



Monadnock Center for  
*Successful Transitions*  
Productive People / Productive Lives

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# SELF-ADVOCACY AND THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

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A Curriculum for Practitioners

By  
Deborah Merchant  
Maria Dintino



**Keene**  
STATE COLLEGE

Wisdom to make a difference.



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# Self-Advocacy and the Transition to College

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A Curriculum for Practitioners

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Part of a series of resources for increasing work-based learning opportunities and transition skills for students with disabilities.  
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MCST is a training and technical-assistance center that provides support to individuals, especially individuals with disabilities, as they transition from high school to adulthood. MCST also works to improve the employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by creating and supporting different projects that encourage employment. Website: [www.mcst-nh.org](http://www.mcst-nh.org)

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This curriculum is part of a series of resource guides from the Monadnock Center for Successful Transitions. All are available for viewing or download at no charge at [www.mcst-nh.org](http://www.mcst-nh.org) or [www.transitions.keenecommons.net](http://www.transitions.keenecommons.net). Other available resources are:

- *Build Partnerships for Career Exploration* – a guide for partnering with an employer and offering a Job Shadow Day for students.
- *Create Approved Work-Based Learning Experiences* – a guide to meeting NH Department of Labor requirements for work-based learning experiences.
- *Habits of Work: An Employment Skills Curriculum* – a ten unit, pick-and-choose curriculum for teaching universal workplace habits.

Keene State also hosts a Transition and Career Development Resources website, [www.transitions.keenecommons.net](http://www.transitions.keenecommons.net), which includes a multimedia training and reference tool about IEP transition requirements and indicator 13.

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## Maria Dintino

Maria Dintino is the associate director of the Aspire Program (a TRIO program funded to serve students who are first generation college students, meet income guidelines, and/or have a documented disability) and a coordinator of the Link Program (a summer program for first-time college students) at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire. Maria taught in public high schools, and for the past 19 years has worked with college students at Keene State College.



# INTRODUCTION



*Self-Advocacy and the Transition to College* is an eight-lesson curriculum designed to address the specific needs of students with disabilities entering college.

The lessons focus on the skills associated with self-advocacy, which include:

- knowledge of their disability
- how it impacts their learning
- what accommodations are needed
- how to communicate those needs
- their rights and responsibilities under the law

The curriculum was initially designed for use with the Link Program at Keene State College and has been revised for use in an expanded variety of educational settings.

It's designed for teachers and/or service providers working with students with disabilities who are getting ready for postsecondary education. *Self-Advocacy and the Transition to College* can be taught at the high school or college level. Materials have been compiled from a variety of sources and are cited in the reference section.

## SUCCESS IN COLLEGE

In order to be successful in postsecondary settings, many students with disabilities must utilize academic accommodations and are required to request those accommodations from college personnel. The numbers of students with disabilities entering postsecondary educational settings has increased over the past decade; however, there is evidence to suggest that students are entering colleges with little knowledge of their disabilities, how disabilities impact their learning, what accommodations are needed, how to communicate those needs, and their rights and responsibilities under the law; these are skills associated with self-advocacy. Self-advocacy skills are also essential for individuals with disabilities who are graduating from postsecondary educational settings and entering the work force.

## SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-determination and self-advocacy skills have been identified as being critical to the successful transition from secondary to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. There appears to be agreement in the field that there are several skills and characteristics underlying self-determination. Self-advocacy is among the most frequently cited (Abery, 1994; St. Peter, Field & Hoffman, 1992; Ward, 1988; Fiedler & Danneker, 2007). Martin, Marshall & Maxson (1993) state that “self-determined people know how to choose. They know what they want and use their self-advocacy skills to get it” (p. 53). Self-advocacy is defined as “an individual’s



ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions” (Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker & Deshler, 1994, p. 1). Trainor (2002) states “in order to be self-determining, one must advocate for one’s own needs” (p. 714). To advocate for yourself means to speak up and ask for what you need on your own behalf. Schreiner (2007) states that in order to advocate for oneself effectively, a student must recognize his or her own likes, dislikes, wants, needs, strengths, and limitations, be able to express those, and be given many opportunities to do so in authentic settings.

### LINK PROGRAM AT KEENE STATE COLLEGE

*Self-Advocacy and the Transition to College* was initially developed for use in the Link Program at Keene State College. Link has been a transition program offered at Keene State since 1980. It is a six-week summer program designed for first-time college students. The purpose of Link is to expose students to the academic and social expectations of college in a supportive learning community. Each year, approximately one-half of the students who participate in the Link summer program have a documented disability.

### CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The curriculum is divided into the following lessons. All handouts are included in the text of the lesson itself and also in reproducible format in the Handouts section.

Lesson 1: Goal setting

Lesson 2: Differences between high school and college, both academically and socially

Lesson 3: Differences between high school and college, including legal rights and responsibilities

Lesson 4: Learning styles and preferences

Lesson 5: Knowledge of disability: strengths and challenges

Lesson 6: Accommodations, specifically what are they and how they relate to your disability

Lesson 7: Self-advocacy and self-determination, including what it means to self-advocate and practice through communication skills

Lesson 8: Putting it all together – role-play. Note: this lesson may be taught over several sessions.

# LESSON 1: GOAL SETTING



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

1. Understand the purpose and value of setting goals.
2. Set goals for themselves, keeping the goal-setting guidelines in mind.
3. Monitor and report progress toward achieving their goals.

## INTRODUCTION

Goal setting is powerful in maintaining motivation and being successful. Students benefit from setting realistic, meaningful goals for themselves and checking in with someone periodically to assess their progress toward achievement.

## ACTIVITY

Have students ask themselves the following questions:

1. Why did I choose to go to college?
2. What am I most excited about as I begin this new chapter in my life?
3. What are my concerns at this point? (Adjust questions to reflect a specific group.)

Give students a few minutes to write their responses to these questions and have them share with the large group. (There's typically a lot of overlap in the responses.)

These are some of the reasons/purposes why you're here and some of your feelings at this point. Now, let's talk about goals.

Why set goals? How does goal setting benefit students? What are some things to keep in mind when you set goals? Brainstorm a list of guidelines. (The list may include these guidelines: realistic and achievable goals in the time frame; goals important to you; why the goal matters; set the bar high so you challenge yourself, but keep goals attainable; realize goals can change as time unfolds; identify and plan for obstacles; strategies and steps to achieve goals.)



Hand out the goal-setting exercise outlined below:

### All-Important Goal-Setting Exercise

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“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.” – Zig Ziglar, motivational speaker, writer, and trainer

1. Keeping your eye on the prize can be very motivating. Consistently reminding yourself of **why** you’re doing what you’re doing and **what** your goals are can assist you in staying focused and on task from day to day.
2. Take a few minutes to think about your long-term and short-term goals and thoughtfully answer the questions below, outlining three top goals for yourself. Remember: these are **your** goals, no one else’s.
3. What are my two top academic goals for the first semester? (short-term)
4. What is one of my top overall goals for my first year in college? (long-term)

### KEY INFORMATION

Most study skills books have chapters and information on goal setting, and there’s a lot of information online. It’s important to schedule periodic sessions with individual students to discuss goals, whether they should adjust any goals, and how they’re doing toward achievement.

# LESSON 2: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE, PART I



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will identify the social and academic differences between high school and college.

## INTRODUCTION

Ask students the following questions and write answers on an index card:

What do you:

- know about college?
- want to know about college?

Set index card aside.

## ACTIVITY

### **Think, Pair, and Share**

Have students consider the general differences they expect to encounter from high school to college and write some of these down. Pair them up and have them discuss what they came up with. Finally, in the large group, share ideas and generate a list on the board.

Compare the list students generated with what is listed on the charts on the next pages.



## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

AREA	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
<b>Personal freedom</b>	Less freedom; student lives at home with parents	More freedom; student lives in a dorm with a roommate
<b>Structure</b>	More structure; student has classes all day long	Less structure; student sets up schedule
<b>Classes</b>	Smaller size	Varies but classes can have 100 to 200 students
<b>Teachers</b>	Frequent contact; student may see teachers every day	Less frequent contact; student may only see professors one to three times a week
<b>Study time</b>	Student may be able to get studying done in a study hall or spend minimal time outside of class on studying	More rigorous demands with more readings and independent work; student may need to study two to four hours a day
<b>Tests</b>	More frequent tests on less material	May have only a few tests a semester; tests may cover many chapters or be cumulative
<b>Grades</b>	Total grade for the class may be based on many grades	Total grade for the course may be based on only a few grades
<b>Physical environment</b>	All classes are in one building	Classes are spread throughout the campus
<b>Legal protection</b>	IDEA: entitled to services through a Free and Appropriate Public Education	ADA: must be eligible for services; reasonable accommodations
<b>Special education classes</b>	Classes are specifically for students with disabilities	Classes include students with and without disabilities; some colleges may offer specialized programs, but they could involve additional fees



AREA	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
<b>Documentation</b>	School evaluates the student and provides the student with documentation	Student must provide the college with updated documentation of the disability in order to receive accommodations; student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) is generally not considered documentation
<b>Advocating</b>	Teacher and parent advocate for services	Student must advocate for accommodations and services
<b>Receiving accommodations</b>	Accommodations are set up through the IEP process	Student must start the accommodation process by contacting the person/office on campus in charge of accommodations
<b>Course modifications</b>	Course content or curriculum is modified, e.g., student is allowed to complete 15 math problems instead of the 25 math problems required	All students are required to complete all coursework as outlined on the syllabus; no modifications are provided

Source: [www.going-to-college.org](http://www.going-to-college.org)



HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
<i>Class time:</i> 6 hours per day, 180 days, total=1,080 hours	<i>Class Time:</i> 12 hours per week, 28 weeks, total=336 hours
<i>Study time:</i> 2 hours per day; frequent tests and quizzes, variety of assignments, including worksheets	<i>Study Time:</i> two hours of study for every one hour of class: four-plus hours per day; infrequent tests and quizzes, mostly papers assigned
<i>Grades:</i> “D”=passing; report cards sent to parents and student	<i>Grades:</i> “C”=passing; report cards sent to student
<i>Teachers:</i> Active role in your progress	<i>Teachers:</i> Passive role, may not know your name
<i>Structure:</i> High; limits set by teachers, parents, or other adults	<i>Structure:</i> Low; limits set by you – no one will come to you
<i>Legal protection:</i> IDEA, ADA, Section 504	<i>Legal protection:</i> ADA, Section 504
<i>Identifying students with disabilities:</i> School	<i>Identifying students with disabilities:</i> Student initiative
<i>Obtaining disability documentation and supporting need for accommodation:</i> School	<i>Obtaining disability documentation and supporting need for accommodation:</i> Student
<i>Providing accommodations:</i> School	<i>Providing accommodations:</i> College
<i>Planning course of study:</i> School	<i>Planning course of study:</i> Student/College
<i>Advocating to obtain services:</i> Parent and student	<i>Advocating to obtain services:</i> Student
<i>Deciding on coursework:</i> IEP team, including student	<i>Deciding on coursework:</i> Student

Source: [www.vacollegequest.org](http://www.vacollegequest.org)

# LESSON 3: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE, PART II



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities in a college setting.
2. Demonstrate their understanding of the legal differences between high school and college for students with disabilities.

## INTRODUCTION

In addition to the social and academic differences between high school and college, there are legal differences to be considered. In high school students are served under IDEA, while in college the ADA and 504 apply. Before discussing with students, have them take the quiz below.

## ACTIVITY I

### Understanding the Differences Between High School and College Rights and Responsibilities (true/false quiz handout)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. My IEP goals and objectives will be continued when I am in a college setting.  | T | F |
| 2. Disability Services will contact me regularly once I am on campus.   | T | F |
| 3. I will be responsible for notifying my professors of my disability if I want to receive accommodations in their class. | T | F |
| 4. I may or may not receive the same services in college that I received in high school.                                  | T | F |
| 5. I do not have to disclose my disability to anyone if I don't want to.  | T | F |
| 6. When I disclose my disability to the college, I will automatically receive all of the accommodations that I request.   | T | F |
| 7. It doesn't matter when I disclose my disability.   | T | F |
| 8. My IEP can serve as documentation of my disability in a college setting.   | T | F |



**Answer Key**

- 1. F
- 2. F
- 3. T
- 4. T
- 5. T
- 6. F
- 7. F
- 8. F

Discuss the quiz together.

**DIFFERENCES IN LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Postsecondary</b>	<b>Practical Application</b>
<b>What is the law?</b>	<p><b>IDEA:</b> Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</p> <p><b>504:</b> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</p> <p><b>ADA:</b> Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990</p>	<p><b>504:</b> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, particular reference to Subpart E</p> <p><b>ADA:</b> Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990</p>	<p>Section 504(e) and ADA aren't about special education services; they're about nondiscrimination and access for eligible individuals with disabilities.</p>
<b>What is the intent of the law?</b>	<p><b>IDEA:</b> Provides free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to identified students with disabilities, including special education and related services.</p> <p><b>504/ADA:</b> Ensures that no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to or benefits of, or is subject to discrimination solely on the basis of disability.</p>	<p><b>504/ADA:</b> Ensures that no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to or benefits of, or is subject to discrimination solely on the basis of disability.</p>	<p>IDEA meets the specific special education needs of the student and modifies the program accordingly; IEP written. 504(e) and ADA allow eligible individuals with disabilities the same access to programs, activities, and services as their nondisabled peers; no IEP.</p>



	Secondary	Postsecondary	Practical Application
<b>Who is covered under the law?</b>	<b>IDEA:</b> All children and youth requiring special education services until age 21 or graduation from high school.	<b>504/ADA:</b> All qualified persons with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meet the college’s admissions requirements and the specific entry-level criteria for the specific program, and can document the existence of a disability as defined by Section 504.	Not every student who received special education services under IDEA will be a qualified individual with a disability under 504(e) or ADA. And once admitted, not every request for accommodation will be deemed to be reasonable.
<b>Who is responsible for identifying and documenting need?</b>	School districts are responsible for identifying and evaluating potential students with disabilities. When such a determination is made, the district plans educational services for classified students at no expense to the family.	Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining disability documentation from a professional who is qualified to assess their particular disability; cost of the evaluation must be assumed by the student, not the postsecondary institution.	Just because documentation is sent on behalf of students, does not mean the students will receive services without the student coming in to specifically request them.
<b>Who is responsible for initiating service delivery?</b>	School districts are responsible for identifying students with disabilities and providing special education programs and services, including related services and transition services as delineated in an IEP.	Students are responsible for notifying the disability support services staff of their disabilities and their need for reasonable accommodations. Accommodations (not special education) are provided on a case-by-case, as-needed basis in order for students with disabilities to have	Students must request accommodations in a timely manner. Resource rooms are not a typical service in college.



	Secondary	Postsecondary	Practical Application
		equal access to the institution's programs and activities.	
<b>What is the parents' role?</b>	Parents have legal responsibility and can request changes to IEP, etc., up until rights transfer at age 18.	Parents no longer have legal responsibility or access to service providers without the student's permission.	It's the student's responsibility for requesting accommodations and services. Service providers cannot talk with parents unless the student gives permission.
<b>What about advocacy?</b>	The parent or guardian is the primary advocate. Students with disabilities from age 14 on must be invited to participate in the IEP process. If the student does not attend, the district must ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered.	Students must be able to self-identify and discuss their disabilities and needs in order to work with the disability support staff to implement reasonable accommodations. The Family Educational Rights Privacy Act guarantees student confidentiality.	Students must become self-advocates at the college level. Conversations with parents regarding confidential information without written consent from the student are illegal.
<b>What is the purpose of documentation?</b>	Documentation is a result of evaluations that determine whether a category of disability is present, which results in an IEP or a 504 plan. There is a re-evaluation every three years at no cost to families.	Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations due to disabilities and on support the need for accommodations. If updated documentation is needed, the student is responsible for the cost.	Must meet college or university guidelines and typically be within the past three to five years. Provision of accommodations is based on the documentation submitted.

(Modified from materials prepared by Kay McVey, PROJECT CONNECT, Henderson State University)



## ACTIVITY II

### Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Under the Law (handouts)

Have students fill in the charts from the choices under the charts, indicating which rights and responsibilities belong to the student or the college. Discuss after completion.

Every student with a documented disability has the **right** to:

Colleges and universities have the **right** to:


1. Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities offered at the college.
2. Information, reasonably available in accessible formats.
3. Maintain essential standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
4. Request current documentation by an appropriate professional and supplied by the student that confirms disability status and supports the need for appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
5. Reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services determined on a case-by-case basis.
6. Select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services as judged by the college with consideration for cost and/or availability.
7. Deny a request for an inappropriate or unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service, including any that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, imposes a fundamental alteration to a course or program, or poses an undue financial or administrative burden on the college.
8. Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding a disability and the choice to whom a disability is disclosed except as required or permitted by law.
9. Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if documentation does not support a need for the requested service, or if the documentation is not provided in a timely manner.



Every student with a documented disability has the **responsibility** to:

Colleges and universities have the **responsibility** to:


1. Meet qualifications and essential standards as determined by the college for courses, programs, jobs, services, and facilities.
2. Evaluate students on the basis of their abilities and not their disabilities.
3. Identify yourself as an individual with a disability to the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in a timely manner when you are seeking an accommodation.
4. Ensure that college courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
5. Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities in accessible formats on request.
6. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication regarding students with disabilities, except where permitted or required by law.
7. Inform students when requested accommodations are not available or beyond the college's ability to provide them.
8. When seeking accommodations, provide documentation of the disability from an appropriate professional, including information about the functional limitations of the disability.
9. Follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
10. Provide or arrange reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids and/or services for students with disabilities on request.
11. Communicate requests for accommodations to instructors by providing a letter of identification describing the reasonable accommodations recommended by ODS as early in the semester as possible.



## Answer Keys

### Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Every student with a documented disability has the **right** to:

- equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities offered at the college
- reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services determined on a case-by-case basis
- appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding a disability and the choice to whom a disability is disclosed except as required or permitted by law
- information, reasonably available in accessible formats

Every student with a documented disability has the **responsibility** to:

- meet qualifications and essential standards as determined by the College for courses, programs, jobs, services, and facilities
- identify as an individual with a disability to the ODS in a timely manner when seeking an accommodation
- when seeking accommodations, provide documentation of the disability from an appropriate professional, including information about the functional limitations of the disability
- follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services
- communicate requests for accommodations to instructors by providing a letter of identification describing the reasonable accommodations recommended by ODS as early in the semester as possible

### Rights and Responsibilities of Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities have the **right** to:

- maintain essential standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
- request current documentation by an appropriate professional and supplied by the student that confirms disability status and supports the need for appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services
- deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if documentation does not support a need for the requested service, or if the documentation is not provided in a timely manner
- select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services as judged by the college with consideration for cost and/or availability
- deny a request for an inappropriate or unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service, including any that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, imposes a fundamental alteration to a



course or program, or poses an undue financial or administrative burden on the college

Colleges and universities have the **responsibility** to:

- ensure that college courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings
- provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities in accessible formats on request
- evaluate students on the basis of their abilities and not their disabilities
- provide or arrange reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids and/or services for students with disabilities on request
- maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication regarding students with disabilities, except where permitted or required by law
- inform students when requested accommodations are not available or beyond the college's ability to provide

### **Why Is This Important?**

Discuss with students the importance of knowing what they can expect for supports from a college or university and what their own rights and responsibilities are in order to gain access to supports and services.

# LESSON 4: LEARNING STYLES AND PREFERENCES



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

1. Demonstrate a general understanding of learning styles.
2. Articulate their own learning preferences, outlining both strengths and challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Ask students what they already know about learning styles in general.

1. What are the various learning styles? (They should come up with visual, auditory, and tactile/haptic/hands-on styles.)
2. Why do you think it's important to **know thyself**, to understand yourself as a learner?

## ACTIVITY

Have students complete the exercise below (from *Your College Experience*, Gardner and Jewler, Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2000).

### Your Learning Style: A Quick Indication (handouts)

Answer the following questions by listing three or four of your **favorite** courses from high school:

1. What did these courses have in common? Did they tend to be hands-on, lecture, or discussion type courses?
2. What were the exams like: multiple choice, true or false, essay exams? Did the exams cover small units of material or larger chunks of material?
3. Were there papers and other projects for these courses?

Now answer the following questions by listing your **least favorite** three or four courses from high school:

1. What did these courses and their exams have in common?
2. How did these courses tend to differ from the courses you liked?
3. What does this exercise say about your learning preferences? Discuss in small groups, then share discoveries and ideas with the large group.



Next have students complete a learning styles inventory. There are many out there. One we recommend is an online survey that can be found at:

[www.metamath.com/multiple/multiple\\_choice\\_questions.html](http://www.metamath.com/multiple/multiple_choice_questions.html)

Discuss what they discover about themselves from this survey.

1. Any surprises? Any concerns?
2. Did this survey reinforce what they already knew or suspected?

### **Important to Discuss**

What to do if your learning style does not match an instructor's teaching style and/or the way you're being evaluated in a course? How do you bridge that gap?

### **KEY INFORMATION**

It's important for students to know that there is no right or wrong way to learn, but we often have to adapt to meet instructor and course expectations. Students can always speak with instructors if they have a concern and perhaps work with an educational counselor to explore ways to be successful in various courses.

# LESSON 5: KNOWLEDGE OF DISABILITY: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of their disability, including strengths and challenges, and the impact in academic settings.

## INTRODUCTION

In order for students to be able to ask for what they need, they have to know what they need and why! Start with a discussion about students' previous educational experiences and their involvement in their own educational planning.

Ask the following questions:

1. Did you participate in your IEP meetings?
2. To what extent did you participate? Explain.
3. Do you know what your transition goals are/were?

Segue into strengths and challenges related to disability. How do you define disability? Generate input from the whole group.

Disability, according to the [World Health Organization](#), is “an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; and a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.” (Wikipedia, 2010)



## ACTIVITY I

### Celebrity Quiz (handout)

All kinds of people have various forms of learning disabilities. Match each description to the personalities listed below:

- |                         |                     |                            |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Albert Einstein      | f. Tom Cruise       | j. Cher                    |
| b. Winston Churchill    | g. George S. Patton | k. Whoopie Goldberg        |
| c. Ludwig van Beethoven | h. Bruce Jenner     | l. Woodrow Wilson          |
| d. Thomas Edison        | i. Walt Disney      | m. Hans Christian Anderson |
| e. Agatha Christie      |                     |                            |

1. \_\_\_\_ As a lad of nine, he did not know the letters of the alphabet. He finally learned to read at age 11. He was thought to be dull and backward. He entered Davidson College, but withdrew because of illness. Yet, he eventually became president.
2. \_\_\_\_ This famous singer and movie star has a math disability. Not only can she not remember phone numbers, she says she is incapable of balancing her checkbook. Yet, that checking account is full as a result of her success in the entertainment field.
3. \_\_\_\_ His head was very large at birth. His mother did not agree with those who said that the child was abnormal. He was sent to school, but thought by a teacher to be mentally ill. The mother withdrew the child from school and taught him herself. She must have done a decent job, because he went on to create the electric light bulb and the phonograph.
4. \_\_\_\_ This composer was deaf when he composed his Symphony no. 9.
5. \_\_\_\_ When he was 12 years old, he could not read and remained deficient in reading all his life. However, he could memorize entire lectures, which was how he got through school. He became a famous general during World War II.
6. \_\_\_\_ He was slow in schoolwork and did not have a successful school experience. He later became a well-known movie producer and cartoonist.
7. \_\_\_\_ This noted Englishman had much difficulty in school. He later became a national leader and an English Prime Minister.
8. \_\_\_\_ This *Sister Act* actress has dyslexia but has succeeded in a movie career.
9. \_\_\_\_ This boy had difficulty reading but was able to write some of the world's best-loved stories.
- 10 \_\_\_\_ This boy could not talk until age four. He did not learn to read until he was nine. His teachers considered him to be mentally slow, unsociable, and a dreamer. He failed the entrance examinations to college, but finally passed them after an additional year of preparation. He lost three teaching positions. He became a patent clerk. Ultimately, he developed the theory of relativity.
11. \_\_\_\_ He was a decathlon winner in the 1976 Olympics. He had difficulty reading and with other school subjects.
12. \_\_\_\_ He is currently a famous movie star. He learns his lines by listening to a tape. His movies include *Risky Business*, *Top Gun*, and *Mission Impossible*. He has been diagnosed as dyslexic.
14. \_\_\_\_ This famous female was a prolific writer of mystery stories and novels. None of her manuscripts are available in her own handwriting. Her learning disability prohibited her



from being able to write fluently, and so from the time she began her career, she dictated all her material to a secretary/transcriptionist.

**Answer Key to Celebrity Quiz**

- 1. Woodrow Wilson (l)
- 2. Cher (j)
- 3. Thomas Edison (d)
- 4. Ludwig van Beethoven (c)
- 5. George S. Patton (f)
- 6. Walt Disney (i)
- 7. Winston Churchill (b)
- 8. Whoopie Goldberg (k)
- 9. Hans Christian Anderson (m)
- 10. Albert Einstein (a)
- 11. Bruce Jenner (h)
- 12. Tom Cruise (g)
- 13. Agatha Christie (e)

You are in excellent company! If they can do it, imagine the possibilities!

Source: [www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/independence/2005-09/CELEBRITY%20QUIZ.pdf](http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/independence/2005-09/CELEBRITY%20QUIZ.pdf)

**ACTIVITY II**

**Understanding My Disability (handout)**

Have students complete the following activity, filling in all of the sections. Upon completion, discuss:

- 1. What was it like to fill this out?
- 2. Which questions were easy to answer?
- 3. Hard to answer?

My disability is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My disability affects my ability to *learn* in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



My disability affects my ability to *live* in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

My disability affects my ability to *work* in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

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I learn best when: \_\_\_\_\_

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Documentation of my disability supports the use of the following accommodations:

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Sitlington, P., Patton, J., & Clark, G. (2008)

### ACTIVITY III

#### Learning Strengths: Think, Pair, and Share

Have students take a few minutes individually and answer the question:  
What are your strengths? (E.g., Which academic tasks are easy? What are you good at?)

Turn to a partner and share strengths. Share as a large group.

During sharing, list student strengths on the board. Take a minute and review. Remind students how they can and do use these strengths in academic settings. These will also help them in college.



## ACTIVITY IV

### Learning Challenges and Needs (handout)

Now that students have identified their learning strengths, ask them to think about their learning challenges and/or needs. (Which academic tasks are difficult? What are your challenges?)

Have students fill out the Learning Needs Checklist. See the Handouts section for a reproducible copy.

#### Learning Needs Checklist

Put a check mark by the statements that reflect your learning needs.

#### 1. Reading Skills

- slow reading rate and/or difficulty in modifying reading rate in accordance with the material's levels of difficulty
- some difficulty understanding and remembering materials read
- difficulty identifying important points and themes
- incomplete mastery of letter recognition, confusion of similar words, difficulty understanding and using new vocabulary
- skips words or lines of printed material
- difficulty reading for long periods

#### 2. Written Language Skills

- difficulty planning a topic and organizing thoughts on paper
- difficulty with sentence structure such as incomplete sentences, run-ons, poor use of grammar, or missing endings (e.g., -ed, -ing, -s)
- frequent spelling errors (e.g., omissions, substitutions, transpositions), especially in specialized and foreign vocabulary
- difficulty proofreading written work and making revisions
- compositions are often limited in length
- slow written production
- poor penmanship (e.g., poorly formed letters, incorrect use of capitalization, trouble with spacing, overly large handwriting)
- inability to copy correctly from a book or blackboard

#### 3. Oral Language Skills

- inability to concentrate on and comprehend spoken language when presented rapidly
- difficulty in orally expressing ideas that seem to be understood by others
- difficulty following or having a conversation about an unfamiliar idea
- trouble telling a story in the proper sequence
- difficulty following oral or written directions



#### 4. Mathematical Skills

- incomplete mastery of basic facts (e.g., mathematical tables)
- reverses numbers (e.g., 123 or 321 or 231)
- confuses operational symbols, especially + and x
- copies problems incorrectly from one line to another
- difficulty comprehending word problems
- difficulty understanding key concepts and applications to aid problem-solving

#### 5. Organizational and Study Skills

- difficulty with organizational skills
- time management difficulties
- slow to start and complete tasks
- repeated inability, on a day-to-day basis, to recall what has been taught
- lack of overall organization in taking notes
- difficulty interpreting charts and graphs
- inefficient use of library and reference materials
- difficulty preparing for and taking tests

#### 6. Attention and Concentration

- trouble focusing and keeping attention on academic tasks, fluctuating attention span during lectures
- easily distractible by outside stimuli
- difficulty juggling multiple task demands and overloads quickly
- hyperactivity and excessive movements may accompany the inability to focus attention
- trouble meeting people or working cooperatively with others

(Adapted from Sitlington and Frank, 2008)

# LESSON 6: ACCOMMODATIONS



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to identify what accommodations they may need in a college setting and why.

## INTRODUCTION

### What Are Accommodations?

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Reasonable accommodations enable qualified students with disabilities to have equal opportunities by making adjustments or modifications to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, or facilities. Therefore, accommodations are determined in the spirit of removing, to the greatest extent possible, barriers to students' abilities that are created by the interaction between their disabilities and the environment of the college, while maintaining essential standards for courses, programs, jobs, services, and facilities. The college is obligated to provide accommodations only to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified student with a disability.

Accommodations do not require instructors to adjust evaluations of academic performance. Rather, they enable students with disabilities to access the material presented and they enable instructors to fairly evaluate students' comprehension of the material.

The ODS staff will work with otherwise qualified students with disabilities to provide their preferred accommodations. However, in the event that documentation does not support a student's request, or the request is deemed unreasonable, inappropriate, or an undue burden to the institution, the ODS will seek appropriate alternatives in consultation with the student and/or the documenting professional(s) and other appropriate professionals as released by the student.

### Common Accommodations

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Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individual basis and are flexible based on individual disability needs and the campus environment. The following is a partial list of common accommodations:

- accessible location/classroom/furniture
- adaptive technology (e.g., magnifier, screen readers, speech to text software)
- campus housing access/adjustments
- priority registration



- priority seating in classroom
- alternative formats for text materials (E-text, Audio CD's, Braille)
- note takers
- copies of overheads or lecture notes
- extended time on exams
- separate testing area
- readers/scribes for exams
- enlarged print on notes or exams
- use of computer/assistive technology for taking exams
- sign language/oral interpreters/CART services

(Keene State College Office of Disability Services)

### ACTIVITY

#### **Accommodations in a College Setting**

Have students review their Learning Needs Checklist and brainstorm, with the group, a list of accommodations that they may need in a college setting.

In small groups or with a partner, have students indicate **what** they anticipate needing in a college setting and **why** they think these accommodations might be helpful for them.

Come back together in a large group, have students share, and identify areas where they were stuck or had difficulty identifying and/or explaining to their partner or small group what it is they might need.

# LESSON 7: SELF-ADVOCACY AND SELF-DETERMINATION



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of the concept of self-advocacy
2. Identify their strengths, challenges in relation to their learning, and accommodations needed.

## INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to self-advocate?

First, “what does it mean to advocate?”

(e.g., speak up for a cause, convince others that the cause is right)

Ask students if they belong or have belonged to any groups in which you advocate for something? (e.g., children, animal rights, environment)

Definition of self-advocacy – what is it?

- Self-advocacy is part of the larger concept of self-determination “in order to be self-determining, one must advocate for one’s own needs.” To advocate for yourself means to speak up and ask for what you need on your own behalf (Trainor, 2002, p. 714).
- “An individual’s ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions” (Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker & Deshler, 1994, p. 1).
- “In order to advocate for oneself effectively, a student must recognize his or her own likes, dislikes, wants, needs, strengths, and limitations, be able to express those, and be given many opportunities to do so in authentic settings” (Schreiner, 2007).

## ACTIVITY I

### Group Brainstorm

Ask students to think about self-advocacy in relation to a college setting. Why do you think it’s important to advocate on behalf of yourself in a college setting?

Some examples:

- change in the laws in which you are covered
- get information clarified that you don’t understand



- questions for professors
- to gain needed accommodations

There are some basic things that students need in order to be an effective self-advocate, some of which have been reviewed already:

- know the nature of your disability (strengths and weaknesses)
- know the accommodations you need in relation to your disability
- know your rights and responsibilities under the law
- be able to communicate your needs to faculty and service providers, and eventually employers

## ACTIVITY II

### Student Inventory (handout)

Students have been exploring the differences between high school and college, their learning styles, strengths and challenges, and accommodations. Next, have students fill out the inventory sheet shown below. Ask the following questions upon completion: How did you do? Do you feel that you were able to fill in all of the sections of the inventory? The next step is communicating this information.

#### Student Inventory

Nature of disability:

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Impact on learning:

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Academic skills/areas of strength:

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Areas to work on:

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Accommodations needed:

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Why accommodations are needed:

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## Communicating your needs in a college setting.

Ask the following question:

What are some situations where you think it would be helpful to provide your inventory information?

Examples:

- requesting extended time for an exam
- negotiating another time to take an exam due to back-to-back courses and the need for extended time for exam
- assistance in obtaining a note taker
- requesting a copy of the instructor's notes and/or overheads
- requesting instructor to slow down during a lecture
- requesting permission to record lectures
- requesting information regarding assigned texts and other reading prior to the beginning of the semester to obtain books on tape

## When do you provide inventory information?

Ask: When do you think it's **best** to provide inventory information?  
(e.g., during office hours or an individual appointment with the professor)

When do you think it is **not** a good time?  
(e.g., right before class starts or right after class).

You want to make sure the professor has time for you. This can happen by either scheduling an appointment or going to his or her office during scheduled office hours.



# LESSON 8: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will articulate their needs in relation to their disability and request accommodations in an appropriate manner.

This lesson may be taught over several sessions.

## INTRODUCTION

### Communicating Your Needs to Faculty and Requesting Accommodations

It's important to think about **how** you approach your professor. Talk about **passive** vs. **assertive** vs. **aggressive**.

Have students take this short assertiveness quiz at:

<http://www.headinjury.com/assertquiz.htm>

Read the introduction to the quiz together and tell students this quiz is a way for them to gauge where they're at in terms of assertiveness.

- **Passive:** "Passive individuals are not committed to their own rights and are more likely to allow others to infringe on their rights than to stand up and speak out." If you approach a professor in a passive manner, what kind of a message do you think you might send?
- **Aggressive:** "Aggressive persons are likely to defend their own rights and work to achieve their own goals, but they are also likely to disregard the rights of others. Additionally, aggressive individuals insist that their feelings and needs take precedence over other people's. They also tend to blame others for problems instead of offering solutions." What message might that send? Do you think professors would willingly give you what you are asking for?
- **Assertive:** "Assertiveness is a way of thinking and behaving that allows a person to stand up for his or her rights while respecting the rights of others." Benefits of this approach may be nonconfrontational, informative, and matter of fact responses.



## Other Tips to Consider When Talking with Faculty

**Listen** – While you’re engaged in conversation with your faculty member, it’s important to listen to what they’re saying to you. It’s easy to get caught up in your own agenda and not hear what the other person is saying.

**Ask questions** – Oftentimes we are, once again, set on our agenda and sometimes intimidated by the perceived power of the other person. Remember that while you’re listening, if someone says something you don’t understand or makes a statement that you need clarification for, ask questions. For example, you could use the opportunity during your meeting with a faculty member to find out what the test format is going to be like. Believe it or not, faculty members really like students to ask questions about their classes. It helps them to know you really care about their classes and are interested in doing well.

**Note:** Accommodation letters are provided at most colleges and universities. Typically, students deliver the letter to the faculty member and discuss needed accommodations for the class.

## ACTIVITY I

### Putting Skills to Work: How to Approach Your Professor (handout)

It’s a good idea to talk with your professors the first week of class about your accommodations. It’s also recommended that you set up an appointment. You can take one of the following approaches:

1. Ask your professor right after class if he or she could set up an appointment with you.
2. E-mail your professor to set up the appointment.
3. Go to your professor during his or her posted office hours (usually listed on the syllabus).

Possible scenarios:

1. If your professor asks you what your disability is, it’s your choice as to how much information you want to share. If you don’t want to state your specific disability, one option is to describe some of your learning challenges and how the accommodations will help. For example, you might say, “I will need extended time on tests because it takes me longer to read the information and process it.”
2. Your professor may believe he or she cannot provide the specific accommodations on your letter. It’s important that ODS is notified that the professor is unclear about providing your accommodations. One option is to explain to the professor that “these are the accommodations that are approved by the university, and if you need more information about the accommodations, I can have the ODS coordinator contact you to discuss this with you, or you can contact them at \_\_\_\_\_ (provide phone number).”



List four things Jerry does right and four things that he does wrong in a meeting with his professor, Dr. John Bagel:

Jerry walks in to the professor's office a few minutes after their scheduled appointment. "Hi, John, sorry I'm late. I do appreciate that you are willing to meet with me." Jerry looks for his list of questions for Dr. Bagel that he wrote up before the meeting. He opens his notebook and his papers fall on the floor. He then looks in his textbook and finds the folded paper. Then Jerry's cell phone rings. Jerry apologizes to the professor and looks to see who is calling him. Since it's Jerry's roommate, he decides to take the quick call. After the phone call, Jerry explains to his professor that he missed class last week, and he has heard from his classmates that he missed a pop quiz. Jerry asks Dr. Bagel when he can retake the quiz. Dr. Bagel informs Jerry that he does not let students make up pop quizzes, and he'll have to accept the zero as his quiz grade. Jerry then asks if he missed anything else important that day. Dr. Bagel informs him that all of his lectures are important and should not be missed. Before Jerry leaves, Dr. Bagel tells Jerry that after he gets the missed class notes from a classmate and reads the related chapter, he should come back to his office if he has any specific questions about the material, as he'd be happy to clarify the information. Jerry thanks the professor for his help and leaves, saying, "I am really enjoying your class."

Have students share their list with the larger group and discuss.



## ACTIVITY 11

### The Actual Meeting – Role-Play (handout)

#### Directions

Fill in the blanks with your information. Read through the completed script out loud. Next, practice with a partner.

#### Introduction

“Hi, Professor \_\_\_\_\_, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m in your \_\_\_\_\_ class. Thank you for meeting with me today.”

#### Accommodation Letter

“I want to give you my accommodation letter, which explains the accommodations that I will need for your class. I am strong in \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in with one or two academic skills or abilities that come easy for you), but the accommodations really help me to \_\_\_\_\_ (identify one of your learning challenges).

As you can see by my letter, I’m a registered student with a disability, and the Office of Disability Services authorized the following accommodations for your class”:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Remember to discuss with your professor any specifics about how to work with the accommodations in his or her class. Clarify responsibilities. For example, some professors may want reminders from you about your accommodation needs one week before a test, or, if you need a note taker, determine how you will get the notes (by email, photocopy, accessing Blackboard).

#### Closing

“Thank you for meeting with me and working with me to provide my accommodations. I’m looking forward to your course.”

Have students practice providing the above information, taking turns being the student and the faculty member. The person listening (playing faculty member) fills out the Role-Play Observation Sheet. Discuss as a group what it was like sharing your information. Practice makes perfect, or pretty close to it!



**Role-Play Observation Sheet**

Indicate whether the student exhibited the following behaviors while requesting an accommodation from a faculty member.

Greeting:

The student introduces him- or herself. Yes    No

Reference:

The student tells a faculty member which class they are in (references the reason they are there). Yes    No

Disclosure:

The student states he or she has a disability. Yes    No

*Functional terms:*

The student states how his or her disability impacts learning (e.g., “Because of my slower processing, I have difficulty reading quickly.”) Yes    No

Accommodations:

The student talks about accommodations used in the past and how they’ve helped. Yes    No

The student requests the accommodation needed. (e.g., tape lectures, extended time for exam) Yes    No

The student articulates how his or her disability relates to the accommodation (e.g., “I need extra time because ...”) Yes    No

Resources for Accommodations:

The student indicates they are registered with ODS. Yes    No

The student discusses how the accommodation will be provided and what the instructor will do. Yes    No

Closing:

The student thanks the faculty member for his or her time. Yes    No



## ACTIVITY III

### Communicating Through Email (handouts)

Your correspondence with your professors tells a lot about you. Properly written emails convey respect and show your writing abilities. You need to be aware of and use proper email etiquette with college personnel.

When emailing your professors, consider these points:

- Use your college email when emailing professors.
- Avoid using slang, text message abbreviations, and acronyms.
- Keep your tone positive and professional.
- Avoid emoticons (such as 😊).
- Use an appropriate greeting such as “Dr.” or “Professor” and then their last name.
- Include an appropriate subject line.
- Include your class name and time it meets at the end of your email.
- Proofread your email before you send it.
- Use spell and grammar checks.
- Refrain from using all upper case letters – this implies that you are shouting.
- Use appropriate punctuation.
- Avoid using too many exclamation points.
- Thank the professor for his or her time and consideration in responding to your email.

**Example of what not to do:**

To: professor@college.edu  
From: lovetodance@yahoo.com  
Subject: Class!  
Cc: mymom@hotmail.com  
Attached: agoodjoke.doc; lateassignment.doc; mydog.jpg

---

WHEN CAN I MEET WITH YOU? I SENT YOU AN EMAIL YESTERDAY. DID YOU GET IT?  
THANX!!! :)

**Your email should look like this:**

To: professor@college.edu  
From: bsmith@college.edu  
Subject: PSYC 101 – textbook  
Cc:  
Attached:

---

Professor Rosenblum,

I am enrolled in your PSYC 101 class this fall and need to get the textbook in an alternative format. If you have decided on the textbook for the course, could you please send me the title and ISBN number so I can purchase the book and have it available in an alternative format in time for the class to begin?

I appreciate this information very much, and I look forward to meeting you in class.

Sincerely,  
Bob Smith  
Introduction to Psychology  
MWF 10-11



**My practice email to a professor**

Write a short email to a professor asking to set up an appointment to discuss your exam results or accommodations. Refer to the tips on this worksheet.

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Cc: \_\_\_\_\_

Bcc: \_\_\_\_\_

Attached: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Message: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# **HANDOUTS TO BE COPIED**

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## UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### True/False

1. My IEP goals and objectives will be continued when I am in a college setting. **T F**
2. Disability Services will contact me regularly once I am on campus. **T F**
3. I will be responsible for notifying my professors of my disability if I want to receive accommodations in their class. **T F**
4. I may or may not receive the same services in college that I received in high school. **T F**
5. I do not have to disclose my disability to anyone if I don't want to. **T F**
6. When I disclose my disability to the college, I will automatically receive all of the accommodations that I request. **T F**
7. It doesn't matter when I disclose my disability. **T F**
8. My IEP can serve as documentation of my disability in a college setting. **T F**



**Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Under the Law**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Every student with a documented disability has the **right** to:

Colleges and universities have the **right** to:


1. Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities offered at the College.
2. Information, reasonably available in accessible formats.
3. Maintain essential standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
4. Request current documentation by an appropriate professional and supplied by the student that confirms disability status and supports the need for appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
5. Reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services determined on a case-by-case basis.
6. Select among equally effective accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services as judged by the College with consideration for cost and/or availability.
7. Deny a request for an inappropriate or unreasonable accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service including any that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, imposes a fundamental alteration to a course or program, or poses an undue financial or administrative burden on the College.
8. Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding a disability and the choice to whom a disability is disclosed except as required or permitted by law.
9. Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services if documentation does not support a need for the requested service, or if the documentation is not provided in a timely manner.



**Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Under the Law (continued)**

Every student with a documented Disability has the **responsibility** to:

Colleges and universities have the **responsibility** to:


1. Meet qualifications and essential standards as determined by the college for courses, programs, jobs, services, and facilities.
2. Evaluate students on the basis of their abilities and not their disabilities.
3. Identify yourself as an individual with a disability to the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in a timely manner when seeking an accommodation.
4. Ensure that college courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
5. Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities in accessible formats on request.
6. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication regarding students with disabilities, except where permitted or required by law.
7. Inform students when requested accommodations are not available or beyond the college’s ability to provide them.
8. When seeking accommodations, provide documentation of the disability from an appropriate professional, including information about the functional limitations of the disability.
9. Follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
10. Provide or arrange reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and auxiliary aids and/or services for students with disabilities on request.
11. Communicate requests for accommodations to instructors by providing a letter of identification describing the reasonable accommodations recommended by ODS as early in the semester as possible.



**Your Learning Style: A Quick Indication**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

List three or four of your **favorite** courses from high school.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions:

- 1. What did these courses have in common?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Did they tend to be hands-on, lecture, or discussion type courses?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. What were the exams like: multiple choice, true or false, essay exams?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Did the exams cover small units of material or larger chunks of material?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Were there papers and other projects for these courses?  
\_\_\_\_\_



Now list your **least favorite** three or four courses from high school.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions:

- 1. What did these courses and their exams have in common?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. How did these courses tend to differ from the courses you liked?

\_\_\_\_\_



### Celebrity Quiz

All kinds of people have various forms of learning disabilities. Match each description to the personalities listed below:

- |                         |                     |                            |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Albert Einstein      | f. Tom Cruise       | j. Cher                    |
| b. Winston Churchill    | g. George S. Patton | k. Whoopie Goldberg        |
| c. Ludwig van Beethoven | h. Bruce Jenner     | l. Woodrow Wilson          |
| d. Thomas Edison        | i. Walt Disney      | m. Hans Christian Anderson |
| e. Agatha Christie      |                     |                            |

1. \_\_\_\_ As a lad of nine, he did not know the letters of the alphabet. He finally learned to read at age 11. He was thought to be dull and backward. He entered Davidson College, but withdrew because of illness. Yet, he eventually became president.
2. \_\_\_\_ This famous singer and movie star has a math disability. Not only can she not remember phone numbers, she says she is incapable of balancing her checkbook. Yet, that checking account is full as a result of her success in the entertainment field.
3. \_\_\_\_ His head was very large at birth. His mother did not agree with those who said that the child was abnormal. He was sent to school, but thought by a teacher to be mentally ill. The mother withdrew the child from school and taught him herself. She must have done a decent job, because he went on to create the electric light bulb and the phonograph.
4. \_\_\_\_ This composer was deaf when he composed his Symphony no. 9.
5. \_\_\_\_ When he was 12 years old, he could not read and remained deficient in reading all his life. However, he could memorize entire lectures, which was how he got through school. He became a famous general during World War II.
6. \_\_\_\_ He was slow in schoolwork and did not have a successful school experience. He later became a well-known movie producer and cartoonist.
7. \_\_\_\_ This noted Englishman had much difficulty in school. He later became a national leader and an English Prime Minister.
8. \_\_\_\_ This *Sister Act* actress has dyslexia but has succeeded in a movie career.
9. \_\_\_\_ This boy had difficulty reading but was able to write some of the world's best-loved stories.
10. \_\_\_\_ This boy could not talk until age four. He did not learn to read until he was nine. His teachers considered him to be mentally slow, unsociable, and a dreamer. He failed the entrance examinations to college, but finally passed them after an additional year of preparation. He lost three teaching positions. He became a patent clerk. Ultimately, he developed the theory of relativity.
11. \_\_\_\_ He was a decathlon winner in the 1976 Olympics. He had difficulty reading and with other school subjects.
12. \_\_\_\_ He is currently a famous movie star. He learns his lines by listening to a tape. His movies include *Risky Business*, *Top Gun*, and *Mission Impossible*. He has been diagnosed as dyslexic.
14. \_\_\_\_ This famous female was a prolific writer of mystery stories and novels. None of her manuscripts are available in her own handwriting. Her learning disability prohibited her from being able to write fluently, and so from the time she began her career, she dictated all her material to a secretary/transcriptionist.



**Understanding My Disability**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My disability is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My disability affects my ability to *learn* in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My disability affects my ability to *live* in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My disability affects my ability to *work* in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I learn best when: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Documentation of my disability supports the use of the following accommodations:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sitlington, P., Patton, J., & Clark, G. (2008)



Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Learning Needs Checklist

Put a check mark by the statements that reflect your learning needs.

#### **1. Reading Skills**

- slow reading rate and/or difficulty in modifying reading rate in accordance with the material's levels of difficulty
- some difficulty understanding and remembering materials read
- difficulty identifying important points and themes
- incomplete mastery of letter recognition, confusion of similar words, difficulty understanding and using new vocabulary
- skips words or lines of printed material
- difficulty reading for long periods

#### **2. Written Language Skills**

- difficulty planning a topic and organizing thoughts on paper
- difficulty with sentence structure (e.g., incomplete sentences, run-ons, poor use of grammar, missing endings (e.g., -ed, -ing, -s))
- frequent spelling errors (e.g., omissions, substitutions, transpositions), especially in specialized and foreign vocabulary
- difficulty proofreading written work and making revisions
- compositions are often limited in length
- slow written production
- poor penmanship (e.g., poorly formed letters, incorrect use of capitalization, trouble with spacing, overly large handwriting)
- inability to copy correctly from a book or blackboard

#### **3. Oral Language Skills**

- inability to concentrate on and to comprehend spoken language when presented rapidly
- difficulty in orally expressing ideas that seem to be understood by others
- difficulty following or having a conversation about an unfamiliar idea
- trouble telling a story in the proper sequence
- difficulty following oral or written directions

#### **4. Mathematical Skills**

- incomplete mastery of basic facts (e.g., mathematical tables)
- reverses numbers (e.g., 123 or 321 or 231)
- confuses operational symbols, especially + and x
- copies problems incorrectly from one line to another
- difficulty comprehending word problems
- difficulty understanding key concepts and applications to aid problem-solving

**5. Organizational and Study Skills**

- difficulty with organizational skills
- time management difficulties
- slow to start and complete tasks
- repeated inability, on a day-to-day basis, to recall what has been taught
- lack of overall organization in taking notes
- difficulty interpreting charts and graphs
- inefficient use of library and reference materials
- difficulty preparing for and taking tests

**6. Attention and Concentration**

- trouble focusing and keeping attention on academic tasks, fluctuating attention span during lectures
- easily distractible by outside stimuli
- difficulty juggling multiple task demands and overloads quickly
- hyperactivity and excessive movements may accompany the inability to focus attention
- trouble meeting people or working cooperatively with others

(Adapted from Sitlington and Frank, 2008)



## **Student Inventory**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of disability:

Impact on learning:

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Academic skills/areas of strength:

Areas to work on:

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Accommodations needed:

Why accommodations are needed:

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**List four things Jerry does right and four things that he does wrong in a meeting with his professor, Dr. John Bagel:**

Jerry walks in to the professor's office a few minutes after their scheduled appointment. "Hi, John, sorry I'm late. I do appreciate that you are willing to meet with me." Jerry looks for his list of questions for Dr. Bagel that he wrote up before the meeting. He opens his notebook and his papers fall on the floor. He then looks in his textbook and finds the folded paper. Then Jerry's cell phone rings. Jerry apologizes to the professor and looks to see who is calling him. Since it's Jerry's roommate, he decides to take the quick call. After the phone call, Jerry explains to his professor that he missed class last week, and he has heard from his classmates that he missed a pop quiz. Jerry asks Dr. Bagel when he can retake the quiz. Dr. Bagel informs Jerry that he does not let students make up pop quizzes, and he'll have to accept the zero as his quiz grade. Jerry then asks if he missed anything else important that day. Dr. Bagel informs him that all of his lectures are important and should not be missed. Before Jerry leaves, Dr. Bagel tells Jerry that after he gets the missed class notes from a classmate and reads the related chapter, he should come back to his office if he has any specific questions about the material, as he'd be happy to clarify the information. Jerry thanks the professor for his help and leaves, saying, "I am really enjoying your class."

Things Jerry does **right**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Things Jerry does **wrong**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



**Role Play**

Fill in the blanks with your information. Read through the completed script out loud. Next, practice saying the script without reading with a partner.

**Introduction**

“Hi, Professor \_\_\_\_\_, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m in your \_\_\_\_\_ class. Thank you for meeting with me today.”

**Accommodation Letter**

“I want to give you my accommodation letter, which explains the accommodations that I will need for your class. I am strong in \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in with one or two academic skills or abilities that come easy for you), but the accommodations really help me to \_\_\_\_\_ (identify one of your learning challenges).

As you can see by my letter, I’m a registered student with a disability, and the Office of Disability Support authorized the following accommodations for your class”:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Remember to discuss with your professor any specifics about how to work with the accommodations in his or her class. Clarify responsibilities. For example, some professors may want reminders from you about your accommodation needs one week before a test, or, if you need a note taker, determine how you will get the notes (by email, photocopy, or accessing Blackboard).

**Closing**

“Thank you for meeting with me and working with me to provide my accommodations. I’m looking forward to your course.”



## Role-play Observation Sheet

Indicate whether the student exhibited the following behaviors while requesting an accommodation from a faculty member.

### Greeting:

The student introduces him- or herself. Yes    No

### Reference:

The student tells a faculty member which class they are in (references the reason they are there). Yes    No

### Disclosure:

The student states he or she has a disability. Yes    No

### *Functional terms:*

The student states how his or her disability impacts learning (e.g., “Because of my slower processing, I have difficulty reading quickly.”) Yes    No

### Accommodations:

The student talks about accommodations used in the past and how they’ve helped. Yes    No

The student requests the accommodation needed. (e.g., tape lectures, extended time for exam) Yes    No

The student articulates how his or her disability relates to the accommodation (e.g., “I need extra time because ...”) Yes    No

### Resources for Accommodations:

The student indicates they are registered with ODS. Yes    No

The student discusses how the accommodation will be provided and what the instructor will do. Yes    No

### Closing:

The student thanks the faculty member for his or her time. Yes    No

**Example of what not to do:**

To: professor@college.edu  
From: lovetodance@yahoo.com  
Subject: Class!  
Cc: mymom@hotmail.com  
Attached: agoodjoke.doc; lateassignment.doc; mydog.jpg

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WHEN CAN I MEET WITH YOU? I SENT YOU AN EMAIL YESTERDAY. DID YOU GET IT?  
THANX!!! :)

**Your email should look like this:**

To: professor@college.edu  
From: bsmith@college.edu  
Subject: PSYC 101 – textbook  
Cc:  
Attached:

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Professor Rosenblum,

I am enrolled in your PSYC 101 class this fall and need to get the textbook in an alternative format. If you have decided on the textbook for the course, could you please send me the title and ISBN number so I can purchase the book and have it available in an alternative format in time for the class to begin?

I appreciate this information very much and I look forward to meeting you in class.

Sincerely,  
Bob Smith  
Introduction to Psychology  
MWF 10-11



**My practice email to a professor**

Write a short email to a professor asking to set up an appointment to discuss your exam results or accommodations. Refer to the tips on this worksheet.

**To:** \_\_\_\_\_

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cc:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bcc:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attached:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Message:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Students may want to keep this information on hand for reference when communicating with faculty.

**Keep this information for reference**

(If you are planning to fill this worksheet out electronically, double click on the line to fill in the break.)

Course name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Professor name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Office hours: \_\_\_\_\_



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