Music Listening as an Academic Accommodation for College Students with Disabilities

by

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ABSTRACT

Most colleges[1] do not advertise all accommodations that are available to students nor do all institutions offer the same accommodations. This can be seen in instances where some universities allow students to listen to music during testing. Music has been shown to benefit students with various disabilities and help with focus and stress reduction, but this accommodation is not readily accessible to students. Music and accommodations, in general, are still viewed as predominantly "privileges" or "advantages" rather than rights promoting equity, diversity, inclusion for all students, and improved testing environments. Obtaining accommodations is based on the dominant medical model which emphasizes impairments rather than accessibility during the registration process. This research examines disability office websites for 50 land grant colleges across the United States to determine if listening to music is listed as a testing accommodation and the accessibility of that information. Of the 50 colleges, five universities had "listening to music during exams or tests" on their websites, and three of the five had the information in the faculty or student handbook, not easily accessible. Only two universities, Virginia Tech, and Washington State University, had information about music listening on their disability website. Future research should address the problem of "accommodations" versus "accessibility" as a right including the inconsistency of finding accommodation information such as listening to music during testing.

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[1] The terms college(s) and university(ies) will be used interchangeably throughout

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5. I would like to thank my brother Adam, who passed away from heart failure three years after we reconnected. He was a fantastic musician and drummer. His joy and excitement for music continues to motivate and encourage me to not only complete this project but enjoy every part of life. I also want to extend gratitude to my cousin David Angelo, who also passed away years back. He was my father figure growing up and continues to inspire me daily.

6. Lastly, I want to thank all people with disabilities for continuing to push the boundaries of what a fair and equal society should look like. It is the voices of people with disabilities that need to be heard the most when it comes to creating access and justice for people who were not expected to succeed in a world that is not built for them.

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INTRODUCTION

Providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities has become a core part of services that are required at educational institutions.[2] In part due to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), how these accommodations are provided varies depending on whether the student is in K-12 or college. Section 504 of the ADA requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction. No matter what the disability is, a school district must identify the individual's educational need, and provide any regular or special education-related aids and services necessary to meet those needs as well as it is meeting the needs of students without disabilities. However, the situation in postsecondary education is different. In postsecondary education, it is not required to provide a free and appropriate public education; therefore, colleges are required to provide reasonable accommodations as necessary to ensure that the university does not discriminate based on disability (The Rights of College Students with Disabilities, 2021). [3]

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[2] Academic Accommodations- Academic accommodations provide students with disabilities with equal access to course instruction, materials, and evaluation. They "level the playing field" by reducing/eliminating barriers caused by the interaction between a student's disability and the learning environment ("Iowa State Student Accessibility Services Accommodations", n.d.).

[3] Purpose for Reasonable Accommodations- Reasonable accommodations provide the student with a disability an equal learning opportunity to their peers.

The main difference between K-12 and post-secondary education is that schools in K-12 are federally required to provide support for educational needs regardless of the disability. But in higher education, the responsibility of locating resources and accessible accommodations is placed not on the institution, but on the student. Since university students are considered adults rather than children, it is the student's responsibility to seek resources and access support individually, according to what is available to them. Even though the ADA allows students greater access to disabled student services, they still face numerous barriers. Since responsibility is placed on the individual, many do not use the services for which they are eligible. Certain issues such as disclosure, stigma, perception of advantage, or simply not knowing about available services can lead students to not access needed services. Furthermore, because accommodations are often based on obtaining a medical diagnosis, students with disabilities face challenges obtaining documentation that is required to qualify for disability services. According to Evans et al. (2017, p. 361),

> In order to access accommodations under both Section 504 and the ADA, students had to prove that they had 'a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more … major life activities' (Section 504, 1973, n.p.; ADA, 2010a). Prior to the ADA, this initial step required students to furnish the disability service provider with written documentation from a physician confirming they had a physical or mental impairment. After the ADAAA was enacted in 2009, this strict standard of requiring third-party

Reasonable accommodations do not guarantee student success and do not provide an unfair advantage. Accommodations are intended to reduce or eliminate barriers to equal access and promote equal opportunities to learn and participate fully in all educational programs ("Iowa State Student Accessibility Services Accommodations", n.d.)

medical documentation and assessing functional limitations as prerequisites for accessing accommodations has shifted toward a more balanced approach that gives greater weight to student self-report, observations made by the disability service professional, previous experiences, and incorporation of a variety of documentation (AHEAD, 2012b). However, because of this historical precedent and the broader culture of medicalization (Titchkosky, 2007), a component of disability resource providers' practice still engages with the broader culture that views disability as a functional limitation or problem that requires a solution.

For clarification of the quote, the ADAAA refers to the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The unnecessary requirement of documentation for students with disabilities by universities is rooted in a long history of medicalization that still supports the ideology that disability is something that needs to be fixed, and if you are deemed to be disabled enough (limits more than one major life activity), you can qualify for these resources; but until you have proven to the disability office that you meet these criteria, you are deemed to be undeserving of assistance.

While most universities claim to provide disability accommodations, they fail to provide crucial information regarding accommodations that could be beneficial to students, such as a list on their website of all accommodations that could be utilized by students and better prepare them for the initial conversation with disability service offices when requesting accommodations. One example of universities failing to provide crucial information to students can be seen specifically with the accommodation of listening to prerecorded music during tests and exams. There is minimal information about this accommodation on most university websites, and it is unclear which universities offer music listening as a testing accommodation.

Music listening has been used in medical and educational contexts because it has been shown that music can relieve stress and lessen anxiety (Lee, 2012; Osmanoglu, 2019). In children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), music playing in the background has been shown to increase attention, speaking, and eye contact and minimize more difficult behaviors (Schwartz, 2017). In higher education, there have been some studies around the impact of listening to music during test taking for students in different academic fields (Claudio & Bakke, 2023; Ince, 2017). Many students use music to help them focus while they are working on homework or studying. Some colleges, including Florida National University and the University of Maryland Global Campus, suggest listening to music before an exam to ease stress, and help with focus and improve performance (Schempp & Sanders, 2023). Universities and colleges ***should*** allow students with disabilities to listen to music during their exams, but there is minimal information about this accommodation on most university websites and most information is not easily accessible. There are often multiple pages that must be navigated and phone calls that are required before accessing information about this accommodation.

In this thesis, I address the origins of accommodations in higher education and how these are rooted in ableism. I also examine the benefits of music listening in educational settings for people with disabilities. My research examines the disability resource office websites of 50 Land Grant colleges across the United States of America to determine if the accommodation or information about the accommodation is available

online[4]. Factors that are central to this analysis are: 1.) ease of finding accommodations, 2.) availability of information about music listening as an accommodation or service, and 3.) whether the information about music listening is provided for faculty or the students. Listening to music could and should be a widely offered accommodation, but the limited amount of information on college websites creates a massive barrier for students who may benefit from using the accommodation but are under the impression that the accommodation is not available because it is not listed on the school websites. As a visually impaired researcher, it was especially challenging to navigate the various websites. It is therefore easy to imagine that the inaccessibility of these sites can deter students from having the proper information needed to be successful as a disabled student. In the next section, I will analyze research on ableist perspectives and approaches to disability in society, including universities from where the misguided idea

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[4] A land-grant college or university is an institution that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, or the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. The original mission of these institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education. (Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities, 2024) There are 112 land grant colleges currently in the United States (National Education Association, 2022)

that accommodations are "privileges" emerges. Then, I analyze the predominant understandings regarding ADA policy. Finally, I examine current research on the benefits of listening to music in academic settings and for individuals with various conditions and disabilities. Disabled students who receive accommodations or would benefit from listening to music during a test in college are not accessing a privilege; on the contrary, they are accessing a right so they can be granted equal access to the classroom and resources offered by the college. Listening to music during testing allows for equitable access and should be easily available for students who request it.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Society's understanding of disability has taken many forms. The medicalization of disability has contributed to the ideology surrounding compulsory able-bodiedness (Dolmage, 2017). Crip theory and the theory of debility contribute to different interpretations of disability outside of the medical definitions (Puar, 2017). But, despite the different approaches from which to understand disability, most understanding within disability resource centers at universities comes from medical definitions of disability (Evans et al., 2017). Within academia the predominant idea is that disability is supposed to be cured, and involve rehabilitation, or treatments (Clare, 2019). With disability studies emerging into higher education, the understanding of disability as more than just a medical diagnosis is now being presented in institutions that have long histories of discrimination against disabled people (Dolmage, 2017). The reshaping of how disability is viewed in academia, therefore, is vital to creating equal access for students with disabilities.

Ableism and Disablism in Academia for Students with Disabilities

In academic institutions, ableism, rather than disablism, is the most present form of discrimination against disabled people (Dolmage, 2017). Dolmage states, "Disablism negatively constructs both the values and the material circumstances around people with disabilities. Disablism says that there could be nothing worse than being disabled and treats disabled people unfairly as a result of those values" (Dolmage, 2017, pp. 6-7). This negative belief is influenced by ableist portrayals of disability in society and the minimal understanding by able-bodied people about those with disabilities. Concerning ableism, Dolmage (2017, p. 7) further says, "Ableism, on the other hand, instead of situating disability as bad and focusing on that stigma, positively values able-bodiedness. In fact, ableism makes able-bodiedness compulsory." The compulsory ideology of ableism creates a normal acceptance of able-bodiedness, as it devalues disabled bodies. The author describes disability as "abject, invisible, disposable, less than human, while able-bodiedness is represented as at once ideal, normal, and the mean or default" (Dolmage, 2017, p. 7). Both ableism and disablism are present in academia, but ableism is the most prevalent.

Another theory that is crucial to the understanding of disability is Crip Theory. Crip theory, much like disability studies, stems from the understanding that rather than disability being a medical issue from within a person's body, what causes a disability is living in a society that is not willing to assist a person with their needs. Essentially, it is the world that is disabling due to ableist norms and expectations (Krebs, 2019). This idea

of the world being disabling is further developed within the concept of debilitation. Puar

(2017, p. xiv) explains the difference between debilitation and disablement as:

> The term "debilitation" is distinct from the term "disablement" because it foregrounds the slow wearing down of populations instead of the event of becoming disabled. While the latter concept creates and hinges on a narrative of before and after for individuals who will eventually be identified as disabled, the former comprehends those bodies that are sustained in a perpetual state of debilitation precisely through foreclosing the social, cultural, and political translation to disability. It is this tension, the tension between targeting the disabled and targeting to debilitate, the tension between being and becoming, this is the understated alliance that I push in this project.

Puar recognizes that disability is not a one-size-fits-all type of circumstance. The social,

cultural, and political facets of people's lives, including labor, are what can create

perpetuated cycles of violence that continually leave individuals debilitated. For Puar,

people who are debilitated are not eligible for rights granted to those defined as disabled

because "disability" confers a socio-political status. Those who are debilitated provide a

quick form of exploitable and disposable labor which will later not allow them to access

benefits or rights if they cannot provide evidence and documentation of their "disability."

Thus, "disability is a status of privilege conferred to only certain socio-economic statuses

and not those defined as debilitated (Puar, 2017). Having this broader understanding of

alternative approaches to understanding disability, rather than the dominant medical

model, allows for more comprehension of the need for equity and equality when

examining accessibility or accommodations defined as reasonable and equitable for

disabled students in university settings. The medical model has been implemented in the

ADA and has a long history of creating barriers for the disabled population. This next

section examines the origins of accommodations and the ADA.

The Origin of "Accommodations" and the ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was a landmark passing of legislation in the United States of America. The ADA was signed into law by then-President George H.W. Bush on July 26, 1990. The ADA states that discrimination against any person with disabilities is illegal in multiple areas of public life. Some of these areas include employment, state, and local government agencies, including public schools and colleges, businesses, and public transportation. (*Introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act*, 2022). The ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. They must have a history or record of such an impairment (such as cancer that is in remission) or be perceived by others as having such an impairment (such as a person who has scars from a severe burn) (*Introduction to the Americans with disabilities act,* 2022). Regarding students with disabilities, they are protected by Title II and Section 504 of the ADA. Title II protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination by state-funded schools such as state universities, community colleges, and vocational schools. Students with disabilities who are enrolled at private schools are protected under Title III of the ADA. The ADA and Section 504 protect students with disabilities from discrimination during the admissions process and in the classroom. Universities and community colleges are obligated to provide "reasonable accommodations" unless doing so would cause a fundamental alteration of the program or would cause undue financial or administrative burden (*The Rights of College Students with Disabilities*, 2021). Examples of "reasonable accommodations" include aids such as

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audio recordings, assistive technology such as zoom text or screen readers, and large print reading materials. Also, universities may modify policies or procedures that will create equal access to the classroom or college campus. To obtain these accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to find disability resources on campus available to them. The university has no obligation to seek out students with disabilities or provide services to test a student for a disability. These modifications and alterations are very individualized to the student's needs. Most universities provide support for disabled students through departments that work directly with students to provide accommodations and resources (Evans, et al., 2017). These departments, mostly known as disability resource centers, on campuses, have staff that discuss students' disabilities and determine what accommodations may seem reasonable for their disability. Accordingly, universities may also require documentation of a medical diagnosis, and it is the student's responsibility to cover any costs incurred to obtain the required documentation (*The Rights of College Students with Disabilities,* 2021). The process of obtaining medical documents for students who request accommodations is often the first of many problems faced by disabled students when seeking help and support in college. These financial difficulties harken back to Puar's notion that in order for the student to receive accommodations, they must first prove themselves to obtain the "disability" status. Besides facing extra financial burdens, stigma is another barrier incurred by disabled students.

Disclosure and Stigma

To obtain "reasonable accommodations," students must disclose and provide "proof" of their disability. Because of this disclosure, students with disabilities often face different forms of stigma while in college. They face discrimination from their peers, professors, and often, from the disability resource centers on college campuses. The term stigma has multiple definitions, but the two that I want to include come from the Lancet Commission on ending stigma and discrimination in mental health. The commission shares:

> Public and interpersonal stigma refers to stereotypes, negative attitudes (prejudice), and negative behavior (discrimination) by members of society toward people with mental health conditions and disabilities; and structural (systemic or institutional) stigma refers to policies and practices that work to the disadvantage of the stigmatized group, whether intentionally or unintentionally (Thornicroft et al., 2022).

Ableism creates the barriers that accommodations are supposed to help break down. The preference for able-bodiedness creates stigmas that lead to the devaluing of disabled students. Stigma and discrimination against students with disabilities can also be determined by an individual's understanding of disability. When reaching out to disability service offices, stigma is a social consequence that can occur when students disclose their disability and may impact whether they request accommodations. Evans, et al., (2017 p. 156), notes,

> Annamma, Conner, and Ferri (2013) and Samuels (2003) found that perceived social consequences can prohibit individuals from requesting accommodations, especially accommodations that are visible. Students develop an understanding of their identity through their experiences with society, including the primary and secondary educational systems. These experiences influence not only their identification as disabled but also

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their decisions regarding which institution to attend and what resources to use. Ultimately, they may have an impact on a student's collegiate success.

If a student has had a negative experience at any point in their academic experience during instances of disclosure, it will make them less likely to request accommodations. These instances can happen at any time in a student's academic career, whether that is early in K-12 or later, but the problem with past experiences having such an impact on a student's decision to identify and disclose the disability is that they miss out on opportunities and tools that could vastly improve their educational experience. Speaking from personal experience, as a child, I can remember children always asking questions about why my books included large print due to my visual impairment, and why I was using binoculars in class. Of course, now as an adult, I understand that most of the children were curious and wanted to know why I had to do certain things differently than them, but it always made me feel like a deviant as students humiliated me. These experiences that occurred at a young age made me not ever want to utilize tools such as magnifying glasses and large print books that would help me and minimize stress on my eyes, but the stigma and misunderstanding of disability that I faced made me not want to utilize these resources.

Labeling theory is also helpful for understanding the stigma created by disclosure and ableism (Becker, 1963). (Inderbitzin, 2003, p. 359) writes, "We are all outsiders in some situation or social group and others judge our behavior based upon their own standards. Power plays into the equation, but we ultimately have little say about the different labels others pin on us". Once a label is placed on an individual, the viewpoint

from which the individual is judged will solely be based on the label. All their actions

and behaviors will be viewed by society in the context of their disability, rather than in

the context of their whole personhood. Thus, because disability accommodations require

students to disclose their disability, they risk exposing themselves to ableist definitions of

themselves to receive any type of help. And even though students technically do not have

to disclose their disability status, they run the risk of not receiving any assistance if they

don't. This creates a situation where much of the research done on student

accommodation is only based on those who disclose their disability. By choosing to use

disability accommodations at a university, a student is unintentionally also marking

themselves as deviant or abnormal. This unintentional self-labeling is due to the social

consequences of stereotyping and negative reactions from peers and faculty about

disability. Horejes (2022, p. 9) says,

> "Simultaneously, societies also construct the ideology of abnormalcy with
> specific sets of constraints (i.e. biology, physiology, intellectually, and so
> on). These boundaries are developed through careful documentation and
> ostensible examinations as valid casual inferences to reach toward
> (proclaimed) validity. Validity is then transmitted through these social
> control agencies and institutions. Via these institutions, the body or
> objective subject is situated as a strategic instrument to perpetuate the
> types of discourse via moral boundaries and their movements. These
> boundaries, then, become formalized through a documentation of reality
> whether it is done through medicalization or legalization of societal
> norms. In the end, the documentation of validity becomes a site of social
> control via social stratification as a strategy to construct the "order of
> things" in the name of ideology at that given time, but it is continually
> changing via paradigmatic shifts in our social consciousness (Marx &
> Engels in Bunge, 1986).".

 For many students with disabilities on college campuses, their disability can only have

"validity" if medical documentation is provided. Medical documentation is used to justify

a person's experience of being disabled. If a student is unable to provide medical documentation, their own experience of disability is not seen as credible enough documentation of their need for accommodation.

The decision not to disclose can be based on fear of stigma. The fear of stigma can lead to a lack of accommodation because students fear that asking for help will make them appear incapable. These barriers would be eliminated if services were available to all students regardless of disability status. Several factors play a part in a student's willingness to disclose their disability. Some of these factors include a student's past experience with requesting accommodations and the student's perceptions of the teacher's willingness to provide support and understanding. Students are more likely to request accommodations when they believe that faculty will have a positive perception toward students with disabilities. Students 'willingness to disclose information about their disabilities was affected by their perception of how they were treated by the campus faculty (Mamboleo, 2020). Students with disabilities are not even attempting to get accommodations because they think that professors have a negative view of what disability means. This can be seen as an example of labeling. Students are afraid to place the societally constructed label of "disability" on themselves because of the negative judgment that they might receive once that label is placed upon them (Becker, 1963; Inderbitzin, 2003). Often, students with disabilities will accept the negative perceptions that come with a definition of disability as an inherent fault and therefore will choose not to access support and resources that are available to them, while others will seek out resources regardless of the label. Studies have shown that a student's willingness to

request accommodations also comes down to how much they accept their disability and what their view on it is. A quote from a disabled student with autism says, "I don't like being labeled. I'm fine to say, to call myself autistic . . . but I don't like it when other people label me and make assumptions about me" (Cox et al., 2021, p. 264). This student is accepting of the label of autistic for himself to use but does not like when other people use the label because of the negative and misguided thoughts and beliefs that come along with having that label in society.

Concerning receiving accommodations, the label of being disabled also creates differences in how a person may be viewed depending on the type of disability a student has. This can be seen in the perception of non-disabled students towards individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Deckoff-Jones & Duell (2018) provided fictional scenarios about disabled students to non-disabled students to see which accommodations were perceived as the most reasonable for a specific scenario. In this study, accommodations were listed under different categories. "Academic accommodations" included accommodations such as extended test time and flexible attendance. "Accessibility accommodations" were accommodations that included having an assigned seat in class or access to a wheelchair ramp. Accessibility accommodations were seen as more appropriate for disabilities with physical symptoms. Academic accommodation was thought to be more appropriate for disabilities with cognitive symptoms. After a more in-depth analysis, this connection between accommodation and disability type showed that psychiatric disabilities received a much lesser appropriateness rating for academic accommodations than learning disabilities. Psychiatric disabilities received the lowest academic accommodation

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appropriateness ratings among the disabilities with cognitive symptoms (invisible physical, psychiatric, learning) (Deckoff Jones & Duell, 2018). This finding is particularly interesting because the data suggests that individuals with psychiatric disabilities are more likely to face stigma and discrimination if they are provided accommodations. Psychiatric disabilities can oftentimes be invisible, thus creating a situation where it may not be obvious to another person that they are disabled, which can lead to a lack of empathy or judgment about their disability. Students with invisible disabilities may also be more likely to have to provide a medical diagnosis or documentation to justify why they need accommodations in the first place since it is not obvious.

Many students with disabilities believe that professors or faculty think accommodations provide an unfair advantage or allow students to cheat. Studies from Field, Sarver, and Shaw (2003) found students labeled with a learning disability feared they would be perceived as cheating if they tried to use accommodations. Some participants from a study reported faculty members thought accommodations provided an unfair advantage. The students were told "certain modifications could not be made (e.g., extended time allowance on exams) because of the advantage it might give the student with a disability when compared to the non-disabled student . . ." (Hill, 1994, p. 11). In a study by Sarver (2000, p. 86), one student recalled, "Some professors have a really negative attitude towards me, even though they don't even know me". Elaqua, Rapaport, and Krusese's (1996, p. 6) participants felt professors believed they "were trying to take advantage of the situation and attempted to 'pull a fast one on them". The label of

disability creates a negative attitude toward the student. This is reflected on the student through peers, faculty, and the students themselves. Switching the narrative around disability will create more acceptance not only for able-bodied individuals but for students with disabilities as well.

Visibility and Invisibility

The understanding of what constitutes somebody as having a disability varies depending on the person's belief about what defines a disability. For most people, disability typically is understood as a visible physical impairment. Deckoff- Jones and Duell (2018) examine the role that the visibility of a student's disability plays in others' perceptions of appropriate accommodations for disabled students. Their research shows the connection between disability type and accommodation type and found that the visibility of disability is a crucial determinant in influencing perceptions of accommodation appropriateness. Although the physical symptoms of visible and invisible physical disabilities justified the need for accessibility accommodations, visible physical disabilities still received much higher accessibility appropriateness ratings (Deckoff-Jones & Duell, 2018). The perception that a person must be physically and visibly affected by a disability to receive accommodations is based on hegemonic cultural ideas surrounding what it means to be disabled. "Hegemony is an order in which a certain way of life and thought dominates, in which one worldview permeates customs, politics and religion, especially their intellectual and moral connotations" (Oliverio & Lauderdale, 2005, p. 157). D'Attoma (2011) in his application of Gramsci discusses how hegemony is established in society via the use of consent and coercion. The hegemonic idea

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surrounding disability can be seen in the use of medical documents as proof and validation of a student's disability. Coercion is used by creating a society in which medical doctors are portrayed as experts in the construction of disability and cure and thus can help anybody needing a diagnosis (Clare, 2019). However, medical care in the United States is still very much a privilege, not accessible to everyone.

A study conducted with students with learning disabilities mentioned a student named Danielle (Cox et al., 2021). Danielle spoke of the need to "get a long file" after she was denied accommodations at her college. Providing a file with documents that show an autism diagnosis was difficult to obtain for many students in the study whose original diagnosis was determined more than a decade before starting college. Obtaining medical documentation was impossible for certain students who did not have their diagnosis when they first enrolled (Cox et al., 2021). Asking students to provide medical documentation is not only creating barriers for students to access help, but it is also creating situations where students will not attempt to get help because they know they will need to provide medical documentation at some point to receive help. The ADA doesn't say requesting medical documentation is mandatory, but they have the right to ask for it, and to approve or deny services based on the level of documentation a person can provide. Evans et al., (2017) talk about the amendments that were made to the ADA in 2008 that have loosened the requirements for documentation, saying,

> Of particular importance is the statement that "no legislation or regulations require that documentation be requested or obtained in order to demonstrate entitlement to legal protections because of disability and seek reasonable accommodations" (para. 2). Nevertheless, "entities can require documentation though they are not obligated to do so," but a request for

> documentation must be "reasonable and limited to the need for the
> modification, accommodation, or auxiliary aid or service requested"

As the authors point out, it is the disability services staff at universities, and not the

federal or state government, that decide whether to ask a student with disabilities for

medical documentation. Using medicalization to validate student experiences of their

impairments restricts access to all the students who face challenges in obtaining medical

documentation or may not identify as disabled, but still need support that could be

improved with services offered at disability offices.[5]

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[5] **Other Forms of Support**

Students with disabilities should be able to access support on and off campus. Support can come from

family, friends, or faculty. Depending on the university, they may offer services like TRIO. TRIO is a

program that is run for individuals with disabilities, first-generation college students, and students with low

income. TRIO will offer services such as free one-on-one tutoring, webinars with the Department of

Rehabilitation, and workshops to develop study habits and strategies. Some academic institutions have also

had students with disabilities create clubs and organizations that focus on creating community and actively

work to destroy barriers for disabled students. Participation in postsecondary transition and orientation

programs can prepare students to access college-level services. The support disabled students receive also

depends on how much disability services are willing to work on their own biases. (Kim, 2022). Disability

services and university departments should work to create and conduct training to improve faculty

awareness and reduce campus stigma surrounding disabilities and accommodation use. Disability-focused

training has been shown to improve faculty knowledge and attitudes about postsecondary accommodations

(Blasey & Wang, 2022). Ableism and discrimination against students with disabilities can be seen

throughout college campuses. Some of that ableism is internalized by the student who has the disability.

Some of the best support they can receive is the support they receive from themselves. If students can see

Summary of Literature Review

As the definition of what criteria a person needs to be considered disabled continues to change and evolve, more students with disabilities will continue to enter academia. However, ableism also continues to impact students' willingness to request accommodations. Thus, student success will continue to depend on the level of equity provided by the environment and culture of the institutions that they choose. The academic setting of colleges in the United States of America has perpetuated ableism and discrimination against students with disabilities for so long that even with disability becoming more prominent in academic institutions, disabled students are already at a disadvantage that they may struggle to overcome because of the rooted history of ableism that exists within academia. The next section outlines my exploration and examination of disability services websites for music listening specifically and for accessibility of information.

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the positives in their disabilities through the community, this will allow them to see their full capability. For example, Lea, a student with a learning disability talked about how interacting with other disabled students made her acceptance of her disability easier (Denhart, 2008). She said, "Meeting other people and seeing myself in them and seeing, "oh, my god," that's the thing we share in common and it's not a flaw in me or something that I need to work out. It's like a way of being in the world. And when I see in other people, it's like I like it in them" (Denhart, 2008, pp. 492-493). Creating an environment where students can find community around their disability would allow students to discuss their needs and implement new ways to make universities more inclusive and accessible.

How Music Listening is Used in Educational Settings

The music a person listens to can shape the experiences in their lives. Education also has the same large-scale impact on students. Also, not all students learn the same way. Adriano (2010) conducted a study that looked at students' perceptions and reasoning for listening to music while completing academic assignments. The article says, "One theme that emerged was that students listen because music helps them concentrate. A 12th grader shared, "If you're doing math and it's taking you a while and you have music in the background, it helps calm you down and lets you focus" (Adriano, 2010). This student was able to use music to help them focus and relax while they were working on math. Listening to music may be helpful while working on school assignments, but it may also depend on the subject that they are working on, and it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. That means what may work for one student may not work for another. The same article, (Adriano, 2010) has another quote from a student who says, "Music can be distracting when working for me. However, some kids cannot work without it.". While music may not be the solution that works best for everybody, this student was able to recognize that although it does not work for her, many kids are unable to do work without it. There was another study that looked at the effects of listening to music and exam-taking environments for engineering students. Claudio & Bakke, (2023), explain in their research, that students could choose whether to listen to self-selected music or not while completing exams in three undergraduate engineering courses over four years. Results showed that listening to music during an exam had no significant

effect on the mean exam scores or completion times. However, when data was compiled from students who had taken exams both with and without music, it was shown that these students performed significantly better with music, but equal to the mean score. These results determine that allowing music during exams for students who study with music does not represent an advantage but rather an opportunity for equity in exam-taking environments. The article also discusses the importance of individual study habits for students. If students are used to listening to music when they study, it is plausible that they could do worse on an exam due to not having the familiar stimuli of music present in their exam-taking environment. Not only has music been shown to be beneficial in exam-taking environments, but also for nursing students who attempted their first blood draw. Ince and Cevic 2017) said the study was conducted on nursing students of Akdeniz University attending Fundamentals of Nursing, a beginning-level course, during the 2013–2014 academic year. A total of 73 students, 34 of whom were assigned to the experimental group and 39 were assigned to the control group, participated in the study. The students in the experimental group listened to music during blood draw skill practice in a laboratory environment. The anxiety levels and vital signs of students were assessed before and after the practice. Results show after music listening, the mean anxiety score of the students was lessened in the group of students that listened to music than in the control group that did not listen to music during their blood draw. The results also showed lower diastolic blood pressure values in the experimental group that listened to music. This study concluded that listening to music decreased the anxiety levels of nursing students during their first blood draw experience. The idea of listening to music

to manage anxiety and stress should not only apply to situations where students are in test or exam-taking situations. Students can feel pressure or stress in all academic environments. For students who have become used to studying with music, when it comes time to take the test, they may already be at a disadvantage if they are unable to listen to music during their exam-taking time. Research on the topic of music in academic spaces has shown that music listening can increase the ability to focus, reduce distraction from background noises, improve concentration, and reduce stressors that can interfere with learning (Lemaire, 2019). Listening to music can increase a sense of arousal that can aid learning (Lemaire, 2019). Music can create a happy emotional state, resulting in an improved ability to focus on schoolwork (Gonzalez & Aiello, 2019). As demonstrated in the nascent research on music listening, music has been shown to benefit students in different academic settings. (Lee, 2012; Osmanoglu, 2019). Music also benefits people on the autism spectrum (Schwartz, 2017). Even though listening to music has these benefits, it is not frequently promoted as a testing accommodation during exams on college disability services websites.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

When a student with a disability applies to college, one of their first interests is to explore the accessibility and accommodations offered at the college or university. Sometimes this exploration can be easier said than done. Thus, in the interest of examining the overall accessibility of accommodations for disabled students, I decided to research the disability services office websites of 50 out of 112 Land Grand Colleges in the United States. The purpose of my research is to identify how easy or difficult information about music listening is to access. I examined each of the 50 websites to determine the following information:

     1. Is information about music listening as a testing accommodation

     available on university disability services websites?

     2. Is the accommodations information targeted towards faculty or students

     (or both)?

     3. How accessible is the information?

As a student with a disability at Arizona State University, I searched for services in the same fashion most students find information. I did an individual search on Google to access the disability service office website at the university. The website had a page that informed me that I had to fill out an application to receive services and then I would be followed up with by a Disability Access Consultant (DAC). I then went through the initial process of having to explain my disability and why that warranted services. Based on that conversation, I was told what I could be offered by their office. This is a common occurrence for many students with disabilities in university settings. During my time as a

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student at ASU, I began working as a Management Intern at Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS). It was during my time there that I got a lot of first-hand experience of what it is like to be on the other side of the disability accommodations process. I saw firsthand the challenges that students go through when obtaining documentation and the difficulties that can occur for students when an accommodation they used to receive in K-12 no longer applies once they get to higher education. It was a conversation that I had with an accessibility consultant that inspired me to do this research and include my subjective experiences. I was interested in learning about the different accommodations that are offered in higher education. Growing up, and even now, I have used music as a tool to help me study and sometimes during exams to get through not only school but life as well. Music has always been a way to express myself. I was curious if ASU offered music listening as a testing accommodation. I talked to a coworker about it and was told they did offer the accommodation. I had never seen it on their website, so I mentioned the fact that the accommodation should be promoted on websites to ensure that students know that it is available. I was then told that the SAILS office did not have to list the accommodation on their website because that is all discussed when students meet with their DAC to discuss what is available to them. I was surprised by that response because the student then must rely on the assumption that the accessibility consultant will mention listening to music during testing as an accommodation for whatever their disability may be. Being legally blind and having mild cerebral palsy are part of my life, but they do not define me and were a crucial part of informing my understanding of the world. Playing guitar, being a musician from an early

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age, and my passion for education have all influenced my desire to include my lived experience in my research. This is a method that is often utilized in research to ensure more insightful data collection and a more beneficial impact for those who participate in the research (Beams et al, 2021).

I started my analysis with a Google search on the Internet for "Land Grant Colleges", and Google generated a list of 50 land-grant colleges. As the list was not the same every time I searched for "Land Grant Colleges in the United States", I examined the first list of 50 colleges. This list is comparable to the initial information someone searching for land grant colleges on Google would find. The list is provided in Table 1 and the information I obtained is comparable to the initial information another prospective student searching for land grant colleges with Google would find. From this list, I examined each website for the following three pieces of information:

1. Music listening as an accommodation

2. Target audience (faculty, student, or both)

3. Accessibility (Found within three web page clicks)

"Accessibility" for this study is determined as listed under the "Accommodations" tab and found within three clicks of the homepage of the university disability website. This process was followed for each of the 50 universities. Using Google as the search engine, I typed in the name of the university and "disability service office." For example: "Iowa State University Disability Service Office." The Google search would send me directly to the university's disability website. From there, I scanned the website to find a tab or any

mention of "accommodations". In most cases, there would be a list of some common accommodations, such as extra time on tests, or assistive technology. If I was unable to find the accommodation of "music listening" on the disability services webpage, I would look at other tabs and information found on the rest of the university's website, such as in student or faculty handbooks. At that point, if I was unable to find information about listening to music as an accommodation, I determined that the university did not have the information listed on its webpage in an accessible way.

<div align="center">RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</div>

Forty-five of the 50 university websites I examined had no mention of music listening in the accommodations section or on the disability website. Table 1 shows a list of the Land Grant Colleges and indicates where the accommodation is listed on the website, accessibility of the information, as well as if the information is listed for faculty, students, or both. Of the 50 colleges, 5 universities indicated they offer music listening during exams or tests on their websites, and 3 of those 5 included the information in the faculty or student handbook. This was the case with Purdue University. The accommodation is listed under "instructors" rather than "students" or "accommodations." Colorado State University had it listed under "Accommodations" and "Faculty Accommodation Handbook." From there, I clicked on "Providing Exam Accommodations", and "Accommodations Explained." Oregon State University says, "Listening to DAS Disability Access Service) approved music is available to all students upon request. This is provided as a courtesy and not considered an accommodation" ("Das Student Handbook", n.d). This bullet point is listed under Chapter 5, "Alternative

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Testing Exam Accommodations" of the DAS Student Handbook. There is no other information explaining the process of requesting this courtesy, or if you are required to be registered with the DAS office to use the approved music. The fact that the DAS handbook states that DAS-approved music can be used by _**all**_ students is misleading. Can any student, regardless of disability registration with DAS, use the approved music because it is a courtesy and not an accommodation? If that is the case, maybe more students would utilize the accommodation, but since it seems that the only way to find information about music listening on Oregon State University's website is through the faculty handbook, it is difficult to know just how many students know that is something that is offered by the school. As a researcher, I called the Disability Access Service office for clarification and learned that this "courtesy" is only available to students registered with their office. The two colleges that had "listening to music" under testing accommodations or a similar category were Washington State University and Virginia Tech University. Washington State University had it listed under "exam access" and "test environment." Virginia Tech University had "listen to music during test" under "accommodations and physical access" and "exam access." Both universities had the information accessible within 3 clicks of the disability website.

Table 1: List of Land Grant Universities and Music Listening Accommodations

Institution	Is information about listening to music during testing available on disability websites?	Is information accessible within 3 clicks of the Disability office webpage?	Is information targeted towards faculty or students?
Iowa State University	No	No	Not Found
University of Georgia	No	No	Not Found
Dine College	No	No	Not Found
Ohio State University	No	No	Not Found
Penn State University	No	No	Not Found
University of DC	No	No	Not Found
University of Alaska Fairbanks	No	No	Not Found
University of Florida	No	No	Not Found
Michigan State University	No	No	Not Found
Cornell University	No	No	Not Found

Mississippi State University	No	No	Not Found
Oregon State University	Yes	No	Located in the Student Handbook Chapter 5 DAS Student Handbook (oregonstate.edu)
The University of Maryland	No	No	Not Found
Virginia Tech	Yes	Yes	Students can easily find the information. It is under "accommodations and physical access" and "exam access" Exam Access | Services for Students with Disabilities | Virginia Tech (vt.edu)
University of Kentucky	No	No	Not Found
University of Maine	No	No	Not Found
University of Illinois Urbana Champaign	No	No	Not Found

Purdue University	Yes	No	Located in Faculty Handbook under "instructors" and "DRC Accommodations." **DRC Glossary of Terms**
University of Idaho	No	No	Not Found
University of Rhode Island	No	No	Not Found
University of New Hampshire	No	No	Not Found
Texas A&M	No	No	Not Found
University of Wisconsin-Madison	No	No	Not Found
Colorado State University	Yes	No	Located in "Faculty Accommodation Handbook" under "Accommodations Explained" Providing Exam Accommodations - Student Disability Center (colostate.edu)
Washington State University	Yes	Yes	Students can easily find the information. It is under "Student

			Support" and "Accommodations"
Utah State University	No	No	Not Found
University of Vermont	No	No	Not Found
UCONN	No	No	Not Found
Clemson University	No	No	Not Found
West Virginia University	No	No	Not Found
University of Tennessee Knoxville	No	No	Not Found
University of Arizona	No	No	Not Found
University of Wyoming	No	No	Not Found
Louisiana State University	No	No	Not Found
Haskell University	No	No	Not Found
University of Arkansas	No	No	Not Found
University of Massachusetts	No	No	Not Found, but UMASS suggests listening to music to help with test anxiety.

			[Test Anxiety: Student Success: UMass Amherst](#)
[University of Nevada Reno](#)	No	No	Not Found
[NC State University](#)	No	No	Not Found
[University of Nebraska Lincoln](#)	No	No	Not Found
[Alabama A and M university](#)	No	No	Not Found
[Tuskegee University](#)	No	No	Not Found
[Delaware state University](#)	No	No	Not Found
[University of Guam](#)	No	No	Not Found
[University of Minnesota](#)	No	No	Not Found
[Rutgers University](#)	No	No	Not Found
[Lincoln University](#)	No	No	Not Found
[Prairie View A and M University](#)	No	No	Not Found
[North Dakota State University](#)	No	No	Not Found

University of Hawaii	No	No	Not Found

It is important to recognize that Purdue, Colorado State, and Oregon State University mention listening to music during testing is an accommodation available for students to utilize. However, designating this important information only in faculty or student handbooks makes the information difficult if not impossible for most disabled students to access. Most students who are looking to apply to a university or find information about music listening during testing would look in the student section of the disability services website. The student handbook should also have information about listening to music during testing, but it should be listed under the accommodations section as well for students to be able to locate the information. Faculty, of course, also need to be aware that listening to music is an accommodation and service that is offered to students.

One difficulty that I encountered while conducting this research was knowing where to look once I located the website. The first thing that I noticed as I was going onto each college disability office website, is that all the colleges have different names for their disability service office. Colorado State's disability office is called the Student Disability Center and Purdue University's disability office is called the Disability Resource Center (DRC). DRC is one of the more common names for disability services that I found while researching college websites; both the University of Arizona and Purdue University use this title. The incongruence of the names of disability offices also may create barriers for students who may not know where to look to find their college disability offices or websites. Another challenge I faced was how different each college

disability service website is designed. They are not all set up the same way, which leads

to having to navigate through multiple different pages to find the information needed. In

most cases, listening to music was not listed on disability office websites, but in the

schools where it was listed, only Virginia Tech and Washington State University had the

information within the first three pages. Evens et al., (2017 p. 228) share a 2012 report

from the US. Government Accountability Office (GAO) that discussed the barriers faced

by parents of students with disabilities saying, "Many parents of disabled students stated

to investigators that they had trouble securing information they needed about services

offered to disabled students on college campuses (Moran, 2012)." The lack of

information that is provided by disability service offices creates challenges for everybody

involved in the efforts to try to help students with disabilities succeed. If information

about certain accommodations or resources that are available to students is not known or

mentioned on disability service websites, it can have a significant impact on how the

student views their experiences on campus. While also having a major effect on their

success in higher education, information availability can be the deciding factor in how a

student views academia and if they attend higher education at all (Evans et al., 2017).

 While I was conducting my research, I wanted to try to utilize the software that a

student with a registered disability may use when looking up music listening at colleges.

As a student registered with Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services

(SAILS), at Arizona State University, I have access to Kurzweil 3000, which is a

software provided by various colleges to students with disabilities that allows them to

upload PDF files and the software will read the files out loud to the student. There are

multiple voices that students can choose from while they follow along with the highlighted text. They also have a Google Chrome extension that allows Kurzweil to be used on web pages as well. The issue that I found with Kurzweil 3000 is that the "Read the Web" Google extension is only available if the person wanting to use Kurzweil has Google. The "Read the Web" feature does not work unless it is being used on a Google browser. Also, the extension must be downloaded from the Google store and the software does not send you directly to Google to download the link to get the extension nor is it on the base Kurzweil system. The extension not being built into Kurzweil may already limit how many students can have access to and utilize it. When I attempted to use the Kurzweil 3000 "Read the Web" feature with the glossary, that was listed in the faculty handbook, from Purdue University, Kurzweil 3000 was unable to read the spreadsheet format of the glossary that was provided by Purdue. When the information was in a faculty or student handbook, but not listed in a spreadsheet document, as in the case of Oregon and Colorado State, the challenge of using the "Read the Web" feature became having to click on each line of text that I wanted read to me. This became difficult because if the sentence went on to the next line of text, it would get cut off and I would have to click on the next line to continue the sentence. This was especially challenging and time-consuming. It was most definitely more of a challenge than a benefit to utilize the software when looking up music listening information at the universities. As I have used Kurzweil 3000 throughout my college career, I have noticed that there have been improvements over the years, but the "Read the Web" feature could still be improved to better help students with disabilities. The software is more user-friendly in the system

itself, without the extension, and is more intuitive when reading PDFs after they have

been uploaded into the software by the user.

The other software that I attempted to utilize is called Narrator. It comes installed

on Windows computers. The Mac equivalent is called Voice Over. Narrator can be used to

narrate the actions performed on a computer. For example, If I scroll over the search bar,

Narrator will say "Search". The software can also read the text displayed on a webpage.

When I attempted to use Narrator to read the glossary from Purdue, Narrator was able to

read the document in the spreadsheet format that the document was in, but similarly to

Kurzweil 3000, I had to click at the new start of each line to have it read the document. I

also found that because the software not only narrated the words on the page, but every

action that is performed on the computer, Narrator becomes unusable and hard to follow.

These systems are intended to help students with disabilities and can be a large benefit to

students. The problem with them is that they are not always efficient or functional. As my

research has shown, there is already minimal information about music listening as an

accommodation. Couple that in with software that does not read documents and

webpages that students need to fully understand to have access to resources in higher

education, students with disabilities can find it difficult to succeed in academia. The

concluding section of my thesis will discuss aspects that need to change surrounding the

issue of accessibility of information about music listening during testing,

recommendations to accelerate the change, the limitations to my research, and what

future research should address.

CONCLUSION

Throughout my research, I have discussed the barriers students with disabilities face when trying to obtain accommodations in higher education. These barriers occur because of ableism, stigma, and the dominant societal belief that disability is an inherent impairment of individuals. The visibility of a person's disability also affects how they are viewed in society and while requesting accommodations. These are barriers that students face due to being disabled, rather than obstacles that are inherent to the tools and software that they are trying to access. It is unlikely that students or other individuals who are not disabled would encounter the same level of difficulty in trying to access this information. It is particularly ironic that it is often the disability service webpages that are themselves inaccessible and unable to be read with assistive technology such as screen readers. According to my phone conversation with Oregon State University,[6] I was told not that

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To clarify what Oregon State University meant by saying "Listening to DAS (Disability Access Service) approved music is available to all students upon request. This is provided as a courtesy and not considered an accommodation," (*Das Student Handbook*) I had to call the DAS office. The administrator that I spoke to wasn't sure she could give me a correct answer, so I was transferred over to the DAS testing center. Once I got transferred over there, I explained that I was looking for information at 50 land-grant colleges about music listening during testing as an accommodation. I explained to her that I was looking for clarification about what the handbook said and how the courtesy worked. She told me that she hadn't read the whole handbook herself, but she

many students utilize their "courtesy" of listening to music during testing. It is unknown why students do not utilize this courtesy, but there is a possibility that it could be due to students not liking the music that is offered, as they are only offered one classical music station. It could also be because the only location of this information seems to be in the student handbook. A suggestion I would make to all universities is to have the information listed under a tab that references accommodations, similar to Virginia Tech and Washington State University. While that may not be a perfect solution, having the accommodation for music listening listed under accommodations on the disability service website would give students easier access to finding information about music listening. Even if they decide to not use the accommodation, at least they would know that it is

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pulled up the part in chapter 5 where it talks about DAS approved music listening being available to all students. She said that "somewhere in the handbook, it should say that the DAS testing center is only available to those who are registered with the DAS office." Although, the handbook may say that the sentence that is written in the handbook regarding listening to DAS approved music states that all students can use it. This is unclear as the wording is written as if anybody can use music listening whether or not they are enrolled with the DAS office. From what I was told by the DAS testing center administrator, not that many students utilize the accommodation, and it is only one station that they can listen to on a device that is similar to an iPod. The station that is played is classical music.

available to them. It is important to have the information about music listening listed in faculty and student handbooks, but that is not the only place that the information should be located. Purdue University had a good idea by using a glossary of terms for accommodations that are available to their students, but having it only listed in the faculty handbook makes it unnecessarily difficult for a student to find the information. Another suggestion would be to insert a glossary under the accommodations tab of the disability service website. If universities put listening to music under the accommodations tab on their disability service website, the barriers that are already faced by students with disabilities would be lessened because they would know what accommodations are available to them when beginning their interactions with disability service staff, rather than waiting for the disability service staff to make suggestions that may or may not be what is best for the student with the disability. Having the information available would give more control to the student because they will be more informed about what the university can offer them.

Limitations

To do this thesis, I needed to come up with a systematized way to determine whether the information was on the website and if it was accessible, in an efficient way. The way I determined if the information was accessible was if it was accessible within three clicks of the website and if it was under the "accommodations" tab. So therefore, it is possible that some of the universities that I stated do not list information about music listening as an accommodation are listing it in a place that I did not check. Although it may be available somewhere on the website, the fact that it is not in one of these places

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that I did check means that the information is not accessible because the average person looking for accommodations would most likely not think to look for that information outside of the disability office.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should continue to address how ableism impacts students' willingness to request accommodations. It would be advantageous to extend this research by recruiting or inviting several disabled participants (10-20 participants to start) in order to examine how each of the participants searches for accommodations and under what conditions each participant chooses to accept the accommodations offered. This research, which uses my lived experience and my observations from working in a disability resource center, addresses the inaccessibility of not only finding information about listening to music during testing but also the lack of promotion around listening to music during testing. Listening to music during testing does not seem to be a commonly used accommodation by students with disabilities. At least not in relation to accommodations such as extra time on tests, taking an exam in a testing center, or being able to use notes or other aids. As my research shows, music has been beneficial to students in academia regardless of whether they are disabled or not. Music has been used to calm nerves and focus during a stressful situation. Even some of the universities that I looked at that do not list music listening on their websites, mention listening to music as a tool to reduce stress before taking an exam, such as the University of Massachusetts. Since these universities clearly know that there is a benefit to listening to music before or during tests, they should promote it and make it known that music listening is an

accommodation that could be beneficial to students. Since accommodations operate differently in K-12 than they do in college, as it becomes the student's responsibility to access and find resources to support them with their disability, the universities need to give them all the information and tools that allow students to make informed decisions about what accommodations they have at their disposal to utilize. Giving students with disabilities the tools to make decisions regarding their own disability can create a situation that is beneficial for both the student and the university because the student feels more empowered and in control of their education and the university will be providing all information that is needed for the student to succeed in academia and be more independent.

As demonstrated, stigma, the beliefs disabled students have about themselves, and the beliefs of those who oversee creating an accessible learning environment, all lend themselves to being deciding factors in how much success a student with disabilities will have. The ideology that accommodations are privileges that provide advantages to students is also ableist because these accommodations are not available to everybody. Ideas, such as universal design, would eliminate that belief of advantage because everybody would be given that same opportunity regardless of having a disability or not. Students with disabilities are often forced to operate in an environment that is not built for them. On the contrary, society is all too often actively working to exclude these individuals that add creativity, value, and diversity to society. Faculty and professionals who work at the colleges are not often aware of how to interact with

students with disabilities. (Evans, et al., 2017). Faculty cannot be aware of everything having to do with disabilities, and they are not provided with the tools needed to assist all students from varying backgrounds that they may encounter (Evans, et al., 2017). Providing a way for teachers to take courses or complete workshops promoting inclusion for students with disabilities is one way to attempt to minimize the stigma that is placed on students with disabilities by professors and faculties at universities.

Changing the narrative around disability from a medical model that involves curing and rehabilitation to a model that knows disability to be a changing spectrum that is influenced by the hegemonic structures of society is the first step to working towards inclusion for all disabled people. To bring this paper back to its original point, providing accommodations and accessibility is key when engaging with students with disabilities. Students with disabilities face much discrimination and negative beliefs about themselves because of the dominant, able-bodiedness that exists within society. Due to this belief of able-bodied superiority, disabled students are at an unequal starting point before they even get the opportunity to enter the doors of a college campus. The marginalization of disabled students on college campuses, while at the same time centering non-disabled students, is the catalyst for the need to promote the fact that accommodations are not a privilege, but a right that is compulsory for the success and inclusion of disabled people on college campuses. Furthermore, the quality of the resources provided to disabled students must be improved by being easily accessible. Music listening provides an

example of an important resource disabled students should be able to utilize but is not readily available.

It is also vital to hear the voices of disabled students themselves. As the ones that face systematic ableism, their input and ideas must be centered to create academic institutions that work to break down ableism and discrimination that continue to consume college campuses throughout the United States of America. Contrary to popular belief, accommodations are not meant to only provide access to the classroom. Access is not just being able to get into a building. Access is about creating an environment where all individuals with varying learning styles, identities, and beliefs can accomplish the same goals of learning and obtaining a college degree. There has been major progress in allowing students to attend universities, partially due to the amendments made by the ADA, which allow for broader definitions of what a disability is; but tools that should be provided by universities to ensure student success have not been provided. Students are met with doubt and uncertainty when coming to a university that is very different from the high school they attended previously. This uncertainty and bias held by faculty manifests itself through the procedures and difficulties a student must go through to get basic accommodations that would allow students with disabilities to even the playing field with their non-disabled peers. Actively challenging these biases by making disability accommodations visible and commonplace is just the start of creating college institutions that can truly support and recognize the value students with disabilities can bring to campuses on their academic journeys.

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