

Collaborating to Make a Difference— Through Faculty Development

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Abstract:

Teaching college students with disabilities can be a unique challenge, especially for faculty who have little or no experience working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind, or have learning disabilities. Through a collaborative effort between the Arkansas State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center and Project PACE, a series of three videos; *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Blind or have Low Vision*, and *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who have Learning Disabilities*; has been developed as a strategy for training faculty efficiently and effectively. Video topics include information related to classroom setup, accommodations, technology, academics, communication, and specific teaching methods and strategies that other faculty have found successful. Accompanying handbooks have been developed for two of the three videos and the third is currently under development.

Teaching college students with disabilities can be a unique challenge, especially for faculty who have little or no experience working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind, or have learning disabilities. Through a collaborative effort between the Arkansas State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center and Project PACE, a series of three videos has been developed as a strategy for training faculty efficiently and effectively. Three videos have currently been developed: *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Blind or have Low Vision*, and *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who have Learning Disabilities*. Topics covered by the videos include information related to classroom setup, accommodations, technology, academics, communication, and specific teaching methods and strategies that other faculty have found successful. Accompanying handbooks have been developed for two of the three videos (*Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hear-*

ing, Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Blind or have Low Vision) and a third is currently under development for *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who have Learning Disabilities*. These videos have been developed as additional resources for faculty members and are not intended to replace consultation with local on-campus service providers.

Development and Content

In 1998, the video, *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*, was developed by Project PEC (now called the Arkansas SOTAC) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). This video was published in January 1999 through the Postsecondary Education Consortium and is available through the PEPNet Resource Center (PRC) at <<http://prc.csun.edu>>. An accompanying handbook was developed in 2000 and is also available through the PRC.

Targeting secondary and postsecondary faculty, information and examples in the video and handbook include:

- classroom setting
- communication issues
- using interpreters
- assistive listening devices
- teaching strategies
- tips that have helped other faculty
- a glossary of terms

Also included in the handbook are instructions for in-service presenters on how to effectively use the video in training. A full script of the video is included in the back of the handbook.

In the fall of 1999, the Department of Education awarded funding to establish a demonstration project to ensure students with disabilities receive a quality higher education. Thus, Project PACE was established at UALR. The intent of Project PACE is to produce systems change at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and other University of Arkansas (UA) campuses through a peer-teaching model and development of training materials that will teach faculty and administrators to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The UA campuses include four-year institutions, community colleges, and a medical sciences campus. Products are being developed to reach a broad group of faculty and administrators within the UA system as well as other interested postsecondary institutions in the state of Arkan-

sas. Because of the tremendous response to Project PEC's *Make a Difference* video, the Project PACE staff decided to develop two more videos using a similar format and title. With approval from the PEC Central Office to use the *Make a Difference* theme, Project PACE developed two additional videos, resulting in a three-video series.

Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Blind or have Low Vision and an accompanying handbook were produced in 2000 by Project PACE at UALR. Targeting postsecondary faculty, the contents of this video and handbook include discussions regarding:

- an overview of blindness and low vision
- initial preparations for the semester
- considerations for instruction during the semester
- guidelines for preparing and administering exams
- an overview of assistive technology

Throughout the video, individuals who are blind or have low vision or have experience in working with individuals in this population provide insightful interviews.

Included in this handbook also are instructions for in-service presenters on how to effectively use the video in training. A full script of the video is included in the back of the handbook. This video and handbook are available for order from Project PACE at <www.ualr.edu/~pace>.

In 2001, *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who have Learning Disabilities* was published at UALR by Project PACE. A handbook is currently being developed to go with this video. Again targeting postsecondary faculty, the contents of this video include the following:

- An overview of learning disabilities
- The range of learning disabilities
- Myths related to learning disabilities
- Assistive technology for individuals who have learning disabilities
- Teaching strategies and tips
- Appropriate accommodations

Interviews with individuals who have learning disabilities, or have experience in working with individuals in this population provide insightful interviews. The accompanying handbook, which will, like the others, include instructions for in-service presenters as well as a full script of the video, will be available by late summer. These items will be available for order from Project PACE at <www.ualr.edu/~pace>.

In an additional collaborative effort, the Arkansas SOTAC and Project PACE are working together to publish all three videos in digital format on CDs! The accompanying handbooks will also be included on the CDs in HTML & PDF (portable document format) files. Two methods of dissemination are planned: the individual digitized video (and handbook) *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hear-*

ing will be distributed through the PEPNet Resource Center. Project PACE is developing a 4-CD package which will include: a CD of faculty development training materials (developed by Project PACE) for teaching students with disabilities, CDs of each of the three videos plus accompanying handbooks. Publication of these materials is planned for late summer, 2002. This package will be distributed by Project PACE.

Funding and Contact Information

Arkansas State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center

Funding for the *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing* video was possible through an agreement between The Postsecondary Education Consortium at The University of Tennessee, College of Education, Center on Deafness and the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Grant #DEGH078A60007. Current grant funding for the Arkansas SOTAC is through an agreement between The Postsecondary Education Consortium at The University of Tennessee, College of Education, Center on Deafness and the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Grant H078AG007-1.

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Project PACE (Postsecondary Academic and Curriculum Excellence)

Funding for Project PACE and the videos *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who are Blind or have Low Vision* and *Make a Difference: Tips for Teaching Students who have Learning Disabilities* and digital conversion of all three videos is possible by a grant from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, #CFDA 84.333.

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