
The Interactive Process

What is an Interactive Process?"

It is actually a term for a way to arrive at an appropriate academic adjustment or appropriate auxiliary aids or service through a deliberative and collaborative process of communication with the student. The ADA and Title 5 Section 56022 require that DSPS certificated staff engage in the ‘interactive process’ as part of the development of an Academic Accommodation Plan (AAP) to determine the most appropriate support(s) for the student. Any certificated staff can verify any disability documentation, including LD, and approve academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, services and/or instruction as part of the interactive process.

Communication is a priority throughout the entire process, but particularly where the specific education limitation, problem, or barrier is unclear; where an effective academic adjustment or auxiliary aid is not obvious; or where you and the student maybe considering different forms of academic adjustments. Therefore, the bottom line is that both the student making the request and the certificated DSPS staff member should work together to identify effective academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services.

The interactive process requires communication and good-faith exploration between DSPS and individual students. The shared goal is to identify appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services that facilitates equal access to the educational process. Following each interactive conversation with the student about an academic adjustment, a DSPS certificated staff member should document that conversation(s) in case notes and/or on the AAP.

Often, when a student files a discrimination complaint against the college, it is because of a failure to engage in this interactive process when an academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aids could be identified by the student and therefore provided in a timely manner.

The Interactive Process

An example of the [interactive process used in LD](#) can be found as this link as part of the LD Issues and Accommodations training video. This can also be found at www.DSPSSolutions.org

How do I begin this interactive process?

You Are Gathering Information:

You are having a **‘conversation’** with the student, meaning a discussion, a ‘give and take’ and exchange of information. You are gathering information by asking the student open ended questions about their-disability, functional limitations, educational limitations, history in high school (or other setting), etc.

It is important to make the student feel comfortable. This is not a job interview, and neither of you should be nervous about entering into this discussion. The two most important types of questions to ask are factual questions and action questions.

- Factual questions require a student to respond with a what and when answer
- Action questions require a student to describe how they did or used something.

Always try for open ended questions meaning asking questions in the form of ‘How did you...?’ rather than ‘Did you’....where you might get a yes or no answer. Following up on the ‘how did you’ question you can move in to a follow-up question such as: “Take me through how that worked for you.

Questions that begin with where, when, why, and how will begin to draw the student into talking about their disability/education limitation and need for academic adjustments. With some students it will be easy, others like drawing teeth, patience and a gentle welcoming attitude will help the student to feel relaxed and open during this discussion. The questions that begin with ‘How’ and ‘Why’ usually bring the most benefit.

The Interactive Process

Think of this interactive process as a ladder:

Step one: Gaining basic information about the students' background and education history. A 'chat' about where they have been and what they have been doing is a positive start. Whether coming to this interactive discussion with their mother, coming from high school, or back from serving in Afghanistan, their response should immediately help you frame your next set of questions.

Step Two: Discovering their self-knowledge of their disability, functional limitations/educational limitations. Some students are well aware and knowledgeable about their disabling condition and educational limitations; for others, they may not have received supports in high school or have come to their disability later in life.

TIP: If you don't know the disabling condition, such as Adrenoleukodystrophy a quick Google search will usually provide you with a few pointers.

Step Three: Gathering information on what academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and or supports they have used in the past.

Step Four: Exploring what worked or what didn't. What were the benefits or pros and cons?

Step Five: Discussing the intended course of study/classes and what types of academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services might be appropriate. Great if the student is knowledgeable, if not, you can provide suggestions based on your experience.

Step Six: Examining prior knowledge of such accommodations and support and what training might be required.

Step Seven; Coming to an agreement of what is needed. Wherever possible taking the students' preference into consideration

Step Eight: Documenting the discussion, the course/class to be taken, the academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services and or training required.

Step Nine: Ensuring the student understands the process for getting these services such as accommodation letters, picking up a tape recorder, etc.

The Interactive Process

Step Ten: Implementing the academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and/or services. Remember this is an ongoing process. Check on effectiveness. Encourage ongoing communication. The student needs to know and feel comfortable that if their needs change or the nature of the course or class they are undertaking changes they can come back for further discussion on what might be needed.

Version 2.0