview was utilized as "it allowed for the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). As there were six student participants and four faculty participants numerous themes and sub-themes were obtained from the interview process.

Discussion of Findings and Interpretations

In this section, the qualitative analysis will evolve into themes and sub-themes. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state, themes are concepts, grounded theories, or ideas that emerge from your data that transcend and unify particular data and findings into coherent patterns (p. 275). For student participant interviews, there were 13 related questions to respond in regard to the three research questions. The first research question had five questions for the student participants, the faculty participants had three questions and multiple themes were identified.

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to what is received at the public community college?

The first research question addressed in this study asked about the students and ODS perceptions of the differences in accommodations between high school and college. Student participant themes and discussion will be listed first. The faculty participant themes and discussion will be listed second.

Student participant theme 1: Even though there were minimal interactions with high school case managers, three students were able to list their high school accommodations. Two students indicated there was not a lot of communication with the case manager although they were able to list their accommodations. One student stated there was a lot of interaction with the case manager as the case manager also taught some of the student's classes. The awareness of the special education accommodations in the high school setting indicates these three students were involved in part of their IEP planning.

Student participant theme 2: There are different accommodation systems for high school and college. Despite the knowledge of the high school accommodations the three students stated some of their accommodations didn't transfer to the college, as they were not considered college accommodations. The students mentioned two examples of former high school accommodations not available to use in college: extended time on assignments, and using notes and books on tests. The students felt this was a considerable change as they were familiar with these additional accommodations in high school and it increased the pressure to work harder in college. Student participants shared that the differences in postsecondary accommodation support was a major change as they were the initiators for seeking the support. This required a different mindset, since the students needed to be arranging their own accommodations; "the only way to prepare for college was to go to college" was stated by ANH A. Initially the time and effort to plan for the support was intense then became a habit as 'just something they do'.

Of the three student participants not receiving special education support in high school, two students stated high school had not prepared them for college and was more lenient with assignments. They gave examples of college being an adjustment due to the struggles with

managing coursework, receiving failing grades, and then recognizing there was a need for the additional support. For the three students who were not identified in high school and were now receiving college accommodations, it is assumed they may not have had previous accommodation knowledge. If the students didn't have prior knowledge of accommodations, they may have had a difficult time predicting the questions they would need to ask once these support systems were in place.

Of the three students who had received accommodations in high school, two students stated that high school had prepared them for college by offering opportunities to tour a college campus prior to graduating. During those tours, the campus personnel provided information about orientation, offered tours to specific offices that provided support, and discussed how to locate ODS. Of the six students interviewed, three students stated high school had prepared them for college.

Student participant recommendation 1: Incorporating college tours into the secondary transition curriculum would be helpful for high school students with SLD.

Student participant recommendation 2: A postsecondary recommendation would be during orientation to offer campus tours that provide the locale for the most frequently utilized resources. One student stated she had been on a campus tour during the college orientation, was guided to the location of ODS, and immediately applied for ODS services after the tour.

Five of the six student participants stated disclosing their disability was hard as they had feelings of being uncomfortable or embarrassed. The sixth participant didn't feel it was uncomfortable but thought of it as a positive with being able to use the accommodations to

enhance learning. All of the students agreed that admitting to needing help was a difficult thing to think about and overcome. However, once they asked for help it was a great relief.

Student participant recommendation 2: Increasing the self-advocacy skills taught in the secondary transition curriculum so students feel more comfortable with seeking accommodations, supports, and being able to ask for help.

Student participant theme 3: Admitting to needing help was a difficult thing to do. One student had been successful in college previously, but due to a motor vehicle accident had to relearn skills and needed an incredible amount of support for the second college experience. Having to ask for help was very difficult as this new life required many supports.

Student participant recommendation 3: College faculty might need to recognize some students may not have accessed the supports before which may involve a distinct delivery approach for that support.

The three laws impacting students moving from the secondary setting to the postsecondary setting provides an explanation for the accommodation differences. There are a few differences between the three laws that apply for persons with disabilities. The first is The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires special education and related services to children with disabilities covered by the act. It also requires that K-12 schools write an IEP to document the agreed upon supports, accommodations, and modifications (Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 602(a), 20 U.S.C. §1401a). The second is that Section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act states anyone qualified with a disability cannot be discriminated against. For students with a qualified disability a plan named Section 504 is developed to document appropriate accommodations (U.S Department of Education, 2014, p. 2). The

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees a person cannot be denied access because of a disability (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1990). The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) expanded the class of individuals considered to have a disability and maintained the ADA cannot deny access based on a disability (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2008).

Section 504 and IDEA are applicable in the K-12 educational setting. Section 504 in the K-12 educational setting provides general and vague suggestions regarding accommodations for instruction and physical access (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). IDEA offers specific, and diverse accommodations based on student needs (Legal Information Institute, 2015). Once an individual with a disability graduates from the K-12 setting, IDEA ends and Section 504 remains in place to support and maintain the civil rights of an individual with disabilities (Gormley et al, 2005). Section 504 and ADAAA provide a broader scope of civil rights and protections for individuals with disabilities but are not as defined, structured, and prescriptive, as IDEA. The broader scope of Section 504 and ADA does significantly impact an individual with a disability when enrolling in a postsecondary institution (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Gregg, Coleman, Lindstrom & Lee, 2007; PepNet.com, 2012; Solovieva & Bock, 2014). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is only enacted when an individual self discloses a disability to the college or place of employment (Solovieva & Bock, 2014). Once a student enters the postsecondary setting, it is the student's responsibility to apply for accommodations.

Faculty participant themes for the study's first research question reflect the differences in the three laws IDEA, Section 504, and ADA. There were two faculty participant themes for the

question of the perceptions of students with SLD and ODS on the differences between high school and college accommodations.

Faculty participant theme 1: Students need to be aware of the differences between high school and college accommodations. Two of the ODS faculty participants had been in special education careers in the K-12 system prior to their move to higher education. These two were able to reflect on the accommodations in the K-12 special education system and compare them to the college accommodations. The other two ODS faculty participants had only experienced offering college accommodations yet they understood the accommodations at the college level were different than those offered in the K-12 system. For K-12 special educators the emphasis is placed on the IEP, however, at the college level the three-year evaluation is the primary documentation needed to determine college accommodations.

Faculty participant recommendation 1: Prior to the college ODS intake meeting; the secondary students and K-12 special educators would discuss sending the three-year evaluation.

Student awareness of accommodation differences is the first topic all faculty participants' addressed at the intake meeting. The goal of an ODS Specialist is to create an accommodation plan for student's with disabilities. To start the ODS intake meeting, ODS Specialists will review the students documentation and part of that process may be to inform the student that the accommodations they have had in the past may no longer be applicable. Students enter the postsecondary setting with the assumption the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a Section 504 plan will continue. Based on IDEA, students qualified for many accommodations in every subject area. When entering the postsecondary setting, the laws change the delivery of services as ADA and Section 504 only require reasonable accommodations and have created confusion

for students when transitioning from secondary education to postsecondary. The accommodations previously accessed in high school may no longer apply in college or are course specific rather than the global approach in the secondary setting.

Faculty participant theme 2: The difficulty for students entering postsecondary from the secondary setting is defining "reasonable" accommodations. The ODS faculty explained that the role of the ODS Specialists at the intake meeting is to determine the reasonable college accommodations a student will qualify for based on the documentation of the disability and the intake interview.

Faculty participant recommendation 2: K-12 special educators should investigate the accommodation supports offered at the postsecondary setting in order to prepare students for the adjustment.

Faculty participant recommendation 3: Minnesota K-12 special educators should access the Postsecondary Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities for their state (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2014b).

The second research question offered insight into how self-advocacy impacts students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college.

RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?

Student participant theme 1: Students need to know their own abilities by identifying strengths and areas that need improvement. The first is being flexible. Students may need to adjust their course schedule in order to receive some accommodations. The second is perseverance to continue to want the college degree even though there may be times quitting

would be easier. As students mentioned, through informing instructors of their accommodations, their self-advocacy skills became stronger. Students stated that when they were successful in their coursework they experienced feelings of improved self-esteem and empowerment. Student ANH A stated that the self-realization of one's own disability allowed for being compassionate towards others as they may have some struggles too.

Student participant recommendation 1: Students need to learn that through struggling there will be emerging skills and increased capabilities.

The postsecondary process for applying for ODS support is as follows:

1. Student applies for college.

2. Student arranges to take the Accuplacer and ask for accommodations.

2. ODS meets with the student to discuss specific accommodations.

3. Accuplacer results indicate student meets at least pre-college standards in reading and writing.

4. Student applies for college enrollment.

5. Student contacts ODS for an appointment.

6. Student attends appointment and supplies a copy of the three-year evaluation from the secondary setting documenting the disability and assessments or provides a third party documentation of a disability (such as a doctor's diagnosis or neuropsychological evaluation).

7. Student meets with ODS for an intake discussion and answers questions related to strengths, areas that need improvement, information processing concerns, amount of time needed to take tests, and executive functioning concerns. ODS determines the

accommodations the student will qualify to use in the college setting. Student signs a

release of information so ODS can share the information with the college instructors.

8. ODS writes up an accommodation plan and makes a copy for the student. Student is

informed they need to talk to the instructors about using the accommodations in the

courses.

9. Once a student registers for classes and informs ODS of the classes, ODS sends emails

to the instructors providing the classroom accommodations the student qualified for

during the intake.

Student participant theme 2: Students need to seek ODS support as soon as possible. All

students stated once ODS support was provided, communicating accommodations to instructors

at the start of a course is very important. Four of the six students stated they waited to talk to the

instructors because they were unsure as to how to approach the topic. Two students mentioned if

they hadn't waited to inform their instructors of the accommodations, they would have been

more successful in those courses. Throughout this study, communication seemed to be the most

valuable skill on both sides of ODS services.

Student participant recommendation 2: Students should seek ODS support as soon as

possible.

Student participant recommendation 3: Students need to inform their instructors of the

accommodations they will be accessing for the course.

Listed below are the three faculty themes for research question two regarding the impact

of self-advocacy skills students with SLD need in accessing services at the public community

college.

Faculty participant theme 1: This theme is regarding two areas of faculty to student communication. The first is the privacy laws for student information at the college level. The second is contacting the college immediately when students are interested in attending. For student privacy laws, colleges operate under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which means all educational records transfer to the child upon the 18th birthday or if enrolled in a postsecondary institution (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). The student has "the right to control the disclosure of personally identifiable information" (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). This applies to parents requesting information if their child has enrolled in courses or is seeking ODS services. College officials can provide access to the information if there is a 'legitimate educational interest' to the information (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). Another key aspect of FERPA is that the only information shared with instructors is the accommodation information that pertains to the classroom. Any accommodations offered to the student in the actual office of ODS are not shared with the instructors.

Faculty participant recommendation 1: To benefit students and their families, students should be informed of these laws prior to college enrollment.

When a student expresses interest in going to college, the K-12 special education system should work to identify the college and support the student's exploration of college ODS' services. As BNC D1 suggested the Postsecondary Resource Guide provides detailed information in how a student with a disability should start investigating college plans prior to graduation. The Postsecondary Resource Guide suggests that students should start planning in their freshman year of high school (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2014b, p. 14).

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Faculty participant theme 2: The ODS Specialists state their staffing is limited since they work with a large population of students. For ANH, there are 1.5 staff for 200 students. For BNC, there are 2.5 staff for a range of 450-600 students. BNC D1 stated the range exists because most students do not apply for ODS at the beginning of the semester but apply throughout the semester. So at the beginning there may be 450, but near finals they will have 600 students to support. Students should recognize appointments are a necessity if they want to meet individually with ODS Specialists.

Faculty participant recommendation 2: Students need to learn to organize and arrange their testing accommodations prior to testing time. ODS schedules and arranges all of the accommodations for students, but if there is a request for an individual meeting with an ODS specialist students should schedule that ahead of time.

Faculty participant theme 3: The responsibilities of a student entering the postsecondary setting are to investigate online college resources, increase the use of technology from an academic standpoint, and improve self-awareness so a student will know their strengths, areas to improve, and areas that need support.   Faculty participants emphasized incoming students should investigate the online information colleges have on their websites. There is a wealth of information on these two public community college websites to inform and support student success. When a K-12 special educator is informed by a student of the college of interest, the immediate resource to peruse would be that college's website to learn more information about accommodations procedures. Another key resource suggested is for students to learn about assistive technology such as screen readers and organizational apps as both will assist with

preparing for college accommodations. The third resource is for a student to improve self-awareness so a student will know their strengths, areas to improve, and areas that need support.

Since the college environment is geared differently than high school, with students being in charge of managing their own schedules, this change can allow for greater time to postpone the completion of assignments. In high school, typical student class schedules are every day of the week for six and one half hours a day. In college, the student schedule can vary from two to three hours one day to no class on another day. This type of schedule can create large opportunities to fill in that time with other interests or the 'I'll do it tomorrow' mindset. When a deadline for an assignment hits at college, there is no extension and this can be a difficult lesson to learn when starting the college experience.

Faculty participant recommendation 3: Students need to learn to self-manage their schedules and practice meeting deadlines while in high school so they are prepared to meet deadlines in college.

The third research question had four questions for the student participants, while the faculty participants had three questions and multiple themes were identified.

RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?

Student participant theme 1: There is a stigma associated with seeking ODS services when applying for the supports and the continual need to inform instructors of the accommodations. Students stated it was their own perceptions of what others would think about them when using ODS accommodations that served as a deterrent from seeking the accommodations. However, once they investigated the services ODS offered, the students stated

it was a relief to have the support. A positive benefit was that when students applied and received

information of the privacy laws and how ODS would inform instructors, each student stated they

felt better. They mentioned an appreciation for the private ways instructors are informed and

that it is up to the student to add any additional information. One student stated that due to

wearing a patch over one eye it was obvious why she was using ODS supports, but the way she

coped with it was to joke about it. This student also stated that part of the fear of accessing ODS

services was "her own stubbornness." After accessing ODS services and seeing the success with

her coursework, she stated she is not stubborn anymore and sees the benefit with the

accommodations.

Another student shared that accessing ODS services no longer affords anonymity due to

the number of supports in place. Having been in a college program prior to the motor vehicle

accident and then in a college program post the accident provided a different perspective on

empathy and sensitivity to student supports. The lack of anonymity, stated as part of the ADA

process, is the continued need to inform instructors of the accommodations.

Student participant recommendation 1: College faculty should be aware that anonymity

is not afforded to students seeking accommodations, which may bring a different mindset to

those providing the accommodations.

Student participant theme 2: Students stated the self-determination to seek

accommodations and utilize them were key to obtaining a college degree. There were a few

barriers mentioned such as the need for the continual conversations to each instructor about their

accommodations, and the preparation involved by needing to contact ODS at least three to four

days in advance for testing accommodations. In spite of the barriers and processes, students

stated by accessing accommodations, success was achieved with each course and their self-confidence improved. Other barriers students mentioned were the different policies each college had when accessing the accommodations. Three students had been at different colleges prior to attending ANH and stated the access to accommodations was dissimilar to their current experience. All six-student participants stated the current systems at both colleges are very clear and consistent. Each student expressed appreciation for the support that assisted with alleviating barriers.

Student participant theme 3: The six student participants stated they saw the benefit of ODS services and expressed a desire to have government funding increased to support more opportunities for access to accommodations. They stated increased support would benefit more students. Some students were trying to obtain additional accommodations but needed to obtain the appropriate documentation that would verify the need for the additional accommodations. A couple of students stated a support group for students with accommodation needs would benefit them as they would like to be able to talk to others experiencing similar struggles. Once explained, they understood the college is not able to release other student's names who are accessing ODS services due to the privacy laws. The need to communicate and support others was an expressed desire.

Student participant recommendation 2: College students should start their own support group as they work through their educational programs, since reaching out to other students is beneficial to all students.

Faculty participant theme 1: College accommodations are limited to being reasonable accommodations compared to accommodations in the secondary setting. The ODS faculty

participants stated the accommodations at the college level may be more limited than the ones

students were familiar with if they had received accommodations in the secondary setting.

Faculty participants stated there is an adjustment period for students when they shift from the

high school accommodations to the college level especially if they had received extended time

on assignments or were able to use books and notes on tests. College accommodations are

mandated by federal law, so ODS Specialists constantly review to determine the best way to

deliver the accommodations in the most effective manner. They are constantly reviewing how

accommodations and supports can best be delivered to students and make these changes as soon

as they are able. This summer (2017), ANH is using Sonocent, which will visually color-code

blocks of sound, can break apart sentences and color-code them (Sonocent, 2015).

Faculty participant recommendation 1: A recommendation for K-12 special educators is

to research college accommodations to prepare high school students with the potential changes

when transitioning to the college environment.

Faculty participant theme 2: ODS faculty participants mentioned a continued desire to

improve the support system. Currently, the colleges offer workshops on test anxiety, and

organization, and provide minimal technological support. If there were additional funding, they

would increase the organizational workshops and technological support. If students needed more

intensive tutoring, ODS Specialists would like to provide that as well.

Faculty participant recommendation 2: Colleges should seek additional funding to

provide more intensive tutoring opportunities and increased technological support.

Faculty participant theme 3: For privacy laws, colleges operate under the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which means all educational records transfer to the

child upon the 18th birthday or if enrolled in a postsecondary institution (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). The student has the "right to control the disclosure of personally identifiable information" (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). This applies to parents requesting information if their child has enrolled in courses or is seeking ODS services. Educational information is only available to the student unless a release of information is signed to provide access to named individuals. College officials can access the information only if there is a "legitimate educational interest" to the information (Family Policy Compliance Office, 2017). Another key aspect of FERPA is the instructors receive only the accommodation information that pertains to the classroom such as extended time on testing, preferential seating, and audio book access. Any accommodations offered for the student within the ODS office are not shared with the instructors.

Faculty participant recommendation 3: In order to benefit students with SLD and their families, special educators should inform students of the privacy laws prior to registering for college.

Implications

A qualitative case study was employed to interview six students with SLD and four ODS staff on their perceptions of the academic supports, barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed at two public community colleges in a mid-western state. Based on the findings of this research, two primary implications can be established. Those implications are: a) Secondary special educators need to understand the differences in secondary and college accommodations, and b) Secondary transition curriculum needs to incorporate privacy laws, self-advocacy skills, and the differences between the three laws of IDEA, Section 504, and ADA in order to prepare students

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for college.

Secondary special educators need to understand the differences in secondary and college accommodations.

One major reason for the significant discrepancy between accommodations offered in secondary and postsecondary education is that IDEA is no longer available for students with disabilities once they exit the secondary educational system (Legal Information Institute, 2015). The data suggests secondary educators do not fully understand that IDEA no longer applies when a student enter the college environment. There is a need for secondary educators to receive professional development regarding the differences in law once a student graduates from the secondary educational system. Postsecondary faculty participants of the study have indicated students are more informed than ever before, however, additional training needs to occur so all students enter the college environment understanding the differences.

Secondary transition curriculum needs to incorporate privacy laws, self-advocacy skills, and the differences between the three laws of IDEA, Section 504, and ADA in order to prepare students for college.

The data suggests a continued need to improve the transition curriculum in the secondary setting for students with special education needs. Transition curriculum is to support students' future goals in the five transition areas, one being postsecondary education. As students and ODS Specialists shared, students are entering the college arena needing to be aware of the accommodation differences as well as being able to self-advocate, use executive functioning skills and prioritize responsibilities. A suggestion from ODS Specialists was to provide students with the information from the Postsecondary Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities as

this outlines the steps and expectations needed to transition to the college setting (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2014a).

Recommendations

This study was conducted to identify the perceptions of students with SLD and ODS Specialists regarding the accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed in a public community college. Based on the findings and knowledge gained by the researcher, the following recommendations are suggested.

Recommendations for Practitioners

1. Provide professional development to increase secondary special educators' abilities to teach transition curriculum with an emphasis on self-advocacy skills and to prepare students for the changes in laws upon graduation. A supplement to the curriculum would be to access the Postsecondary Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, 2014b). As one student participant stated, "if I would have had these accommodations in high school, I would have done much better."

2. Research college accommodations to prepare secondary students about the potential changes in accommodations when transitioning to the college environment.

3. Assist secondary students with scheduling college tours to support accessing ODS Services as soon as possible.

4. Secondary students should send the three-year evaluation before the college ODS intake meeting and ensure the three-year evaluation reflects the documented disability.

5. Provide professional development for college faculty to prepare for student's sensitivity when declaring accommodations, as anonymity is no longer provided to students seeking accommodations.

6. Provide training for college students in how to initially approach instructors to access accommodations.

7. Encourage college students to start their own support group as they work through their educational programs.

8. Colleges seek additional funding for ODS services in order to provide more intensive tutoring and increased technological support.

Recommendations for Academics

Since the scope of the study was limited to two public community colleges in Minnesota, the following academic recommendations are suggested.

1. As a continuation of this study, a similar study could be conducted expanding to several public community colleges in the state of Minnesota or additional states.

2. A study with a larger sample size could be conducted in public community colleges to expand the interpretation of access to accommodations.

3. A longitudinal study could be conducted following students from secondary education into a public community college to identify the steps students will take to access ODS services before, when applying for, and receiving the supports.

4. A similar study could be conducted by including secondary case managers from feeder high schools into the public community college. This would allow for further scrutiny of the differences in the laws and how they impact student success.

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5. A study could be performed investigating the effectiveness of providing professional development using the Postsecondary Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities to secondary special educators to inform and support students with SLD transitioning to the postsecondary educational setting.

Concluding Comments

Chapter five concludes this research study that investigated students' with SLD and ODS Specialists' perceptions of accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills in two public community colleges in the state of Minnesota. The findings of this study indicated once students have accessed ODS services, students generally adapt and work well within the parameters of the ODS system. ODS faculty members and students accessing ODS services interact as often as the student needs. Students have stated that the ODS is continually emailing them reminders to ensure the accommodations are set for the next course or to stop in when there is a need.

The largest identified group with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education is students with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) at approximately 29% of the students self-disclosing a disability (Costello & Stone, 2012). ANH A1 stated the completion rate of students with SLD continues to be a concern as their completion rate is approximately 26%.

The research indicates professional development is necessary for secondary educators to improve transition curriculum for students receiving special education services to ensure a smoother shift into the college environment. Student participants in the study indicated the learning curve to college expectations was sometimes a difficult adjustment, which indicates secondary education courses need to support college preparedness before a student graduates and enters the college setting. The research suggests accommodations in the postsecondary setting

provide students with success in their coursework, however, the stigma of applying for the services continues to be an area of concern. The research indicates a continued need for changes as expressed by ODS Specialists and students with SLD in order to reduce the number of barriers while increasing self-advocacy skills of college students when accessing accommodations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent for Students to Participate in the Interview

Consent to Participate:

You are invited to participate in a study identifying how to better support students with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) accessing accommodations within a college setting. The hope is to learn which accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills are encountered at the college level for students with SLD. Another hope is to provide this information to secondary and college personnel to best prepare students with SLD prior to enrolling in college.

You are selected as a possible participant because you have provided SLD documentation to the Office of Disabilities Specialist to access accommodations and supports at this college. This study is part of a dissertation at Bethel University. If you decide to participate, this study will present a series of 16 interview questions that will take about 45 minutes to answer, related to your past accommodations in high school compared to current college accommodations as well as some questions regarding self-advocacy skills. The hope is to audio record the interview in order to accurately capture your responses. There are no known risks for participation in this study. You will help with providing information for identifying accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed in the college setting.

Any information obtained in this study will not be identified directly to you. In the written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only aggregate data will be presented. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your current or future relationship with your college or Bethel University in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting these relationships.

This research project has been approved by the researcher's dissertation advisor in accordance with Bethel University's Level of Review of Research with Humans, and this college's Level of Review of Research with Humans committee. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participant's rights or wish to report a research related injury, please contact Jodi Stohl at (612) 716-1006 or Dr. Mike Lindstrom at (612) 209-1739. By signing the form in person, agreeing over videoconference or on the phone prior to the interview, you are granting consent to participate in this research.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Permission over a video or phone conference: Date: _____

_____

Appendix B: Consent for Faculty to Participate in the Interview

Consent to Participate:

You are invited to participate in a study related to identifying how to better support students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) accessing accommodations within a college setting. The hope is to learn which accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills are encountered at the college level for students with SLD. Another hope is to provide this information to secondary and college personnel to best prepare students with SLD before enrolling in college.

You are selected as a possible participant because you work as in the Office of Disability Services to provide access to accommodations and supports at this college. This study is part of a dissertation at Bethel University. If you decide to participate, this study will present a series of 14 interview questions that will take about 45 minutes to answer, related to your role in providing college accommodations as well as questions regarding student self-advocacy skills. The hope is to audio record the interview in order to accurately capture your responses. There are no known risks for participation in this study. You will help with providing information for identifying accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills needed in the college setting.

Any information obtained in this study will not be identified directly to you. In the written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only aggregate data will be presented. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your current or future relationship with your college or Bethel University in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting these relationships.

This research project has been approved by the researcher's dissertation advisor in accordance with Bethel University's Level of Review of Research with Humans, and this college's Level of Review of Research with Humans committee. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participant's rights or wish to report a research related injury, please contact Jodi Stohl at (612) 716-1006 or Dr. Mike Lindstrom at (612) 209-1739. By signing the form in person, agreeing over videoconference or on the phone prior to the interview, you are granting consent to participate in this research.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Permission over a video or phone conference: Date: _____

_____

Appendix C: Interview for College Students

1. In high school, a case manager plans the supports or services to help with academics.

    What types of supports or services did you receive in high school?

2. How did high school prepare you for college?

3. Can you describe any differences between high school and college?

4. Please walk me through your experience of applying for support from OSD?

5. What types of accommodations or services are you receiving in college? Are these

    different than those received in high school?

6. Any advice you would like to share for incoming students?

7. Please describe self-advocacy skills needed to access accommodations at college.

8. How have you communicated your accommodation needs regarding your Specific

    Learning Disability (SLD) to your instructors?

9. How has accessing support services made you stronger?

10. What were the most difficult aspects of advocating for college services?

11. In high school, case managers would advocate for a student, how is this different in

    college?

12. Regarding accommodations at college, is there one thing you would like to see changed?

13. Is there anything else you would like to share?

14. What is your ethnicity?

15. What is your gender?

16. How many years have you been diagnosed with SLD?

Appendix D: Interview for Office of Disability Service Specialists

1. How does one apply for assistance at Office for Students with Disabilities?

2. In your experience, what are some major differences between accommodations in high school vs. college? Are incoming freshman aware of these differences?

3. Who determines the types of accommodations or services to be received in college?

4. There are the differences between secondary and college accommodations, how can a secondary case manager inform students of these differences?

5. Any advice you would like to give to incoming students?

6. In what way are students informed that they need to self-advocate for their accommodations?

7. Parents have played an integral part in their child's advocacy, what has been your experience with helping a family work through this adjustment?

8. Are there any accommodations that students may receive in high school that may not carry over to college environment?

9. What is one thing about college accommodations you would like to see changed?

10. Is there anything else you would like to share?

11. What is your job title?

12. How many years have you been working with students with disabilities in this role?

13. What is your ethnicity?

14. What is your gender?

Appendix E: Student Interview Invitation Letter

Greetings,

My name is Jodi Stohl and I am a doctoral candidate at Bethel University. I am writing my dissertation and part of the dissertation process is to conduct a research study. This letter is to ask if you would be willing to participate voluntarily in this study. Your college has given permission to conduct this research. The focus is to examine the accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills for students with SLD at the college level. Your school was selected to participate. Voluntary participation will involve participating in an interview and will take about 45 minutes. The hope is to audio record your responses in order to accurately capture your information.

The interview will include questions regarding gender, ethnicity, when you were first identified with SLD, and length of time enrolled at this college. However, your name and other identifying information will not be used in the study.

In appreciation of being interviewed, I would like to give you a $40.00 gift card to say thank you for your time. This is important work to be the voice for other students so they can learn how to advocate for accommodations in college.

Thank you in advance,
Jodi Stohl

Appendix F: ODS Interview Invitation Letter

Greetings,

My name is Jodi Stohl and I am a doctoral candidate at Bethel University. I am writing my dissertation and part of the dissertation process is to conduct a research study. This letter is to ask if you would be willing to participate voluntarily in this study. Your college has given permission to conduct this research. The focus is to examine the accommodations, barriers, and self-advocacy skills for students with SLD at the college level. Your school was selected to participate. Voluntary participation will involve participating in an interview and will take about 45 minutes. The hope is to audio record your responses in order to accurately capture your information.

The interview will include questions regarding gender, ethnicity, how you assist students first identified with SLD, access to accommodations, self-advocacy skills students need for continued access. However, your name and other identifying information will not be used in the study.

This is important work to be the voice for students with disabilities so they learn how to advocate for accommodations in college. Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance,
Jodi Stohl

Appendix F: Qualitative responses

Student participant responses

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to what is received at the public community college?

In high school, a case manager plans the supports or services to help with academics. What types of supports or services did you receive in high school?

Student A	Received the minimal supports in high school. I was evaluated when at SM College in California. I'm from Chicago, then moved to BC and went to ABC high school. Left MN and headed to CA as I needed a break from the cold.
Student B	In high school, I didn't know anything about it. Started college, I was in and out of college for a while. Someone noticed I was in and out of college and said in college there are accommodations for you. I asked what do you mean? They explained it to me about the requirements, so I learned about it here and applied.
	Been trying to be on the college campus for a while, I started at MBC school; I thought I can't be on campus, so started online, and it didn't work. When I started here in 2016, have been here one full year now. I found out about accommodations and I've actually been going to college the first time for a full year, because of all the help ANH offers for me. I have migraines, seizures, and my left eye is considered blind right now.
	My right eye is perfect, but because it has to work more and strain a little more, it can give me headaches in some lighted settings. So they give me a dark room to test.
Student C	I didn't need any support services in high school.
	It was recommended to me by my social worker and from the hospital, three years ago. I have access to a note taker, extra time for tests, at times extra time if needed for assignments to complete. Leniency, if needed due to missing a class from an illness or migraines. Also, audio books, Kurzweil and then if I have PE classes, accommodations for physical activity.
Student D	From middle school to high school, the plan changed from a Section 504 to an IEP. When I was in high school, I had extra time for tests and if I needed extra time for writing papers. If I had a problem with my tests or homework or anything, usually my teachers would bring it up with me. They would say, you have an IEP plan, what does this mean? I would say it means I have extra time for tests and if I needed I could have extra time for writing papers.

Student E	In high school, I received extended time on tests, private testing room, note takers, notes on tests, audio books and audio tests. I saw the case manager frequently, because the case manager taught some of the classes as well.
Student F	I received more testing time in high school. I didn't have anything else even though I had an IEP and I was in special ed. classes.

How did high school prepare you for college?

Student A	College prepared me for college. My grandma believed in me and said I can do so much more with what I have so it's time I should advocate for myself.
Student B	I can honestly say, I don't think high school did. It didn't prepare me at all. I've learned more in college here at ANH than I did in high school. It's the structure and rules in college. I mean I'm learning more things in my ethics class than in high school. Here you have to get your work done and there are no extra days. In high school, you're spoiled. They said in high school if you wanted extra time, ok I'll give you another week to get it in. Here [in college], you have until 11:59 pm to get your work in.
Student C	I was homeschooled for the first 2 years and then went to a charter school for my junior and senior years. I was very prepared for college. I went to a two year Bible school right out of high school, did very well then went to a technical school for social work, decided to take some time off and re-evaluate. Spent some time in career for several years, I had a successful career. I was then in a car accident and I sustained a brain injury. That's when my learning disabilities started and when I needed help.
Student D	To be honest, I'm not sure that high school prepared me fully for college. I feel like when I was in a transition to college program that prepared me more for college. We learned that we needed to start at the beginning in college instead of taking classes we just wanted to take. So I took the intro to writing and other intro classes that helped me with the rest of my college.
Student E	I felt it was really helpful my senior year because they brought in some students and staff members from different colleges and they told us about the college. I feel like they prepared us really well.
Student F	High school most definitely helped me learn about college especially with the writing, English, and Social Studies. Learning in those subjects prepared me to realize college was not going to be like high school. It helped to learn you were going to be more on your own in college. In high school, they told us that teachers are not going to be lenient. In college, they are not going to be lenient so you will definitely need to work harder.

Can you describe any differences between high school and college?

Student A	Now what I've experienced in high school was of course obviously the cliques. Students just found it necessary to categorize each other and in college there is less pressure. So many people in college are striving for an education. High school teachers seemed to teach us about postsecondary education based on their own experiences versus actual. From what I've experienced, it was more of a conversation of 'hey this is what I've done, I'm in a whole lot of debt, it's ok, you can pay it back later".
Student B	The structure and rules, you get a lot more lead way in high school than in college.
Student C	High school was 15 plus years ago. Yes, everything was very intentional for me, towards a career and academia. So for me I felt prepared for college and life, I didn't really have a problem.
Student D	Well, the main difference is the flexibility I don't have to be there all day. My entire college program, I have yet to have a class on Friday because I've scheduled it to where I don't have a class on Friday. The other difference I found from high school to college is I feel there are more opportunities to get help. There were opportunities in my high school, but I just wasn't aware of them until it was too late. And at BNC, I feel like they're very good at explaining to you right away there is a tutoring center. You don't have to go, but it's going to help you a lot. I have gone to the tutoring center, yes.
Student E	In college, if you want accommodations, or help you have to go to them versus in high school they basically come to you. They are both really helpful. Some of the accommodations that we were able to use in high school we can't really use here at the college. It was easier adjustment than I thought it would have been.
Student F	Well, high school is easier. If you are going to a community college, it depends on the community college teachers are not going to be lenient with you. You really have to pay more attention in college. In high school, you still have to work hard but you don't have to not worry too much. In college, it's a totally different ball game if you miss something you missed something. You are out of luck, period, there's no second chances. In high school, we didn't get a lot of assignments or homework; we could do a lot of it in class.

Please walk me through your experience of applying for support from OSD?

Student A	When I first got here, I told myself, I know what I did in CA, I applied right on time at SM college. That was the wrong thing to do. So I knew if I didn't come here months before I enrolled I would not do well. I had enrolled in

	the fall, which started in August so I started coming here in March asking questions through May. So I met with ANH A1 as I had a packet that was sealed form from SM college about my verification form and ANH A1 told me these are the services we provide. I was able to tell them my disability – dyslexia, dysgraphia, that I mix up my letters, my writing and it was reassuring. It made me feel I was valued.
Student B	I was nervous. Everyone that knows me will tell you that I'm not the person who will ask for help. I'm stubborn, I will get through it on my own didn't need help. But then I wanted to be dedicated to school, I wanted to make sure if I needed support and help, to just ask for it. I was happy that I did. I said this is the first college I've been at full time for a full year since I have been in college and I am dedicated to it too.
Student C	Because of my brain injury, because of the last couple of years of being in rehab and therapies. I have a speech therapist, a social worker, a lawyer, a lot of support systems, and a Vocational Rehab Specialist. I have a lot of people behind me and they helped me to get set up in school. They helped me do a lot of the legwork, because even though I was ready for college right out of high school, I needed more support coming to college this time than I did last time. ANH and ODS services they take care of all the work for me. As soon as I did the initial paperwork with my social worker, speech therapist, and doctor, they took care of everything else. It was pretty smooth.
Student D	When I came to BNC, I believe I found out how to do it through the transition to college program. They were a big help with starting at BNC. Originally I wasn't going to go to college at all, so they sent me an email, and I set up a meeting with the ODS person who transfers IEPs over to college. She talked about what I had been getting in high school and then what I would be when I transferred to college. She said some of the things I was getting in high school weren't going to transfer to college. Then, she walked me through how I could get the accommodations such as if I needed extra time for tests. I go to the ODS, once or twice a year and they just to talk to me about what I could get again. They send email to set up a time and to update your information.
Student E	After orientation, they were talking about all of these different areas in the school and they said that if you had an IEP or 504 plan to go and talk to ODS. It was really helpful hearing about it at orientation. I enrolled for college near the end of my senior year. And that was really helpful too, because my parents had not went to college. I am the first in my family.
Student F	With ODS, I didn't know why I thought that they're the same as high school in where they are going to follow me into college so I was confused. Then I came to the realization that this is not high school, and then applied for ODS which is limited with it's accommodations. Also, I did wait a little bit before signing up for ODS.

When I first went to ANH, I went to ODS because I had gone to a college in |

	Ohio and it wasn't the best experience. My grades were failing because I didn't take it serious. This second time, I am taking it serious because I want to graduate by a certain timeframe.

What types of accommodations or services are you receiving in college? Are these different than those received in high school?

Student A	I'm receiving extra test time, note taker, and audio books. Teachers are a lot more understanding. ANH 1 and ANH B don't go up to a person and say this person needs this because of this. They ask would you mind taking notes for a specific student? It's not excessive detail in the notes, yet it's appreciated. Sometimes, you meet the person who takes the notes by talking with them in class, it's helpful to become friends and study with that person as their schedule permits. If the note taker is absent, it is up to me to reach out and ask someone else to take notes, because it's very humbling to advocate for what you need. I remember before, I signed up without ODS and it was trial and error.
Student B	Because of the eye, I get audio books. I get more time for testing. Private room, I can go to a private room. I can request to sit up front, and towards the left side of the board because I don't have to strain my right eye to read all the way across the board. I believe ANH A1 and ANH B1 send emails to the instructors. Our disability is not disclosed. Mine was kind of clear because I wore a patch over my eye for a while. They send the requirements to the instructors because when I go to find a seat, I just look for the yellow sticker with the schedule. It doesn't have a name but it does reserve the seat. The sticker stays there all semester. I didn't do badly in high school, my vision really didn't get too bad until about now. But I think if I had accommodations in high school I probably would have done a lot better, take it more serious.
Student C	Note taker, extra time for tests, at times extra time if needed for assignments to complete. Leniency, if needed when I miss class due to illness or from my migraines, audio books, Kurzweil, and if I take PE classes, accommodations for physical activity. I also record class lectures.
Student D	Extended time on tests, and that is the only one. I am trying to get audio book, because it just works better for me to hear the books instead of reading them. But it's been difficult to find my elementary school, middle school and high school information to pass on.
Student E	Time and half on tests, private testing room, audio tests, audio books, seating in the front row and note takers. I think the big difference is how we were just able to use notes, and books on our tests and we could redo things that are basically the difference between

	high school and college. Redo tests and assignments, and we had helpers or aides in high school and we don't have those in college.
Student F	I'm receiving extended test time, audio versions of my textbooks. It's really fantastic, so I'm grateful for that. Usually, when instructors don't know you have services or accommodations, they won't necessarily interact with you so it's good to really have that in place. I'm working extremely hard now and I don't even have a lot of support. The thing about high school was I had so much support I didn't have to put in a lot.

RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?

Any advice you would like to share for incoming students?

Student A	Know yourself. Know your difficulties examine them otherwise you'll set yourself up for more than you are prepared for. You can expect to exceed from beyond what you were comfortable with and capable of. If you need help, then you say I need help.
Student B	Take advantage don't be afraid.
Student C	I would say, don't be afraid to speak up. Be your own advocate when you need something, because ANH A1 and ANH B1 are really good at helping they just need to know when you need something. The teachers are really good; they are phenomenal at helping. But they can't help you unless they know. And really, if I can do it, being successful before a brain injury, then coming back after a brain injury and realizing I can do it even with a brain injury. I mean like with a whole new life and abilities, really anyone can do it. I have…basically two different lives. I mean the one before and the one after.
Student D	Oh, please use the tools that are given to you.
Student E	I would say one thing that helps me is just don't postpone going to ODS. If you hear about it and you think you qualify, go for it, don't wait because they've helped me through my time here at ANH. I don't know if I could do it too easily without them. ODS sends reminders every semester for you to fill out a yellow form to prepare for the next classes and accommodation needs. If they didn't remind us, I would probably forget. This seems like a lot of students might do that as well.
Student F	Incoming students I would say, take it serious. Work hard, work extremely hard, work to the best of your abilities, don't give up don't drop out of college. Surround yourself with positive people as they are going to

	influence you to make good decisions in life and the last thing I would say to an incoming student is just have fun don't worry about too much, just take a breather, there are going to be times where there is extreme stress and there are going to be times when you'll want to give up but just relax you got this.

Please describe self-advocacy skills needed to access accommodations at college.

Student A	I think maybe a support group because we will need to fully utilize the services provided for us. For instance my first semester, it was foolish of me to not utilize the notes; it was foolish of me not to take the extra time on tests.
Student B	Make a friend, me I made a friend and asked questions. For me, not being that stubborn person anymore. Don't be stubborn. Like they say a closed mouth don't get fed.
Student C	Well, let people know what you need, but also you have to put your own work into it. Even though I have a note-taker, I still show up to class and I still put my best effort into class. I don't wait until things are a disaster, I let people know right away if I have a concern and I work with those people in a respectful manner. I try to be flexible and understanding because the people who are helping me are doing their best and they also are helping a ton of other people.
Student D	When I was transferring to BNC from BCD high school, I used my own self-advocacy to tell people I was dyslexic to enroll in the ODS because none of that transferred from my high school.
Student E	That's one thing students should tell their instructors otherwise they wouldn't know about the need for accommodations because it's confidential information. Don't be afraid to tell your instructors.

I've had some really nice instructors here, I'll admit I was a lot more shy at the beginning and afraid to tell them but it got easier.

I guess because the instructors don't make too much of a big deal of it. It's just between you and them, as they don't hand out the notes in front of the whole class. That's one thing I like here at ANH, the notes are written by students except the students never know who will use the notes. You just go to ODS and pick them up or get them sent to your email. |
| Student F | If you don't know, ask somebody. Just tell somebody I have a disability or I need these types of services and ask them where you can get those accommodations, because they'll tell you and lead you to the right spot. |

How have you communicated your accommodation needs regarding your Specific Learning Disability (SLD) to your instructors?

Student A	So an instructor just asked me with I got an email from ANH A1 and ANH B1 about this. I just want to know if anything is up? It wasn't like she was pushy or anything. She just wanted to make sure I had what I needed.
Student B	I really didn't have too. I believe whatever AHN A1 and AHN B1 sent in the email to instructors informs them so they speak for me. This school is very supportive.
Student C	AHN A1 and ANH B1 communicate first, but at the beginning of each semester, the first day of class I try to reach out and talk with each instructor. I try to briefly explain to them my strengths but also weaknesses and let them know that I want to work with them. Because there are little things AHN A1 and ANH B1 may not be able to totally explain. For example, I had a PE class with a sub who played loud music and I'm sensitive to loud music. I learned I needed to be a little more expressive about sensory things. I try to be accommodating, and I work hard, because even if I'm not strong in one area, they see that I'm trying really hard which usually picks up the slack.
Student D	My instructors have been really good about talking to me or I bring it up if they haven't mentioned it. At the beginning of the semester, they will say I see you're with ODS and what does that mean? Or I'll say I'm with ODS and this is what it means. I explain to them it just means more time for tests. Then I go to the ODS building and take the test there. I haven't needed to use it because with the Center at BNC, had a testing anxiety workshop. I went to that and it seems to have helped a lot to be able to sit down and take a test. So I haven't needed to use the accommodation but they still give me the paperwork for it and I still talk to my teachers about it just in case.
Student E	I've mainly seen them during office hours. I stop in and explain to them these are my accommodations. Before every test you fill out this worksheet that reminds them I have these accommodations and I want to use them during this test.

The first step is to go to ODS, pick up the worksheet and then hand it to the instructor in person or send it in an email to the instructor. It takes just a few days before the test or a week as it is sent to the instructor and the instructor will send it to the testing center, or ODS or both.

That's mainly the biggest difference between high school and college. In high school they basically do the majority of it for you. In college, you have to basically do the work on the accommodations yourself, I mean they are going to help you with it, but you've got to do it. They are not going to come to you. |
| Student F | I didn't really inform the professors. The thing about the accommodations is some of the professors get the accommodations that you need and some of them don't, so sometimes you have to tell them "I do have accommodations for your class" because some of them don't know. |

How has accessing support services made you stronger?

Student A	It has made me a better researcher. I have an increased desire for bettering myself. It has given me more care and compassion for my peers, allowing me to see other people as if they have something going on within them that they are not communicating to me.
Student B	I'm not as stubborn any more. It has built up a lot of confidence. It's made me realize it's ok to need help.
Student C	I would not be successful if I didn't have the support system. Because the days that I don't get my notes or if something goes wrong I don't do well on those sections. So I know that those accommodations are very much needed. If something goes wrong if someone is absent, it throws me off. If a test is not verbalized, I have audio tests and if that doesn't happen, I do worse on a test.
Student D	I think just the ability to say I can have extra time if needed has helped. Even if I don't need it, just being able to express to the teachers about the accommodations is a relief. It has helped me feel so much stronger because I had been using it as a crutch and it's not a crutch. These accommodations are there to help me level the playing field.
Student E	So many ways, it's made me stronger just feeling more comfortable with my issues. I feel like I know more about them and they really helped me realize there are a lot out there I can use to help, a lot of accommodations I can use and everybody is here to help me.
Student F	It's made me stronger it's made me able to communicate better with the professors. For example, if I don't want to speak to the professor I can just ask someone at ODS if they could speak with them. I mean it's definitely easier in that regard, and it's made it easier to gain access to other things, especially tutoring or different things for the class that you might need. ODS will send an email or phone call to communicate with the instructor.

RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?

What were the most difficult aspects of advocating for college services?

Student A	Thinking about what my peers would think of me.
Student B	I think the only difficult thing was probably being embarrassed. That was my fear of it, not being challenged and being treated different. I still wanted to be treated like a normal student, which I have been. So it is great.

	More of my thoughts of being embarrassed and my own thoughts of being secluded. I learned to joke about it. Just like I said I had to wear a patch on my eye so pretty much if I sat at a sticker that said ODS, the other students pretty much knew I was the person with the disability.
Student C	I had to learn to speak up for myself and admitting how much help I really needed. Especially, because this injury is new, I used to be a good student and ok on my own. Sometimes, I can't be anonymous as much as I'd like to be. It's obvious that I have support systems in place. But I've realized that the more I'm ok with it and the more I talk about it the better it is instead of trying to hide from it. I realize it's more of a need for people to realize that people struggle from non-apparent illness and disabilities more often than it's recognized on campus. I get a lot of "you seem fine" and all that. But I've had the opportunity to talk with a lot of staff and the faculty, because I am a student who seems fine and who's been willing to talk about it and can verbalize the experience.
Student D	When I started college, I was very insecure so just sitting down, talking with the ODS and saying I have a learning disability was probably one of the most difficult things, because nobody talked to me about it. The teachers would ask but nobody would "talk about it with me". I had studied learning disabilities, I know about my learning disability, but it's different knowing about it and then telling somebody else.
Student E	Like I said, just remembering to fill out the forms. That's basically it.
Student F	It wasn't really difficult. I would say it was in between. Depends on how you approach it really. It depends on ODS, I think people with a disability you need ODS anyway period. So, I've never really had a problem advocating for it really. It really just depends on who you are. If you are going to take this serious and you have a disability, you know you should just use the services that are available. Some may feel somewhat discriminated so they don't want to use it. It's really good, and you should use it to your advantage really. It's easier for the professors, if they know you have a disability and have ODS so they are able to work with you better.

In high school, case managers would advocate for a student, how is this different in college?

Student A	By being transparent in your difficulties, not dismissing them but by being transparent. Admitting a need for help and keeping the reason for achieving in mind.
Student B	Here is much more support, by being advocated for and being spoken for.

	Normally I would have just let a class slide and not spoken up about it. So I said no, I'm going to email someone about it. So I emailed the instructor and cc-d my advisor on it.
Student C	Well in high school I didn't have a case manager I didn't need one. So I'm familiar with it but not on a level I've experienced.
Student D	Personally, the teachers talking for me in high school and then going to college and I have to talk for myself. I have to say it was a big change. Because I could talk to my friends to teachers I've known for years, but having a new professor every semester and new people in class was different and challenging.
Student E	In college, you basically advocate for yourself, but they're still there to help you, you just have to be the person that says it.
Student F	Pretty much in high school, you get a lot of support. When you are in college, you get some support and it's enough.

Regarding accommodations at college, is there one thing you would like to see changed?

Student A	I would say, more involvement with those who are getting ODS also. But to have others talk about it and say "How do you get over this? Maybe I'll implement that for myself." That's the only thing I would change everything else has been wonderful.
Student B	Right now as far as what I've been having, I think it's perfect. I'm always getting emails, "hey get your books in." They push it a lot and they talk about it during orientation too.
Student C	More funding, it's very difficult to get note takers. Because the students don't see a lot of benefit to it as they are not getting instant satisfaction or pay for it. I've literally had to switch classes because they couldn't get a note taker, which I was willing to do because I needed the class but it was a huge inconvenience for me. Also more awareness and acceptance for ODS, I think that more funding would help to get more resources and more staffing.
Student D	I would like to be able to have audio books in my accommodations, but I know that I have to go through the process to get them and it has nothing to do with BNC, I just need to get the paperwork from my high school. I don't know overall if I see them needing a change because I see that there is a lot of good work they are doing.
Student E	Not really, ODS is a great area. I like how they do their audio books; I love the way they do the notes. I just started using Kurzweil. So to name a few technology applications such as Kurzweil, a little natural reader, learning ally, and bard. That's one thing I like about ANH, if you prefer someone reading it versus an online program. They will find someone to make that adjustment for you. I like Kurzweil too, I just started learning about it and there are all these different kinds of things inside Kurzweil. Like notes, you can type in it and highlight.

Student F	Certain schools are different, so it really depends on how the school works. I feel all schools should work the same way. They should have the same procedures, same policies when it comes to tests. What I mean is as an example the professors could work more with the students with disabilities.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Student A	I think I got a great deal of it out. I plan on making my experience in financial literacy into an e-book and let others know "You weren't told this, but this is what this is."
Student B	Think it pretty much is in there. I mean like I said, don't be afraid.
Student C	I would say that without having the support I would not be graduating next week. I would not have a 3.8 grade average. It takes a lot of work, it takes more work than I've ever had to do before but it's because I have to have all of these resources to do it. I can only take two classes at a time. And it takes all of those resources and all that help to make it happen.
Student D	No, I don't think I've missed anything.
Student E	Not really, just I love Access Services.
Student F	No, I don't think so.

Faculty participant responses

RQ1. What are the perceptions of the differences between the accommodations received in the high school to what is received at the public community college?

How does one apply for assistance at Office for Students with Disabilities?

Faculty A1	Call, email, stop-in. Instructor/Advisor will suggest based on what is revealed by student. Pre-college parents will contact.
Faculty B1	Formal interview, small application detail. Contact information. Document medical and educational dx. 504 plans, IEPs are covered.
Faculty C1	So there are a couple of different steps that students have to fulfill before they are ready to get connected with our office. The first thing they have to do is apply to the school, just like everybody else. The next step is they have to take the Accuplacer exam so we know where they scored in reading, writing, and math, and currently the expectations are students have to score at least pre-college level in reading and writing to be eligible to take classes at BNC. This may change in the future but right now that is the policy, and for the Accuplacer exam we can provide accommodations. We do tell all students that inquire the Accuplacer is untimed. This is a major barrier that they're concerned about and if they want additional accommodations such as having the test provided in a paper version instead of the compute version or audio. We can make that happen upon request and we don't require documentation for that, we take the students at their word and they schedule the exam up here in our office instead of downstairs in Admissions. Once they take the Accuplacer and scored at least precollege level in reading and writing, the next step is to go to an advising/registration session. Once they do that advising/registration session, then they are ready to meet with me. During the intake, I ask them questions to get to know them and to figure out the eligible accommodations appropriate for the student.

We would like students to provide documentation before the meeting so I have time to review. Typically IEPs are not enough documentation for us, because every IEP is a little bit different as far as what kind of information it gives so we like to make sure to tell them if they have an IEP or a 504 plan that we would like a copy of that 3 year evaluation. The summary of performance doesn't give us everything we need. So we don't accept that as documentation. If they only bring in their 504 plan that doesn't give us enough documentation as well.

When students bring in their documentation for the first time to the intake meeting, I have only a couple of minutes to glance through it. So the 3-year evaluation is most important documentation from high school. If they want to bring in an outside evaluation or a doctor's diagnosis, we will accept that |

	as well. Typically students like to go to their high school because it is the easiest way to get the documentation.
Faculty D1	We generally see students early on, because they are looking to the ODS staff for accommodations for the placement test. If a student has not taken the ACT or SATs, although that's going to be changing in the very near future, or in the past if a student had not taken the ACT or SAT or those cut scores in reading, writing, math didn't place them at a college level, they still have to take the Accuplacer placement test. The Accuplacer placement test is not timed, but if you want an individual room, you want it read, you need it enlarged, need Braille then you come to the ODS office. When students do take the Accuplacer, we're discussing with them their scores and give them our brochure, which goes into the steps to registering for courses and for registering to receive accommodations through the ODS. So during the placement tests we tell students about ODS services, and about ODS services on our website. Once they've registered with the college, they make an appointment for an intake interview. We ask for documentation. It doesn't have to be a full neuro-psych evaluation, but we would like some form of documentation. It's whatever driving the 504, or the IEP. We would like an evaluation or a note from a doctor or medical provider. A 504 can be helpful, but like the IEP there can be a lot of things on that not applicable to the college level. So we would like to have the 3-year evaluation, and/or we would like to have what's driving the 504, so basically information on the diagnosis. Although, some diagnoses aren't going to warrant accommodations. For instance, if someone only received accommodations because they had very poor behavior or they were truant and they don't have a medical diagnosis they most likely would not qualify for college accommodations.

In your experience, what are some major differences between accommodations in high school vs. college? Are incoming freshman aware of these differences?

Faculty A1	Learn more on accommodations/modifications in high school. Students do learn quickly that accommodations do level the playing field. Students need to learn to advocate for independence and use of accommodations. Most learn within the 1st or 2nd month at college. Primary focus should be on Assistive Technology.
Faculty B1	Students typically come in from high school not knowing about the use of audio books. We use the Kurzweil program. Also Learning Ally, which can be accessed on a smartphone. Students can have a personal account or use a college account. What we have seen from students when they register for ODS is either flight or fight, as the knowledge to start with us right away is

	not there. We have a user friendly website, use of audio books and audio tests.
Faculty C1	I think the major difference I see when I'm doing intakes are more students approaching me saying that in high school I got flexibility with assignment deadlines so as long as I got it in 2 or 3 days after, it wasn't penalized. I have to explain to them that this is not a reasonable accommodation in the postsecondary environment, as you're expected to meet the same expectations as everybody else.

That's part of why I like that I came from an advising background before I transferred here, because I do take time during the intake to talk through the number of credits they are taking and to balance that out. Talking about the number of work hours while in college. I would say flexibility with assignment deadlines or even with attendance policies, are the two biggest differences to them. One more thing being able to advocate for self. I think for some students are used to their case manager or parents being their personal advocate. Whereas in college, they are the person expected to self-advocate to make their needs known. Some secondary schools are really good about making sure students are aware of the changes in accommodations, some students come in and have no idea about these differences. |
| Faculty D1 | We have a Postsecondary Guide for Students with Disabilities, I was the lead on getting that written and we worked with the Minnesota Department of Ed's transition coordinator. This guide is on our website and has been very helpful for students. The reason this is helpful is I know the more work I do to help prepare special ed. teachers and students prior to entering postsecondary education, the better informed the students will be once they are here and they're not surprised that they won't be able to use their notes and books on every test.

I've been at BNC forever, in August it will be 16 years. I oversee ODS, but I can tell you anecdotally from conversations with students and BNC B1, students are a lot more prepared and understand the differences between high school and college, more now than they did 16 years ago. |

Who determines the types of accommodations or services to be received in college?

Faculty A1	Broad accommodations for all. Director does review the IEP, 3-year evaluation from K-12 to determine what was provided and we try to give as much as was used in K-12 for the first few months. Then students will have some fade away or we will determine what is really needed for each class. Students get to pick what is offered for each class after the Director assigns a list of accommodations and student can select what should apply for each class. Students sign a Release of Information to inform instructor, Director

	sends a secure email to each instructor regarding the selected accommodations. Every class, student will send a form to the Director indicating what accommodations should be used per class. Student needs to do this at least 3-4 days prior to any test situation if needing extended time or use of the testing center. Sometimes students want to take the test with the rest of the class and choose not to use their accommodations.
Faculty B1	Director does intake process. If accommodations are not working, we can change them. An example is extended time on tests, could change them.
Faculty C1	So usually it's the ODS Specialist. Here at BNC, it would be me as the primary person also BNC D1 of course is trained and is able to do it as well. By the time we complete the intake, the students are going to know the eligible accommodations.
Faculty D1	That's the intake/interview process. It's why we would like students to bring their documentation so we can know their disability, some information, and have a little history. During that conversation is when the accommodation plan is implemented. So BNC C1 is talking to students about what was received that would be postsecondary appropriate and how the accommodations are implemented at the college level. For instance a lot of students start out with one and a half times on a test. We will have students realize they have more difficulty say in Chemistry or Math so we'll set it up to readdress later and then change their accommodation plan to maybe get double time on Math and Science or double time on all tests. There's an initial accommodation plan, but it can be modified with further conversation and sometimes other documentation. There is no retake if a student had a recent change in their accommodation plan, unless their instructor would allow a retake. For most students it seems like time and a half for tests helps a lot. The questions we ask helps with determining the accommodations needed, questions such as how long has a test taken you in the past? Do you find you are you usually the last person? Are you concerned about processing? Do noises interfere with your processing? We spend a lot of time talking about testing because that is the biggest accommodation students' use. If we see they had time and half on the ACT, but then they might find out that in certain classes they need more time. So we are going by history, the more scores on the documentation the better. I mean if a student tells me it takes them really long to process and I see their evaluation and the scores help me get a better idea. Sometimes the documentation helps steer the conversation because students may not tell me everything so when I look at the documentation it helps to ask about it.

RQ2. How will self-advocacy skills impact students with SLD in accessing services at the public community college?

There are the differences between secondary and college accommodations, how can a secondary case manager inform students of these differences?

Faculty A1	There are great YouTube videos regarding college accessibility, accommodations, and students actually using the accommodations. Suggestion would be to invite the ODS director to high school groups, we have had students at the college who attended the former high school volunteer to talk with current high school students about accommodations. Parent/Teacher conferences are a great idea, and invite students to separate meetings during that conference time. I have been working with the transition coordinator at Minnesota Department of Education to share K-12, and higher ed. information.
Faculty B1	Meeting with college and student. Possibly at a transition meeting.
Faculty C1	I think one of the biggest pieces of advice for students considering college is to visit that college. It helps to get a feel for the college. What we do at BNC is a college tour geared towards students in special education. I spend the first hour showing them the campus and explaining generically how campus works. Then the last half an hour, we go into a classroom, I sit with them and answer questions about the differences between college and high school. We discuss the expectations so they're not shocked when somebody is saying flexibility with assignment deadlines or attendance is not a postsecondary accommodation, and it's not the first time they are hearing it when they are about to start their first semester. A suggestion would be to start changing high school accommodations for students to college accommodations while in high school for that senior year. This gives a more realistic perspective before they graduate. Another suggestion would be to ask students what colleges they are interested in attending and contact the disability offices before they apply and ask questions about accommodations. I have parents call me before a semester starts and state my child has ADHD, what kind of accommodations would he/she get. My answer is it always depends, because every person is different, they have different barriers and strengths so that's why we are so keen that intake meeting but at the same time, I will explain common accommodations are extra time on tests, audiobooks, note taking, but I can't tell what a child is going to get until the intake meeting.
Faculty D1	There are a lot more materials out there now, including the resource guide. I'm working with high school instructors. I think it is being discussed more in teacher preparation. It's teacher preparation collaborating with postsecondary disability people, getting the materials because there are now more available then ever.

Any advice you would like to give to incoming students?

Faculty A1	Start learning assistive technology that works such as Sonocent, or Kurzweil. ANH uses this a lot as screen readers for students. Theory is K-12 tries to teach students to read but they need to use screen readers to keep up with the coursework. He has been working with a vision impairment coordinator at Minnesota Department of Education. Get used to organizational apps, know the ODS right away. Students do not want to be associated with the ODS as it reminds them of sped, but after 1 or 2 months, they realize it is helpful.
Faculty B1	Weekly check-ins with ODS staff. Open to all.
Faculty C1	Calling the college. If really thinking about starting college and if you have accommodations that provide more flexibility with stuff to try not to use the flexibility before exiting high school so you're prepared for what it's going to be like. The other major thing some students don't know this thought process of needing to take 15 credits each semester for full time consideration. I explain yes in order to get financial aid for full time status you need to take at least 12 credits, but you're still eligible for funds even if you're a part time student, which is 6 credits or more. So if they are worried about expectations of college a student should take less credits for the first semester, and if that goes well to increase the number of credits for future semesters.
Faculty D1	When you look at college there's a lot of skills to help a student be successful and its not just intellect. It's motivation. It's executive functioning, the ability to organize, and the ability to manage your time, the ability to understand what your capabilities are as far as course load. Questions about your whole life, how much are you working? How involved are you with caring for family members? Or is that your responsibility? We know if a student is having difficulty in a course and they see a tutor, the chances of being successful will go up substantially because they're doing more with their learning, they're not being passive. That they are doing something for their learning, the more students are motivated they're going to be more apt to seek the services they need to stay on campus and get studying done so they're not distracted. Students can go to their instructor and talk to them when they don't understand something. Go to the tutoring center, be a part of student support services, use the services of disability services. So it's what you should have before you come in and then once you get here, using what we have, especially in community colleges, we have students who work more, have families, have a lot more personal things going on, then a student at a four year, living in a dorm and maybe doesn't work as much. Those are the things that we have in the resource guide and we discuss with

	students at the intake, such as course load and if a weakness is writing, don't take too many writing intensive courses if writing takes three to four times longer than anybody else. We're looking at the whole person when we have the intake, which is why we meet for an hour with a student, as we want to talk about all of these things with them, because we know it's important to their success.

In what way are students informed that they need to self-advocate for their accommodations?

Faculty A1	We are clear on that right away, staffing is limited at college. About 200 students for 1.5 staff so not a lot of time to assist. Teaching students to use the basic screen reader information so they are ready to use it. Only about 13% of students with a disability will ever earn a B.A. About 50% graduate from 2-year college and about 26% with disabilities grad from ANH.
Faculty B1	Conversation at the intake is to encourage an open communication with the instructor. We send a mass email to the instructors and we include the student with this email. I believe this helps the self-advocacy when we send the email to instructors and cc the student in order to start the advocacy for the student.
Faculty C1	Here at BNC, if a student is connected with us we do inform the instructors about their testing accommodations and classroom accommodations. But we do not indicate what their diagnosis is, that is "need to know" information. If there is a medical emergency or there is something relevant that the instructor needs to know is when we tell them the diagnosis. I recommend students with disabilities to be proactive and set up a really short meeting with the instructor even before classes start just to let them know of any concerns, how their disability works, and even to ask for advice from the instructor on what steps to take to be successful in the class. We inform students at the intake to self-advocate for their accommodations.
Faculty D1	That's part of the intake process when we're meeting with the student, we talk to them about self-advocating. At the end of the intake meeting, we develop an accommodation plan based on the information from the student, and what came out in the discussion. We give them a sheet of paper that has all of their accommodations on one side and how to use them on the other side. We give them a testing center bookmark that goes into even more detail about how to use the testing accommodations. We have all of that information on the website and it's on the back of the testing form the student's give to their instructors. ODS is the one to inform all of the instructors of any student who receives accommodations, we continue to do that throughout the semester. Then students will approach instructors after that. When school starts in the fall, we could have 450 students registered by December, we'll have 600

	students. It goes up substantially as the semester goes on, because a lot of the students don't meet with us before the semester starts. We still notify instructors of all the accommodations applicable to the classroom. We don't tell instructors about some accommodations such as organization, time management, or audio books because the instructors don't provide that for the student. Those are done through ODS, but we tell the instructors about accommodations that impact the classroom, such as testing, note taking, disability related absences, being able to record lectures. If the student wants to use their accommodations for instance, testing then there is a separate letter they print off and give to their instructor. But if they don't want to use it in that class, then they don't give them this letter, however, the instructor does know they could use it as the instructor has been informed. We don't disclose disability we only disclose accommodations.

Parents have played an integral part in their child's advocacy, what has been your experience with helping a family work through this adjustment?

Faculty A1	Not too many problems, this changed in 2013 where parents asked a lot of questions to now students are more prepared. Parents are invited to attend after the student signs a release of information, but the focus is to talk to the student, as they are the primary. Observations from ANH A1 have been that parents are sitting back and identifying critical questions when their child is in the primary position of the interaction.
Faculty B1	Reassuring parents what mom would like to set up their child for success.
Faculty C1	I will ask student's if they want to sign a release of information for ODS to talk to their parents. In high school, parents can probably call up the school and talk to school staff. At least, that's the impression students and parents give me, whereas in college I can't give specific information about their child over the phone due to privacy requirements. So parents have to come on campus and talk with me or I snail mail them responses. If they ask very generic information about the college, I can email that. If I do have a parent that's very much wanting to be involved, I try to encourage them to take a step back and give their child room to be successful. I explain the privacy policy during the intake meeting so if the parents are with the student at least the parents are aware of the expectations. If a student wants to be independent and not sign a release, we are open to that too. If a parent is emailing us, and especially if there isn't a release of information, we would recommend the student and parent come in for a meeting together and the student gives their verbal consent so we can have a three-way conversation.

Faculty D1	We've allowed parents to be at the intake interview with a student, if a student signs a release for the parent to be in the intake meeting. The student checks on the form what the parent can have rights too as far as the private information. Every once in awhile you'll get a student, they'll ask is it ok that my mom's in the meeting? And we'll say it's ok with us if it's ok with you.
	Once in awhile, there'll be a student who will say I'd rather not have my mom or dad in the meeting so mom or dad doesn't come in to that meeting. Sometimes it may be the student really needs it, but that's their choice when they get to the college because of privacy and FERPA. It's really important for students to know that instructors would prefer to talk to the student than to a parent. Even if they have a release on file and they've given consent for instructors to talk to parents, the instructor doesn't have to have that conversation.
	It's really important that students learn about advocating for themselves and taking ownership of their education. Students, the more they take ownership of their own education the better. It is helpful to have someone being in a meeting to listen or talking through a difficult situation is helpful. We know students need support either from family or friends that's a key part of being in college, but we also want students to take more ownership for their own learning.

RQ3. What are the remaining barriers for students with SLD after accessing disability services at the public community college?

Are there any accommodations that students may receive in high school that may not carry over to college environment?

Faculty A1	We do not have scripting. We let Kurzweil take that due to limited staff. Students should learn more about screen readers as more publishers are going for e-books. This helps to control the purchasing too.
Faculty B1	Extended time on assignments is used on a case-by-case basis. Rarely and only depending on the situation. They are given a syllabus at the beginning of the course, so they have a timeline and need to plan.
Faculty C1	Extended deadlines, flexibility with attendance. We do have what is called disability related absences, so if a student is gone for a medical emergency such as hospitalized unexpectedly, we do have an accommodation where we can advocate on their behalf, but because we advocate does not guarantee they will be allowed flexibility with the assignment deadlines or attendance. It depends on the instructor.

Some instructors don't have attendance policies and other instructors have |

	very strict attendance policies. I tell my students if they have a disability that requires them to be away from campus or they have a lot of flare-ups to really look at that syllabus before the drop date so if there is a strict attendance policy to drop the class and find an instructor with a more flexible attendance.
Faculty D1	It's the conversation of postsecondary appropriate so that we maintain the level of earning a college degree, which is different then earning a high school degree. You don't have to go to college, but when you do get a college degree you did all the work. So you could say I received accommodations and somebody would say "Oh you didn't do all the work", that's not true, you did all of the work because the accommodations don't modify the curriculum, accommodations assist to try to level the playing field. Postsecondary student have to study for tests, have to know the material and it takes a lot for some students to know that material. But that's the commitment you'll need to have in order to be successful here.

What is one thing about college accommodations you would like to see changed?

Faculty A1	Better resourced in terms of staff. We are teaching basics with screen readers and would like to have students use it to it's full potential. Informing faculty of this resource for all students. Have a primary staff person tutor students with assistive technology as well as identify more assistive technology for students.
Faculty B1	Advocating for notes as it is difficult to seek volunteers. Sometimes the note taker is absent.
Faculty C1	I think the biggest thing, a lot of students have this fear if I talk to you and get connected with accommodations that in some way or some form means I failed. I would love for that perception to change for students. This isn't a matter of being given an unfair advantage it's about getting the same equal access as everybody else.
Faculty D1	We change as we go along. There is case law, and things that you learn so you change it. For instance, the process we have for students who experience a disability related absence during a course in a semester and end up losing points due to lack of attendance, missing a test, or a paper is nothing like we had when I first started 16 years ago. As we see things that are not right or that maybe didn't help we change our process. For instance, we've looked at note taking. We review the best way to provide note taking. We've implemented some things this past year with our note taking process that we've never done before. If we think there is something that should be changed based on information we've received from students, based on case law or based on some sort of process or something you've heard from people you respect, then you change it.

	If I had more staffing, I would like to have a special program for students with more significant barriers that are not being successful. I would like to have someone working more closely with those students. They would meet more often with the students to set up a success plan and implement it. More resources, more help with organization and time management is always nice to be able to do for students because more touch points, more community, and stronger relationships with the staff from our office, the students are going to be more successful in general.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Faculty A1	Sonocent is a program we will pilot this summer. It records and can visually color code blocks of sound, can break apart sentences, and color code. It can use a text box to type in notes and assign a color to each sound. It can sync PowerPoint to sections of sound as well. We are working with the transition coordinator at Minnesota Department of Education. We will be working with businesses to get more connections for persons with disabilities to work. They are starting to use hands on interviews versus verbal interviews so they can see someone in action.
Faculty B1	Advocacy for notes, it would be nice if they were posted.
Faculty C1	During that first meeting with students, being part of our office is private, meaning I don't go around and show their file to everybody. It's not confidential because I do have the right to talk to an instructor, co-worker, if there is a need to do that. Since it's private, if I were to see them anywhere outside my office location, I need to pretend I don't know them. I'm not trying to be rude or disrespectful, I have to uphold the right to privacy, which is one major difference from high school to college.
Faculty D1	I don't think so we've talked about a lot.