

# Learning & Attention Disorders in College

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## Purpose

- ◆ Educate audience on support services available in college for students with learning differences
- ◆ Strategies for the transition from High School to College
- ◆ Different types of techniques and strategies that are useful at the college level
- ◆ Provide personal student perspective

## Support on Campus

- ◆ Universities need to have a strong undergraduate academic support center, in addition to LD support services for the growing numbers of students with LD attending college.
- ◆ Other populations are also growing, who will need similar support (Asperger's Syndrome, Autism, Psychiatric disorders).
- ◆ Southern Methodist University provides LD support in the form of a 3-part system:
  - ◆ Office of Services for Students with Disabilities
  - ◆ Learning & Attention Disorders Counselors (housed in general learning center)
  - ◆ Counseling and Psychiatric Services (psychiatrists, LD/ADHD testing, counseling)

## Statistics

- ◆ College students with learning differences refers to those diagnosed formally with learning disabilities (in reading, writing, math, etc.) as well as attention disorders.
- ◆ Approximately 6% of the population has a learning difference of some kind. Most universities see about 3% of their population identified with LD/ADHD, more represented in undergraduates than graduate students, and even more represented in first-year students.

## Video

- ◆ ADHD and Learning Disabilities: The Student Perspective
  - ◆ Video presentation by Students for New Learning
  - ◆ Supported by SMU's President's Advisory Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities, SMU Media, SMU's Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center
  - ◆ Available to view, along with a panel discussion titled "How Expert Are You On Learning Differences: It's Not All Pills and Accommodations"
  - ◆ <http://smu.edu/smunews/learndifferently/>

## The Transition

- ◆ Much learning the first year is done by **Trial and Error**
- ◆ The partnership between the student and family/support system is key. There is a need to encourage "letting go" but for students with LD, often parental involvement should be maintained and slowly tapered off.
- ◆ Do you disclose your disability on your college applications?

## Programs vs. Support Services

- ◆ Colleges/Universities differ in how they support students with LD/ADHD
  - ◆ Some colleges have programs, with additional fees, lots of structure, several staff, and a facility specifically for students.  
[http://www.college-scholarships.com/learning\\_disabilities.htm](http://www.college-scholarships.com/learning_disabilities.htm)
  - ◆ Others have support services that are integrated into the university's academic support for all students.
  - ◆ Some provide only the minimum accommodations.
- ◆ Which one is right for your student?
  - ◆ Students must visit campuses!
  - ◆ K & W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities, 9th Edition

## Accommodations & the Disability Office

- ◆ Students must identify **themselves** to the Disabilities Office (DO). They request accommodations and chose to use them or not.
- ◆ Documentation must be submitted ahead of time; consult the college's website for details. I recommend submitting documentation before school starts.
- ◆ Documentation must be recent enough to demonstrate the current impact of their disability on their learning/functioning. This usually means within the last 3 years!
- ◆ DO approves accommodations such as extended time for tests, quiet room for testing, note taking assistance, converting books to audio format, readers, computer for taking exams, etc. It is up to the student to execute these accommodations with each professor.

## Support System

- ◆ It is important to know what students need for accommodations and that they understand their accommodations.
  - ◆ Classroom accommodations
  - ◆ Tutoring
  - ◆ Coaching
  - ◆ Weekly game plan
  - ◆ Write everything down
  - ◆ Involve others (parents, coach, tutor, professors)

## First Semester Tips

- ◆ Privacy: Parents need to realize that they probably won't be with their student when she selects her courses with her adviser. Educate them before this meeting!
- ◆ Schedule like a high-school day (or a work day), plan for time between certain classes if the student will need extended time for tests.
- ◆ Do not switch to a new foreign language! (especially if you have a language-based LD) Look into the FL substitution policy at different schools, if this is a big issue for your student.
- ◆ If reading is an issue, do not put more than 2 heavy reading courses in one schedule at first (HIST, RELI, PSYC, PHIL)

## Location, Location, Location

- ◆ Identify someone to help you with organization
- ◆ Use 1-3 big binders that will hold absolutely everything (you'll get more paperwork than you initially plan for)
- ◆ Location is even important when it comes to files on your computer.
- ◆ Pick 2-3 good study locations and go there several times a week, no matter what.
- ◆ Color-code!! This uses both the right and left brain so you're less likely to miss important details.

## Managing Time With Flair

- ◆ Differences that come along with blocked schedules
  - ◆ How does this feed into procrastination?
- ◆ Things take so much longer in college than you think
  - ◆ Reading, writing, organizing, showering even!
  - ◆ When all else fails (or just before)...make a list.
- ◆ You must take time for yourself, and please encourage this in your students when you see their stress.
- ◆ All students need a basic time management system- Semester at a Glance, Time Awareness, Planner

## Time Awareness

1st Semester 2008 Week 15 to 22

English  
Art History  
Philosophy  
ORACLE

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
7am		sleep		sleep			
8am	sleep		sleep		sleep	sleep	sleep
9am							
10am		English		English			
11am	ORACLE	Art History	ORACLE	Art History	ORACLE		
12pm		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch	Lunch
1pm	Studio Art		Studio Art		Studio Art		
2pm		Study/Work		Study/Work	Lunch	Study/Work	Study/Work
3pm					Study/Work		
4pm	Food	Philosophy	Food	Philosophy			
5pm	Study/Work		Study/Work			Study	Study
6pm						Get ready for dinner	Get ready for dinner
7pm	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER		
8pm						Dinner	Dinner
9pm	Study	Study	Study	Study			
10pm							
11pm					free time	free time	free time
12am							
1am							
2am							
3am	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep			
4am					sleep	sleep	sleep
5am							
6am							

= freetime to get things done (laundry, errands, etc.) or to take a short break or possible extra study time

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## Weekly Game Plan

### Weekly Academic Status Report

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10/20/08 Staff: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting #: 4

Course Title	Have you missed any classes? Yes/No/How many	Behavior: Assignments and Grades	Assignments: Met/Not Met	Weekly Game Plan: Include specific study strategies	Today's Projected Grade:
Soc 1 - 1001		Test 1 - B	Summary	Start research on topic and bibliography, read chapter 4 for quiz	B-
Calc 1 - 1001		Test 2 - F	HW 2.3	See tutor Wed, work practice test	C
1001		4/4	4/4	Summarize ch. 3, start preparing money for midterms, meet with prof	C
Comp 1 - 1001		Lab 1 4/2 10/10	Lab 3	Start Excel lab, make notes cards for ch. 3, see professor today	B

**To Do This Week:**  
 Meet with advisor  
 Pick up prescription  
 Laundry

**Counselor Comments:**  
 Agreed to set two alarms, and see professor to discuss missed classes. Analyzed mistakes on tests and made adjustments in studying - good!

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have reported complete and accurate information regarding my academic progress at ODM.

Student Signature/Date

## Other strategies that work

- ◆ Project organizer
  - ◆ Breaking down due dates into reasonable chunks
- ◆ Reading: SQ4R, Reading Helpers, Reading Drills
- ◆ Note cards, Main Point Sheets, practice essays-the Big Idea
- ◆ Sleep strategies
- ◆ Intense exercise
- ◆ Email check-ins
- ◆ Be strategic

## What Works for You?

- ◆ Time to learn from others in the room...what have you found that helps your students who learn differently?
  - ◆
  - ◆
  - ◆
  - ◆
  - ◆
  - ◆
  - ◆

## Accommodations A Student Perspective

- ◆ What keeps us from using our accommodations?
  - ◆ Fear?
  - ◆ Underestimating the need?
  - ◆ Embarrassment?
  - ◆ It's a lot of work!

## Self-Advocacy

- ◆ What is self-advocacy?
  - ◆ It means taking care of yourself
  - ◆ It means speaking up for yourself
  - ◆ You are your best advocate – you know yourself best!
- ◆ Making mistakes is expected, but you must be honest with yourself and recognize the mistake. Take actions necessary to fix it.
- ◆ Improving a student's ability to self-advocate is probably the most important thing you can for them right now!
- ◆ Self-Image: Feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy or lack of confidence are very common in those with LD/ADHD.
- ◆ Be aware of lowered expectations-you may need to combat this stigma, especially with high-performing students.

# Medication

- ◆ Costs vs. Benefits
  - ◆ Truly a love/hate relationship, and a personal decision
- ◆ Social impact and Physical Impact
- ◆ How to manage medication issues with others
  - ◆ Who do you tell, how do you keep your meds safe
  - ◆ Knowing the affects on you is necessary, so you can explain it to others
  - ◆ Work with a doctor on campus, if possible
  - ◆ Abuse potential on campus

# Assistive Technology

- ◆ Dragon Naturally Speaking
- ◆ Audio books (Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic)
- ◆ Kurzweil Reader
- ◆ Read & Write Gold
- ◆ Style Writer
- ◆ Inspiration
- ◆ Ultimate Speed Reader
- ◆ Ipod recording
- ◆ Dictionary.com
- ◆ PDA, Outlook or iCal electronic calendar
- ◆ Notetaking/recording with a Mac (notebook layout view)
- ◆ Kindle, SmartPen, iPhone

## Things You Can Do Now

- ◆ Require your students to take notes
- ◆ Teach students how to use a planner. Expect them to schedule appointments themselves.
- ◆ Don't let bright students get away with using their intellect to get by - expect them to write several drafts, create flash cards, make an outline, do the homework problems.
- ◆ Help them come up with a list of 5 strengths and 5 weaknesses and teach them strategies to cope with their weaknesses.
  - ◆ Loses track of time=use timer on watch or laptop to remind me to stop surfing web and return to project

## Monster Trucks

- ◆ We need both BMW's and Monster Trucks!
- ◆ Please build a garage for the Monster Trucks in your school or family.
  
- ◆ For additional questions, please email Alexa Taylor at [alexat@smu.edu](mailto:alexat@smu.edu)