



PREP

Postsecondary Readiness Experiential Program

School Workbook

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Preface

Marsha and I were presenting on transitioning at a conference in the spring of 2006 in Duluth, Minnesota. I remember watching the audience of parents of students with disabilities and professionals working in K-12 when in the middle of something that Marsha was explaining, I realized that a great many people were really confused by what we were telling them. We were confusing them because most of them really had little or no understanding about the process of transitioning from high school to postsecondary education if you were a student with a disability or the parent of a student with a disability. Worse, as the audience asked their questions at the end of the presentation, I realized that many professionals (guidance counselors, teachers, special education teachers and case managers) really didn't understand the entire process or what students with disabilities need to do to prepare for college.

The purpose of our presentation was to talk about the needs of students with disabilities and to encourage education professionals to prepare students with disabilities for college much as other students so they are able to take on the responsibility of postsecondary challenges. When we sat down to talk about this that evening we listed some of the challenges faced by high school students, their parents and high school personnel who are meant to be a support to both parents and their students.

We need to look at each role of the people involved. First the student; the student plays only a passive role in terms of being responsible for their education in high school. Frequently the parents and school personnel work to negotiate the details of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The student plays a minimal role and may not understand the seriousness of what is being discussed or decided. The student may or may not have been encouraged to think about postsecondary education until they get to the age where the IEP meetings must address transitioning plans or goals.

Second, the parents tend to not understand the transitioning process. There are many changes and differences in responsibilities for students between what is mandated for students in K-12 and the lesser charge to institutions of higher education. Parents frequently assume the services and accommodations will continue as they were set up in K-12. They don't understand what the differences are, so they expect that the disability piece of their student's education will continue as it always has. Often they don't learn about the changes of responsibilities and expectations until their student is in college. The parent is frustrated and often angry that no one prepared them for these changes.

Finally, high school professionals also tend to not understand the difference in responsibilities from high school to postsecondary education. They assume that the same kind of supports will be available to students in college as is mandated in K-12. School counselors and high school case managers call my office to ask questions about their students who are thinking about transitioning to college. Sometimes this is disheartening because the students haven't prepared themselves academically for the rigors of postsecondary education. They haven't enrolled in nearly enough classes from the "college prep track" to be successful in higher education. Often these students aren't successful even if they manage to get into a postsecondary school; their lack of academic skills and knowledge sets them up to fail.

The purpose of the PREP School program at Bemidji State University is to help students with disabilities and their parents or guardians understand the skills that are needed to be successful in postsecondary education. We'll address necessary skills in academia, independent living and disability management. A transitioning timeline, an outline of tasks broken down year-by-year for students who know they want to go on to college or some higher education institution, will help you prepare for postsecondary education.

We will help you understand why you need to know about your disability and what your needs are so that you can access reasonable and appropriate accommodations in a higher education setting. You will evaluate your strengths and areas of challenge to prepare for academic transitioning.

Prior to the on-campus portion of the program you were asked to fill out several surveys and personal assessments. During one-on-one advising sessions with your program advisor, you will discuss areas where development is needed as well as how to use your strengths to overcome other challenging areas.

For participants who will be returning to high school for another year or two, a mentor will continue to work with each of you to provide support through the college search and the financial aid processes. Every two months participants will receive a newsletter with additional information for college success and students will be given information on how to access the tutoring program website.

Those of you who are graduating and attending BSU will also have access to the mentor on campus, will be enrolled in the Disability Services Program at BSU and will be able to meet regularly with either the mentor or the Coordinator of disability services. Support during your first year of college will be available as you need it and referrals for additional needs may be made as required. In addition to the mentor you will have phone numbers and e-mail addresses for the program coordinators. We will gladly answer questions, listen to concerns or fears you may have and help you explore options or discuss your decisions. We will be your private consulting team this next year. To those who will be attending other schools, you will have support from the mentor and receive copies of the newsletter. We encourage you to contact the disability services office of the school you will be attending and work closely with their staff to make sure you will receive the accommodations you need to access your course material.

So now you know the plan, why we developed it, and you have our commitment of support for your transitioning success. Let's begin the journey together.

Starting to Set My Goals

Before a person can begin to set goals he or she needs to figure out his or her personal identity. Who are you? What are your values? What are your strengths? Weaknesses? In the book Motivation and Goal Setting: the Keys to Achieving Success, Cairo leads adults through exercises as they examine themselves and their roles in the current jobs.

We have adapted his exercises for the purpose of this chapter. We have used many of his questions to help you explore who you are and adapted others to use as you think about your own educational and career.

Complete the following:

1. What was the last thing you learned about yourself?

2. Name the last spontaneous fun thing you did.

3. What two goals have you set for yourself for this year?

4. Name two people you find interesting and would like to get to know better.

5. What three things would you like your children to inherit from you as a person?

6. When I think about myself, I'm proud of:

7. My best friend describes me as (qualities, skills, characteristics):

8. The three most important areas of my personal life are:

9. My attitude toward other people is:

10. Three moral issues that are important to me are:

11. My obligations to my family are:

12. My obligations to my community are:

13. Who are you today?

14. Who do you want to become?

15. What are your attitudes?

16. What is your self image?

17. How do you treat other people?

18. What values are important to you? Highlight ten values and prioritize them by numbering them 1-10, 1 being the most important to you.

	Travel		Charity/Helping Others
	Good Health		Family and Relatives
	Power		Family of Your Own
	Friendship		Honesty
	Image		Personal Integrity
	Happiness		Spirituality
	Education		Fame/ Popularity
	Wealth		Respect of others

What do your values say about you?

What do you want for yourself, rather than what do others expect of you? Be specific.(For instance, don't say you want to be a career person-what career? Do you want to be an elementary ed teacher or a city planner, social worker, etc.?)

What about your goals?

- Your values are (or should be) what you base your goals on. If you prioritize your goals based on your values they will have more meaning to you.
- Goals need to be very specific. If they aren't, how will you know if you have reached them? For example, to say you are going to pass all your classes the next term isn't particularly helpful because a D-grade is passing but if you want to go to college after graduation a "D" isn't going to get you there. A specific goal might be: I will have either a specific grade in a specific class or I will have a B in every class next term. Goals should be measurable.

- Goals should be written down. Writing goals down gives you a visual reminder that helps people stay on task to meet them. Another excellent tool is to tell/show someone else your goals and what you are striving to do.
- Having someone else know your goals provides support or strength for you to keep going when things become challenging. They become a kind of cheerleader for you and can support you through the tough times.
- Make your goals achievable yet challenging. Goals, by definition are something you want to strive for, but they should be something you can accomplish with effort.
- Reward yourself after you reach your goal; make the reward worthwhile. For example, if your goal was to learn how to ride a horse well enough to ride in parades, once you become proficient on the horse, you might buy riding clothes, or perhaps a saddle to commemorate reaching your goal.

Think about your answers to this self-exploration. We are going to be working together throughout the week helping you determine your goals and the action steps to complete them. You need to decide if you want to go to work after high school or pursue post secondary education. Be thinking about what you want for yourself for the future.

Reference

Cairo, Jim (1995). *Motivation and Goal Setting: The Keys to Achieving Success*. Shawnee Mission, KS, National Press Publications

PRIORITY LEVEL _____

PERSONAL GOALS AND ACTION STEPS

TYPE OF GOAL:

____ Academic ____ Living ____ Disability Management

My goal is:

The Action Steps I am going to take to meet this goal are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

I am going to monitor my progress on this goal by:

My contact person to help me with this goal is:

Name _____

Telephone Number _____

E-Mail _____

Other people who could help me with this goal are:

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

GOALS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE

Examples

My personal goal(s) academically to help become better prepared for college are:

1. Become a better note taker in lectures and textbook notes; develop my style of note taking and have teachers help check my content
2. Learn to order my own books on tape and start helping do the paperwork each term to get in the habit of it.
3. Determine the college prep courses at my high school and work with the guidance counselor to get on track this term.
4. Make doing my homework and handing it in on time a priority (i.e., no late papers)
5. _____

My personal independent living goal(s) are:

1. Learn how to make a budget and stick to it. Start that this year with my allowance or job earnings.
2. Learn how to keep a checking account
3. Buy an alarm clock and begin setting it tomorrow morning and get myself up on time each day.
4. Start learning how to do my own laundry when I go home and assume responsibility for my own clothing.
5. Buy a personal calendar and start keeping a schedule and work on time management immediately.

My personal goals for disability management and healthy physical and mental health include:

1. Learn more about my disability and how it affects me personally as well as my learning.
2. Learn to manage taking my own medication every day and by Christmas begin to be able to remind my parents to order it for me when I need more.
3. Start an exercise program of walking or swimming every day to help relieve stress and anxiety.
4. Begin keeping my room clean and things organized and put away for a calmer healthier atmosphere to do my homework.

Introduction to Academic Skills

“I am going to go to college.” Have you made that statement yet? It is a good, positive, affirming statement that clearly asserts your determination to accomplish a difficult but rewarding task. We encourage you to keep that statement in your mind as you complete your high school career.

Unfortunately, “going to college” isn’t enough. One of the most serious problems in higher education is the problem of “retention,” or keeping students in college and in good academic standing once they get here. Frequently, we find that many students arrive at college with great intentions; they even faithfully attend every class. In other words, they “go” to college. But it isn’t enough simply to sit in the classroom and listen.

Academic work is just that: work. Like any kind of work, you can do it with skill, or you can flail around haphazardly not accomplishing much. One thing we know for certain, if you do academic work in a skillful, deliberate manner, you are much more likely to succeed in completing it.

This section of the workbook contains training exercises for specific academic skills. By this time in your school career, you have probably already gained considerable experience in each of these areas. In fact, you probably already have some “academic habits.” Some of your habits may be good ones that help you, but some of what you do might be bad habits.

All of us develop bad habits because they seem to be helpful in some way. (I might bite my fingernails because that helps me cope with my feelings of nervousness.) But the trouble with bad habits is that they don’t work well over the long run or in more complex situations. (If my fingernails start bleeding, I will probably just get more nervous because I am embarrassed about how they look!)

Academic bad habits may work well in school when the material is easy, or when you have someone helping you. You might just shove all your papers into your backpack after every class, and when you get home, one of your parents might help you organize them according to class. What has worked for you is never to throw anything away in case it might be important. If you then move into a situation where you don’t have anyone helping you organize your papers, you just keep shoving them into your backpack until you can’t find anything. Even if you don’t throw anything away, you won’t be able to find what you need when you need it. That’s an example of a habit that is ok in one situation but becomes a bad habit when the situation becomes more difficult.

Other academic skills may be altogether new to you. You may have gone to the library for years to check out interesting books, but you may never have had any reason to use the library as a research tool. In these days of “Google” and “Yahoo” you may be very adept at conducting a web search, but you may be completely unaware of the “scholarly” sources available through a library’s website. College research is quite different from most high school projects, and you will be several steps ahead if you are familiar with the skills needed for this type of academic work.

In this unit, we will give you some suggestions for developing good academic habits and skills. Specifically, we will be focusing on note taking, test taking, reading, time management, organization, library skills, following directions, and essay writing. During this week we will practice the skills, but don’t expect to become an expert overnight. The good news is that you can take these skills back to high school with you and keep practicing them there. By the time you are taking college courses you should have a whole closet full of good academic habits!

Note Taking Skills

Students in high school often receive notes from the teacher or another student from the same class. They aren't encouraged to try and take their own notes and several reasons may be cited—the student has “terrible” penmanship, they write slowly, their spelling is bad or whatever. Thus no one teaches them how to take notes or pushes them to try and overcome these problems as much as possible, in order for the student to be an independent learner. Independence is always important; in college it is crucial. You need to be able to do as much for yourself as you can in order for you to have control over your life, study habits and course work. So while note taking may be difficult for you, determine what about it is difficult. Your workshop instructors will help you this week.

For some students it is helpful to tape record their lectures while they are working on taking written notes. They take whatever notes they can from the lecture and after class when they get a break they can listen to the tape and add the information they missed in the lecture. This is a very successful method for most students. Even students who are terrible at spelling can learn to take good notes.

There is a note taking format for students to use when they tape record lectures that works well for students with learning disabilities who may write slower and have spelling problems.

Divide your paper into similar size columns (see chart on next page). On the left side of the page try outlining your chapter material leaving space where necessary to put in questions you might have—include vocabulary and technical terms in your notes from the textbook. In the right hand column write in the instructor's lecture notes as they coordinate with your book notes. You can draw diagrams, do mind mapping or work in outline form to stress the points the instructor brings up.

You can use a chapter outline or just write vocabulary terms on the left side, using the information from your textbook as you read through the chapter; this allows you to take the extra time to make sure you have spelled the vocabulary and technical terms correctly. During lecture you only need to write the extra information the professor addresses. Information you put in your outline that the professor addresses can be highlighted, underlined, or marked with a symbol to indicate its importance or relationship to the lecture.

This can be very important. No professor or instructor will ever test you on every single important fact in your textbook (thank goodness) so while it's necessary to write your notes on the book information, listen and note the points your professor brings up. If the professor dwells on a point, this tells you it's important, or says “you're going to see this again,” etc., chances are they are saying it's going to be on the exam in some format. Pay attention. Some phrases to listen to include:

- Now, this is important...
- Remember this or that...
- The important idea is...
- The basic concept here is...
- You'll need to remember this...
- You'll need to understand this before you can move on to...
- This will be on the test...
- There are three reasons why... (The first, second, etc., is...)
- For instance...
- In addition...
- On the other hand...
- However, ...
- In contrast...
- Listen for a voice change—if the voice becomes louder or softer...

- Listen for a rate change—if the voice becomes faster or slower...
- If the professor repeats information...
- If your professor points their finger for emphasis
- Note all writing on the board or writing on overheads and copy all information

If the professor gives an example or two to illustrate the idea or theory, **MAKE NOTES OF THE EXAMPLES** and remember them. They may come in handy on the exam. While you are at it, think of an example of your own as well. If you get an essay question and the instructor wants an example it is always good to be able to give them the example they used in their lectures but it really impresses an instructor if you can come up with your own example. It shows them you are an active and engaged learner and can apply the information you are learning in their course. Don't ignore the teacher's examples entirely though because exam questions can and frequently are about specific examples the instructor used in lecture.

Look at the following note taking example; it is a great format for note taking when you want to tape record the lecture and go back and add information to your notes.

Put book notes on this side	Put lecture notes on this side
<p>On this side you can outline your material from the text or put your text notes and put in any diagrams that you think the instructor will lecture about.</p> <p>I. Main Topic A. Supporting Info B. Supporting Info C. Supporting Info</p> <p>II. Second topic A. B. 1. 2.</p> <p>III. Third Topic IV. Etc.</p> <p>You can diagram something from your textbook on this side; write in technical terms or vocabulary words. Make sure to leave plenty of space between points so you have room to write your lectures notes on the topic beside it in the right columns.</p>	<p>On this side write your lecture notes.</p> <p>Leave plenty of white space between your sections of you lecture notes so that if you are taping your lectures you have room to add the additional information.</p> <p>You can color code your lecture notes. I sometimes advise students to take notes in blue ink during the class lecture and then when you play the tape back use another color to write what changes you add from listening to the lecture tape to do your notes.</p> <p>After your exam, look at your notes. Did you have a lot of extra information in your notes that wasn't on the exam? How important was the information that you wrote down? Are you writing too much information?</p> <p>Or is it possible that you didn't write down enough information? Was there a lot of material on the test that you didn't bother to put in your notes? How well did you do on the exam overall?</p>
<p>If you have specific questions write it on this side and mark it so you can ask your instructor if it isn't covered in lecture. I boxed this one but you could use a star or question mark or whatever you choose so you remember to ask your question.</p>	

Tape recording your lecture allows you to go back and make sure your notes are accurate and you have recorded the information in your notes that you feel is important.

This is the most independent way to learn and is strongly recommended for most students.

There are many different ways to make notes and no one way is necessarily better than another way. What I have recommended to students is to learn several different ways and then choose the one that works the best for you. We all do things differently and sometimes what works really great for one person may not work for another person.

We'll show you a variety of note taking formats. You can choose one style, perhaps a combination of styles or you can design a style that you like and works for you and use it. You may find that different styles of note taking work better for you in one type of class than another. You may want to use more than one style or a combination of styles.

There are three different kinds of notes that students take:

- lecture notes
- book notes
- Research notes.

We'll go through each one. Before that, let's explore some general rules that everyone should remember when taking notes.

General Note Taking Rules

1. Use only one side of your paper for notes. This will allow you to spread your notes out side-by-side to study for exams.
2. Use a three-ring binder for notes. Pages can be removed and spread out for review. This is a good way to get a full picture of the day's lecture.
3. Insert any handouts into your binder behind those days' notes so that you have everything together for each day.
4. Your book notes from your reading can be inserted in a three-ring binder in their own section or be written on the same pages as your lecture notes depending on the note taking format you prefer.
5. **Always** review your notes after class—do it the same day. If you have missed information in your lecture notes this would be a good time to add anything you can remember. If you missed some information or have questions, write a note so you can also ask questions at the next class lecture or meeting.
6. Use white space. Notes that are crammed tightly on a sheet or page are hard to read. When reviewing the material it is difficult to pen in additional notes that you may want to add. Leave space to add information you may have missed in lecture, information gleaned in a study group or an example of your own to illustrate that you understand information from the lectures and your textbook.
7. In each notebook, folder, and/or the front cover of you three-ring binder, **writes your name, student id number, e-mail address and phone number.** Your notes are valuable and if you forget your binder, books or book bag somewhere you need to have enough information so your property can be returned to you.
8. **Label your notes clearly:**
Date/name of class/professor

Number your pages (this is very important if your binder breaks and your papers fall out and fly everywhere). Start numbering with page #1 on the first day of class and number each page consecutively; on the second day of class continue the date/name of course/professor's name and number your pages where you left off the day before. The third day of class put the date/name of course, professor's name, and continues numbering your pages of notes where you left off the previous day's lecture.

9. **Keep your own thoughts separate.** Try not to make editorial comments in your lecture notes. When you return to your notes at a later time you may not remember what your professor said and what your idea was. If you have a question or an opinion clearly mark that it is yours—circle it or put it in a box. Use one color of ink that is used only for your own thoughts or questions!

So with these general rules lets move on to take taking lecture notes.

Lecture Notes

Lecture notes are very important. Some instructors only test from information in their lectures. It is critical that you get the main ideas and supporting material given in class. You must be able to listen intently to hear the main ideas and get them in your notebook. A word of warning here, there are a lot of college professors who really know their subject matter. They don't lecture from your textbook at all. They expect you to read the assigned material before class and process that information on your own. When they come to the classroom they lecture on additional information about the chapter that isn't in the book, but you need to understand the book material to process the lecture material and tie everything together. Exams usually cover what you read in the textbook as well as lecture material or the professor may test on only the text material or only the lecture. Professors don't always write the same type of exam for every class they teach. In fact some professors write one exam that covers more of the lecture information one time and another exam may stress information from the textbook. You don't usually know these things in advance so it is important to cover both lecture and textbook material carefully.

For lecture notes many students like the Cornell method for note taking. Divide your note book page into 2 columns.

<p>Column I Make column 1 about 1 ½" wide</p> <p>Use this side for key words and questions</p> <p>You can write key concepts on this side across from the concept write down an example or two the instructor uses to illustrate the idea-again this is another reason to leave plenty of space between ideas and concepts in the left column. The lecture information pertaining to each idea should be kept in the same area as the concept.</p> <p>Make sure to leave plenty of space between concepts, key words and concepts so you have room to add the appropriate information on each topic in column 2.</p>	<p>Column II Write other lecture notes on this side</p> <p>You can make lists or diagrams on this side</p> <p>List instructor's examples here</p>
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Using this method is quite simple. You can write key words and vocabulary in the left column as you are doing your chapter readings before the lecture. When your instructor begins talking about the term you can focus on getting down the definition, examples or other information the instructor talks about. One problem with this format is

that you are going to find yourself with separate notes from the textbook in another notebook instead of keeping everything together on one page.

A slight variation of this style is one Walter Pauk taught using the 2-5-1 format. Start by dividing your sheet of paper into three columns.

<p>This column should be about 2 “</p> <p>Use the first column much like the one above in the Cornell method. Record ideas, facts, summaries, and clues in this column</p>	<p>The second column should be about 5”</p> <p>The second column is used to record information as completely and meaningfully as possible.</p> <p>This area is also for diagrams, graphs, etc.</p>	<p>This column should be about 1”</p> <p>Use this column for your own ideas and synthesis</p>
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Pauk also recommends the 2-6-2 format which a lot of students like. This one is a little different. You again start with two columns:

<p>This column is about 2 inches across— Use this column as you have in the last two examples—</p> <p>Vocabulary, technical words , summaries, etc.</p>	<p>This column will be about 6 inches across.</p> <p>Record lecture information, diagrams, etc., as in the first two examples.</p>
---	--

Here’s the change.

At the bottom of each page of your notes you leave the last two inches. This space should be used for reflection and synthesis (summary) notes of the days lecture. Each of these formats can be customized by the note taker for the best use and review of their notes. If you are taking a course that you feel nervous about because of lack of background information, this is a great style for notes. In addition to using the bottom of the page to summarize lecture material, it’s also an excellent place to write questions you may still have about the material. You can write questions in this space that you think might be on the exam. Just make a note to remember which questions are questions you need to get answers to!

Color coding is an easy way to manage this. All questions you need answers for to be able to understand the material might be in green ink. Questions you write for potential test questions could be in red. The trick is to **be consistent in what you do** so you don’t become confused later on.

You need to decide which format works the best for you. Try all of them and see which one you like best. Practice taking notes in front of the TV. Watch talk shows and practice making notes; choose shows on national geographic or the learning channel. The more you practice the better your skills will become. Like anything we do, taking notes will get easier and you will feel more confident after some practice.

Step one in note taking is being an active listener. You need to stay fully engaged with the lecturer. Listen for the main ideas. The most important skill to get good notes is your listening skill. If you don’t listen and have something to write down

the rest will be unimportant. There are some rules that students and professionals (instructors) alike, stress for listening skills. Look at the tips on the following page. They are general guidelines put out by professors and study skills specialists alike.

Do's	Don't's
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do try to sit in the front of the room, toward the center. This may not always be possible if the instructor uses a seating chart but many times students can select where they sit. Pick a chair front and center. It will help you focus on what the instructor is talking about without all the distractions of what students are doing behind you. 2. Do arrive for class two or three minutes early and make sure you have the right tools when you get there. Make sure you have 2 pens, 2 pencils, high lighters, your note book or folders for handouts, assignments, and note taking paper as well as your textbook. Get everything out on your desk so you are ready to begin writing as soon as your instructor begins lecturing. 3. Do copy all material your instructor writes on the board—copy formulas, diagrams and problems. Make sure to get all dates, names, places or other facts. 4. Do raise your hand and ask an instructor to repeat something you miss. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't arrive late to class. Not only do you disrupt others but you will miss all the lecture material from before you arrived as well as while you are pulling out your material to get started. 2. Don't tune out material you find boring or uninteresting. Try and stay focused on what is being said anyway. There is a reason the instructor is talking about the subject so stay focused and try to determine what the point is. 3. Don't just listen for facts. Facts are important but how they relate to each other or if there is no relation may be just as important to know. 4. Don't talk to others around you. If you miss something the instructor said, don't bother a neighbor, ask the instructor to repeat what they said. 5. Don't avoid difficult material. Try to work through the material. Ask questions of your instructor, get a study partner or tutor, but take good notes from the lecture. 6. Don't try and write your notes in complete sentences and paragraphs. Don't try to write down everything the instructor says. 7. Don't try and make an outline of your notes <u>in lecture</u>. Focus on the main ideas and facts. While an outline form may work great in some classes, it may not work at all in others. To get the best outline you may need to rewrite your notes and organize them in an outline form.

Why Pre-Read for Lectures?

- The biggest help to take good lecture notes is to always complete your reading assignments **prior** to the class lecture. Your professors/instructors will expect you to have completed your homework and done your reading prior to coming to class and that you will have at least a basic understanding of the material to be presented.
- When you have pre-read the material, in lecture you will recognize points that are already familiar to you and the information will be more interesting.
- If your instructor assigns problems or questions make sure to do them. In addition to familiarizing yourself with the material for the lecture you will also be prepared for a pop quiz (a cute little trick some college professors pull on a weekly basis to make sure students are staying caught up on their reading assignments!). Your professor may not collect your work and grade it, but it is in your best interest to do the work when you get the assignment.

Instructors Who Talk Fast:

What can you do about instructors who talk fast in their lectures? Here's some advice:

1. Write down just a key word or point.
2. Focus on the lecture and your notes. Try and go over them immediately after class or as soon as possible.
3. Leave large empty spaces in your notes to go back and fill in information you miss. Make some kind of symbol when you miss information (and everyone misses stuff sometimes). Get someone to compare notes with on a daily basis.
4. Make sure you are completely prepared for class lecture ahead of time. It's important to have an idea of what the lecture material is about so you get a sense of where the instructor is going. Be aware of vocabulary and other key terms and names in advance. Jot these down in your note book ahead of time and leave plenty of space to record information from the lecture.
5. Talk to the instructor right after class to get the information that you missed or make an appointment to meet them in their office later the same day.
6. Raise your hand and ask the instructor to slow down –or ask them to repeat the point you missed. If you missed information chances are so did other students.
7. Meet another student or two and agree to go over your notes together to see what you missed. Between two or three of you, you should be able to get most of the information.

These points are important to everyone, including those who are tape recording the lecture. Recorders don't always pick up everything clearly, so plan on still missing some information. This is especially true if the person lecturing walks around the room when talking, or spends a lot of time writing on the board with their back to the classroom. Also when students ask or answer questions it is very difficult to hear and understand what is said. Lecture point: some instructors who teach note taking skills don't encourage students to tape record lectures. For students with disabilities, it may be your lifeline to the lecture material.

Textbook Notes

Let's move on to note taking from your textbook and in your textbook. I would imagine that most high school students are discouraged from taking notes or writing in your textbook because the books don't belong to you. But in college you will spend hundreds of dollars on textbooks and can use them how you please.

Writing in your text allows you to identify the main ideas, organize the material and note supporting information. Making some notes in your text book is great for open book tests. In college, professors do (although it depends on the subject area and is generally done for essay exams) give open book tests. While you may not get as much practice in this area while you are in still in high school, remember it is an important technique to know when you go on to college. There are some testing skills we'll teach you for this, too.

When taking in-text notes write in the margins making short keyword notes. Underline or highlight important points. Many students will underline something lightly in pencil when they are reading and then use colored pens or high lighters to mark points or passages that the instructor discusses. Again these are choices you need to make depending on what works the best for you.

As you read your text pay attention to the first sentence or two in a paragraph for the main idea, topic headings, words in bold or italics, lists of information, etc.

Develop a code that makes sense to you to note vocabulary, definitions, important details that you use consistently. Personalize what works for you and do it the same way all the time. Don't do something different each time. At first I recommend writing down your code in each of your note books so it's always available to you. Some examples for your code might be:

Vocabulary—circle the word and write the definition in the margin or in your notes in your book—this is a good left-hand column entry

Main Idea—rewrite, in your own words, the idea in the margin and highlight it or write it in your notes in the left hand column and highlight it there

Questions—material that you don't understand should be indicated with a question mark beside the text—write a short question you want to ask—flag them so you don't forget

While taking notes in your text is important for open book tests, they shouldn't replace your in-depth notes in your notebook for most things. Again, how you do your textbook notes is a matter of personal choice. Some students just write their text notes on a separate page from the rest of their notes, either in another notebook or in the same notebook as their other notes. Many times they are disorganized and the student doesn't have everything organized in a way that makes sense to them. They show up for an exam assuring me that they are going to flunk the exam. When I ask them how they can be so sure they tell me that they have lost some sheets from their notebook; they couldn't review their notes—and they didn't do well on the exam. Organization, which we will address in a later chapter, is critical for college success.

Students tend to put too much information/detail in their notes. This may work for some students but students with disabilities have different needs. I have found most students with disabilities are more successful in college when they exercise learning methods that give them the greatest independence. You will hear me repeat that often. Tape recording lectures, writing your own notes so you have the information that you feel is important to you, and having your notes available to you when you want to study them is important. Although not everyone can write their own notes, anyone who can manage this task is strongly encouraged to find a system that allows you to do so. There is a great deal of technology available that can be very helpful. Explore what is

available when you are still in high school because you are going to need these tools the rest of your life! Learning doesn't stop at graduation and many of these items are going to be necessary in your job as well.

For students with disabilities who struggle to keep everything together and stay organized I recommend trying the 2-3-3-2 format we talked about earlier in this chapter. This will keep all your notes together and everything will be in one place when it's time to study for our exams.

<p>This first column is two inches and is used to record summaries, key words and vocab, etc. Information put in here should be points, terms, etc. that you know will be on the exam.</p>	<p>This second column is three inches and you would write your textbook notes.</p>	<p>The third column is also three inches and you write your lecture notes here as well as any examples the instructor gives or additional important information.</p>
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<p>A line, whether visible or invisible is drawn two inches from the bottom of your sheet of paper. This area is used for questions you still have about the lecture material; synthesizing or reflecting on the material. You can also use this space to makeup potential test questions for review later.</p>

Three final suggestions for you. I strongly recommend using filler paper and a 3-ring binder to keep all your notes in. What works the best is putting all your notes for each class in separate binders. Taking color coded folders with several pages of note paper to class each day allows you to take notes and keep them all together, collect any handouts for the class that day and store them in the folder until you get home. Make sure you write your name and the date on your handouts as well. Then put your notes in the appropriate 3-ring binder. Make sure that you have the course name, date and your own name written clearly on each sheet. Put the day's handouts behind your notes for the day to keep the material together. You won't have to wonder where your notes and handouts are when you start to study for exams.

The second suggestions is buy a couple of reams of filler paper (maybe more if you prefer wide lines) and rule off 100-150 sheets in the note taking format you like. Label the columns on several pages so you don't waste a lot of time wondering what to write in each column because you have to be ready to write when it's time for class. You can put blank (just lined out in the format you prefer) pages in the folder that you have for each class. When you take out your notes at the end of each day, slip in more blank pages for notes for the next day. Make sure that you take plenty of paper for notes so you don't run out in the middle of class. In college you may use 10 or 12 sheets in one class for a day's lecture—be prepared with plenty of paper ahead of time.

The third suggestion is two things. Buy two or three different colors of high lighters—use one to identify the main topic of your reading. Use another color for supporting details and a third color for vocabulary and technical terms and their definitions or explanations. Always use the same color for the main point in every class, always use the same (second) color for supporting details in all of your classes and use the third color consistently for all vocabulary and technical terms. Eventually you will open a textbook or your notes and see yellow (for example) and know that is the main point, blue will be supporting details and orange will be vocabulary or a technical term.

Let me note here, just highlighting your textbook isn't enough to help you remember important information. You need to write book notes as well to help get information into your long-term memory.

The second thing is you need to buy different colored ink to take your book notes. This is key for people who are mainly visual learners. Color coding is an excellent visual tool.

Find an ink pen and pencils that you are comfortable using. On my desk there are pens everywhere and some people tease me about my pens. But like a serious worker will tell you, you need the right tool for the job. If you're a carpenter you aren't going to use a hammer and saws that take too long to cut the wood or break when hammering or pulling out nails. They won't get the job done as well as it should be done. You would find the best tool for the job.

When you are taking notes, that is your job and you need the right tools and materials to get the job done. Ink pens are tools. You want a pen that writes smoothly and doesn't leave ink blobs all over your hands and papers. Pens that feel scratchy or "drag" when you write, slow you down too much when you need to write quickly as you take notes. The pen should feel good and have balance when you write. You can use a roller ball or a gel pen, which many people prefer over traditional ballpoint ink but remember your notes could get wet, the ink will bleed and your notes will be gone. In fact while writing this workbook my cat was playing with Blue Boy, my grandson's fish. The little bowl fell off the shelf and landed right-side-up but sloshed water out all over a stack of notes I had written with a fountain pen. When I sat down on Saturday afternoon to write more workbook chapters I found pages and pages of drenched notes and a chapter from the work book ruined. So remember what your notes might be subjected to as you choose a pen and ink.

In college you will do more writing than you can ever imagine. A "good" pen isn't about the cost, rather it is about how long you can write without hand pain. You will take book and lecture notes, write research notes and papers, prepare presentations, write term papers and more. Find a good pen you like, that may even take refills, and use it. You won't regret it. You will continue to do a great deal of writing even after you graduate and start your career. Your pen will be your best friend.

Lets recap this information:

1. What note taking format do you think would be the best system for you? Explain what you have been doing in high school to take your notes. How has it worked for you? What do you think you need to change (if anything) to be a successful note taker and an independent learner?

Test Taking, or “How to Really Ace It”

“What?” you say, “Don’t you just answer the questions?”
The answer to that would be a resounding “Yes, but...”

There is a lot that goes into good test taking, beginning with preparing for the exam, continuing through the actual test, and finishing after your exam is returned to you for your perusal. If this sounds like a lot of work, that’s because it is. Even if you happen to be one of those students who “breeze through” high school, you can count on college exams being much more difficult. If you are currently struggling with test taking, cheer up, these practices will really help.

Pre-test Preparation

Believe it or not, there are people out there who are interested in finding out the best ways for students to learn and prepare for exams. Cognitive psychologists and educational psychologists have spent a lot of time studying and they have found out that some things work a lot better than other things for most people.

Distributive Practice

Have you noticed that most math teachers will give you homework problems every single night? Sometimes it seems like all you really need to do is one problem, but they give you “practice problems.” There is actually a good reason for this. If you work on learning something for a short time every single day for several days you are much more likely to learn it than if you spend a lot of time on just one day (cramming).

Give an example of a time you crammed for a test. How did you do it? What happened on your test? What do you now remember about that material?

Give an example of something other than math that you learned through distributive practice? How was that experience different from cramming?

List some of the things that make it harder for you to use distributive practice as a study method.

List some of the things that might make it easier for you to use distributive practice as a study method.

Elaboration

Another method of studying that is particularly helpful is called elaboration. This is based on some really interesting findings in brain research. When we are trying to remember something, we do a better job of “storing” the information if we connect it with something we already know or if we somehow use the material. For example, if you are trying to memorize vocabulary words, you will be more likely to remember the meanings if you use the words in several sentences. That’s an example of elaboration.

Use the process of elaboration to help you understand the meaning of “elaboration.” Give one example you’re your own experience of the concept of elaboration.

Give one example of how you could use elaboration to study for a test in your least favorite subject.

Study groups

As you can imagine, studying with other people can be a lot more fun than simply studying by yourself, but study groups can also be very effective if you use them well.

Which would be more helpful: meeting once with your study group the night before the test or meeting several times every week to review the material you have been learning?

Which would be more helpful: asking each other words and repeating back the definitions or explaining to each other what the words mean, how they are relevant to the material, and how you might apply the words in your everyday life?

One of the best ways to learn something is to teach it. You might consider dividing up the course material among group members, and then each of you would be responsible for teaching the material to the other group members. This means that each group member must be responsible for his or her part, and everyone must work hard at learning what the group members teach. Otherwise, you will only learn a small part of the material you need for the exam.

Appropriate places to hold a study group: A basic rule of thumb is that you need to find a place where you can talk without disturbing others and where you will have few distractions. Someone's living room may work, if the rest of the family agrees to leave you alone. Meeting rooms in the Public Library are perfect, and usually free of charge. A lot of times students will want to meet where there is food or drink, like Starbuck's. But beware: Your attention will waver in a relaxed social atmosphere, and the study group is likely to fall apart after about 45 minutes.

Schedule in breaks every hour when you are studying. (10 minutes is usually enough time to stretch, get something to eat or drink, and use the facilities.) That will clear your head, and improve the next hour's worth of studying you put in.

How can you stay on track? An agenda helps. Make a plan that you will do specific homework problems (unless you have been told to work on them alone), answer extra questions that have not been assigned (like the ones at the end of each section or the beginning of the chapter), work together through any practice tests.

Finally, keep the number small (about 4-to-6 students). More than that and you will lose focus. The larger the group, the more likely there will be "**social loafing**." That is what happens when members of a group expect someone else to do the work for them. Keep your group small, and everyone is more likely to work hard.

Based on what you have already learned about studying, describe how you would set up an effective study group for a class you will take next fall.

Studying Alone

You won't always have the luxury of a study group, and even if you do, sometimes you need to study alone to prepare for your study group. Remember that studying is work. In fact, it is difficult work, and difficult work goes more smoothly with the correct tools. For solitary study, you should consider the following questions: Where will I concentrate best? When am I most alert? How long can I focus without my mind wandering? What can I do for a short, effective break that won't distract me from returning to my studying? What kinds of foods give me energy rather than make me sleepy? And other questions that seem relevant to your best performance.

Know your bio-rhythms. Some people work better late at night while others do better in the early morning. After school do you need a break or do you work better if you just plunge on in and get homework finished?

Everyone has fluctuations in their blood sugar and brain chemistry. You should become familiar with your own patterns and use them to help you schedule studying so that it is effective.

Good Sleep Hygiene

This topic will be covered in Section II of this workbook, but it is so important that it deserves special mention here. Sleeping is a very important part of your daily routine. Students generally have difficulty with healthy sleep routines, partly because their bio-rhythms don't match the public school system schedule, and partly because they generally don't practice good sleep hygiene. You probably can't do much about what time classes start in the morning, but you can take some steps that will help you get the best sleep possible. The following are some simple rules for improving sleep habits.

- Don't study in your bed.
- Don't drink caffeine late at night.
- Relax for at least ½ hour before you try to sleep.
- Don't nap during the day.
- Exercise regularly.
- If you have a sleep disorder, get it treated!!!

These steps won't guarantee that you get better grades, but they can be a tremendous help. The better sleep habits you form, the better you will be able to perform when you are under stress (like when you are taking a test).

Dealing with Test Anxiety

Even if you do not have a diagnosed anxiety disorder, you may suffer from test anxiety. It is a common problem, and it can range from a few "butterflies" in your stomach to "going blank" as soon as the exam is passed out.

The more severe your anxiety about tests, the more likely this problem will interfere with your performance on the exam; however, the good news is that you can actually do something about this anxiety. If you have serious anxiety problems, panic attacks, or generalized or social anxiety, we strongly suggest that you seek help from a trained mental health professional. There are excellent behavioral therapies which can significantly reduce anxiety symptoms, but it may take some time and work before you see the effects.

For the more typical type of test anxiety, there are some techniques you can use on your own.

First, you might want to stay away from caffeine. If you are staying up late to study, there is a good chance that when you start to get tired you boost yourself with a cup of coffee, a bottle of Mt. Dew, or a can of Red Bull. Oops! This is exactly the opposite of what you should be doing. The caffeine can set off a kind of internal stimulation that does a lot more than keep you awake. It can actually increase your anxiety level, elevate your heart rate, raise your blood pressure, and even increase your breathing. Once those symptoms start, you may be heading for some serious anxiety.

Second, you might want to practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or muscle relaxation. As soon as you start to feel the tension of worry or anxiety, take a deep breath in through your nose and blow the air out hard through your mouth. You can feel the muscles in your chest and back relax when you do this. The trick is to catch yourself before you get highly anxious, and start relaxing early. Always practice relaxing before you go to your exam, so that you can start out in a more relaxed condition.

One good thing about learning relaxation techniques is that the more you practice them the better you will be. It is like learning anything new, it takes practice. Look at the Test Anxiety/ Relaxation exercise at the end of this chapter. Practice what it says a couple of times.

Third, you may find that taking tests with other people around is especially distracting and anxiety producing. If this is the case, you should discuss this with your counselor or your disability services coordinator. You may qualify to take your exams in a private, quiet room. Without the noise of other students, and without that particularly distressing feeling of watching other people finish early, you may remain more relaxed. (You might also want to remember that there is no connection between speed of finishing tests and grades on those tests. Sometimes the first person finished simply doesn't know any of the answers!)

During the Exam

"I hate essay questions." This common student complaint usually means that the student doesn't do very well on essay questions. Since you will certainly face many essay questions during your college career, you should learn how to successfully answer such questions.

Read the Question Well

The most common problem students have on exams is their failure to understand the question. It is extremely important that you read the question carefully, because you frequently will receive no credit at all if you write a wonderful response to some question that was not asked. Review the chapter on "Reading" as a refresher for how you need to work at understanding what you read. If there are vocabulary words in the exam question with which you are unfamiliar, you should ask your instructor to explain them. (Of course, if those words were included in your reading or the lecture, you are responsible for knowing them before the exam. Your teacher may or may not tell you what they mean. My policy is that it never hurts to ask.)

There are several other things you need to consider before you attempt to answer a test question.

Types of questions

There are many different types of questions, and each requires a different approach to answer it.

1. Information-seeking questions: ***What was the First Continental Congress and where did it meet?*** This may seem like a straight forward question, and it is; however, you should be careful to read it completely. There are two parts to the question, and if you do not answer both parts you may not receive credit for your answer.
2. Diagnostic questions: ***What are some of the ethical problems in conducting research on the effectiveness of stimulants in reducing symptoms of ADHD?*** In a question like this, you are expected to apply something you have learned about research ethics to a specific case. You must explain both the ethical principles and how they may be violated in this specific instance.
3. Open-ended questions: ***What is important about the movie Brokeback Mountain?*** Notice that this question allows you to think of a number of different answers. In fact, with a question such as this you should probably give more than one reason why the movie is important. Your teacher will probably have a few things in mind that you have discussed in class, but he/she may also be interested in your own ideas.

4. Priority questions: ***What do you think are the most important aspects to understand about various contraceptive methods?*** Note that this question asks you to make a decision about relative importance. It is not enough simply to list things that might be considered. You should state what you think is **most** important, and it would strengthen your answer to explain why you think so.

5. Generalizing questions: ***Based on what you have already learned about studying, describe how you think you should set up a study group.*** Notice that this question asks you to write your own thoughts, to think for yourself about a question that may not be directly answered in the book. But the question also expects you to base your thoughts on specific material. In other words, you cannot simply give an opinion. You must back up your opinion with evidence.

Following the Directions

The wording of essay questions usually includes specific directions for how you are to present the material. If you don't follow the exact directions, you may present a lot of information and still fail to receive credit for your answer. Pay particular attention to the use of specific words. See the handout on words to think about when writing essay questions.

Always Create an Outline. An important rule to remember about essay exams is that **organization is always important.** After you have read the question carefully, you will have an idea what type of outline you should use. Taking the extra few minutes required to write a simple outline will add so much to your answer that it is definitely worth the time. The "Outline Handout" should give you some ideas about how to use an outline in your answers to essay questions.

Use Plain Language. When students attempt to answer an essay question on an exam they are frequently tempted to sound more sophisticated than necessary. The result can be disastrous if one uses unfamiliar words incorrectly, if one misspells words, or if one uses long, convoluted sentences that ultimately result in confusion rather than clarity. An essay question should be answered clearly, exactly, and briefly. More words rarely results in a higher grade.

"I hate multiple choice questions." Fewer students make this claim, and yet students generally do not perform any better on MCQ tests than they do on essay exams. Because it takes less effort to fill in a circle on a scan sheet or write a letter in a blank space than it takes to write out a paragraph, students have the illusion that MCQ tests are easier. Those students who dislike MCQ exam usually find them frustrating for several reasons.

Reading the Question and Answers

Again, reading the question carefully is extremely important. Some instructors try to avoid using negatives in most MCQs, but occasionally a negative phrasing is unavoidable. Look carefully for the word "**not**," (or other forms of negation) and be sure to read your answer with this in mind.

Most instructors who use multiple choice questions will use "**distracters.**" This is a specific way of wording both the question and the answers so that the item will be difficult to answer if you have only a superficial familiarity with the material. For example, consider this multiple choice question based on the material in the workbook section "Your Disability and You."

1. According to the I.D.E.A.,
A. students in K-12 must have an I.E.P.

B. state and local agencies must provide eligible students with disabilities a free, appropriate, public education through college.

C. public education services cover students until they graduate from high school or reach the age of 21.

D. the federal government prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability in any activity or program that receives federal funding.

There is only one correct response, but all of the responses make you think. What are the distracters in the answers? How do the answers discriminate between "superficial" and "thorough" understanding?

Changing Your Answers

Many times students will have the correct answer the first time through, and then when they re-read the item they change their answer to an incorrect one. On the other hand, other students find that by re-reading the items they discover that they actually did make an error the first time through and they benefited from changing their answers.

There appear to be two types of test takers when it comes to multiple choice exams. One group reads the question carefully, finds the correct answer, and then is susceptible to "over-thinking." When these students re-read the test, they are liable to change the correct answer to an incorrect one.

The second group rushes through their test, misreads both question and answers, misses subtleties about the question, and responds with the answer that represents the most common mistake. Since good multiple choice questions are designed to discriminate between those students who really understand the material and those who only superficially understand it, there is almost always an answer that reflects a "common error."

One way to determine if you belong to one or the other of these groups is to carefully review your exam after you have taken it. The section below (After the Fact), will detail the process.

Avoiding Careless Mistakes

Frequently students complain that they knew the correct answer, intended to answer correctly, but somehow filled in an incorrect circle on the computer answer sheet. When your test questions are on one sheet and the answers must be placed on a different sheet, it is easy to make this type of mistake. There is a simple procedure to help you avoid this problem.

First, you should answer the questions on the question sheet if at all possible. Read the question carefully, cross out the wrong answers as you eliminate them, and then circle the letter of the correct answer. When you have finished answering all the questions on one sheet, then go back and fill in those circles on the answer sheet. This will allow you to pay full attention to which bubble you are filling in for which question. Be sure to pay careful attention to the numbers on the sheet and the number of the question you are answering.

Note: If you have a reading disability, a writing disability, a focusing disability, or other disability that makes it difficult for you to use computer answer sheets, you may ask for accommodations through your high school counselor or through the college disability services office.

Even if you don't have that particular disability, be careful when using computer sheets. Make certain you are following the numbers correctly on the answer sheet, and double check to be sure you haven't accidentally skipped a question or answer. Using a ruler to stay on the correct line is sometimes helpful.

Don't Try Tricks

Unfortunately, many students learn ways to guess at multiple choice questions. Some students claim that “the correct answer for 85% of all MCQ answers is C.” Others warn “never use the same answer more than three times in a row.” Still others say, “2 answers are always easy to throw out.” None of these claims are true, and attempting to follow such “rules” will only cause you trouble.

Many instructors who use MCQ exams will also use a computer program that allows them to randomize their answers. Random order of answers means that for any question, each letter is equally likely to be the correct one. You could have seven B's in a row, or you could have an entire test with no B's as the correct response.

On the other hand, it may help to go through the test the first time answering those questions you are sure about. That way you won't waste too much time on those you don't know, and you may actually pick up some clues that will help you answer the difficult questions.

The only way to take MCQ tests well is to read each question and each answer carefully, then select the answer that is the very best one. Prepare carefully, and you will do well.

Studying for MCQ Tests

One excellent way to prepare for a multiple choice test is to develop your own questions, but most students (and many teachers) have trouble making good multiple choice questions. Pair up with someone in your group and together make a good multiple choice questions about the material you have just read on test-taking. Make sure the question has only one correct answer and that the answers will tell you who understands the material and who doesn't.

After the Fact: The Value of Reviewing Your Mistakes

Good test taking doesn't stop after you have completed your test. In the big picture of education, your goal is not to get good grades but to **learn**. If you never review the mistakes you make on exams, you may never learn the material you missed. That is the most important reason for reviewing your exams. Many instructors will hand back exams and discuss them, but others leave it up to you whether or not you want to see more than your grade. It is always a good idea to go over the test with your instructor.

As stated above, it can be very helpful to review the types of mistakes you make on a multiple choice exam. You can see whether you erased more correct answers or more incorrect ones. You can see if you were misreading the question or answers. You can see if you made careless mistakes. That is important information about your test taking problems, and you can make specific adjustments.

Additionally, you can begin to understand how your professor thinks. Remember that every teacher is different. Part of your job as a student is to understand how your professor thinks about the material, and reviewing the exam provides you with important clues.

This is especially true in essay exams or other written work. Most professors spend a considerable amount of time writing comments on exams and papers that explain why you received the grade you did. Those comments benefit you in general, so that your writing improves, and they can also help you understand this particular professor. Sometimes they have eccentric requirements (quirks like insisting that students never use the word “is,”) that you will only realize if you carefully review your exam.

Give an example from your experience when reviewing your teacher’s previous comments on an exam or assignment that have helped you on a later test or project.

List three things you have learned from this chapter that you believe you could start doing when you return to school in the fall.

Relaxation Exercise for Exam Anxiety

Learning to relax will help you reduce tension, nervousness and anxiety. It is simply not possible to be very anxious, tense or nervous when your body is completely relaxed.

Try to get as relaxed as possible in a short time. As you practice relaxing, you will find that you will become better and better at it and will be able to develop a relaxed state very quickly. This exercise is meant to give you practice until you can relax quickly and easily without any instructions.

Read through the following relaxation exercise, or better yet, have someone else read it to you while you do the drill. Then you can do the same for a classmate. Still another possibility is to tape record the exercise, making it a more permanent record.

Sit back in a chair and get as comfortable as possible. Before you begin to relax, notice all the little pressures and tensions in your body. Check your feet and legs. Do they feel completely loose and relaxed? Now your head. Are there strains in your neck muscles or jaws?

Close your eyes and try to relax all the tension you found. Breathe normally and concentrate on feeling heavy all over. You should feel more calm and relaxed than you did a few minutes ago.

Now work up to a deeper level of relaxation. You will have to locate the tensions and systematically remove them. First, try to tense every muscle in your body, from your head to your toes, jaws tight, neck tight and still, forehead wrinkled and tense, arms and hands tense, fists clenched, stomach and chest muscles tight, legs and feet tensed. You should be tense all over. Hold that tension for another moment and then let go all over. Breathe normally and feel the wave or relaxation spread through your body. You may feel a kind of warm glow or slightly tingling sensation as the relaxations flows in. Relax as completely as possible. Concentrate on feeling heavy in your chair. Notice the lack of tension everywhere in your body.

Next find all the remaining tensions in your body and remove them. Keep the rest of your body as relaxed as before, but tighten up your toes and your foot muscles. Notice the tension in your toes, the tops of your feet, and the sides of your ankles. Now relax your feet completely. Notice the contrast. Now tense the same muscles again, hold it now, relax. Feel the relaxation. Note the heaviness of your feet. Now keep all the rest of your body relaxed while you tense your leg and thigh muscles. Feel your legs rise a little as your thigh muscles tighten. The backs of your legs should be hard and tight. Hold that tension for a moment and then relax. Notice the heaviness in your legs and thighs. Your whole body should be limp and at rest in the chair.

Tighten your stomach muscles. Notice that you feel like you do when you are anxious or angry or in a tense or dangerous situation. Hold the tension for a moment and then relax. Repeat that again. Tense the muscles, hold it, and then relax.

Do the same with your chest muscles. Notice that when you tense your chest muscles, the tension goes up into your shoulders and upper arms. Hold it for a minute and then relax. Again, tense and relax. Again tense. Again relax. You should now be relaxed all over. Check to be sure that the rest of your body is relaxed and loose.

Clench your right fist and tense your arm muscles-forearms and biceps. Hold the tension in the right hand and arm and tense the left fist and arm. Tighten both more. Study the tension. Locate it in each arm. Hold it. Now relax. Straighten out your fingers and let the comfortable, loose, restful feeling flow into your arms, hands and the rest of your body. One more time, tense both hands and arms and hold it. Now let go and relax.

Tighten your face and neck muscles. Close your eyes, wrinkle your forehead, and tighten your jaws with your teeth together. Hold it for a moment and then relax. Try it again with all the same muscles, tight jaws, tight neck muscles, tense all the way down into the back. Relax. Notice all the changes as you relax. Your forehead and scalp smooth, your lips and jaws relax, your mouth is open a little, and your shoulders are loose and free to move.

You have now relaxed all the major areas of your body, and you should be relaxed all over. Try to go over all the areas and make sure there are no tensions left in your feet and legs or your thighs. Stomach and chest are relaxed.

Relax your chest, shoulders arms and hands. Relax all the neck muscles, jaws and face, and the scalp muscles. Keep relaxing your whole body. It feels loose, heavy, calm quiet and at rest.

Increase the relaxation by taking a really deep breath and exhaling slowly. Close your eyes and notice how you become less aware of anything but your own hushed, mellow, comfort. You feel like soft velvet-tranquil, peaceful and serene. You blend into the chair. You feel placid and gentle, unwilling to move a muscle. Just raising your arm would be an effort. Even thinking about it is an effort. Drop back into the comfort; relax the slight tensions in your arms.

Now you are all quiet and relaxed. You can observe the lack of tension all through your body. Now try to become more relaxed. Try to become more relaxed each time you breathe out. Notice the deeper and deeper relaxation as you become calm and serene.

You can continue relaxing this way for as long as you wish. When you are ready to get up, simply count backwards (5-4-3-2-1), open your eyes and notice that you are refreshed, calm and wide awake. You feel fine.

Suggestions for Use of Relaxation Techniques

Once you have learned the relaxation routine, you can use it before a study session. Before beginning to study for a test, sit in a comfortable chair and go through the relaxation drill. Once you are feeling comfortable, proceed to your desk. During the study session, stop if you feel tension or anxiety creeping into your body. Turn away from the books and relax. Work on the areas of tension until your body feels calm again.

You can, of course, also do the relaxation drill before an exam or during it. When you sit down to take an exam, quickly relax your body. If during the exam you are side-tracked by tension, take a few seconds and use relaxation as a first-aid measure. In this situation, you can only relax those areas in which you are tense, such as your neck, shoulders or back. Take a deep breath, hold it for ten or fifteen seconds and slowly let it out. It is both a mind-clearer and a body relaxer.

Here is something else to practice. When you are relaxing in a chair before studying, try to form a mental picture of yourself sitting in a chair in a classroom taking a test. Take a mental and physical measurement of your body's tension when you see this scene. Relax those areas which feel tense when you see and think about yourself in the test situation. See yourself again in the classroom. Take a new measurement and do some more relaxation. Continue to alternate these two items, relaxation and visualization of yourself in the test situation, until the measurement of yourself in the testing scene registers "comfortable."

Reading

Now here's a topic you probably think you don't need. You already know how to read. Right? Well, you probably do know how to read some things. You can probably get through the newspaper, or a favorite magazine, or even a hefty novel without too much trouble. Unfortunately, that kind of reading won't get you through college work. In fact, if you are a good reader, you may have even more trouble reading in a disciplined way.

Most college students try to deal with reading assignments the same way they would read a novel for pleasure. They pick up a book, start with the first word, and just keep going until they come to the end of the assigned section. In college, if you want to succeed, reading needs to become much more interactive than that. There are many aspects to interacting with your text, but here we will address a few of the most basic skills that will help you approach difficult material. The areas covered below include strengthening vocabulary, organizing and prioritizing information, making connections, and recognizing questions.

You will probably notice that this section contains a lot of material that is similar to the section on note taking. That is because you need to take notes while you read in order to understand, organize, and use the material you are reading. So, pick up your pen or pencil and get started.

Vocabulary Problems

Do you remember when you first started to read, and you would come upon a word that you didn't understand? Most of the time, your teacher probably told you to "figure it out from the context." Rather than slow down, find a dictionary, and disrupt your reading while you learned a new word, you probably managed to get by with a partial understanding of the text. "Using the context" helps you read faster, and it becomes an automatic practice fairly quickly. If you are simply reading a book for pleasure, this method of reading is not problematic, but when you are reading for precision learning, this method can get you into a lot of trouble.

Difficult Words

When you begin perusing an inordinately convoluted text, it behooves you to foster your comprehension by more than mere speculation.

Does this sentence make sense to you? You can probably guess the meanings of some of the more difficult words, but suppose you were tested on the meaning of "inordinately" or "convoluted." Would you know that inordinate means "disordered" or "lacking restraint"? Would you know that convoluted means "extremely complicated"? Putting the words together suggests that the text could be both extremely complicated and also disorganized.

When you come across words you are not certain of, it is a very good idea to have a way of identifying those words and then making certain you look up the definitions. If you draw a box around unfamiliar or imperfectly understood words, you can write a definition in the margins of your text or in your notes. Always use the same notation for these words, and you will be able to study them more easily.

In the paragraphs above, identify any words that you are not completely certain of and draw a box around them. Using a dictionary, find the definition that most clearly fits the meaning in the sentence. If you are not certain, then write a question mark beside the best definition. This would be an appropriate question for you to ask your instructor.

Jargon/ Terms of Art

As you begin studying in specific disciplines, you will find that there are words that only people in those fields use. Some texts assume that you know the definitions of those words even though you may be completely unfamiliar with them. Many texts have a glossary providing definitions for terms of art. New words may be boldfaced or have definitions in the text. It is always important to make sure you understand these terms. If you are taking biology and you come across the word “histology” or if you are studying history and you come across the word “historiography,” you want to be certain that you know what each means.

In the paragraph above, identify any words that you are not completely certain of and draw a box around them. Using a dictionary, find the definition that most clearly fits the meaning in the sentence. If you are not certain, then write a question mark beside the best definition. This would be an appropriate question for you to ask your instructor.

Special Meanings

Frequently, words that you use in everyday language have very specific meanings within a discipline. For example, it has become a colloquialism to describe something with the phrase “That’s so random.” What do you mean when you use that phrase?

When a scientist or social scientist uses the term “random,” he or she has a very precise meaning. What is that meaning?

Other terms that may carry precise meanings include “arbitrary,” “modernism,” “gender,” “theory,” “platonic.” How might you use these words in every day speech? Look them up and see if you can find differences in how scholars might use these words

Prioritizing Information

One of the most important tasks for good readers is to discover what the writer considers to be important. In most textbooks you will usually have some help, because the chapter headings and the important ideas are frequently boldfaced or set apart some way.

There are other aids in most texts. The Table of Contents usually serves as a sort of outline, with the major topics being identified as chapter or section headings. The Preface or the Introduction also usually lays out what the author is trying to do. Interestingly, most students simply skip this part of the book and jump right into the first

chapter. But sometimes the Preface is the most important thing you can read. It gives you a clear explanation of what the author intends to cover and why.

Of course, in many college texts you don't get these kinds of assists. In these cases, you must identify the important ideas and information on your own. It is usually helpful if you make an outline of the chapter as you read it. An outline forces you to think about what you are reading as you try to decide what the author's main ideas are and what evidence supports those ideas. If you are not able to identify the main idea, you then have an important question to ask your instructor.

I would give you a word of caution here about the use of highlighters. Many students use highlighters as they read, expecting that they will then go back and re-read the highlighted material as a way to study for their exam. The problem with this method is that two negative things frequently occur.

First, it is very easy to highlight passages without paying much attention to them. Because you are sure you will come back to them later, you don't think about them much while you are reading the first time. Later, when you go back to review, it is as if this material is completely new to you. You may actually remember and understand **less** of the material if you use a highlighter when you read.

Second, it is so easy to highlight, that it is tempting to highlight everything! I have seen students' textbooks with entire pages glowing with pink highlighter. The students have done no prioritizing and no organizing of the material. Everything that is pink is of equal importance. The students haven't really thought about anything they have read, and as a result, they are not likely to really understand it.

It certainly takes longer to write notes about what you are reading than it does to highlight. But remember, the purpose of reading college material is to understand it and be able to use it, not to race to the end of the chapter simply to say that you read it. Write a brief outline of this section identifying the major points and specific examples.

In this chapter, one connection to a different chapter has already been pointed out to you. What is it?

Identify at least one other connection between this chapter and another.

Using What You Read

When you really understand material that you have read, you should begin to notice that the information has some meaning and usefulness for you. You will start noticing situations that remind you of what you read, you will apply your new knowledge, you will be able to teach or explain to others what you have learned. Sometimes, this new understanding is subtle. It simply influences how you look at the world and understand it. Sometimes it is obvious and practical.

If you have read this chapter carefully and understood it, you should have an immediate practical benefit. If you have read carefully, outlined, and made connections, you should be able to predict how a teacher would test you on this material. You can make up your own study guide by identifying the most likely questions. Make a study guide for this chapter based on your reading.

Time Management

Time management is important for high school students, college students and people who are working. For students there never seems to be enough time for them to do everything they want or need to do. It's a sad refrain that I hear every day. Yet when I talk to them about prioritizing, they look at me like I just landed on this planet.

So for those students who are reading this (and maybe wondering what planet I'm from) lets start at the beginning and talk about time management. Time management is not an evil plague. It will take a few minutes a day on the average, and should help you organize your life. It should free you up to do the things you want to do, while still accomplishing the things you need to do. It's learning to spend time more efficiently or productively and being more in control of your life. If you are running around always doing everything at the last second, you are not in control of you life.

As you will learn, in college serious students have daily planners or calendars, but just carrying a calendar around isn't enough. You need to have goals and you need to set priorities. You may need to learn to say "no" to friends and put homework and academic responsibilities first.

Prioritizing What You Need to Do

Many of you may not use a calendar or planner yet. Let's get you started. Fill in the following table:

In column #2, make a list of everything you have to do and want to do in the next month.

In column #3, write the amount of time you require or want to give to the task.

In column #1 give each item a score of 1-5: 1 is most important, 2 is not quite so important, 3 is more neutral, 4 isn't really important and 5 is absolutely not important or that you would do only if there's time.

#1	#2	#3

On a month-by-month calendar begin writing in the activities that you have each month that are priorities (all items numbered 1-3). Now you have your priorities on a monthly calendar and have a small sense of your month at a glance. Because it is summer now, chances are many students won't have a lot of items on their calendars. There's no school, football practices, band rehearsals, church activities and the like. For some people, all they ever use is a monthly calendar but it most certainly isn't enough for students in high school, college or many professionals because it doesn't give you enough space to have the details and information you need to get the job done.

Many students need help to learn time management and put it to work for them. Everyone is different and it is something that needs to be customized for each student. In the workshop we'll give you several calendar formats that people use to manage their time.

Think about the next few questions. Write your answer to each question in the space provided.

1. How do you think about your day or even your week? Do you think about each day in a kind of linear profession? Do you see each day as a series of projects? Explain how you think about your time.

2. How do you see time? Do you think about each day or do you have a "5 day outlook" and plan each week? Explain how you visualize time.

3. What gives you a feeling of accomplishment at the end of the day? Explain what criteria you use for a good day; what is your criteria for a bad day?

4. Explain what you do for time management now. How do you keep track of assignments, course exams, social appointments, practices, etc.?

5. How does your method work for you? What doesn't work about it?

6. What would you like to improve about how you do time management?

Time Management Styles

No matter how you decide to format your time management plan, a calendar is the first necessary item. The first thing you must decide is what kind of system you like and need. You may find a calendar or organizer that works very well for you but as your life changes so might your calendar or organizer need to change. Don't be alarmed if one day things don't seem to be going as well as they used to. You just need to analyze what is working and what isn't working anymore. What do you need to change so your system works better for you?

First, choose a calendar format that works for you.

Do you want a whole month on a page or two pages?

Do you prefer a calendar by the week on a page or two pages?

Do you prefer one day on each page?

How much space do you need to record what you have going on?

Here are some questions to help you answer what format might work best for you at this point.

How busy are you? Do you have a job, do volunteer work or have other responsibilities outside of school and homework?

Are you active in the church and have meetings or practices that you attend?

How much do you write in your calendar and how large do you write?

For the purpose of the workshop we'll use the weekly calendar on two pages. As you will see we have set up a calendar for you to use through December. Blank copies

of this format are included if you want to make more copies. Now is the time to be thinking about what kind of calendar you prefer and to make it a habit to use it all the time.

We have also included other formats for you to look at as well. If you find a different format that you want to try, use that one the next time. Or, go to an office supply store and look at the different calendars and planners available. What do you like about those formats? Remember, unless you design your own you will probably never find the “perfect” system but you will find some that are more suitable than others. It just depends on what works for you. Just remember, it won’t matter what you choose unless you use it all the time.

Tomorrow in the time management workshop we’ll give you some tips on how to put some of the things that you are learning about yourself to work for you.

Reference

Chickering, A. W. & Schlossberg, N. (2002). *Getting the Most Out of College*. Second Edition. Prentice Hall, Columbia, OH.

Why Can't I Find Anything? Organization!

Do you spend hours looking for papers that don't seem to be anywhere? Do you look for assignments, textbooks and class notebooks that are never where you think you left them? Do you get home from school only to find out you left stuff you really need in your locker—or vice versa, you get to school in the morning and your homework, textbooks or school projects are still at home on the table? To make sure this doesn't happen to you again—**ORGANIZE!** It's worth it just so you don't get lower grades for turning your work in late, and to avoid the embarrassment of everyone knowing that you were that irresponsible. In college you need to have the materials you need, when you need it because, as I am sure you can imagine, when you have to leave for school or class, you have to leave and there's not enough time to hunt around for things you need. So what can you do?

Time Management

One of the most important things I have learned was from the **Daytimer** organization! Keep things together and keep them in the same place. When we talked about time management and using a calendar or academic planner, have only one calendar. Don't have one on your desk, one in your book bag, another one in your locker or dorm wall, etc. There's no way you can remember to write everything on all those calendars and before you know it you are going to find yourself in trouble. You will have information written on the wrong calendar, or you forgot to write the information down at all. Suddenly everything starts to fall apart and you are grasping at straws! Just have one calendar and write everything in it—keep everything together. Remember the calendar you started in the last chapter? Make that your only calendar. We'll talk more about your calendar in a couple minutes.

Organize your Academic Needs

Let's talk about your classes. For every class you will have at least one textbook (usually, and in college there may be three or four textbooks—sometimes even more); you should have a folder to keep class handouts, worksheets, returned assignments and the like. You are also going to need a notebook for class notes or filler paper to use in your 3-ring binder.

Color code your courses. For example, assume you are enrolled in:

Composition-purple folders, notebook or filler paper and book covers

Advanced Algebra-red folders, notebooks or filler paper and book covers

Chemistry-green folders, notebook or filler paper and book cover

World History-blue folders, notebook or filler paper and book cover

*Remember that we prefer 3-ring binders and filler paper!

Keep your folders and note books the same color for each course and make each course a different color. When it's time to pack your book bag for class it is easy to identify what you need. You need to take your folder, notepaper and textbook for each class when you go to lab or lecture. Keep everything together—in your room, in your book bag, and in your school locker.

In college you may only have 10 minutes to get from class-to-class and if you forget what you need, there may not be time to return to your dorm room to get things you forgot earlier. If you live off campus, it is even less likely that you would be able to go to your apartment to pickup things you need. You need to have things where they belong so you can find them when you need them.

Let's go back to your calendar/planner. When you are writing assignments, exams, or breaking work apart to do a research paper, color code your entries. For

Composition assignments use purple ink to match your folders and notebook, for Advanced Algebra use red ink to match, green ink for Chemistry and blue ink for World History. Write in exams on your calendar in the appropriate color for the course and then highlight the word “exam” in yellow or some other bright color so your exams will really stand out as a reminder that they are coming.

Don't leave writing assignments or studying for exams until the last minute. Break them into smaller projects. When you first get an assignment to write an essay or paper, take a few minutes the same day and look the assignment over. If it's a research paper do you need to have your topic approved by your instructor before you begin? Schedule time to meet with your instructor; time to go to the library to research your topic; and set aside some time to read the research material and take notes, and time as well, to start writing your first draft, time to proof read your work and make any necessary changes before turning in your final draft.

Breaking a big project, like a research paper, into smaller projects makes it much easier to accomplish. You set small goals to enable you to meet the bigger goal. How you need to schedule these smaller projects depends on the length of time you have before it's due and the amount of work you have to do. A 10-page paper is going to take much longer to research than a five-page paper. Research will take longer, reading and writing will take longer, and so on, so plan accordingly.

Just a reminder, keep all these small projects in your calendar—color coded for the class that they are for and you should be good to go. Do the same thing to plan for exams. Don't leave studying for an exam until the night before the exam. Start studying early. Again, mark your calendar for studying the material over several days prior to the exam. Marking your calendar for these tasks will keep the projects you need to do in front of you as a constant reminder of things that you need to do and assures time to do it if you block the time on your calendar.

Organize Your Life

Make schedules. Make a time each week to do your laundry. Make sure you have laundry soap and fabric softener on hand. Make a time when you don't have class and do it during the day if possible. Take homework and read while you wait on your laundry to wash and dry. It will most likely be quiet and you can concentrate on your studies. Schedule this task in your planner.

In the next section you will learn more about ways to stay organized when we talk about housekeeping. Remember to put things where they belong and that will organize your belongings.

The second thing is you need to focus on your calendar/planner and how it will become the mainstay of your existence. Check it frequently to see what you need to do and where you need to be. Every night look at your planner and see what you have for the next day. Make sure you have everything you need for the next day organized and ready to go before you go to bed. Put textbooks, folders, notebooks and other needed materials in your book bag the night before. Double check that you have put everything you need in your bag and you are ready to go. If you oversleep the next day you can grab your book bag and head out the door knowing you are ready to go.

In the morning check your planner again. What does your day look like? Get a sense of what you have going for that day. On the weekends you want to look at your entire next week. To be organized you need to know what is going on in your life and be on top of things.

Using the Library

Effective and efficient use of the library may be one of the most important skills you can develop to help you with college work. You should become familiar with the layout of the library. Find the reference room, the periodical collections, the catalog, the reference librarian, and the inter-library loan system. As libraries become more reliant on computers, they frequently change their systems to make their materials more accessible to their users. If you are unfamiliar with any of the systems in your library, you should ask a librarian for assistance.

Librarians are there to help you find out what you need to know. They are experts at finding information. If you want to do well in college, you will improve your chances tremendously by becoming comfortable using all the tools available to you through your library.

In this day of internet access, it is often typical for students to simply type in a search term on their internet server, skim the selections offered, and piece together a paper based on what you find. Unfortunately, this is not a very good way to do the kind of research you will need to do in college.

One of the major problems with internet sites is that they are not evaluated or regulated in any way. What you find may, or may not be valid information. Just to prove this point, try going to the following website:

<http://descy.50megs.com/mankato/mankato.html>

See anything unusual? I am particularly fond of the concept of whale watching on the Minnesota River, but I don't think it will actually happen in my lifetime.

Now most websites are not intended to be "spoofs" as is this one which was created by a group of students from the University of Mankato just to prove a point. On the other hand, it is certainly possible, and highly probable, that many websites are created with some agenda in mind. Sometimes that agenda includes presenting slanted information, partial information, or even seriously questionable information. Unless you happen to know the political, social, economic, or religious motivation of the creators of the website, you may not have any clue that the information you are reading is "off."

Another difficulty with using websites for your research is that they tend to be transient. Webmasters may make changes on the website at any time. On some websites, such as Wikipedia, anyone may go in and make a change. What you found on the site one day may no longer be available by the next day. In some cases, the entire website may disappear because it is no longer being maintained. This is really a problem if your teacher (or any other reader of your work) is trying to see where you got your material.

Websites can be extremely convenient and are often a good starting place for you to find general information; however, when you are writing a paper for a college prep course or for a college course you will need to use what are called "scholarly sources."

Scholars take a very different approach from most webmasters, journalists, or popularizers. Scholars follow certain standards in their research. These standards are determined by the discipline in which the scholar writes, and other scholars will judge the work based on these standards.

Journals, which are like scholarly magazines, will publish articles after they have been reviewed by a team of scholars to make sure that the articles meet the standards of the discipline. For example, a biology journal will make sure that a published experiment follows good scientific methodology. An English Literature journal will make certain that the article recognizes research done by other scholars, is well written, and is on a serious topic. Other disciplines have their own standards, but in most cases journals use at least three independent judges before they agree to publish any article.

This means that you, your teacher, and your readers can assume that your own paper is based on solid work done in the field. It doesn't mean that there are no mistakes ever made, but it is a better way to gather information than simply going to the internet where there are no safeguards at all.

Scholarly books are not as rigorously reviewed as journal articles. Anyone can publish a book, if the publisher thinks it will sell. It may be helpful to read some reviews of a book before you use information from it. Usually, books are a few years behind the research you will find in journal articles. If you are writing a research paper for a college class, you should use few books unless your teacher specifically suggests them.

To improve your familiarity with the library, use the following scavenger hunt. Remember, if you are having trouble, you may ask the librarian for help!

Following Directions

Brush your teeth. Comb your hair. Clean your room. Do your homework. Go to bed. Seems simple. Does that about do it for following directions? Not by half.

There is an interesting thing about following directions. It seems like you already need to know how to do whatever it is that the directions are supposed to be telling you. Take the examples listed above as an illustration. You might try using a hair brush, a scrub brush, or even a paint brush on your teeth if you hadn't already learned that there is a particular kind of brush for teeth, you are supposed to use it in a particular way, and you usually use it with water to apply a special kind of paste to your teeth. We assume you already know all of that, so we can probably safely assume that you know how to brush your teeth. I suspect that most of you also know how to comb your hair and go to bed. Your parent/s may or may not agree that you know how to clean your room.

But do you always know how to do your homework? Again, this simple direction covers a lot of different activities. Some of these activities are discussed in the chapters on reading, note taking, and studying; but students frequently have a hard time understanding exactly what is expected of them when they are given an assignment.

If you were told, "Write a 2-page essay on your summer vacation," what would you need to know to follow that direction? List as many questions as you can think of that would help you follow the directions for this assignment.

Now suppose you were asked to write a 10 page term paper on tourism in northern Minnesota. What questions would you need to ask to make sure you could follow this direction?

This next section is actually a copy of a page from the test taking section.

1. Information-seeking questions: ***What was the First Continental Congress and where did it meet?*** This may seem like a straight forward question, and it is; however,

you should be careful to read it completely. There are two parts to the question, and if you do not answer both parts you may not receive credit for your answer.

2. Diagnostic questions: ***What are some of the ethical problems in conducting research on the effectiveness of stimulants in reducing symptoms of ADHD?*** In a question like this, you are expected to apply something you have learned about research ethics to a specific case. You must explain both the ethical principles and how they may be violated in this specific instance.

3. Open-ended questions: ***What is important about the movie Brokeback Mountain?*** Notice that this question allows you to think of a number of different answers. In fact, with a question such as this you should probably give more than one reason why the movie is important. Your teacher will probably have a few things in mind that you have discussed in class, but he/she may also be interested in your own ideas.

4. Priority questions: ***What do you think are the most important aspects to understand about various contraceptive methods?*** Note that this question asks you to make a decision about relative importance. It is not enough simply to list things that might be considered. You should state what you think is **most** important, and it would strengthen your answer to explain why you think so.

5. Generalizing questions: ***Based on what you have already learned about studying, describe how you think you should set up a study group.*** Notice that this question asks you to write your own thoughts, to think for yourself about a question that may not be directly answered in the book. But the question also expects you to base your thoughts on specific material. In other words, you cannot simply give an opinion. You must back up your opinion with evidence.

Following the Directions

The wording of essay questions usually includes specific directions for how you are to present the material. If you don't follow the exact directions, you may present a lot of information and still fail to receive credit for your answer. Pay particular attention to the use of specific words. See the handout on words to think about when writing essay questions.

Do you see how you must have an understanding of the meaning of the directions before you can follow them accurately? Suppose I answered question # 1 with this response: **"The First Continental Congress met in 1774 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."**

Did I follow the directions? Why or why not?

Now look at question #3. Suppose I answered it with this response: "I disliked Brokeback Mountain because it was too graphic and because it was about a subject that I think is inappropriate. The scenery was beautiful, and I thought some of it was funny, but it was embarrassing and too long. I don't think the class should have watched it."

What is wrong with this answer?

If you wrote this answer on a test and were marked off, you might be tempted to complain that the teacher took off points because she disagreed with you. But the problem with this answer is not your opinion, it is your failure to follow the directions. Even if you didn't like the movie, you should be able to explain what is important about it.

Where to Find Directions

Some assignments may be written down by your teacher and presented to you as a handout. Whenever you receive a handout explaining an assignment, be very sure to keep it until the assignment has been completed and turned in. Usually, such written assignments will have detailed instructions for you to follow.

Some assignments are given at the beginning of the semester, and you are responsible for remembering them, understanding them, and turning them in at the correct time. Usually such assignments are listed on your syllabus. You should be sure to ask questions about these assignments well before the due date. If you wait until the last minute, and then ask a question about which resources you need; you could be in real trouble. Perhaps the requirement is to use a book which can only be found through inter-library loan. You won't have two weeks to wait for it! Get clear directions for these assignments as early as possible.

Some assignments are given orally during class. This is a real problem if you aren't there! If you happen to miss a class, you must contact your instructor and ask if any assignments were given. It is not the instructor's responsibility to find you and make sure you know about homework. If you have a friend taking notes, that person may forget to tell you about an assignment. Don't take anything for granted when it comes to class assignments.

One common problem for college students is coming late to class or leaving early. Because there is no tardy bell, as there may be in high school, students are personally responsible for getting to classes on time. Some teachers will close and lock the door at class time, but others will simply allow you to walk in late. The problem with coming late is that you miss the first few minutes of class. You may think that you can catch on and there will be no problem. HOWEVER, those first few minutes are frequently the time when professors give assignments. The other time that assignments are discussed is during the last few minutes of class. Students who are in too much of a hurry to get out the door may very well miss announcements about assignments or extra credit. You may miss a question that someone else has asked, and that means that you don't know important information that you need.

Essays! Essays! Essays! (Or why does the teacher hate me??)

For many students writing is an academic chore nearly as thrilling as eating canned spinach. Yelch! It's hard to imagine people who enjoy eating spinach. Like most students we avoid what we are afraid of or aren't good at—which sometimes means we don't even want to try something. It's more fun to take courses that are easy or that we are really interested in because it is what we are good at. Writing is like any other subject. Once you understand the basic elements of an essay, you just need to practice writing...any kind of writing. Just write!

I remember when I was eight years old my grandmother always wanted me to write letters to her. I am sure I was a terrible writer. I couldn't spell that well and my writing wasn't anything special. But I remember why my grandma made such a fuss every time she got a letter from me. It made me feel like I could write anything and I would sit down and write her another letter. She was tricky that way—she liked to make learning fun. But to this day writing is one of my favorite things to do. I write letters to my friends all the time; I have a lot of paperwork to do in my job and must write all day long. People tell me that they love to get a letter or that I am a good writer and it still makes me feel wonderful.

I want to accomplish three things in this chapter. First, I want to show you that writing an essay isn't really as hard as it sometimes seems if you break it down for students. Second we need to look at the language or vocabulary words used in writing. And third I would like to show you how to take that five paragraph essay and turn it into a two, three or five page paper—including how to document the resources you use for a paper.

A standard five-paragraph essay includes the following:

Paragraph I—Introductory paragraph

Paragraph II—First main point

Paragraph III—Second main point

Paragraph IV—Third main point

Paragraph V--Conclusion

The Standard Five-Paragraph Essay

So let's talk about essay writing (which isn't that different than those old letters to my grandmother). Most students begin to learn essay writing with the standard five paragraph essay. What if this was your assignment for a class? **There is a great deal of controversy whether or not religious activities should be allowed in the public schools. Are you for religious activities in the public schools, against religious activities or do you have no opinion or not care? Whatever your preference, write an essay stating your opinion and three reasons why you believe as you believe. If you have no opinion, state three reasons why this topic doesn't matter to you. Use this opportunity to state your case and persuade a friend why your opinion is the right one.**

Let's write an essay together and I will walk you through each of the five paragraphs.

Paragraph I is your introductory paragraph and usually consists of your thesis sentence and two or three sentences that give the reader information about your essay.

How do you develop a thesis sentence or thesis statement? Your thesis statement can be developed two ways. Frequently you can simply restate the question that you are answering. Other times you may need to develop your own thesis sentence depending on the paper you will write. For the assignment above

we can restate the question as a thesis sentence and it would look something like this:

I am for religious activities in the public school for any student that wants to be a part of them. I have just told the reader what I am writing about (religious activities in the public school and what my opinion is on whether they should be allowed).

The next sentences should each be one of my reasons why I believe in religious activities in the public schools. Let's say that these are my three reasons: (note that they don't have to be complete sentences—just jot down the main idea so you don't forget the points you want to make.)

1. The constitution gives me religious freedom to practice what I believe
2. Religious practices are another way that people can learn about diversity if they choose to do that
3. Religious activities are a great way for young people to socialize and get to know each other using their faith as a basis for friendships

What is your first main point? Your first sentence would be to state reason number one from the list above. You don't write anymore information about the topic, just state that point. So sentence number 2 in your introductory paragraph would look something like this:

The government has given us the right to practice our religion as we choose under the constitution. It's as simple as that. You don't elaborate on the topic at this time.

What is your second main point? Sentence number three in your introductory paragraph would look something like this:

Religious activities are a good way to learn about another person's culture and cultural diversity is a part of school. That's it.

What is your third main point? Again, just make a good sentence out of my third point. **Religious activities are a great way for young people to socialize and get to know each other using their faith as a basis for friendships.**

Your fourth sentence in the introductory paragraph would be a short summary sentence to bring the reader back to the main point. It would look something like this:

For these three reasons I strongly believe that religious activities should be allowed in the public schools.

And you have just written your first paragraph of a persuasive essay. Let's look at it all together.

I am for religious activities in the public school for any student that wants to be a part of them. The government has given us the right to practice our religion as we choose under the constitution. Religious activities are a good way to learn about another person's culture and cultural diversity is a part of school. Religious activities are a great way for young people to socialize and get to know each other using their faith as a basis for friendships. For these three reasons I strongly believe that religious activities should be allowed in the public schools.

Just a word on essay writing in general, *the first paragraph is often the hardest paragraph to write. It means narrowing down your topic to exactly what you want to write about and staying on that topic.* Don't start writing about something else that has nothing to do with the assignment. One of the most difficult obstacles to writing a good essay is understanding exactly what the assignment is and limiting your essay to answering that question or questions. Remember the section on test taking when we warned you about knowing what the assignment was asking and staying on task when answering those questions.

Paragraph II is the first main point you want to make to support your opinion. The second paragraph can begin with your first main point (in sentence format) from your first paragraph. From there you need to have four or five sentences with supporting information on the first point.

The government has given us the right to practice our religion as we choose under the U. S. constitution.

We have just restated the first main point. Although there is no set rule as to the exact number of sentences that need to be in a paragraph, generally you need at least five or six sentences, all about the same point, to make a paragraph. So now let's look at five or six additional sentences to complete the second paragraph. Finished it would look something like this:

The government has given us the right to practice our religion as we choose under the U. S. constitution. When the pilgrims first came to this country and our government was originally formed, the constitution was written to protect the people from the tyranny in England and Spain. It gave people freedom to do many things, including the right to worship as they choose and to gather together to share their religious beliefs. This was the reason our relatives came to this country, to be able to worship together without fear of punishment or death. The government shouldn't be able to tell students that they can't gather before or after school to have religious events or gatherings. This is a fundamental right based on our constitution and now modern government wants to limit the very ideals that the United States was founded on. People today, should be able to continue gathering for religious purposes if they want to do so.

First, there are seven sentences in this paragraph. But a good paragraph isn't about the number of sentences you write. It's about stating your point and providing supporting information for that point. Notice how all the sentences relate to the main point of this paragraph. Together the sentences flow together.

Paragraph III will restate your second main point and an additional four or five sentences (minimum, but use how many you need) to support the point. The third paragraph might look something like this:

Religious activities are a good way to learn about another person's culture and cultural diversity is a part of school. A part of everyone's culture is religion, whether or not the individual is a religious person or not. When students look at people in other countries and learn about their way of life, all aspects of the culture are important because they all play a role together; religion, economics, agriculture, imported and exported goods, climate and values are inter-related. If students are going to learn cultural

diversity you can't study only certain areas and ignore others if a complete picture is to be provided. In many countries today people are forced to worship as the nation or country's leaders dictate. Imagine learning about "freedom of religion" if you were from a country where how or whom you worshipped was passed down from your country's leader. Think about how important that information would be as you learned about their culture. Having religious activities can lead to a better understanding of others, even if their choice is not to participate in those activities.

Again, the sentences flow together and all relate to the idea of cultural diversity and understanding a person better by knowing and appreciating all aspects of the other person's culture.

Paragraph IV follows the same development. Restate your point from your introductory paragraph and write several sentences supporting that point.

Religious activities are a great way for young people to socialize and get to know each other using their faith as a basis for friendships. In high school there are students who are drinking alcohol regularly, experimenting with drugs and are sexually active with multiple partners. However, there are many young people who choose not to participate in those behaviors. Religious study or youths getting together are ways to meet new people and learn more about them as well as maybe having some values in common. It could provide a group of friends that choose not to smoke, drink or use drugs as well as other values they may have in common together.

Paragraph V is the concluding paragraph which is really a summary paragraph that restates the main points one last time. This paragraph may be much shorter than the other paragraphs depending on the points you have made. Here is a concluding paragraph for the essay we just wrote:

In conclusion, I am in favor of have religious activities in the public schools, whether it is religious studies or religious social gatherings for any student who wishes to be a part of them. As noted above our constitution guarantees us the right to gather for religious purposes and this one way to exercise that right. Further, gathering for religious studies allows for cultural diversity in the school setting. It lets others learn about our religious beliefs and values if they choose to do so. Finally religious activities in the public schools will allow students who have the same beliefs and values to gather together and socialize with each other. They can do this without the peer pressure of others who may not share in those values. For all of these reasons I believe that students should be allowed to have religious gatherings and activities in the public schools.

Look at the entire essay together on the next page. I have identified the various parts for you to show the layout of a short five-paragraph essay.

Sample Essay

I am for religious activities in the public school for any student that wants to be a part of them. The government has given us the right to practice our religion as we choose under the constitution. Religious activities are a good way to learn about another person's culture and cultural diversity is a part of school. Religious activities are a great way for young people to socialize and get to know each other using their faith as a basis for friendships. For these three reasons I strongly believe that religious activities should be allowed in the public schools.

The government has given us the right to practice our religion as we choose under the U. S. constitution. When the pilgrims first came to this country and our government was originally formed, the constitution was written to protect the people from the tyranny in England and Spain. It gave people freedom to do many things, including the right to worship as they choose and to gather together to share their religious beliefs. This was the reason our relatives came to this country, to be able to worship together without fear of punishment or death. The government shouldn't be able to tell students that they can't gather before or after school to have religious events or gatherings. This is a fundamental right based on our constitution and now modern government wants to limit the very ideals that the United States was founded on. People today, should be able to continue gathering for religious purposes if they want to do so.

Religious activities are a good way to learn about another person's culture and cultural diversity is a part of school. A part of everyone's culture is religion, whether or not the individual is a religious person or not. When students look at people in other countries and learn about their way of life, all aspects of the culture are important because they all play a role together; religion, economics, agriculture, imported and exported goods, climate and values are inter-related. If students are going to learn cultural diversity you can't study only certain areas and ignore others if a complete picture is to be provided. In many countries today people are forced to worship as the nation or country's leaders dictate. Imagine learning about "freedom of religion" if you were from a country where how or whom you worshipped was passed down from your country's leader. Think about how important that information would be as you learned about their culture. Having religious activities can lead to a better understanding of others, even if their choice is not to participate in those activities.

Religious activities are a great way for young people to socialize and get to know each other using their faith as a basis for friendships. In high school there are students who are drinking alcohol regularly, experimenting with drugs and are sexually active with multiple partners. However, there are many young people who choose not to participate in those behaviors. Religious study or get together are a way to meet new people and learn more about them as well as maybe having some values in common. It could provide a group of friends that choose not to smoke, drink or use drugs as well as other values in common together.

In conclusion, I am in favor of have religious activities in the public schools, whether it is religious studies or religious social gatherings for any student who wishes to be a part of them. As noted above our constitution guarantees us the right to gather for religious purposes and this one way to exercise that right. Further, gathering for religious studies allows for cultural diversity in the school setting. It lets others learn about our religious beliefs and values if they choose to do so. Finally religious activities in the public schools will allow students to gather together who have the same beliefs and values and socialize with each other. They can do this without the peer pressure of others who may not share in those values. So for all of these reasons I believe that

students should be allowed to have religious gatherings and activities in the public schools.

** Just a note here about the order of your responses in the body of your paragraph. Some teachers like students to use the strongest argument first, your second point might be a little less important, and finally the third point is maybe even less of an argument. But other teachers like you to “build” your argument, starting with the weakest point and ending with the strongest point. Personally I would ask an instructor if you are concerned, but generally either format would be acceptable. In the essay above we have started with the strongest argument citing the constitution and going to the lesser point of social opportunities.

Use the space below to write any questions you have for the workshop tomorrow with regard to essay writing.

Vocabulary in Writing Essays (Especially Essay Exams)

David Ellis lists the following terms in Becoming a Master Student (1984, pg. 147) and it is a fairly complete list of terms.

Analyze break into separate parts and discuss, examine or interpret each part

Compare examine two or more things. Identify similarities and differences. Comparisons generally ask for similarities more than differences

Contrast show differences

**Just a note about compare and contrast—Many times on an exam you will see instructors asking students to compare and contrast something. You need to tell the similarities of the subject or even as well as the differences between them

Criticize or Critique make a judgment about something. Evaluate the comparative worth. Criticism often involves analysis

Define give the meaning of something, usually a specific meaning to the course or subject. Determine the precise limits of the term to be defined. Explain the exact meaning. Definitions are usually short.

Describe give a detailed account. Make a picture with words. List characteristics, qualities and parts

Discuss consider and debate or argue the pros and cons of an issue. Write about a conflict. Compare and contrast –discuss means present both sides of the issue

Enumerate List several ideas, aspects, events, things, qualities, reasons etc.

Evaluate give your opinion or cite the opinion of an expert—include evidence to support the evaluation

Illustrate give concrete examples, explain clearly by using comparisons or examples

Interpret comment upon, give examples, describe relationships, explain the meaning, describe, then evaluate

Prove support with facts—especially as presented in class lecture or in text readings

State explain precisely

Trace Show the order of events or progress of a subject or an event

Essay exams are a little different than writing traditional essays. Essay exams are written under time constraints as a rule so you have to be very organized. You need to know exactly what the question is asking, and knowing the vocabulary words above will be to your advantage.

Before you begin to write make a short outline (the three main points that we used in the essay earlier in the chapter is a good example of an outline for an essay). Taking a few moments will help you organize your thoughts to answer the question, will save you time writing because you won't have to stop and think about what you want to talk about next and it will help you remember the points that you want to make.

In essay exams many professors will not want you to write an introductory paragraph. They want you to just get to the point that you want to make. You can do that by using part of the question in your answer so your professor will know exactly what question you are answering. When you need to give supporting points in an essay, start with your strongest point first. Make sure that your supporting information also starts with the strongest information first followed by less important information later. This is important because if something happens and you don't finish your essay at least you will have an outline with the information in the margin and as much important information as you could possibly write in your essay. Some instructors will give partial credit if you had good points even if you didn't get a chance to write everything down.

Writing a Research Paper

I work with college students in all grades and majors and for the most part many of them are still afraid of courses that require a research paper. While we don't plan to have you write research papers as part of the summer program, eventually in classes in high school and certainly in college, you will encounter this assignment. Like most assignments, it's only as hard as you make it.

What is a Research Paper?

A research paper is a project in which the writer uses journals, books, magazines and sometimes the internet to get information about a topic. The difference between the essay assignment we wrote earlier in this chapter and a research paper is that the essay was expressing our opinion and backing it up with information we already knew. We didn't go to the library to research any information to write the essay and we used no citations. But a research paper will always include research and citations in the paper as well as a reference or bibliography page.

What is a Citation?

When research is done and the information is used in your paper you must "cite" where (what book, periodical, journal etc.) you got the information from. A citation may include the author's name, publication date, and page numbers where the information came from. That information is "cited" after you write about something from your research.

Where Can I Learn More About Citations and Writing a Research Paper?

There are two reference books students are advised to use when writing research papers. The first reference book is *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers; sixth edition by Joseph Gibaldi*. This book is for high school and undergraduate students and will take you through the steps of writing a scholarly project. The Modern Language Association (MLA) is only one style of documentation and is typically used when writing papers for classes in the humanities, classes about art, music and literature.

The second reference book for writing research papers is *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, fifth edition, (2001)*. Like the aforementioned MLA handbook, this also takes readers through all the steps of writing a research paper and using APA format to cite your sources of information. Both are excellent resources for all students to have on hand but it is a must for students planning to go on to postsecondary education because you will need to be familiar with both formatting styles.

What Does "Doing Research for a Paper" Mean?

It means going to the library to find in-depth information about the assigned topic or a topic of your choice. Typically a research paper is expected to cover a narrow topic in-depth or compare two topics in-depth. In college a research paper might be ten or twenty pages long when finished (theses and dissertations are somewhat longer) and

will provide scholarly information on the topic as well as provide the reader with a list of sources you used in your paper. Sometimes information is gathered and in the end may not necessarily be used in the paper but don't worry about that initially. Gather information that you think is pertinent to your research paper but remember to stick to the topic you are writing about. If your assignment is to write a paper *detailing* (what does that mean?) five reasons why World War II happened and give examples of each you don't want to be wandering off and writing about how the soldiers were starving and freezing to death. That wasn't why or an example of why the war happened. It is something that happened during the war but that wasn't your assignment.

Research is conducted using refereed journals, reference books, perhaps magazines and newspapers like **Time**, **U. S. News and World Report**, and **The New York Times**; These are "credible" sources for information. Students would be expected to use recognized sources such as these for a paper. Most instructors or professors would want students to use something besides the internet for information. While there are many good resources available to internet users, many carry no credibility so it is recommended that you do your research in the library or from a library online—not the internet itself, necessarily.

Let's Get Started!!

We're going to start with the same format as we used with the five-paragraph essay and expand that to something greater (or longer). Let's begin with an assignment question.

You have been learning many of the differences between student expectations and accommodations in high school and postsecondary education. Using research information for this paper, write a research paper differentiating five responsibilities from secondary education (IDEA) to postsecondary education (Section 504 and ADA) and tell how those responsibilities will affect you personally. Give examples of what you are required to do now and what changes you will have to make for postsecondary education. How do you plan to prepare for those changes so that you will be ready for postsecondary education?

First, KNOW WHAT the Assignment is Asking You to Do. Part of the answer is based on research and the second part is based on personal application. Using research articles and books, you need to start by finding five responsibilities that you will have in postsecondary school that you don't have in high school. Now begin your research by looking to see what information can be gleaned from this workbook. In the chapter, "Your Disability and You" there is some information given. You might begin by making a comparison table like the one in the chapter. Not every student will have the same table, however, because the essay question is asking you to look at the different points and then apply them to your own personal situation. But the table in your workbook is a good starting point.

The other thing you need is some "research material" to give credibility to your paper. Your workbook may be one source but it also gives you clues to some additional resources to check out further. It mentions the I.D.E.A.—what is it? Who does it protect? What does it mandate? These might be important questions to answer in your assignment. From the writing assignment you can infer (what does that mean?) that this is going to be an important piece of information for your paper, as is the A.D.A. and Section 504. What does A.D.A. stand for? What is Section 504? Again, who do they protect? What does each mandate?

The information answering these questions will prepare you to answer the first question in the assignment. You must know what is happening in K-12 and what responsibilities you had as a student with regard to your disability. Some of the information will tell you what you are responsible for in postsecondary education. You will need to know this information to help you write the rest of your paper.

You must take good (accurate) notes for a research paper. That means you have to not just write down information you find but you must clearly indicate your source—did you just jot down a few notes from the page—you must be able to cite your source. Did you copy down the notes word-for-word from your source? Which ever way you took the notes you must be able to cite your source accurately and if you wrote word-for-word exactly what the source had you must use quotation marks and the appropriate citation. The two main sources for documenting research sources are the Modern Language Association (MLA) format or the American Psychological Association (APA) format as noted earlier. You will be required to use one format or the other depending on the discipline you are writing your paper for. English papers tend to be written in MLA format while psychology, sociology, and the sciences tend to the use the APA format. Most professors tell you in their syllabus what formatting source they expect you to use. I recommend buying whichever source you need (depending on your major) and keep it handy because you will refer to it many times in your college career. Citations are formatted different in each case. Know how you will need to cite your research before you go to the library so you get the information you need when you start reading and taking research notes. Otherwise you may end up making extra trips to the library to get the information you need for the citation. **DOUBLE CHECK** your work to make sure that you have used the proper format for the citations for your paper.

The second part of the question is asking about YOU. Look at the assignment again. What will those responsibilities mean to you personally? Every student will have something a little different here, most likely. Think about the goals you are setting for yourself to prepare for postsecondary school. What action steps are you developing to meet those goals? This part of the question is asking you to take a look at what you learned about your research and then **APPLY** that information to you and your academic career.

Make an outline!!

Here's a simple and very brief outline that you could start with.

- I. Background Information (Intro?)
 - A. IDEA
 1. What is it?
 2. Who does it protect?
 3. How did or will it affect me?
 - B. Section 504
 1. What is it?
 2. Who does it protect?
 3. How did or will it affect me?
 - C. ADA
 1. What is it?
 2. Who does it protect?
 3. How did or will it affect me?
- II. Five Differences
 - A. Difference #1:
 1. How does it affect me?
 - a. Example of what I do now
 - b. What changes will I have to make?
 - c. How will I prepare for these changes?
 - B. Difference #2:
 1. How does it affect me?
 - a. Example of what I do now
 - b. What changes will I have to make?

c. How will I prepare for these changes?

Etc. You would go through all five differences the same way.

III. Conclusion

Remember you don't add any new information to your conclusion—it will be a summary of your earlier points

Finally you have your outline started, you can begin to “flesh” it out with the information you might want to include. After that it is just a matter of sitting down at the computer or with your notebook and starting a draft of your paper.

You can organize the assignment by using the five responsibilities as your main headings and then answering the questions for each responsibility to help your reader stay organized.

Take a moment to look at the help sheet below. On the left side is the outline from above. In the second column note how to use the information you have to plan and create this longer paper. Note the directions for this assignment don't say write a three (3), or five (5) or any specific length of paper. So you aren't locked into handing in a certain number of pagers. What you must do is use enough space to respond to the assignment without rambling and going on and on about something that doesn't matter. Use enough space to write a clear and concise paper, explain what you need to explain and stop.

Instead of each area being a paragraph, you can expect several paragraphs and one section may easily extend to a page or more to adequately address your responses.

Outline from Above	Planning on how to proceed with your paper
I. Background Information/Intro	One difference between an essay and a longer paper is that your introduction may be more than one paragraph, as it is in this case. Your thesis statement may not be your first sentence and you won't be able to just restate your question as your thesis statement.
A. I.D.E.A. 1. What is it? 2. Who does it protect? 3. How did or will it affect me?	You may want to briefly explain the three applicable laws to you as a student with a disability to begin your paper. If the reader knows nothing about them you need to give them enough information so they understand what each one is about and how they may or may not have applied to you.
B. Section 504 1. What is it? 2. Who does it protect? 3. How did or will it affect me?	Just the introductory information may be 2 or 3 pages typewritten. You may have one or several paragraphs just answering the questions posed for each area.
C. ADA 1. What is it? 2. Who does it protect? 3. How did or will it affect me?	You will write your thesis statement /paragraph somewhere in this first information. It should indicate the five responsibilities you intend to talk about—again it will be the list of these responsibilities and later it will become a topic that will cover several paragraphs or pages.
II. Five Differences A. Difference #1 1. How does it affect me? a. example of what I	II. Five Differences Again, one responsibility at a time you will begin to address each subject area. Answer each question thoroughly without rambling. Be clear and use a

<p>do now</p> <p>b. what changes will I have to make</p> <p>c. how will I prepare for these changes</p> <p>B. Difference # 2</p> <p>1. How does it affect me?</p> <p>a. example of what I do now</p> <p>b. what changes will I have to make</p> <p>c. how will I prepare for these changes</p> <p>C. Difference #3</p> <p>1. How does it affect me?</p> <p>a. example of what I do now</p> <p>b. what changes will I have to make</p> <p>c. how will I prepare for these changes</p> <p>D. Difference #4</p> <p>1. How does it affect me?</p> <p>a. example of what I do now</p> <p>b. what changes will I have to make</p> <p>c. how will I prepare for these changes</p> <p>E. Difference #5</p> <p>1. How does it affect me?</p> <p>a. example of what I do now</p> <p>b. what changes will I have to make</p> <p>c. how will I prepare for these changes</p> <p>III. Conclusion</p>	<p>good example of what you are doing now. Maybe you really don't do anything or haven't been involved in securing the accommodations you have needed. Don't just say "I haven't done anything in the past" and leave it at that. Who has been taking care of these responsibilities? Why weren't you involved? The reader will want details so they can understand where you are coming from.</p> <p>Depending on your answers to the questions for each responsibility, you may find several paragraphs are needed to adequately respond to each question.</p> <p>You should continue writing your responses to each question until you have addressed all five responsibilities. In many of these areas if you use information from your research you need to make sure to cite the information again—especially quotations!</p> <p>Finally, you will need to write your conclusion for this paper. You need to review the tips for conclusions earlier in this chapter.</p>
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Writing a long paper isn't rocket science. If you approach the assignment methodically, break it down into smaller sections and remember to use the proper format to document your research, you should do fine. In college you will write dozens of papers; many will be only five (5) pages but others may be 10, 15, or 20 pages. Each one is manageable if you follow a few simple rules.

- 1) Start your research early. “Term papers” are so named because they are projects students work on throughout the term, and are usually 10+ pages so start them early.
- 2) Sit down with your calendar and begin to break the assignment down into smaller units. Your first task is to narrow your topic down to something manageable.
- 3) Start your research immediately—DON’T WAIT! If some of your material has been checked out already you may have to wait until someone else returns it—if they ever do. It’s happened where books/journals disappear. If you wait too long you may never get the information you need. Likewise, the school or community library may not have the books or journals you need and you may need to request the information through interlibrary loan. That can take additional time to get the material sent to your school. All colleges use interlibrary loan to provide the largest access to information as possible. Block time on your calendar to go to the library and do your research. Block more than one trip because you may have to go three or four times to get enough research material. (A note here for anyone who doesn’t know: Don’t do your research off the internet sites. Most college instructors don’t allow students to use the internet for research information).
- 4) Don’t just gather research, schedule time to start reading it and taking notes. Sometimes you will check out material to use for a paper only to find out that there is nothing in the book or journal articles that actually pertains to your paper. That’s going to mean going back to the library and checking out some additional resources.
- 5) Read the information carefully. Does it sound credible? You need critical thinking skills to do research. Does the information make sense when viewed with the rest of your research? Does the author use his own research to back up his information or use other scholarly journals and research articles to make their point?
- 6) Take careful notes. If you just summarize information and put it in your own words make sure you indicate that. On the other hand, if you quote passages directly make sure you clearly indicate the quote in your research notes. In either case you also need to record the citation for the information. Always double check your citation information to make sure everything is correct. If you order something through interlibrary loan and return it, you could have problems getting the book/materials back again to correct the mistake or get the correct information.
- 7) Do you need to check with your professor? Some faculty may want to meet with the student during the research stage. They want to make sure you are on track in terms of meeting the assignment as well as to find out if you have narrowed your topic as much as you need to. They may ask to see a list of your references and the notes you have begun taking to check on your progress or to make sure you are doing everything you need to do and doing it the way it should be done.
- 8) Seek feedback on drafts of your paper or even sections of your paper. Friends are nice but may not be honest with you if you have writing problems—or they may not catch mistakes if they aren’t as good a writer as you are. They may miss your mistakes or not be comfortable telling you about them. Go to a writing or tutoring center and ask them to read your paper for organization and clarity. Some may be able to help with grammar and punctuation as well. This help is free to students so take advantage of these services when you can do so.
- 9) When you get to your last draft or second to last draft, do a spell and grammar check. It also pays to ask someone you know and trust to read through your paper and check it for mistakes like typing “or” instead of “on” or “it” instead of “if.” These aren’t going to get caught even if you use spell check. Ask a friend or roommate to help you check your writing.

- 10) Start writing early so you can let your paper sit for a day. You'll do a more thorough job of proof-reading and revising your paper if you can leave it until the next day and go back to it "fresh."
- 11) Writing papers takes time; don't procrastinate. Get started right away on the assignment and keep working on it. Contrary to what you may hear, rarely does cramming writing a paper into a day or two, or even a few days for a term paper bode well for a student. To be written well, a paper requires time, effort and a chance to let the paper rest so the author has a chance to return to it fresh rather than just writing, reading, revising, reading and starting all over again.

This chapter should provide a writing reference to you for the future, whether you are in high school or entering college. Of course it doesn't have all the answers but if you follow the tips for writing papers and follow the APA or MLA format as needed, you should have a good start for writing college papers.

Study Tips for Academic Success

Do you want to be more successful in school and impress your friends with your study skills and time management techniques? Try these tips:

- When possible, sit in the front of the classroom. Sometimes teachers will have seating charts, but ask if you can have a front or second row seat near the center of the classroom. It's much easier to focus on class lectures if you sit in the front of the class when possible. There's nothing happening between you and the instructor to distract your concentration.
- Always get to class on time and be ready to learn. Have pens, pencils, folder, textbook open to assignments, and notebook or notepaper on your desk and be ready to start writing.
- Always do your assigned reading prior to the class lecture-as well as any other homework (worksheets, written assignments, etc.) Take notes on the assigned reading using one of the methods covered earlier in the section on note taking by reading your assignment ahead of time. Make note of any vocabulary, key concepts or theories in your notes. They are key words to listen for in the next class lecture. Mark material you have questions about in your text or write your question in your notes and mark it so you can ask the instructor if they don't answer it in lecture.
- Keep a calendar or planner and keep it up to date with assignments, project/paper due dates, appointments, work schedules, etc. Some people who teach time management even tell people to block meal times, shower times, etc. If you find that helpful, by all means do so.
- Form study groups for some of your classes. For classes you might be struggling in, you will want to get help learning material that is problematic for you. When you know material and are explaining it to someone else, it enhances your learning as well. For more information see the handout on forming a study group.
- Speaking of class handouts, when you get any handouts, study guides, or anything from your instructors or guest speakers in a class, write the course name, date and your name on the paper and put them in the appropriate folder for the course. Keep things together by date. It's a good habit to start while you are in high school because it is critically important in college. Almost every professor will include test questions on information in handouts and from guest speaker information.
- To learn course material you need to get the information into your long-term memory. To do that you need to review the material many times. Each day, after class, you should take a few minutes and read through the class notes you just took. No one will get all their information in their notes during lecture, so double check your notes and write information down that you didn't get written during lecture.
- When you sit down to do your homework, read through your notes for that day again. I recommend that you make this a daily habit! Do your homework and note any questions you might have on the assignment or the material in the textbook or any handouts.
- Now here is what I do and what I recommend to all the students I work with at the university. Although this is a bit more work these students will tell you its worth your time. Each day you go to class and take your notes as described above; double-check them right after class. Before doing your homework, read through the current day's notes. Here's the important part; each day sometime when you have ten or 15 minutes, carefully read through your notes from the first day of

class until the current day of notes. Do this everyday the class meets whenever you get a few minutes. The more times you look at the information, the more information you will put into your long term memory. The more information you are able to put in long-term memory the more you learn and can show on your exams.

- Once you have an exam date, mark your notebooks. Many professors don't give cumulative exams-that is a test may cover chapters one through four, the next exam would cover chapters five through eight but not material from chapter one through four, and so on. But there are some who make each test cumulative information. They will ask test questions on any material covered during the term. That means you need to keep reviewing your notes the entire term. It's very important to know how exams are structured in your class. Review your book notes!
- Take care of yourself! To be successful academically, in high school and in higher education, you need to take care of yourself; a healthy body makes a healthy mind. Eat right! Get enough rest! Your body needs both to be able to function well. When we work with students who have trouble coping with the stress and pressure of college we frequently find three things: the student hasn't been eating right, they have been skipping meals, aren't getting enough rest, and in some cases where they should have been taking medications, they had stopped for whatever reason. Before long things build up and the student starts to fall apart. They begin to miss classes, don't do homework and soon find themselves in trouble academically and health wise. Eat healthy, take your medication if you are on prescribed meds, and get enough rest.

How to Form a Study Group

1. Limit the people in your group to no more than 4 or 5 people. If you have too many people it's harder to find times when you can all get together to meet. It also makes it harder to keep everyone focused on the study topic if there are too many people.
2. Choose people who are serious about mastering the subject matter. This shouldn't be a social gathering – treat it as a study lab. Make set times to meet each week and limit the time to one hour (you will be less likely to goof off or visit if you have a designated study time.) Save visiting until after the study session.
3. Make a study lesson plan. Choose a topic to review each week. Have each group member bring in questions that they have about the topic. Review each person's questions during the session. Make sure the person understands the answers to his/her questions if at all possible. Keep the lists of questions to use to review for exams.
4. Decide how often the group will meet. Pick a date, time and place and stick to it. If you change times and places to meet it gets too confusing and you may have group members who miss the study session.
5. Pick a group leader who can guide the study session and help keep everyone on track.
6. Make any rules for the group when you first start. Will it be no smoking; how do you want to handle situations where someone is disruptive in the study group; how do you want to proceed if a group member shows up for the meeting late or comes unprepared for the study session? These are questions to be established from the start. Then every group member knows what is expected of them from the beginning.

Office for Students with Disabilities
Bemidji State University
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Introduction to Independent Living Skills

"You're on your own."

Does that sentence fill you with exhilaration? Or does it make you quiver in your shoes? Perhaps a little bit of both? If you have never lived away from adults who are supposed to care for you, then the thought of living independently probably causes you at least a little bit of ambivalence. You may be very happy to anticipate no curfew, no one telling you to pick up your dirty socks, and no one to tell you to go to bed! On the other hand, what happens when you run out of clean socks, or lose your key, or get sick? What happens when you run out of money? When there is no one to nag you, there is also no one to pick up your slack. Everything falls on your shoulders, and you had better know what to do.

Although it is possible that you have taken a high school class that deals with home and personal management, most academic courses don't cover these areas. They are important, but most schools will assume that you are learning these things at home. Maybe you have learned these things at home. If so, this section of the workbook will be very easy for you. On the other hand, many of you will not have learned these skills yet. Feel free to work with each other and help each other out as you go through this section. You may be on your own in terms of responsibility, but that doesn't mean that you must live in isolation.

In this section of the workbook we will be addressing a wide range of skills that will help you live as an independent adult. Some of these are very practical skills for everyday life. You will learn how to be responsible for your own laundry, housekeeping, health, and money. Even if you have household chores while you are living in your parent's house, you may have someone around to remind you of what to do and when to do it. You also probably have someone around to help you out if you get stuck. When you are no longer living at home, you no longer have that other person pushing you along. If you need help, you will have to find it.

In addition to the practical daily living skills, other skills for independence should be helpful. Psychological skills for managing stress, feeling good about yourself, and forming healthy social relationships will help you handle your new environment as an independent adult. These are sometimes known as "mental hygiene" or "mental health" skills. All adults benefit from developing these skills, and students with disabilities particularly need them. These skills include having a repertoire of methods to help you deal with moods, emotions, and stressful situations; they also include knowing about appropriate resources for help if your own methods don't seem to be doing the job.

The following section covers these topics and provides you with a number of potential good habits for independent living. As with the academic skills, these independent living skills should be practiced at home while you are still in high school. The more you practice, the better you will be at handling the demands of independence.

Stress Management or “I Hate Change!”

What is Stress?

Everyone knows the meaning of stress, right? My husband’s college roommate wrote a little poem that sums up most students’ idea of stress:

So much to do
So little time to do it
This week
Will I ever get through it?

It is certainly true that a heavy load can add to your stress and that using the skills from the first section of this workbook will greatly enhance your ability to limit the stresses of college work. If you manage your time well, stay organized, keep up with your various assignments, and work on long projects a little bit at a time, you will be better able to manage the stress when assignments are due.

But psychologists recognize that stress is both simpler and more complicated than just having too much to do. In fact, stress is defined as a person’s response to change. Any change! Good changes, bad changes, silly changes, profound changes, temperature changes, and deaths all cause you to experience some kind of stress. Of course winning the lottery and wrecking your mom’s car don’t necessarily cause the same kind of stress, but both events result in changes that stress you as you adapt.

The simple part of stress is that it is always the result of some kind of change. The complicated aspect of stress is that some kinds of stress are actually good for us, some kinds are not so good, and everyone has their own unique ways of responding to different stressors.

A perfect example of these differences is illustrated in how different people in northern Minnesota respond to weather changes. I’m sure you know folks who can hardly wait until it is cold enough for the frozen lake to hold their ice houses. They ski, snowmobile, fish, and complain if the temperature rises above 20° F. Other people feel that first bite of below freezing air and spend the next five months hunkered around the wood stove. They feel miserable and tense, and they complain about the ten yard walk from the house to the car. For the first group, the stress from the change in weather results in excitement, energy, and enthusiasm. For the second group, the same stress leads to irritability, anxiety, and even depression. This does not imply a value judgment, it merely illustrates that people respond to different stressors differently. In fact, for some of these people, the opposite reaction will occur when the summer sun takes the temperatures into the 90’s!

So, what have we learned so far? First, all change causes stress. Second, some stress is positive and some stress is negative. Third, the positive or negative effect of stress may depend on the individual response to any specific event.

The fourth aspect of stress we will consider is that individual change-events, or stressors, have different magnitudes or levels of impact. For example, waking up in the morning is a stressful event (more so for some than for others). It requires that the individual change from a sleeping state to a waking state. Now change the scene slightly. Rather than awakening at your usual 7:00 a.m. time, you must set your alarm for 5:00 a.m. because you have an early appointment. For most people waking two hours earlier than usual is more stressful than getting up at the regular time. Consider an even more radical change. You are unexpectedly awakened at 2:00 a.m. by a telephone call! Most people can immediately recognize the physical stress resulting from that kind of unexpected and significant change. Your heart pounds, your breath may be short, you may feel shaky, and (of course) it is hard to get back to sleep. Your body has come to full alert in preparation for the possible threat of a sudden change. If

the phone call was about an emergency, you would have the energy ready to handle it. Of course, if it was just a wrong number, your excess energy would probably be channeled into shouting nasty words about the caller. As I said, some stressors have more impact than others.

The final complication about stressors is that they are cumulative. They can pile up on top of each other until the weight is so great that you simply feel overwhelmed. You become literally “stressed out.” Not only do stressful events combine, but even good stressors add to the total stress load.

Here is an example. It is your last week of high school for the year. Summer vacation will start in five days and for most people that is a good stressor. Final exams are occurring this week, and I’ll go out on a limb and call that a bad stressor. So far, they seem to balance each other out, but remember you have to adapt to both changes. Next, your dad tells you that you need a summer job. Bad stress? You get a job interview, set up for Thursday afternoon right after school. Good stress? You come out of your history final to find that your car has a flat tire. Bad stress! The police officer on duty in the parking lot helps you change it (good stress?), but you are still ten minutes late for the interview. Very bad stress!! In spite of your greasy hands and tardiness, you are offered the job, but only if you will start this Saturday morning. Good stress? Bad stress? Who cares? By this time you are so tense that all you want to do is go home, go to bed, and sleep for six weeks. Your parents are quite ready to take you out to dinner to celebrate your new job and can’t understand why you are in such a bad mood. Go figure!

Personal Example

Describe a personal example of cumulative stress in your life that includes both good and bad stress.

Measuring Your Stress

There are a number of ways to measure stress loads. Major life events always increase stress, even when they are positive. Just think about all the horror stories about weddings. Look at the list below and put an X beside any that have occurred to you, or to an immediate family member, in the past two years. The more events you have marked, the greater the stress load you have experienced.

Major Life Stressors

1. _____ Death of a parent
2. _____ Divorce of parents
3. _____ Marital separation of parents
4. _____ End of serious romantic relationship
5. _____ Detention in jail or other institution
6. _____ Death of family member, sibling or close relative not parent
7. _____ Major personal injury or illness

8. _____ Marriage or beginning new relationship
9. _____ Being fired from work
10. _____ Marital or relationship reconciliation
11. _____ Major change in behavior or health of family member
12. _____ Pregnancy
13. _____ Getting a new family member
14. _____ Major change in financial state
15. _____ Death of a close friend
16. _____ Change to a different type of work or beginning work
17. _____ Change in the number of arguments with close family member
18. _____ Taking on a significant debt/ loan
19. _____ Failure to pay off a loan
20. _____ You or other family member leaving home
21. _____ Outstanding personal achievement
22. _____ Parent leaving or entering the workforce
23. _____ Beginning or ending formal schooling
24. _____ Change in living conditions
25. _____ Change in residence
26. _____ Trouble with boss
27. _____ Change in school
28. _____ Major change in type or amount of recreational activities
29. _____ Major change in church or spiritual activities
30. _____ Change in social activities
31. _____ Taking on a small loan
32. _____ Major change in sleeping habits
33. _____ Major change in number of family get-togethers
34. _____ Major change in eating habits
35. _____ Holiday or vacation
36. _____ Christmas
37. _____ Minor violation of the law (parking or traffic ticket)

Adapted from Holmes, T.H. and Rahe, R. H. (1967). The social readjustment rating scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*. 11. 213-218.

Hassles

Another method of measuring stress is to add up the little hassles that occur on a regular basis. Research shows that for some people, these hassles create a kind of low level “background noise” of constant stress that, over the long run, accumulates until the person’s stress load is very high.

Put an X beside any of the following items that you experience on a regular basis (at least once a week or so).

1. _____ **Pressure about class assignment deadlines**
2. _____ **Not enough money for entertainment**
3. _____ **Feeling discriminated against**
4. _____ **Being lonely**
5. _____ **Pressure to get good grades**
6. _____ **Finding a job**
7. _____ **Parents’ expectations**

8. _____ Learning material is too difficult
9. _____ Communication problems
10. _____ Personal safety
11. _____ Physical appearance
12. _____ Concentrating on school work
13. _____ Being treated differently because of my disability
14. _____ Making friends
15. _____ Dependence on parents
16. _____ Others' opinions of me are based on my disability
17. _____ Too many things to do
18. _____ Owing money
19. _____ Trouble relaxing
20. _____ Introducing myself to strangers

(Adapted from Pett, M.A. and Johnson, M.J. (2005) Revised University Student Hassles Scale. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*. 65, 984-1010.)

Personalizing Your Stress Assessment

The trouble with both of these methods is that they give you limited choices. Because you are a unique individual with your own unique experiences, you may find it more accurate if you think about your life and identify those events that cause your stress. Start in the column on the left and list the major events that you know have occurred in the past year or so. (Some of these may be on the major events list above, but perhaps others are not.) Then on the right, list stressors that occur more frequently but that may not seem so major. You may add more events and hassles on the back of this page or on another paper. Remember: a stressor is any event or situation that requires you to adapt and change. Even completing this assignment is a stressor (although I hope not too great a one).

Major Life Events

Every Day Hassles

Once you have completed your lists assign each item a "+", "-", or an "N" to indicate if you feel that this stressor is positive, negative, or neutral.

Next, assign each of the listed stressors a number from 1-5, with 5 being the most stressful and 1 being the least stressful. Remember, the more adjusting you do, the more stressful. This is not a measure of "good" or "bad" stress. Now total your score.

First count all the + scores _____ positive
Then count all the – scores _____ negative
Then count all the N scores _____ neutral
_____ Total

The higher your total, the more stress you experience; however, if your positive stress is greater than your negative stress, you will be better able to handle it. Try subtracting the negative from the positive. If you have a positive number, you will probably have a bit of a “buffer zone.”

One of the problems with stress, is that it seems so out of our control. We certainly are not able to live lives without any stress. On the other hand, if we can reduce the number of negative stressors and increase the number of positive stressors (while keeping the total as low as possible) we can increase our chances of managing our stress. Are there any stressors that you have control over?

List at least one negative stressor that you might eliminate or reduce.

List at least one positive stressor that you might add or increase.

List at least one additional idea you have for reducing your stress total.

Physiological Components of Stress

The definition of stress as adapting to change applies to more than our thoughts and feelings. The changes we experience occur at a very basic, physical level. The autonomic nervous system (that part of us that responds without our deliberate control) prepares us for whatever may be happening. We have increased heart rate and more rapid breathing, we may start perspiring, our muscles become tense, and we have an increase in the hormones adrenaline and cortisol. Our bodies are ready to help us out with the stressful situation by running away, tackling some project, or just staying alert and full of energy. This can be a good thing. If the stress we happened to be facing was a saber tooth tiger (or the playground bully), we would want to be able to climb a tree (or the jungle gym) pretty darn fast! On the other hand, if the stress is the math test we have to take tomorrow morning, we would like the old nervous system to ease back a little and let us get a good night’s sleep.

What is particularly interesting about the autonomic nervous system is that there are two separate parts: one part tenses us up (the sympathetic nervous system), and the other part calms us down (the parasympathetic nervous system). Even though both of these systems operate on their own most of the time, we can actually gain some control of them. The relaxation exercise described in the next section is one way to control your body’s responses to stress. Other ways include some simple guidelines for good physical and mental health.

Avoid too many stimulants. Caffeine is a very widely accepted drug, and sometimes it has a beneficial effect on people. It can help you focus, stay alert, and just wake up in the morning. But at high levels, caffeine can hinder your functioning by making you too restless to concentrate, keeping you awake at night, making you feel

jittery and nervous, and leaving you with a severe headache if you don't get the amount of caffeine you are used to.

How do you determine if you are getting too much caffeine? First, answer the following questions:

1. How much caffeine do you consume in a day? (include coffee and coffee drinks, tea, caffeinated soft drinks, energy drinks, power bars that include caffeine, etc.)

2. Are you taking any prescribed stimulant medication or do you use any street drugs that are stimulants? (Note: this includes many meds for ADHD and Asthma.)

3. Do you have trouble falling asleep at night?

4. Do you have trouble staying awake in the morning if you haven't had a cup of coffee (or a Mt. Dew, or a Dr. Pepper, or a Surge, etc.)?

5. Do you get shaky, have rapid heart beat, hyperventilate, or have nervous twitches after you have had your typical amount of caffeine?

6. Do you have a headache if you don't have morning caffeine?

If you drink more than three cups of coffee a day and if you replied yes to any of the other questions, you may be using too much stimulant. If you said yes to two or three of the questions, there is a good chance you are being too stimulated. If you said yes to four or five, then you are almost certainly too stimulated.

If you are too stimulated, then your body is being kept in an artificial state of tension and you will not be able to relax and rest. This kind of long-term stress is bad for you. It can cause all sorts of health problems, and besides, it starts to feel really bad! You need to be able to relax and let your body get ready for whatever life is going to

bring to you tomorrow. You also want to be able to think, and if you are too tense, that isn't going to happen. It is definitely time to cut back on the caffeine!

Suppose you said yes to questions 2, 3, & 5, but you don't use much caffeine. In that case, you may be somebody who just happens to respond intensely to stress. The good news is that with practice you can learn to control quite a bit of what your autonomic nervous system is doing to you. By practicing the relaxation exercise you can become better and better at reducing your body's tension. You can slow your breathing, get rid of muscle tension, lower your heart rate and blood pressure, and even change your body temperature. It doesn't happen immediately, and like any other kind of skill, the more you practice the better your ability to relax.

The thing to remember is this: It is impossible to be both tense and relaxed at the same time. If you can teach your body to relax when you want it to, then it cannot be tense.

Your facilitator will take you through the relaxation practice, giving you suggestions about how to focus on your breathing and your various muscle groups until you are feeling very relaxed. You can then practice this on your own before you go to sleep at night. If you have trouble doing it on your own, you may want to buy a CD or audio tape that talks you through the process.

Once you have become experienced with this kind of relaxation, you can do it anywhere and any time. If you are meeting new people and you start to feel nervous, you can do a little deep breathing and then proceed. If you are getting ready to take a difficult test, you can relax your muscles, close your eyes for a minute, and let yourself enjoy the feelings of relaxation. You can even stop during the middle of the test and relax yourself again. This is a great skill, and you can take it with you for the rest of your life.

List three times or places when you would like to be able to be more relaxed and you might be able to use the relaxation exercise to help you.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Relaxation Exercise

Take a few deep, slow breaths; inhale through your nose, and exhale blowing out through your mouth. You may want to close your eyes to help you concentrate.

You will relax your muscles by first tensing (3-5 seconds) and then releasing them (20-30 seconds). You will do this with one group of muscles at a time. You may want to go through each group twice before moving on to the next group. Try to focus your attention on each group of muscles and pay attention to the difference between tensing and relaxing.

Start with the muscles of your right hand and make a fist...then relax.

Right arm, tense by tightening right elbow into your side...then relax.

Left hand make a fist...then relax.

Left arm, tense by tightening left elbow into your side...then relax.

Top of your head, lift your eyebrows high...then relax.

Squeeze your eyes shut tight...then relax.

Grit your teeth and pull back your lips...then relax

Tighten your neck muscles and push your head back...then relax.

Shrug your shoulders high toward your ears...then relax.

Take a deep breath, hold it and pull your shoulders back...then relax.
Take a deep breath, tighten your stomach...then relax.
Lift your right leg and flex your thigh...then relax.
Pull the toes of your right foot back toward your head...then relax.
VERY GENTLY, point the toes of your right foot...then relax.
Lift your left leg and flex your thigh...then relax.
Pull the toes of your left foot back toward your head...then relax.
VERY GENTLY, point the toes of your left foot...then relax.

Now, simply focus on breathing slowly, steadily, and deeply. If you notice any tension in any of your muscles, simply let it go and relax. Continue relaxing like this for several minutes, then gradually begin moving your legs, arms, neck, and head before opening your eyes.

Do you feel pretty relaxed?

With practice, you will be able to do this very easily. You can begin combining muscle groups (for example, both hands and arms at the same time), and become quite relaxed in only a minute or two.

Like anything that you learn, this will improve with practice. I recommend that you go through this exercise at least once every day, even when you are not feeling particularly stressed. That way, you will have a good skill to use when you really need it!

Wrap-up:

Everything that we cover in this workbook will help you with stress management. How can you use the self-esteem ideas to improve your stress level?

How can you use time management and organization to lower your stress?

Give three examples of other ideas you can use to reduce your stress levels.

Now that you have put in a lot of time and effort on your Stress Management work, it is time to go and relax. Have a good time!

Self Esteem

“Self-worth comes from one thing - thinking that you are worthy.” --Wayne Dyer

If there is one thing that can sabotage all your efforts to deal with the difficulties of life, it is having low self esteem. You can make progress, you can surmount amazing obstacles, you can work yourself into exhaustion; but if you tell yourself that you still aren't good enough, you will be fighting an internal battle that you can't win.

Wayne Dyer, the psychologist quoted above, focuses his work on how people's thinking can influence their feelings and their behavior. There is a lot of evidence that our thoughts can control us unless we control them. This section is devoted to helping you recognize self-defeating thoughts, get control of those thoughts, and replace them with thoughts that will work for you instead of against you.

You are Who You are, Not What You Do

The first kind of thinking that can get you in trouble is the kind that says you are a human doing rather than a human being. These thoughts go something like this: “I'll be worth something if I can get a 4.0 on my report card” or “If I don't get into the college my parents want me to get into then I'm a failure.”

These thoughts miss a very important point. You are already worthwhile. Every person has worth. You are a unique individual, and you count. No matter what you do or do not accomplish, you are worthy of love, caring, and respect.

Sometimes, this seems like it is not true, but do a little experiment to see what I mean.

Think of someone you know and like who is much younger or somehow more vulnerable than you are. Write that person's name here:

Now think of some things that that person is not able to do but that you are able to do.

Now ask yourself this question: Does that person's limitations make that person unworthy as a human being? Do you like the person less because of what he or she is unable to do? Of course not. We like and love people because of who they **are** inside and as individuals, not because of what they are able to do.

The same rule applies to yourself. You as a person are worthwhile. You are worthy of esteem, or caring respect.

Over-Generalizing is a Trap

Another kind of thinking that can hurt your self-esteem is called over-generalizing. When we over-generalize, we tend to think of things as “all or nothing.” This is an especially easy trap to fall into, and it tends to make us feel discouraged and depressed.

An example of over-generalizing is when you take one event and think that it describes everything in your life. For example, if I get a bad grade on one paper, I start thinking “I always mess up on papers,” or “I can never write well.” An even more extreme over-generalization would be “I can’t do anything right.”

It is easy to start thinking this way, but you can see how it would make you very discouraged. One of the most important steps in controlling your thinking is to learn to be very specific in how you think about problems. For example you could try very deliberately telling yourself something like “I do have trouble with writing, but there are other things that I can do better,” or “I didn’t do well on this paper, but I learned some things from it and will use those things on my next paper.”

Over-generalization isn’t limited to academic problems. Lots of times we over-generalize about relationships. This can lead us to feeling badly about our own behavior or the behavior of others. If one person doesn’t want to go out on a date, and I tell myself “No one ever wants to be with me,” I’m going to get discouraged pretty quickly. If I am more specific, I would tell myself “this person doesn’t want to go out with me at this time.” Now if one person says no several times, you can probably get the idea that that person really isn’t interested. But even then, you need to remind yourself that this is only one person, not every person on the face of the earth!

Anytime you find yourself thinking with words like “always,” “never,” “everyone,” “no one,” or other extreme descriptions, you are probably doing some over-generalization.

Think of a time when you were upset or discouraged and your thoughts were over-generalizing. When did this happen?

What were some over-generalized thoughts that you had?

What would be an example of more specific, more realistic thoughts?

How do these more specific thoughts make you feel?

Negative Thinking as a Habit

One of the problems with negative thinking is that it becomes a habit. Thoughts like “I’m stupid,” “I can’t do anything right,” or “I’ll never be able to do what other people do” can play around and around in your head all day. It is like a CD player when you press the repeat button and you keep hearing the same song over and over. Pretty soon, that song is so stuck in your head that even after you take off the headphones you keep hearing it. You may get sick of it, but it will be really difficult to get it out of your mind.

The best way to get rid of a song that is stuck in your head is to start singing a different song. The same thing is true for getting rid of negative thoughts that are stuck in your head. If you want to stop the negative thinking you need to have some ready-made positive thoughts to put in the place of the thoughts you want to delete.

What is interesting about positive thoughts is that you can come up with your own deliberately positive statements and then find ways to train yourself to use them. Thinking positively can become a habit just like thinking negatively. But like changing any habit, you will need to make some effort at first.

First, you need to identify the negative thoughts that you habitually use. What are the things that you say to yourself that make you feel bad? Try to come up with several thoughts that you are aware of repeating in your thoughts. List some of them here.

Now come up with a list of positive thoughts that you can use to replace the negative thoughts.

Talk these thoughts over with someone to make sure they are positive and to make sure that they feel realistic enough to be believable to you. For example, if you have a physical disability that limits your ability to walk, it doesn’t make any sense to try telling yourself that you can run fast. That isn’t realistic, and it won’t help your self esteem at all. On the other hand, if you cannot walk, but you are very good at managing your wheelchair to get to places, or if you are very good at standing up for your rights to access, then those would be great positive thoughts.

Once you have identified several positive thoughts you will need to practice using them. Take a stack of index cards and write one positive thought on each card. Now

make a plan for using these cards to help you change your thinking habits. Some people keep the cards in their pocket and read them 3-4 times a day. Other people tape them around their room and read them whenever they pass them by. Some folks tape them in their school binder, and read them when they open the binder. Whatever your plan, it should be a realistic one. The more you read these thoughts, the more likely that you will start thinking them on your own, and the more you will feel positively about yourself. Describe your plan in the space below.

Drugs and Alcohol

Doesn't Everybody Drink?

A survey conducted at Bemidji State University in 2002 (CORE) indicated that there are actually a lot of college students who do not use drugs and alcohol, and who would rather attend parties where drugs and alcohol are not available.

- 24%** of students preferred not to have alcohol at parties they attend and
- 86%** indicated they preferred not to have drugs available at those parties.
- 24%** of students had not used alcohol at all in the past month, and
- 46%** had not been involved in any binge drinking.
- 87%** have not used any illegal drugs in the past year.

The results of this survey suggest that, in spite of what television and the movies show, there are a lot of students out there who are not drinking or using drugs. If you decide to avoid alcohol and drugs, you will find plenty of friends who will be making the same choice.

That is especially good news for students with a disability, because you have a special vulnerability when it comes to alcohol and drug abuse. This section of the workbook is not a repeat of the DARE program you completed in elementary school. This section will be dealing specifically with the problems of alcohol and drug use for persons who have specific physical, learning, and neuropsychiatric disabilities.

Why Alcohol Makes You “Feel Good”

Neurobiological Influences. Your brain contains a neural response called the Pleasure Pathway: Most psychoactive drugs (drugs that have a psychological effect on you) mimic the actions of a natural brain chemical, the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine fits on special nerve cell receptors in the brain and causes pleasure. Dopamine is the neurotransmitter that allows you to enjoy normal experiences of pleasure. It also helps you control certain body movements. Most psychoactive drugs, including alcohol, mimic the dopamine action but in much larger amounts than normal.

Another neurotransmitter, GABA, is also influenced by alcohol. GABA is a depressant neurotransmitter. This means that it relaxes you, and in normal situations GABA helps you feel less nervous or anxious. In small doses, alcohol also may make you feel relaxed, and this is one reason people like to drink in social situations. The problem is that over time, alcohol actually changes the structure of the GABA neurotransmitter and receptor sites. You are unable to use your natural relaxer, and you become dependent on alcohol to relax. The amount of alcohol needed to help you relax increases, and you have become addicted.

Reinforcement. Another reason that alcohol use is so addicting is because we can so easily learn, or become conditioned, to drinking. There is a strong *Positive Reinforcement* for alcohol use. In other words, the user immediately feels the extremely pleasurable feelings from the dopamine and GABA reactions. This very positive feeling makes it much more likely that the person will use alcohol again.

At the same time, there is a *Negative Reinforcement* occurring. Negative reinforcement means that something bad or unpleasant is stopped or avoided. The use of alcohol is likely to continue because it may temporarily remove preexisting negative thoughts and feelings. If you are usually nervous when you have to meet strangers, a drink of alcohol may remove that nervousness temporarily, and so you are more likely to use alcohol every time you might meet a stranger. Feelings of sadness or depression may be temporarily numbed, and you may worry about things a little less when you are drinking. You can see how easy it is to “learn” to depend on such a drug.

Exposure & Peer Pressure. We live in a society where you are exposed to alcohol use and abuse on a regular basis. About one in four children in the U.S. have at least one parent who is an alcohol abuser. Evidence suggests that alcohol use in the home during childhood is one of the strongest indicators that the person will begin drinking early and have difficulties with alcohol consumption.

As mentioned in the introduction above, you are exposed to images of alcohol use on television and in the movies. And you have at least some exposure to alcohol use in high school. Most students do not feel that they are pressured by their peers to drink; however, they describe social situations as being very uncomfortable for those who do not drink. Youtube.com broadcast a video called *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies, and Alcohol* that shows college students discussing just how powerful the culture of drinking can be. Students don't think they are influenced by other people's behavior, but they do want to fit in. That is the social scientist's definition of peer pressure.

So why does alcohol make you feel good? As you can see, there are physical reasons for the effects of alcohol, there are some "conditioned" responses that make you feel good, and you may feel more like you "fit in" if you are drinking. The question now becomes, why is alcohol a problem?

Why is Alcohol a Problem?

Some physical effects can occur pretty quickly with the consumption of alcohol. Even a small amount of alcohol will slow down your reaction time, impair your vision, and may make it difficult for you to make judgments. One of the biggest problems with alcohol consumption, is that once you start drinking you become less able to judge how impaired you are. So you **think** you are able to drive your car, but in fact your reaction time is much too slow for you to be able to avoid the truck that suddenly stops in front of you. Most alcohol related fatalities (deaths) occur when individuals are high school or college age, when peer pressure is at its highest. "Just say 'no'" sounds great, but it isn't always as easy as it seems.

Other problems of judgment may include putting yourself in risky situations that you would normally avoid. Date rape is much more likely to occur if one or the other person has been drinking. Under normal circumstances you might never go off alone to a guy's room by yourself. Under normal circumstances you might never consider forcing a girl to have sex with you. If either of you has been drinking, these circumstances can easily occur because your normal judgment has been impaired by the alcohol.

It is important to remember that sexual misconduct is defined as "non-consensual physical conduct of a sexual nature..." The most important word in this definition is "non-consensual" which means that someone has not given agreement. According to the BSU Code of Student Conduct, "Consent does not exist when acts are committed by force, intimidation, coercion, or through use of authority, or the victim's mental or physical incapacity even if that lack of capacity is chemically self induced. The expectation is that consent is clear and mutual." In other words, if your date has been drinking to the point of not being able to make clear judgments, then your date is not capable of agreeing to have sex. If you then have sex with your date, you may be guilty of sexual misconduct.

Other physical mechanisms of alcohol and other drugs are such, that over time, it takes more and more of the drug to produce the same effect. So if one drink relaxes you enough to go to a party and have a good time, pretty soon you will need two drinks to feel just as relaxed. If you don't have two drinks you will be anxious, and if you don't have any drinks, you may be more anxious even than you used to be. Before too long, you will find yourself feeling anxious even in situations that didn't bother you before...unless you have a drink to help you relax. Additionally, you are likely to become more and more depressed. This is the result of the dopamine and GABA response in your brain.

In the meantime, other things are happening in your brain. Your frontal lobes, which are the part of the brain that help you make good decisions and control your behavior, may actually change shape. They will be less able to function, and all of your *executive functions* will become impaired.

If your alcohol consumption is serious enough, you will stop absorbing vitamin B and eventually you will lose your ability to form clear memories. There are a lot of other neurological effects from too much alcohol consumption, and you can read about them in the resources at the end of this chapter.

Why is Alcohol Even More of a Problem for Students with Disabilities?

Although there are no guarantees about any particular person's behavior, there are some characteristics that allow us to make fairly good predictions about groups of people. We know for certain, that some groups of people are more at risk than others when it comes to problematic alcohol and drug use. Several studies have been conducted to determine the likelihood that students with disabilities will have more or less problems with alcohol and drugs than students who do not have disabilities. The results suggest that some disabilities may be more correlated with these problems than other disabilities. Students with learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, mobility disabilities, and any combination of multiple disabilities are at greatest risk for alcohol and drug problems.

Other factors that increase risk for alcohol and drug abuse may be indirectly connected to a student's disability. Lack of social support, isolation, somatic or health problems, lower academic expectations, and a history of having repeated a grade are all factors that are connected to higher risk behaviors. Students with disabilities are more likely to experience these factors than are students who do not have disabilities.

Finally, the direct impact of the disability itself may increase the risk of drug or alcohol abuse. Students who experience an emotional disability such as anxiety or depression may try to treat their symptoms with drugs or alcohol. If they are already taking medication for those symptoms, the alcohol or drug is likely to interact with medication and become much more potent. Sometimes such interactions are life threatening.

Students who are taking medication for a physical ailment, such as asthma or diabetes, or who take medication for pain, are risking serious complications when they add alcohol or street drugs to the mix. Their physical condition may deteriorate quickly because the disability interferes with the body's normal attempt to deal with alcohol or another drug.

Finally, students with disabilities may be more at risk for problems with drugs or alcohol simply because teachers or parents assume that you are not at risk. They may believe that because you take special education courses, or because you have a tutor working with you, that you never have access to drugs or alcohol. This is a fantasy! You know it, I know it, and your friends know it. So, it doesn't do any good to pretend that students with disabilities are somehow protected from the risks that face every other student.

Things that can Protect You from Substance Abuse Problems

Know yourself. Look back at the first section of this chapter and reflect on your own life experiences. Identify three times when the physical effects of alcohol might have been "tempting" for you.

Identify three situations when alcohol might be “reinforcing” by rewarding you or by removing something unpleasant.

Identify three examples of exposure or peer pressure that might be seen as encouraging you to use alcohol or drugs.

Identify at least 5 things that you can do other than using drugs or alcohol that will allow you to experience some of the “benefits” of those substances.
(For example, if you said you felt self-conscious at a party where you didn’t know anyone, and alcohol might have made you feel more relaxed. You could plan to take a friend with you and agree that you will keep each other company until you are feeling more comfortable.)

Identify any medications or medical conditions that you have that might play a part in your response to alcohol or drugs. What is the likely effect?

Problems with Drugs and Alcohol You Don't Expect

The Drunken Roommate. For many students who are living away from home for the first time, a major concern can be dealing with behavior of other people. When my daughter spent her first night in her college dorm, she came out of the shower to find another young woman passed out on the bathroom floor. The young woman had gone to a party and had so much to drink that she became unconscious. If that happened to you, what would you do?

This is a safety issue that all students should understand. If someone has had enough to drink that they have passed out (either in the dorm, or at the party) this is a very dangerous situation. If the person continued drinking until passing out, that means that there is still more alcohol in the system that will continue to have an effect after the person loses consciousness. It is possible that the person's heart will stop, that the person will have a seizure, or that the person will have some other medical emergency. **Any time someone passes out from alcohol consumption, that person should be cared for in an emergency room.** If you are the one to call the ambulance, you may save that person's life.

Date Rape Drugs. Another problem that can be unexpected for college students is the presence of date rape drugs. These drugs are colorless, odorless, and tasteless. If you leave a drink unattended for a few minutes, someone may slip this type of drug into your drink without your awareness. These drugs work even if you are not drinking alcohol; although combined with alcohol they are even stronger. Once you have consumed it, you will become deeply relaxed, uninhibited, or even unconscious. It is like taking a very strong tranquilizer. You are unlikely to be able to protect yourself, and you probably will not have a clear memory of what happens.

You can help protect yourself from this by always being very careful to hold on to your own drink, drinking from a can or bottle that you have opened yourself, and making a plan with a buddy before you go to any party where drinks will be served. Agree that you will keep an eye out for each other, and that neither of you will leave with someone else. Any unplanned exit by either of you should be suspect and carefully discussed.

Write two questions or concerns you have about alcohol or drug use.

Why Get Involved?

Some people just love to join everything. They are popular and have no problem being involved, going anywhere and meeting new people. You've seen them, or maybe you are one of those lucky people who live like that. Hopefully you will be able to share your viewpoint and tips in the workshop and help others.

For many of us meeting new people and going into new situation or environments isn't so easy. This discomfort can come from a variety reasons; reasons like low self-esteem, previous bad social experiences, or not having been given a lot of opportunity to participate in new ventures with others. If having more experience in certain areas makes a person more comfortable, then it's important to work on creating opportunities to have the personal growth each of us needs to be comfortable enough to get involved with different groups.

So right now I am going to recommend that if you aren't involved in any groups, sports or extracurricular activities, you need to make that a priority goal for yourself. It's important for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Getting involved in some activity (especially at college, but in high school, as well) allows you to meet people who have at least one interest, (and probably more) in common with you. It's a chance to get together with the people in the group and socialize, exercise, and perhaps just have some fun or explore something you are interested in. Each high school may have some what different clubs and groups to get involved in, just as will the colleges. But most will have student clubs in all the majors, environmental awareness, bands, choirs, GLBT groups, and dozens of other areas of interest. Sometimes when students continue these interests in college they meet people again that have been in sports or contests that they attended and make new friends or renew old acquaintances.
- Joining the club for your major (once you have decided or as you are trying to decide on a major) allows you to meet people with some of the same academic and career interests that you have. Some of the older students will already have taken courses that you still need to take. These people are valuable resources to you. You can seek advice about course material, the best instructor to take and why that person is the best instructor. (One word of caution here, though. All of us learn differently. Sometime a great professor for one student isn't the best for someone else. So listen to what this older, wiser student has to say but make sure you understand your own needs as you listen to their advice).
- Another valuable benefit of knowing older students who have already taken these courses is your opportunity to ask them questions. NO ONE is good at everything- I repeat; NO ONE is good at everything. Sometimes it's wonderful to know someone (even a little bit) that you can approach and be able to ask questions about the material. I've had a lot of students tell me they are so confused they don't even know what to ask. Here's a hint: do you need to know and understand the process to do something such as math or science problems or understand a concept or theory? Or do you grasp the material but need to know how to organize it and study for the exams? Seek out an older student as a mentor.
- Join something just for fun! I dare you. Play soccer, join the dance club, try out for a theatre production-even if you don't act, lots of people are needed behind the scenes. Get really crazy and join something you've never done before. Try something new. Find someone from your dorm who hasn't been involved with whatever it is and join together. See not only what you learn, but who you might meet.

- Joining clubs or action groups often gives students the opportunities to travel to conferences and trainings. This allows you to meet people from all over the state, region, and even nation who are already involved in the field. This kind of networking can be very beneficial to students when they need internships, practicums, and jobs!
- Reality: College freshman can get very homesick. Students go through a huge transitioning stage when they first come to college. While getting involved won't necessarily cure homesickness, it will help. The students who have the hardest time are the ones who just want to sit in their dorm room crying and calling home two or three times a day. There's nothing wrong with calling family and friends to tell them you miss them but you need to make a strong effort to adjust, and be happy in, your new surroundings. That means getting out of your dorm room and meeting people.

There are a lot of reasons to get involved but choose carefully what you get involved in. A student's first responsibility is to their studies. Only join one group to begin with. You will have dorm meetings, homework, housework (dorm work), meals, chats with dorm mates, etc. When you know more what your typical work load will be then think about what group or club you may want to be a part of. Students can take on too much without realizing it. The next thing they know they have overcommitted themselves and their homework suffers, their grades begin to drop, they miss classes to catch up on homework and their commitments. So do get involved but use common sense.

Housekeeping Skills (For the Non-Housekeeper)

I have been laughing that of all the people on earth, I have been selected to write this chapter. I completely hate doing housework-HONEST. It's a waste of my precious time, time that I would much rather spend doing anything else. So here are some tips that I have for the person who hates cleaning but understands it's a necessary evil in life; take note:

1. Dorm rooms are small, microscopically small, so really, really think about how much "stuff" you have/want to take with you. The more you take with you the smaller your room gets, and if you have ever had to live in a small space you know that is the hardest thing in the world to keep clean. The less you have in your dorm room the easier it is to keep it clean.
2. Many of the dorm rooms don't have windows that open so dorm rooms are stuffy! That is a major concern (or should be). Bring air fresheners and Febreze to clean the air and freshen linens. Remember, Febreze doesn't replace doing your laundry!
3. And with that said, let's talk about laundry. Bring a laundry bag, fold-up mesh hamper or a laundry basket to put your dirty clothes in. Dirty clothes have a bad odor and leaving them all over your room makes all your clothes smell bad as well as your bed linens-and then eventually you begin to smell bad. And the worst part is that after a while you don't even notice the smell-BUT OTHERS DO NOTICE. So do your laundry and do it often! This includes washing sheets and pillow cases (or at least changing them) every week. Wash blankets at least once a month- if your room is really warm, once every two weeks. Bedding absorbs body oils and perspiration and needs to be washed frequently. One last thing, when you bring your laundry back to your dorm room, take five minutes and put it away, right away.
4. Organize your room (and your life). Have a place for everything and put it back in its place when you are through using it. It doesn't take any longer to first put things where they belong right away. It saves time later because you don't have to look all over for your stuff when you need it. Keep things where they belong.
5. Bring a feather duster-they will dust everything including Venetian blinds and don't forget to use it when you get to school.
6. Bring trash bags. If you eat in your dorm room clean it up right away. Recycle pop cans, throw away "to-go" and delivery containers and keep garbage sacked up and gotten rid of. Old food containers have grease that turns rancid and eventually smells bad. Again the smell gets into your clothing and bedding and makes everything smell bad.
7. Keep your homework, textbooks, notes, etc. organized in your room. Make sure your pens, pencils, paper and other supplies are where they belong so you can find them easily when you need them. If you have to spend a half hour just looking for what you need before you can get started on your assignment, you are wasting precious time that you could be doing homework or something fun with friends.

8. Use clear storage bins to keep extra clothing, supplies or whatever. You can easily see what is stored in the bin to find what you need when you need it. Another item to think about is a tote for your bathroom items you'll need it to carry to the showers: shampoo, conditioner, toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, body wash, deodorant, lotion, etc. Some kind of organizer on your desk to hold pens, pencils, colored pencils, erasers, tape, stapler and paper clips is also a good idea. None of these things have to be fancy-they just have to do the job. For desk items a shoebox size plastic container is sufficient.
9. If you are on medications find a box to store all your prescriptions in. You should also have weekly medication holders to help you keep track of the pills you need to take each day. Depending on your prescriptions it may be necessary for you to have something to lock your medication in or you may need a dorm fridge in your room to keep your medicine cold.
10. Another good idea is to keep yourself showered and clean.

These are just a few ideas to help keep you organized and your dorm room tidy without having to spend hours and hours cleaning it up.

Think about yourself and your likes and dislikes. If you are a morning person and like to get up early, use that time to do a load of laundry. Take homework with you and do your reading assignment for one of your classes or sit quietly and proofread a paper for a class.

Take 10 minutes to tidy up your room before you leave it in the morning. It's relaxing to return to a clean room rather than looking in the door to find the final devastation of a hurricane blowing through. It's depressing to see that and zaps energy from you before you even start cleaning up the mess. So to save time and energy get into the habit of just putting things where they belong when you finish with them, do your laundry every week or 10 days, keep yourself clean and you should be in good shape.

Hygiene: The Art and Science of Staying Healthy

Here is a little trivia for you. The word “hygiene” comes from the name of the Greek goddess of health, Hygieia. Her followers encouraged cleanliness and sanitation for the prevention of illnesses. The modern symbol for medicine is a staff with two snakes twined around it.



The staff is from Hygieia’s father, and the snakes are from her. (Actually, the history is a little more confusing than that, but you get the idea.)

The point is that hygiene is about preventing illness by practicing good health habits. Sometimes that means staying clean, and sometimes that means doing other things that we know can help you avoid serious health problems. In this world of life threatening viruses, an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure.

Cleanliness in Living Space

I bet you thought that once you got out of the house, you wouldn’t have anyone telling you to clean up your room. You certainly won’t have those daily reminders, but if you let your living space get too gross, you might have the public health inspector writing you a citation! Why? Because cleanliness is a health issue, and one dirty apartment (or dorm room) can cause problems for every apartment (or dorm room) in the building.

Food left out or inadequately sealed will attract roaches, mice, and even rats. If you put away all of your leftovers, but you don’t vacuum the crumbs, those little critters will find them. And they will bring their friends over for the party. The next thing you know, you have scurrying sounds in the walls and mouse droppings on the counter. You probably won’t see the fleas until you start to itch!

The good news is that you can prevent an infestation by making sure to put food away properly and to wipe off counters and floors. Get handy with a broom, mop, or vacuum cleaner. If you see any evidence of pests, take steps to get rid of them right away. If you don’t know how to do this, ask your landlord or your dorm director.

If you are being careful about your own space, but you still have pests, it may be because others in the building are not being clean. In this case, you will definitely need the help of the manager of the building. If a tenant does not follow minimum cleanliness standards, that person can be asked to leave. Make sure that person is not you!

Personal Cleanliness

Americans on the whole are somewhat obsessed with personal cleanliness. If you travel to other parts of the world, you will find that lots of cultures don’t insist on a shower every day. Shaving body or facial hair is not considered a normal part of personal hygiene in many places for either men or women. And the use of deodorant is very much a cultural rather than a health practice. So, if you were living somewhere else, you might shower once a week, stop using deodorant, and only shave when you started itching.

On the other hand, if you are living in the United States, and if you want to have any friends who are willing to sit down at the same table with you, you should probably consider following the cultural practices of this area. As a college student, you will also be interacting with faculty members who may be writing letters of recommendation for you in the future. If you want a good recommendation, you probably should follow the local customs regarding personal cleanliness!

Body odor is actually difficult for us to detect on ourselves. In spite of the scenes on TV of the guy sniffing his own armpits, this is not a very effective way to tell if you have an unpleasant odor. We get used to our own smell pretty quickly (this is called adaptation), and we can't easily detect it. Of course, the person sitting next to you hasn't adapted and can easily tell that you slept too late to take your shower. The best way to make sure you smell clean is to shower regularly and use a good deodorant, especially if you have been exercising enough to perspire. If you have any anxiety, you may not even need to exercise to build up a sweat.

The other important part of maintaining a pleasant odor is to make sure that your clothing is clean. If you are accustomed to throwing your clothes in the laundry and having mom wash them for you, you will need to start scheduling a time for getting the laundry done. You definitely don't want to run out of clean underwear just before you go to dinner with that cute guy/girl you are interested in.

How Ready are You to Stay Clean?

1. In your experience at home, what kind of housecleaning have you done? Put a check mark beside each of the cleaning activities that you have done and a minus sign beside each one that you have not done.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> make your bed | <input type="checkbox"/> wash dishes | <input type="checkbox"/> defrost refrigerator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dust furniture | <input type="checkbox"/> remove stains | <input type="checkbox"/> wash/dry clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mop floor | <input type="checkbox"/> clean toilet | <input type="checkbox"/> clean oven |
| <input type="checkbox"/> remove stains | <input type="checkbox"/> use a mouse trap | <input type="checkbox"/> unclog drains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> clean bathtub/shower | | |

2. Add any other kinds of housekeeping skills that you may need to improve before you are ready to live on your own.

3. Look at the chores above and estimate how much time you would need each week to keep your living space healthily clean. Write that time here: _____

4. Consider your current or recent schedule during the school year. If you needed to do all of your own housekeeping, when would you fit it in? Write down a time (or times) when you would be likely to do your cleaning:

5. Since you probably don't stay awake at night wishing that you could do more housekeeping, it is likely that this is a "low probability" behavior. That means that you need a reward for doing it. List at least three rewards you can give yourself for completing your weekly cleaning chores.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

6. Look at those chores listed in numbers 1 & 2 above. If you need to improve any cleaning skills, how will you do it? Who can teach you? When can you practice? Write a specific plan for learning these skills before you start college.

Very Personal Hygiene: Reproductive Health and Safe Sex

Preventative Health Care. Most health care professionals will tell you that the very best way to be healthy is to avoid those problems that can be prevented. The old saying "a stitch in time saves nine" means that early intervention or prevention of a problem is a lot less work than trying to fix or cure something later on. This is especially true in the areas of reproductive and sexual health.

There are many sexually related problems that, if caught early, can be easily treated, but if they are missed or ignored they can become life threatening. Some infections can be prevented, but cannot be cured once you have contracted them. Your best hygienic practice is to be as well educated as possible, to act carefully, and to insist on responsible behavior from yourself and your partner at all times.

Self-exams. As a young adult, you are moving into the time of your life when you should begin practicing self-exams for any indication of abnormal growths. Breast and testicular cancers are not particularly common among young people; however, they are often more fast growing and dangerous when they do occur at a young age. The very best survival rates for these cancers result from early detection, and the earliest detection occurs when the person regularly practices self-exams.

You should begin examining your breasts or testicles on a monthly basis. Your instructor will describe the self-exam procedure to you in detail, but a description won't really help you much. You need to practice this kind of self-exam, because you need to become familiar with how your body normally feels. You will be feeling for "lumps," but you will immediately realize that your body happens to be pretty lumpy everywhere! That

is the reason you do these exams every month. You are feeling for changes that have occurred, not just lumps.

If you are a young woman, you should plan your self-exam at the same point in your menstrual cycle every month, preferably immediately after your menses (bleeding) has ended. This is because the hormonal changes that occur during your cycle actually change the size and shape of your breasts, and it is difficult to know what is causing the change if your exam isn't at the same time each cycle. Doing the exam during and after a shower helps, because the warmth and water make it easier to detect lumps.

For young men, both breast exams and testicular exams are important. Although breast cancer is rare in men, it is extremely malignant. Any lumps in your breast should be reported to your physician immediately. Testicular exams are also important, because testicular cancer is also very malignant. It doesn't matter which time of the month you perform the exam, but it is better if you have taken a warm shower so that the testicles are not drawn closer into your body. It also helps if you intend to do this at a regular time, because then you aren't as likely to forget.

Check-ups. Regular check-ups with your physician are another important part of your health care. If you have a disability, you may find that your physician focuses on the disability and thus minimizes attention to other aspects of your health. Sometimes physicians and other professionals unconsciously assume that persons with various disabilities are not as sexual as other people. This is an unconscious stereotyping and doesn't mean that your physician is bigoted toward people with disabilities; but it does mean that you must take a bit more personal responsibility. You need to be assertive and bring up any questions or concerns you have about your own sexual health.

By the time you are an adult, or during your teenage years if you are sexually active, you should be receiving a full examination of your reproductive system. If you are female, you should have a pelvic exam and a baseline pap smear (which checks you for cervical cancer or abnormalities). You should also have a breast exam, and you will need a baseline mammogram sometime in your early 20's even if you have no known problems.

Both men and women should have a rectal exam. This is especially important for young men, who may have prostate problems without any symptoms. Most men have prostate enlargement when they are older (over 65), but early problems can be very serious.

If you are sexually active, or if you are considering becoming sexually active, you should discuss this with your physician. You should decide on appropriate methods of contraception and STI prevention **BEFORE** you engage in sex; and if you are changing partners, you and your partner both need to be screened for STIs **BEFORE** you have sex. More details about these decisions appears in the sections below.

Vaccines. When you see your physician for your regular check-up you should discuss the available vaccines which can prevent certain STIs (sexually transmitted infections). Some colleges now require their incoming students to have completed the three-part HBV (Hepatitis-B Vaccine). Hepatitis viruses all attack the liver, can cause jaundice, and can eventually result in death. Hepatitis-B is transmitted sexually, and the person infecting you may have no symptoms. There is no cure for Hepatitis-B, but it can effectively be prevented with the vaccine.

HPV (human papilloma virus) can also be prevented with a three-part vaccine. At this time, there are no requirements for college students to receive the HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccine; however, Texas has passed a law to require it for public school girls. The HPV virus causes warts, and a certain strain of genital warts (the strain prevented by the vaccine) causes cervical cancer. As with Hep-B, there is no cure for HPV. The warts can be treated with a topical cream or other methods, but the virus remains in the system. This virus is especially contagious, and it can be transmitted by skin to skin contact without actual intercourse.

Although sometimes parents don't want to encourage their children to take precautions against STIs because it seems to promote sexual behavior, you should at least discuss this with your physician. The time to prevent these diseases is before you have been exposed to them.

Abstinence Education

In your public school education you have probably heard abstinence emphasized as the very best, most effective way to prevent conception and STIs. To the extent that a person perfectly practices abstinence (including avoiding any intimate petting, oral sexual contact, or unplanned intercourse), it is indeed highly effective as a means of prevention.

On the other hand, people are not perfect! Typical practice is not perfect practice. Accidents can happen. Also, you are moving into adulthood; and your decisions may change. You will make the best decisions about your sexual behavior in the same way you make the best decisions about all of your behavior. If you are well informed, if you communicate with those people who are important to you, and if you consider your own needs and responsibilities, you will be most likely to make decisions that reflect maturity and enhance your health.

Contraception and STI Prevention

Birth control methods are highly individualized. Both men and women need to be very well informed about birth control methods. You should research the options, discuss them with your physician, and discuss them with your partner. The specific method you choose depends on a number of issues. You will want to know information about the contraceptive such as:

1. What general type of contraceptive is it? (hormonal, barrier, behavioral, etc.)
2. How does this type of contraceptive work?
3. How accessible is this type of contraceptive? Where do you get it and how much does it cost? Is it reusable? Is it currently available in the US?
4. What are the side effects of this type of contraceptive?
5. What are the benefits of this type of contraceptive?
6. How effective is this type of contraceptive in "perfect" use? In "typical" use?
7. Does this type of contraceptive offer any protection against STI's?

Additionally, you will need to consider some facts about yourself, your health history, and your behavior.

1. Do you have any personal or family medical history that limits what kind of birth control you should use?
2. Do you smoke cigarettes?
3. Are you very organized or are you disorganized?
4. Do you have trouble remembering medication?
5. Are you comfortable touching your own or your partner's genitals?
6. Are you in a monogamous, committed relationship or are you more casual in your sexual relationships?
7. Have you had any children?

What other questions do you think you should consider when you are deciding about birth control?

What do you think is the most difficult part of deciding what type of contraceptive to use?

List three people you could (really!) talk to about contraceptives.

Diagnosis and Treatment

As stated above, it is strongly recommended that you and your partner be screened for any sexually transmittable infections before you have sexual relations. This type of screening is very important for a number of reasons.

If you have an STI, the sooner it is diagnosed, the sooner it can be treated and the less likely you are to have serious complications. Some STI's can be cured with appropriate medication. Syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia, all respond to antibiotic treatments. Parasites like scabies and pubic lice can be killed with medication; and even some viral infections can be controlled with appropriate treatment. In all these cases, early detection is vital.

Screening may require that a physician take a blood sample or a specimen from your genitals. In some cases, diagnosis requires a physical exam or a culture growth. Screening for STI's is becoming more and more efficient. Today, you can be screened for HIV (the AIDS virus) with a simple saliva swab that is then sent to a lab. The results will be back in three days. No matter how much you may want to have sex, it is worth waiting those three days if it means not contracting HIV!

Warning Signs and Symptoms

Any time you have unusual symptoms, you should immediately see your physician. Several types of STI's may result in an unusual discharge from the vagina or from the penis. This discharge is not just normal body fluid, it is creamy, or discolored, or may have an unusual odor. If you have any unusual discharge, you should see your physician. This may not be an STI, it might be from some other type of infection, but it still needs to be treated.

Sometimes STI's result in abdominal pain or pain during intercourse. Pain is a symptom that something is wrong. If you experience pain during intercourse, you should see your physician.

Several types of STI's cause skin lesions, rashes, or blisters. If you have any such skin problems, you should see your physician. Sometimes, these rashes appear on your chest, legs, or back. You may have a sore throat or lesions in your mouth. Don't ignore these symptoms. In some cases, the rash clears up, but the infection is still in your body!

No Warning Signs or Symptoms

Many people are infected with STI's but **never have any symptoms at all!!** These people can transmit the disease to others even though they have no symptoms. That is why screening is so important. Take care of yourself and your partner. Have a complete screening for STI's before you begin a sexual relationship.

Where To Get Good Health Care

Most colleges and universities have a student health center where students can receive diagnostic and treatment services for all kinds of health issues including sexual health. Some colleges, especially some private and religious colleges, may not provide these services as a matter of policy.

Departments of Public Health, local health clinics and hospitals, Planned Parenthood, and other non-profit health organizations may provide you with good diagnostic and treatment services. You can find these organizations by looking in the local telephone directory, using the library, or going on-line.

Find three health care organizations that can provide you with information and services for sexual health. List them and their contact information here.

Everything you ever wanted to know about sex but were afraid to ask:

On a 3 x 5 index card, write any question you have about sex, sexual health, birth control, STI's or other related matters. Without your name on it, put the index card in the box in the classroom. We will answer these in class.

Budgeting and Paying Bills

One of the reasons many students end up in trouble in college is they don't know how to make a budget and stick to it. They end up misspending their money and getting into financial trouble. After a while, if they don't know how to "fix" the problem many end up actually leaving school and taking any job they can find, trying to earn some money to bail themselves out of the mess they've gotten themselves into. The problem never really gets solved until the person learns how to make and stick to a budget and live within their means.

Making a Budget

In order to create a budget for yourself you need to know exactly how much your income is going to be; where your money is coming from, and how often will you receive it. You also need to know what your expenses are going to be. Each student's income and expenses are going to be a little different depending on their individual situations. Will you have a current job? Will your parents be sending you money? Will you need to budget any of your money you receive through financial aid?

Look at the sample budget form we have prepared as an example. Look at where the student's income came from and how much it was. The financial aid dollars are the average amount of money students taking full-time courses receive for school. Your financial aid may be greater than or much smaller than the amounts used in this example. Please note that these are not guaranteed amounts for any student. They are for this example only and not for your personal planning.

The Financial Aid income used for your sample budget was based on a \$15,018.00 base for need based financial aid. This already assumes that there will be a family contribution of \$2,850.00, which means that your family (or you) will be expected to contribute that amount toward your educational expenses for the year. Again, not everyone will have the \$2,850.00 family contribution; they may have no contribution based on the family income or they may have a greater family contribution base if the family income was higher.

Sample Budget

Income (Financial Aid)	
SEOG Grant (per term)	\$600.00
PELL Grant (per term)	\$1,200.00
STATE Grant (per term)	\$2,559.00
Perkin's Loan (per term)	\$1,500.00
Subsidized Loan (per term)	\$1,030.00
Workstudy job (per term)	\$1,065.00
Other Income	
Part-time Job	
Savings (budgeted over time)	
TOTAL PLANNED INCOME	
Expenses (School)	
Tuition/Fees	\$3,200.00
Books/Supplies	\$400.00
Room (Dorms)	\$1,850.00
Meal Plan/Board	\$1,000.00
Other Expenses	
Car Payment	
Car Insurance	
Up-keep (oil changes, tires, etc.)	
Health Insurance	
Clothing/Shoes	
Personal Grooming Needs	
Laundry Detergent/Softener	
School Supplies	
Cell Phone/Long Distance	
Total Projected Expenses	

Step 1:

Look at the income sources. Financial aid amounts are determined by student eligibility so your amounts may vary.

What other income will you receive (if any) while you are attending college?

Some sources might be social security disability income, money you have saved for college, an on-going part-time job, commitment of support from family/parents to help out, etc.

Identify each source and the amount on the budget form.

Step 2:

Now look at the expense section. We again filled in most of your school expenses- the ones that will come right out of your school financial aid.

What other expenses will you have in college that your family will expect you to pay? Begin listing your expenses you anticipate having to pay. Will you have a car on campus? Who will be responsible for paying car insurance? Gas? Upkeep like oil changes? Tires? Repairs? Will you have a cell phone? Who will pay the bill each month? Who is going to pay if you go over your minutes? Are you on medication that needs to be refilled? How often does it need refilling? What is the co-pay? Who is going to pay that, you or your parents?

Students like to do things in their dorm rooms to make it home. If this is the case, what do you plan to do to your room? What will it cost and who will pay for it?

Many times students will get together and order-in pizza, go out to eat, go to a movie, etc. This may not be much of a problem the first week or two of school but as you get to know more people, eating out and socializing may go from fun to a financial burden pretty quickly if you haven't set up a budget. Know how much you can afford to spend for socializing and stick to it.

What other expenses will you have? Will you be purchasing 6-12 or 24 packs of soda to have in your dorm room? Other snacks or treats? Do you play video games and plan to buy game cartridges? Do you plan to buy CD's or other hard and software? How are you planning to pay for it? What other habits or vices do you have? Do you smoke?

There will also be many expenses that will come up that you won't know about at the beginning of the term-look at the following list:

- Supplies needed for a special project for a course
- Additional school supplies such as paper, notebooks, pens, ink cartridges for your printer, etc
- Health service fees, prescriptions and/or co pays
- Library fines

These are expenses that happen and need to be taken care of. For the most part they may be as small as \$20 or \$25 (which is bad enough on a budget) but there may be worse problems.

Imagine this nightmare happening to you:

- Every fall I know at least one or two students who forget their book bag some where with all their books, notebooks, graphing calculators, etc. in it and they never get it back. The cost to replace everything can easily be \$400 or more. How much money will you have put aside if this were to happen to you? What would you do to solve this problem?
- Students are often given opportunities in their courses to travel to museums, and go shopping in larger cities. An example might be traveling to Fargo/Moorhead with a group of art students to visit art museums or special art shows featuring a new or local artist. The trip takes a full day. You would need money to buy supplies, meals and other incidentals. How much would you have saved for this opportunity?

It's important to have some money set aside for these and many other "unplanned expenses." You don't know what may happen from one day to the next. The point of these last few questions is that students need to budget money for emergencies and not spend that money on anything else. You should always have some money set aside for emergencies.

The most important task in a budget is watching how and where you spend your money. Don't take money from one budget area to pay another. Many adults will choose to not pay one bill so they have money to do something else. I'm sure you have heard of people who "take the grocery money to go gambling" or "the milk money to buy cigarettes" and they think that somehow they will cover the expense some other way. That rarely happens. They don't pay one bill to have extra money for something else and before you know it you are behind on a bill.

Student thinking goes something like this; "I really need a break from studying but I don't have enough money for pizza and a movie with my friends. I've already spent my budget for this BUT I could use my \$20 I have put away for my medication which I don't need this week anyway. The good time and relaxing break will be good for me. I'll figure something out to get my meds next week."

Of course next week you have to "borrow" from another budget area to get your medication if you don't have a job or some kind of income: How will you get the money back in to your budget?

Other Pitfalls That Can Mess Up Your Life

1. Borrowing money from friends can not only be a huge mistake financially, it can cost you friends. There's an old saying "Neither a borrower or a lender be..." Part of having a budget and following it is to help you learn to live within your means. If you are borrowing money from others (whether you borrow from your friends, your grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, or whomever) you aren't living within your means. Again if you borrow money, how are you going to pay the individual(s) back? By the same token, if **you** loan your money to a friend, how are they going to pay you back, and when will they do it? If they don't pay you back on time how will you pay your bills?

2. Applying for a credit card or even worse, more than one credit card, is not a good plan. Yet every year dozens of credit card companies try to lure students into applying for credit cards. The student may start out with the best of intentions, planning to not even use the card unless there is an emergency. But the allure of a credit card with a thousand or two thousand dollar limit is very powerful. Students often decide to get a credit card to have "just for emergencies" but once in their possession, "emergencies" abound and they are using their credit card. I think most advisors and staff at the university would advise students to avoid credit card debt if at all possible. Few people can own one without using it!

3. Be careful of your student loan debt as well. Needing to take out loans to pay tuition and fees, buy books and supplies and for living expenses is the only way some students are able to go to college. The problem is when students begin taking more and bigger loans out so they can buy extra things they don't need or just for socializing and fun. Once a student stops attending classes they have to start paying their loans back. That's hard enough to do if you have graduated and are working. It might not be possible to cover the payments if you end up leaving school prior to graduation for some reason.

Think about what your budget needs to be. Using the budget form and information we have given you try to determine a budget for yourself for the first year of college. Remember you cannot accurately figure what your financial aid income will be until you actually apply for financial aid and determine your exact eligibility. Focus on other income you may have and whatever personal expenses you expect to have. Do it in pencil so you can make any changes you feel are necessary when we go over budgets in the workshop.

Budget for Month of _____

INCOME	
<i>Total Monthly Income</i>	
EXPENSES	
<i>Total Monthly Expenses</i>	

**Remember that you only get financial aid once at the beginning of the semester so don't plan on that income every month. You would only receive it in September and January and then only if you have done the proper paperwork according to the time line that it is supposed to be done. I have seen many students not get their financial aid until November because of problems along the way. So how will you handle that situation if it comes along?*

Introduction to Disability Management

Every fall twenty-five to thirty freshmen with disabilities enroll at Bemidji State University. No matter how capable they may be academically or how hard they may work, five or six of these students will no longer be in college by the next fall semester. Why do these students leave college?

Some are no longer there because they didn't have the academic skills they needed to be successful. Rarely are students with disabilities encouraged to stretch themselves and take college prep courses in high school. They also aren't encouraged to learn the skills they need to be independent learners.

Some are no longer there because they weren't prepared for the challenges and opportunities of independent living. They may lack the ability to budget and manage their money or to live independently and take care of themselves. A few students may not have the requisite social skills necessary for community living in the dorms. But these skills can be taught to students to help them be successful.

The third area is much more difficult to address; inability to manage their disability needs is a major reason student's leave college. Failure to take medications as prescribed can have a negative effect on student performance. Students take medications for a variety of needs and without the medications students often have problems at school. They may not feel well enough to attend classes, may not be able to concentrate, and may become so ill they need to withdraw from college to go home or to the hospital.

Some students fail because they don't understand their disability and how exactly it affects them. Because they don't know how to take care of themselves they don't know what accommodations are needed so they can access the course material. They don't ask for the help they need when they need it and in the end fail their courses.

But the biggest reason students end up failing is because they think their disability is going to just go away once they graduate high school. No one wants to have a disability and very few people want to be treated differently than others. So once they graduate high school and enter postsecondary education they decide to "do things on their own." A true disability rarely goes away. For most individuals additional coping skills must be learned in each new environment whether it is postsecondary education or starting a job.

Before you can make informed decisions it is imperative you know about how your disability affects you. What are your strengths? What are your weaker areas? What have you been taught about using your strengths to compensate for those weaknesses? You will need to use all those skills and learn more to be successful in college. College is harder than most of you have imagined. Most of you will need accommodations in college and you must identify yourself to the proper person and request that help. As a college student you are an adult and this is one of your first responsibilities.

In this next section you will learn the process for accessing accommodations, what background information about yourself you need to know and the differences between the laws that affect students in K-12 and those laws that apply to postsecondary education. Let's start at the beginning.

Your Disability and You

As a student with a disability, you are already aware that some learning situations can be extremely frustrating and academically challenging for you. Noise and activity in the classroom or nearby hallway, or even outside the window can cause you to lose focus from your task. Concentration on reading may be nearly impossible in a regular classroom setting. Many students with learning disabilities or disabilities that affect how they learn avoid courses in math, writing or those that require extensive reading. They may lack spelling skills. Some students do not have adequate computer skills to be successful in college, including the ability to use grammar and spell-check to write (type) their own papers; all written assignments must be typed on a computer in college.

In junior and senior high school special education teachers and staff are available to help students with disabilities throughout the day. Students may have help staying organized; tutoring is available in subjects where the student struggles; faculty and staff are available to help with assignments and assist the student in turning in homework as needed. Parents are available in the evenings and weekends to help students stay focused on assignments and getting work done on time. As part of your I.E.P. you may be allowed to do a shorter (modified) assignment than other students are required to do so that you are able to complete your homework on time. These issues may not appear to be as big a problem in high school as they will become in college. This is because the laws that govern education are different for K-12 than those of post secondary education.

What are the Differences Between High School and Postsecondary Education?

In pre-school through high school, students are protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.), which is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the U.S. Department of Education. This program gives money to state and local agencies to provide eligible students with disabilities a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment with special education and related aides and services as the student needs. According to the Office of Civil Rights, "in order to ensure that students with disabilities are given a fine appropriate public education, local education agencies are required to provide many services and aids of a personal nature to students with disabilities while they are enrolled in elementary and secondary schools". This law covers students from pre-school through high school completion or until the student reaches their twenty-first birthday. The concern for this program is that the student completes high school and graduates. This law mandates the I.E.P.'s that students have had through high school.

Once a student chooses to go to the post-secondary education, whether they attend a university, state or community and technical college, the student is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) which approaches disability issues differently. Section 504 prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability in any activity or program that receives federal funding. This means that a person with a disability may not be denied admission solely on the fact that they have a disability. If an institution receives federal financial aid, the students there would be protected under this legislation. The A.D.A. and Section 504 define a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities; has a record of having had such and impairment; or is regarded as having such and impairment. Section 504 defines life activities as activities such as walking,

seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks.

The postsecondary institution is responsible for providing appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services for eligible students across educational activities and settings. Some examples of the kinds of academic accommodations or adjustments a student needs include:

- Testing out of class with or without extended time
- Note takers or tape recording lectures
- Sign language interpreters
- Priority registration
- Books on tape
- Library assistants
- Readers
- Scribes

After students with disabilities graduate from a high school program or its equivalent, educational institutions are no longer required to provide aids, devices, or services of a personal nature. Personal attendants and individually prescribed devices are the responsibility of the student who has a disability and not of the institution (Office of Civil Rights, 1998). While it is the responsibility of teachers and administrators to identify students with special needs enrolled in K-12, in postsecondary education it is the responsibility of the individual to identify that they have a disability and to ask for the appropriate accommodations they need.

If an institution provides transportation on campus for all students, transportation that is handicap-accessible must be available to students with disabilities. If residential life were to put phones in every dorm room, they would have to have TTYs available for students who are hard-of-hearing or deaf. If the institution provides housing for students, comparable, convenient housing that is accessible to students with disabilities must be provided at the same cost. At the same time, colleges and universities are not required to provide personal attendants, hearing aids, wheelchairs, readers for personal use or study or other devices or services of a personal nature for students with disabilities. It is important to note here that there are many students who are in junior and senior high school and are diagnosed with depression or other mental health issues but do not necessarily have an I.E.P. In high school if needs are being met through medication and an outside therapist (one not hired by the school district) the school would not put the student on an I.E.P. in that case.

However, a student in that situation is certainly encouraged to contact the disability services office at colleges that the student is interested in attending. The student should have a current diagnostic report from their doctor, listing the assessments given and the results, medications that they are taking, side effects of the medications, and any recommendations for support and accommodations they might have for the student. While every university has their own criteria for whether or not a student is eligible for accommodations (and a student may find themselves eligible at one school and perhaps not at another) you should apply at each institution's disability services office in schools you are interested in attending.

Study the differences between high school and postsecondary education on the chart on the next page.

What are the Differences Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education?

Pre-school through 12 th grade	Postsecondary education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is the school's as well as the parents' responsibility to identify when a student is having problems. The school and the parents work very closely together to identify the special educational needs of the student. ✓ Each year your parents, school staff and teachers meet and have an I.E.P. meeting where special services are set up. Sometimes the student attends these meetings and may or may not play a role in them. ✓ Students are provided a great deal of support from teachers, aides and parents. Tutoring is available on an individual basis, someone works with the student to go over concepts, assignments can be explained and re-explained when necessary. ✓ Students have parents available at home to help them stay on track, they can wake you up in the morning for school, buy groceries, make meals and help you with laundry. Frequently they check your home work, help with assignments and may remind you about tests or other events. Some parents even sit with their student every night and help them do their homework. ✓ The school nurse may dispense your medication to you; your parents are responsible for medical appointments and prescriptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Postsecondary institutions are under no legal mandate to identify students with special needs. Students must self identify to the appropriate office or program at an institution that they have a documented disability. ✓ Students are adults when they enter postsecondary education and must assume responsibility for their learning. It is your responsibility to meet with the disability services office staff each semester (or term) and identify what courses you are enrolled in and what needs you have in each class. ✓ Students must be proficient in time management, self-monitoring their academics and have strong organizational skills. They should use a planner or calendar for homework, school events, work or volunteering schedules. ✓ You are responsible for taking your medication on time and making sure that you are getting your own prescriptions filled. ✓ If you have problems understanding course work or homework assignments it is your responsibility to talk to your professor for help or find someone who can help you understand the material. ✓ No one is going to tell you if you are doing badly in a course. You must be able to keep track of how you are doing academically.

Let us assume that you have made the decision to pursue postsecondary education after you graduate from high school. You need to begin preparing yourself

NOW so that you have both the basic knowledge all freshman students are expected to possess, and that you have developed the skills you need to take care of yourself and be successful. The first part, possessing the knowledge you need comes from taking the college prep courses offered at your high school. These courses are important for your academic success in your liberal education or general requirements. Students must take courses in math, science, writing, humanities, social sciences (history, sociology, geography, psychology or political science), environmental awareness, cultural diversity, and more. Without enrolling in college prep courses in high school you will find yourself getting lost during the professor's lectures in college. This is your first step. Check with your high school guidance counselor to make sure you are enrolling in the courses you need.

The second part, developing the skills you need to take care of yourself are two-fold. One part is developing the independent living skills you need to physically take care of yourself and your daily living needs and the other area is academic skills. Both of those are covered in another section of this book. For now, we will focus on the impact your disability has on your learning.

What conditions may qualify as a disability include (but are not limited to):

- Attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (A.D.D./ A.D.H.D.)
- Asperger's syndrome (high functioning autism)
- Blindness/ visual impairment
- Deafness/ hard-of-hearing
- Epilepsy/ seizure disorder
- Orthopedic/ mobility impairment (physical)
- Specific learning disability
- Speech and language disorder
- Spinal cord injury
- Tourette's syndrome
- Traumatic brain injury

Chronic Illnesses:

- A.I.D.s
- Arthritis
- Cancer
- Cardiac disease
- Diabetes
- Fibromyalgia
- Lupus
- Burns
- Hemophilia
- Renal-kidney disease
- Respiratory disorders
- Stroke
- Asthma
- Multiple sclerosis
- Muscular dystrophy
- Narcolepsy

Psychiatric Disability

- Depression
- Bi-polar disorder
- Borderline personality disorder

- Schizophrenia
- Neuroses and psychoses

What conditions are not covered by ADA?

- Kleptomania
- Pyromania
- Compulsive gambling
- Poverty
- Current Drug Use or Conditions Caused by Current Use

How may a student be affected by their disability? Look at the chart on the next several pages. Highlight the disability or disabilities you have. Read through the listed conditions that may result from your impairment. Highlight those that apply to you. Now read through the list of possible accommodations. Again, highlight the ones that you have been using up until now.

Type of Disability	Conditions Your Disability Causes	Academic Adjustments or Accommodations
Orthopedic or Mobility Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual may have fatigue, shortness of breath, weakness, possible numbness • Pain, chronic and flare-ups • Limited use of lower body • Periods of remission where there may be no symptoms • May or may not have use of upper body • Speech or hearing impairment • Lack of coordination • Limited or decreased endurance or stamina • Limited ability to move head or neck • Inability to walk or stand for long periods-may use walker, crutches, or wheelchair for mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special seat in classroom • Priority registration to arrange schedule to have enough time to get from one class to another • Testing accommodations including extended time, separate testing area, scribes, computer access • Note takers, peer notes or tape recorded lectures • Accessible classroom location and place for faculty to meet with student • Adjustable tables for labs • Lab assistance • Special computer software, voice-activated word processing • Accessible parking near student building • Adapted physical education classes to allow for student's ability • Taped textbooks and other reading assignments
Psychological Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student may have problems with social functioning, motivation, concentration • Inability to handle stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended time for exams • Testing outside the classroom

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student may display anger, disruptive behavior (follow code of conduct for student) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note takers or tape recorded lectures • Special seating • Medical withdrawls in the event of hospitalization or illness
Type of Disability	Conditions Your Disability Causes	Academic Adjustments or Accommodations
Psychological Impairments (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student may miss class due to bouts of depression or mania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study skills or learning strategies to compensate for side effects of illness and/or medications • Tape recorded textbooks and/or reading assignments • Adjusted attendance, makeup assignments and exams due to illness
Learning Disability Dyslexia: inability to read Dyscalculia: inability to do math Dysgraphia: inability to write words with appropriate syntax Dysphasia: inability to speak frequently or sometimes understand each other Figure-Ground Perception: inability to see an object from a background of other objects; inability to see difference in objects Auditory Figure-Ground Perception:	Study Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to organize and budget time • Difficulty taking notes/outlining material • Difficulty following directions • Difficulty completing assignments on time Reading Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow reading rate • Inaccurate comprehension • Poor retention • Poor tracking skills (skip words, lose place, miss lines) • Difficulty with syntax on tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced course load • Priority registration • Taped texts • Readers • Course substitution for nonessential course requirements in major • Tape recorders • Copies of classmates notes • Extended time for in-class assignments to correct spelling, punctuation, and

<p>inability to hear one sound among others Auditory-sequencing: inability to hear sounds in the right order</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete mastery of phonics <p>Writing Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent Spelling errors • Incorrect grammar • Poor penmanship • Poor sentence structure • Difficulty taking class notes while listening to lectures 	<p>grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word processor with spell check • Extended time for testing • Tests read to student • Student responds/dictates answers to essay test • Scribe • Blank card to assist in reading calculator
Type of Disability	Conditions Your Disability Causes	Academic Adjustments or Accommodations
<p>Learning Disability (cont'd)</p>	<p>Math Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computational skill difficulties • Difficulty with reasoning • Difficulty with basic math operations (multiplication tables) • Number reversals, confusion of symbols • Difficulty copying problems • Difficulty with concepts of time and money <p>Oral Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty understanding oral language when lecturer speaks fast • Difficulty attending to long lectures • Poor vocabulary • Problems with correct grammar • Difficulty in remembering a series of events in sequence • Difficulty with pronouncing multi-syllabic words <p>Social Skills</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial Disorientation • Low frustration level • Low self-esteem • Impulsive • Disorientation in time • Difficulty with delaying problem resolution 	
ADD/ADHD Students May: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform better in morning classes • Need to sit in the front of the class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrating/inability to focus • Listening • Starting, organizing and completing tasks • Inability to follow directions 	Accommodations would be the same or similar to those for a learning disability.
Type of Disability	Conditions Your Disability Causes	Academic Adjustments or Accommodations
ADD/ADHD (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need assignment organizers • Need written assignments • Experience difficulty following through with several directions at once • Have problems organizing multi-step tasks • Benefit from structure using lists, schedules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with transitions • Difficulty interacting with others • Problems producing work at a consistently normal level • Organizing problems that involve multiple steps 	
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Student may need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established routine with step-by-step directions • Books on tape • Repetition of reinforcement of information to be learned • Demonstrate poor judgment and memory problems • Exhibit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing thoughts, cause-effect relationships and problem-solving • Struggle processing information and word retrieval • Trouble generalizing and integrating skills • Difficulty interacting with others compensating for memory loss 	Accommodations would be the same or similar to those for a learning disability.

discrepancies in abilities such as reading comprehension much lower than spelling ability		
<p>Deafness/Hard of Hearing Hearing loss ranges from mild to severe/profound <u>Mild</u> may have difficulty hearing fair speech. A person may miss 10% of speech from a distance greater than 3 feet or in noisy environments <u>Moderate</u> understands speech 3-5 feet. Without amplification 50-100% of conversation may be missed. Speech may be affected. <u>Moderate/severe</u> conversations must be very</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with writing skills, using correct tenses, and word endings because they don't hear them and interpreters don't interpret exactly what is said in conversations • Delays in spoken language and reduced speech intelligibility • In severe hearing loss prior to a person becoming lingual, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating in front of classroom • Written supplement to oral instructions, assignments, and directions • Visual aids as often as possible • Speaker facing class during lectures • Speaker repeating questions that other students ask • Note taker for class
Type of Disability	Conditions Your Disability Causes	Academic Adjustments or Accommodations
<p>loud to be heard or amplification used <u>Severe</u> with amplification should be able to detect speech sounds and environmental noise <u>Profound</u> aware of vibrations more than tonal patterns. May rely more on vision rather than hearing as primary means of communication.</p>	<p>spoken language may not develop simultaneously. Reduced speech intelligibility expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must rely on visual cues and information 	<p>lectures or copy of power point slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test accommodations: extended time, separate testing area, proofreading of tests, access to word processor, interpreted directions • Unfamiliar vocabulary written on board or handout • FM loop system • Interpreter
Speech and Language Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuttering • Problems with articulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications of assignments such

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice disorders • Aphasia 	<p>as one-to-one articulation or use of a computer with a voice synthesizer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitutions for oral presentations
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Chart produced from information developed by: Anne R. Thompson, Ph.D., Director; Leslie Bethea, M.S., Coordinator, Project PAACS, Department of Counselor Education and Educational Psychology, PO Box 9727, Mississippi State, MS 397-5740

Information on deaf and hard of hearing loss ranges and conditions caused is from <http://www.handsandvoices.org>.

What, if anything, did you learn about your disability that you didn't know before?

References

“Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Higher Education’s Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA.” U. S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D. C. Revised September 1998.

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Student Rights, Responsibilities and Self-Advocacy

How many times have you heard someone say, “with rights come responsibilities?” I’m sure that you have heard that before. It’s important that everyone know what their rights are and exercise those rights; it is equally important to know your responsibilities and to live up to them. As a student in a Minnesota postsecondary institution you will have both rights and responsibilities. The following information is taken directly from the Minnesota State Council on Disability website from “Know Your Rights and Responsibilities” (July 26, 2002).

The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** of 1990 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation and telecommunications.

The **Minnesota Human Rights Act** (1973), Minnesota’s comprehensive civil rights law, prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, or disability. Disability discrimination is prohibited in the areas of employment, housing and real property, public accommodations, public services, education, credit services and business. Through a series of amendments, this law has become-and-remains broader than A.D.A.

The **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by Federal agencies, receiving Federal financial assistance, Federal employment and employment practices of Federal contractors. These standards are the same as Title I of the ADA.

The **Fair Housing Act**, amended in 1988, prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status and national origin. It’s coverage includes private housing, housing that receives Federal financial assistance, and state and local government housing. It is unlawful to discriminate in any aspect of selling or renting housing or to deny a dwelling to a buyer or renter because of the disability of that individual, and individual associated with the buyer or renter or an individual who intends to live in the residence.

The **Fair Housing Act** requires owners of housing facilities to make reasonable exceptions in their policies and operations to afford people with disabilities equal housing opportunities.

Choosing to exercise your rights as provided in disability rights law, means you also have responsibilities. These laws were written to ensure that people with disabilities would have equal access to goods and services provided to all people with and without disabilities.

Rights

- You have the right to be provided information in a language and format that you understand.
- You have the right to accept or refuse services.
- You have the right to receive assistance in writing a complaint or requesting information.

Responsibilities

- It is your responsibility to learn about the laws that provide protections, to ask questions, request assistance, seek self-advocacy training and peer support.
- It is your responsibility to ask questions until you clearly understand presented information.
- It is your responsibility to follow through when given information.

- You have a responsibility to the members of the community in which you live to exercise your rights.

How does this translate into postsecondary education and your rights and responsibilities? Lets do them one at a time.

Right #1. You have the right to be provided information in a language or format that you understand.

How do you think that might affect you in college?

What does it mean to you in terms of your accommodations in postsecondary education?

What is your responsibility in this?

Right #2. You have the right to accept or refuse services.

How do you think this will affect you in college?

What does it mean to you in terms of your accommodations in postsecondary education?

What is or are your responsibilities in this?

What might some of the consequences be if you decide to refuse services?

If those consequences were realized, how might you handle it?

Right #3: You have the right to receive assistance in writing a complaint or requesting information.

What are two responsibilities you have with regard to this right?

Let's look at the responsibilities that you must assume in order to have protection under these rights.

#1. When you apply for college you will need to have the same background information (knowledge learned in courses from the college prep track) that all students need to take. At most college's students with disabilities applying for postsecondary education are expected to meet the same admissions criteria as any other student. These expectations are based on the fact that in college you will be expected to do the same work as everyone else. There are no reduced assignments for any student.

Going to post secondary school is **not** a right everyone has. Going to college or graduate school is something you have to qualify or be eligible to do. If you don't meet the admissions criteria at a school, there may not be anything you can do about it. You can apply to other institutions and may or may not be accepted at one of them. But under the law if you don't meet the admissions criteria schools are not obligated to admit you, whether or not you have a disability.

#2. You've worked hard and been accepted to college. Now you must notify the appropriate office that you have a disability and request to start a file with their office. There will be a small amount of paperwork to do and you will need to provide documentation of your disability to this office.

It's important to note that just because you have an I.E.P. in high school and have a diagnosis of learning disabled, diabetic, or some other diagnosis, doesn't necessarily mean that you will be eligible for services in postsecondary education. The professional you use to document your disability must clearly indicate that your condition affects one or more major life activities such as walking, talking, caring for oneself, hearing, learning etc. If your doctor doesn't clearly state this you probably won't be eligible for services at most colleges. The law states that a qualified professional must state that your condition affects a specific life activity or activities and to what extent they are affected. They must also make specific recommendations to remedy the situation.

#3. After your file is approved you will need to follow the process the Disability Services Office has for all registered students. The one rule all postsecondary schools have is that the student must initiate contact with Disability Services and request appropriate accommodations or academic adjustments for each course accommodations are needed in. If you don't request accommodations you won't receive them. It's important to know what you need and why.

#4. It is your responsibility to monitor your accommodations and make sure you are getting the information you need when you need it (ex. notes on time that are legible, etc.) and that accommodations are working for you. If there is a problem you must report it to the appropriate person in a timely manner.

You may not want or need accommodations when you go to college but it is important for you to understand the consequences. If you initially decide you don't want to work with the Disability Services Office you must understand that you will need to present documentation of your disability to the appropriate office and get a file started and accommodations approved before you receive them. If you don't have all of this done before school starts you may not be able to receive the services you need when you need them. But if you start a file early and have everything ready to go, you can choose initially not to use services. But after attending classes if you change your mind and decide you do need to use accommodations there is a much greater likelihood you may be able to get what accommodations you need in a timely manner.

That isn't necessarily true at every institution, however. I have seen colleges that expect students to start files several weeks in advance of the term and to decide whether or not you will use services by the second week of classes. If you don't sign up

for what you need during that two week window or if you haven't set up a file prior to the term, you can set up a file but won't begin to receive services until the next term. Know what the school you plan to attend expects of their students. A term without using accommodations may cause your grades to drop and you could get suspended; and yes, a school can suspend you for poor grades, because you failed to set up a file with the disability office and you chose not to use accommodations.

This brings us to the last piece of this chapter—self advocacy. Self means you need to do it on your own for yourself and advocate means to speak up on behalf of something. So self advocacy in a nutshell means speaking up on your own behalf to get what you need in college. There won't be teachers or parents taking care of you to make sure that you are getting what you need to be successful in school. Unlike high school, the college or postsecondary institution has no obligation to identify your needs, seek you out and make sure that everything is going okay. You are in charge of your own life.

This means that you will need to have a clear understanding of how your disability affects you in the learning environment to be able to seek the accommodations necessary for you to have access to the information being presented and show the professor what you have learned. Each semester you will get a syllabus from each of your professors describing the requirements of the course; you will need to be able to examine the assignments on the syllabus and determine what accommodations you will need for the course. At that point you will need to go to the Disability Services Office and request the appropriate accommodations for each course. We will cover all of this in another chapter.

Documenting Your Disability and Accommodations

Think back to when we defined “disability” under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): a person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities, has a record of having such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 defines life activities as activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks.

The emphasis is substantially limits life activities to be considered “disabled.” This can be confusing for both students and their parents. Students may receive all kinds of services in K-12 and yet may not be considered to have a disability in postsecondary education. Frequently students may receive services or accommodations in high school that they won’t be able to receive in college. The I.E.P. ends at graduation and a student starts over when they need accommodations at the postsecondary level.

Probably even more confusing for students (and their parents!) is that they can apply for and receive accommodations at one school and yet be legally denied accommodations at another school. The standard for who is eligible for accommodations is much different in postsecondary education. Some colleges and universities may hold students to that higher legal definition of disability and other schools may provide accommodations to a student that others may decline to provide accommodations for. Part of this depends on the schools philosophy, accreditation regulations, rigor of their programs, etc.

One thing all institutions will require is that a student prove they have some type of impairment and that impairment is so severe that it substantially limits one or more life activities...and their ability to learn (i.e., access information) at the institution.

To document that your impairment substantially limits one or more life activities a student must provide information from a qualified professional to document this condition.

Who is a Qualified Professional?

Depending on your impairment, a qualified professional or someone trained to diagnose your particular condition. For example, a person with diabetes would need to provide an evaluation from an internal medicine doctor or a medical doctor (not a chiropractor). A person with a learning disability or ADD/ADHD would provide copies on an evaluation done by a school psychologist or someone from the community mental health clinic.

The qualified professional is someone with training in the field being diagnosed. If someone is hard-of-hearing, a student would need to provide testing results from an audiologist, etc. The last evaluation of the severity/impact of your disability should be no older than 3 years. Students with mental health conditions frequently are required to provide more frequent documentation at most institutions.

What Does the Disability Services Office Need to Know?

The disability services office needs a clear statement of the student’s diagnosis or impairment.

- What exactly is the student’s condition/ diagnosis?
- When was it first diagnosed and by whom?
- What assessments/tests were given and the results of each assessment?

- What are the student's strengths and how can they be best used by the student to overcome weaker areas?
- What is the current level of cognitive functioning?
- Are the results indicative that the condition substantially limits the student in one or more life activity? What activities and to what extent?
- What accommodations does the professional specifically recommend and why that particular accommodation? (Accommodations and auxiliary aids may include note takers, tape recorders, separate test settings, etc.) If that accommodation were not available or provided, what would the impact be to the student's learning? What might an alternative accommodation be?

If the qualifying professional doesn't provide this information a school does not have to set up accommodations for the student until they receive all the necessary information on a student.

What Happens if You Have Lazy Professionals?

We receive all kinds of inappropriate medical information on students. Doctors have the medical records staff Xerox pages out of a patient's chart that has the word "diabetes" or "depressed" somewhere in the transcript. That is not documentation. Worse, sometimes these pages contain information that should have remained private and confidential. I have been given information about people having STI's (not a documented disability in all likelihood!), having pregnancies terminated, well you get the idea. These aren't documented disabilities and it's no one else's business about a person's personal/private life.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your doctor sends the appropriate information needed to document your disability and does it in a timely fashion so you can get the accommodations you need. If the professional does not send adequate information you may need to sign an additional release to get information that is needed. Most schools will not provide accommodations without information regarding your condition and the exact limitations it places on your life.

If the documenting professional does not recommend specific accommodations and the rationale for them, most schools will not provide accommodations. Colleges are not required to take any action until a student provides appropriate documentation. If the documentation isn't sufficient, disability services must clearly explain to the student what is lacking!

Some "materials" provided by professionals that **ARE NOT** appropriate documentation include:

- The aforementioned copying several pages out of an individual's medical transcript.
- Writing "this person has ADD or ADHD" or any other diagnosis on a prescription pad.
- A letter stating a person has a particular condition and they should be accommodated.

What Else Do You Need to Know?

- Students may not necessarily receive the accommodations or services that they received in junior high and/or high school. In K-12 schools are mandated (required by law) to provide students any type of help they need to succeed. For

many students this means a great deal of individualized help, modified assignments (shortened/lesser requirements) and these are not available in postsecondary education.

- Students have a huge responsibility in securing accommodations. Memorize these.
 - a.) You must ask for specific accommodations that you need. You must do this every term (even though you may have had the professor before!). And the accommodation must be appropriate for the situation. As an adult in postsecondary education if you don't speak up and ask for an accommodation you won't get it. The school is not supposed to provide accommodations a student hasn't asked for.
 - b.) You must play an active role in the provision of your accommodations. This is very important. You must also adhere to the faculty member's attendance policies as well as the rules of DSO. Note takers- It is your responsibility to ASK for a note taker. If there is any problem with your notes (ANY PROBLEM) it is up to you to notify someone in disability services IMMEDIATELY- don't wait until the end of the term or even a few days or weeks. Let someone know so the problem can be solved! Testing- If you are receiving some kind of testing accommodation it is your responsibility to make arrangements in advance and remind your professor of those arrangements in a timely fashion.
 - c.) Typing Papers- If you have a disability that requires help with typing papers you must make arrangements in advance to assure someone is available when you need your typing done. Failure to make arrangements in advance may mean no one is available to help you. In these cases, where the student fails to take responsibility for what they need, they bear the burden of handing in a late paper like any other student. In other words your failure to notify disability services and no one is available, isn't their problem. You need to be very proactive about your needs!

You must ask for the accommodation and you need to monitor how accommodations are working for you. You also need to stay on top of scheduling exams and other help you may need. Disability service providers will ask you about your preferences for accommodations and auxiliary aids. Be prepared for this discussion! Make sure that your medical professional has clearly recommended these accommodations and has explained why these are the most appropriate accommodations for you.

The Office for Civil Rights has ruled that only students who currently have a disability are entitled to auxiliary aids and accommodations. If a student's documentation doesn't specify auxiliary aids the disability services provider needs to check with the medical provider. A disability services provider can be specific in their requesting supporting documentation and the student fails to provide the information, the institution is not obligated to provide accommodations until the student provides the necessary information.

My advice to students with disabilities is:

1. Talk to the school you plan to attend very early. Find out exactly what information they want you to provide to document your disability.

2. Contact your documenting professional and make sure they know exactly what information they must provide to the postsecondary disability services office and the deadline if there is one.
3. Double check with the school and make sure they have what they need and that they have it early enough to make a decision on whether or not you have a documented disability and what reasonable and appropriate accommodations you qualify for.
4. Be familiar with your medical information and what recommendations are being made for appropriate accommodations. Know why they are the appropriate ones for you.
5. Ask for specific accommodations that you need in each course. If you don't ask for an accommodation you won't receive it. It is not the college's responsibility to identify and provide accommodations to meet your needs without a specific request from the student.
6. Know your responsibilities and what is expected of you. If you have questions or get confused talk to staff at the disability services office!

Review Questions

1. Who would you ask to document your disability (what qualifying professional)?

Why this person?

2. List three pieces of information your evaluation must include:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

3. Think back through all the information in this chapter. What two pieces of the documenting material do you think is the most important to you?

a) _____

b) _____

4. What role do each of the following people play in the process of documenting a disability in postsecondary education?

Parents _____

Faculty _____

Disability services _____

Student _____

The Role of the Disability Services Office

The Disability Services Office (DSO) is responsible for the provision and supervision of accommodations for students with a documented disability. The DSO Coordinator is the individual who will review your documentation, determine if it is adequate and your eligibility for accommodations. The Coordinator will work with you to determine the appropriate academic accommodations and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to provide you an equal opportunity to participate at the university or college.

As you explore programs at the post-secondary institutions that you are interested in, be sure to make an appointment to visit someone from the disability services program. Prepare yourself for this meeting in advance. It is easy to make a list of your questions you need answered and type it into your computer. Behind each question, leave several lines to write in answers to your questions. Label each sheet with the college name, disability services staff person you met with and a phone number in case you have more questions later. (See appendix for a sample form. Your questions may be different but you will get the idea!)

Be ready to talk about yourself when you get there. Of course you will be asked to talk about your disability! You need to be able to explain your disability yourself (try not to let your parents do your talking – you need to be able to explain it and how it affects you, in and out of the classroom). Do you use technology or other adaptive equipment? Do you have your own computer?

Who arranged for accommodations with instructors for you in high school? What services and/or accommodations have you used in junior high and high school for classroom material, assignments and exams? How have these worked for you? How did you handle it when an accommodation didn't work?

What are your strengths? Weaknesses? Jot these down and start a list. What may be a weakness in 9th or 10th grade may change to some strength in your junior or senior year. Watch this list and update it every six months or so.

Current Strengths

Current Weaknesses

Be able to talk about yourself – you are more than someone with a disability or just strengths and weaknesses and I want to get to know you. Jot down a short answer for each of these questions:

What are your hobbies and interests? _____

What gets you excited? What subjects or topics are you passionate about? _____

What jobs or volunteer positions have you held? _____

What excites you most about college? _____

What are you the most nervous about in coming to college or going on to postsecondary education? _____

Where will you live – in the dorms or off campus? _____

What are your plans for transportation? Will you have a car or will you need transportation to get around town? _____

These are questions you should be thinking about and should be able to present this information to the Coordinator, Disability Services when you begin to visit the different campuses. You and your parents should be discussing these issues early on although living and transportation decisions may be hard to make until after you choose a college or university.

Once you make a decision about where you plan to attend you will need to be in contact with the Disability Services Office if you plan to use accommodations and their support services. At that time someone will describe the process their institution uses to accommodate students eligible for accommodations. For the purposes of this workshop we will use the process at Bemidji State University and the role the Coordinator plays in accommodations and support services through the Disability Services Office. Most programs will be similar and by understanding one process you will have something with which to compare other institutions within your college search. Let's walk through the first meeting I will have with you and/or your parents. Hopefully the three of you will show up together! Some students choose not to come to this meeting but I encourage the students to come along—AND DO YOUR OWN TALKING! I like to hear from the students themselves what they think is hard for them, what subjects they like or dislike and what accommodations they have used in high school. I want to know if you think you needed them or whether or not you believe they worked for you. Your thoughts and opinions are important to me and I want you to be able to express them. Remember, the

more you can tell me, the less chance there is of your parents telling me something that will embarrass you. I will listen to what your parents or guardians have to say but what I like most is to hear from the individual student. You and I are going to be working together for the next few years. I want to get to know you from you.

So, just as I have prepared a list of questions you should be asking the Disability Services Office Coordinator, they will have questions to ask you as well. I need to know how I can help you and what you have used for accommodations. I want to know whether they worked or not. So that is my initial role with students and their expected role with me. We will determine whether or not the services you need can be provided at BSU and you will need to decide if this is the school for you. It is an important meeting for everyone.

You've made the decision that BSU is the place for you. Congratulations. You've applied to the University and you have completed your financial aid packet. In your acceptance folder there will be a letter from my office stating that accommodations are available and if you need more information I ask that you fill out the form and return it to me. Do that when you get the letter. I will send you an information packet from my office. There will be a release authorization form and an intake form in it and you (not your parents) need to fill out and sign the intake form. You may need help with the Release Authorization but if you are 18-years-old you need to sign and date that one as well. Return both forms to me and that will get a file started for you. We need to get information to document your disability. (See more about this in the chapter Documenting Your Disability).

Now, our work together really starts and you will see a big difference between college accommodations and support services and the secondary special education IEP routine. Prior to fall start up you will get a welcome letter from the Disability Services Office that will have the process for startup that you need to follow.

When classes begin you will get a **syllabus** from your instructor that will give you the course assignments, when exams are and information about how to contact your instructor among other things. You need to read through the syllabus. Look at what the instructor is expecting of you. What are you going to need from my office to make sure you are getting the information other students are getting?

- Do you need a note taker to get lecture information?
- Would it be better to tape record the lecture?
- Do you get books on tape? Are you already working with Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFBDB)? Did you order your books or do you need help?
- If you don't use RFBDB and you need your books on tape, it is your responsibility to let the Coordinator, Disability Services know in advance you need the service (prior to the start of the semester). You can't just walk in with your arms full of books and expect them to be taped in a timely manner. It's not possible.

Back to the syllabus.

- Are there papers to write for the course? Are they research papers? How do you do your research? Do you need someone with you to read abstracts?
- What kind of help do you need with writing?

- When are the exams? Do you need to take your exams in a quiet room? Do you need extended time? Do you need a reader or scribe for your exams? Do you need a computer for essay exams?
- Are there projects assigned? What exactly do they entail? Is there anything you need for your project?

These are questions that you need to think about and answer every semester for every class. Once you decide what you need, you need to come and see me the first week of school (no later than the second week). Let me say that at first students don't always know what they need but we will work together to determine your needs the first semester and maybe even the second one. By the time you return your sophomore year you will be able to do this task by yourself. Together we will fill out the Faculty Notification Form and sign it. You will get a copy for your file, I will keep a copy in your confidential file and you will give the original copy to your instructor for the particular course. This is to make sure that everyone knows the accommodations you need.

Once we have filled out the form and I know what accommodations you are requesting I will begin putting them in place. If you need them, note takers will be hired and your notes will be in a mailbox in our area. You can pick them up from the receptionist in my office area. If there is any problem with your notes (or any other accommodation) it is your responsibility to let me know right away. I can't do anything if I don't know there is a problem!! The sooner I know about the issue the faster we can get it corrected. If you aren't getting notes, then you are missing information and you could not only fail an exam but also the course.

It can't be stressed enough that it is your responsibility to know what you need to have as an accommodation and to come to my office the beginning of each semester to set up what you need. If there is a problem you need to let someone in the Disability Services Office know right away. There's no way the staff can know if you aren't receiving notes unless you tell them. It's the same thing if you are having other problems; you need to make staff in the DSO aware of your situation. This is a new responsibility for you; your parents or guardians should not be making these phone calls for you.

My responsibility is to do the paperwork for faculty to set up accommodations and work with you and your instructors to make sure things are in place and working the way they need to. I supervise note takers, proctors, readers and scribes to make sure everyone is following through on their jobs. I meet with students one-on-one to help them as needed and make referrals to other programs, departments and agencies that may be able to provide help to a student as well.

One of my roles is to determine whether or not you have a documented disability and what appropriate accommodations you need to give you access to programs at BSU. That's important, but just as important is my role as listening post, referral source and advisor. When you don't know about something or understand what to do, my office is a good place to come for answers. If one of us doesn't know the answer, we'll help you find it or refer you to someone who can help you.

Student employees are available to help proof papers for students who are visually impaired or have a learning disability. They can show you study/review techniques for some of the classes (although the real expert there is your instructor if they have the time to do it). The student employees in my office work with students who have papers typed as an accommodation. (We are not a typing service!) These students are all usually returning students who "know the ropes" and can answer many

of your questions. If you have questions about the University or about some course work ask them questions.

A copy of the *A Reference Accommodation Handbook For Faculty, Staff and Students with Disabilities at Bemidji State University* is in the appendix. It has the most frequently requested accommodations listed and the student's responsibility, faculty responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Disability Services Office. Again many of the roles and responsibilities will be similar at most campuses.

Review Questions

1. List three responsibilities of the Disability Services Office:

2. List three responsibilities the student has regarding disability accommodations:

3. List four things you need to be able to tell the Coordinator, Disability Services when you meet to set up accommodations:

4. Which of these responsibilities do you think will be the hardest for you to do?

5. What can you do to make it easier for yourself?

Faculty Feedback

This section provides some recommendations about how to deal with faculty members once you are in a post-secondary school. The first three sections are general advice that applies to any student. The final section contains specific recommendations for students with disabilities.

The Job Is Yours

When you enroll at a university or college, you will find out fairly quickly that there is no one whose job it is to make sure that you fulfill all of your requirements or that you complete every assignment. The heaviest responsibility for your college success lies directly on your own shoulders. That means that you must learn what is expected of you, what questions you should be asking, and where to find the answers to your questions.

College is organized differently from the way most high schools are organized, and this means that you may be somewhat “lost” when you first arrive. You will find it quite useful to take some time to understand exactly how your institution is organized and who you should speak to in order to get the best answers to your questions. This section describes some typical arrangements for colleges, but you need to understand the organization of the specific college you attend.

Classroom Teachers

Most college courses are taught by members of the fulltime faculty, although in larger universities, you may find that introductory courses are taught by graduate students who are pursuing a higher degree in that discipline. (A discipline is an area of study such as English, Biology, Computer Science, or Psychology.) In community colleges, technical schools, and in universities under some circumstances, courses are taught by adjunct faculty. Usually adjunct faculty are professionals who practice their discipline in an applied profession and who teach part time. All of these types of faculty are competent to teach at the college level. They bring different perspectives and different experiences to the classroom.

It is always a good idea to get to know your teachers. Find out where their offices are located. Discover when they have office hours. These are times that are specifically set aside for teachers to meet with students and discuss any questions they may have. You are quite likely to find that it is difficult to ask your teacher questions immediately before or after class. Frequently, the next lecturer is coming in and your teacher must leave right away. You may want to know something about your grade, and your teacher won't have those records in the classroom. Again, remember that this is not like high school. Your teacher does not have one room where he/she teaches, has a desk, and has all the students' records. Your college professor may carry notes or a computer from room to room for teaching purposes, but that does not mean he or she will have the information you want. If you tell or ask your teachers something in the bustle of the beginning or end of class, do not expect them to remember it. Your best bet is to find them in their offices during their office hours and discuss the issue then.

Depending on which type of faculty you have for your courses, you may find them more or less available to answer your questions between classes. Most colleges require faculty to have office hours, although the number of hours varies greatly from one institution to the next. If you have a graduate student or an adjunct teaching your class, you may find that the person does not even have an office! This does make it difficult to find them at times. But never fear. There are methods!

Every class has a syllabus. You may not be used to using a syllabus, but in college it is very important. Your syllabus is your *program guide* for the course. At the very least, it will have contact information for your teacher, a description of the course objectives, the name of your textbook, and a tentative schedule. If your teacher has specific office hours, they are usually listed on the syllabus. If not, there will at least be a telephone number or an email address. If you are having difficulty finding your teacher, you should use the telephone or email to request an appointment.

The syllabus is important for more than contact information. Usually assignments are listed on the syllabus, and you will be expected to know the due dates for these. It is quite likely that your teacher will not give you any reminders that an assignment is due. Exam dates may or may not be listed, but they frequently can be found on the syllabus. If there are no dates listed on the syllabus, you should clarify with your teacher what the exact dates are for specific assignments or exams.

Keep a calendar for the entire semester. Put in due dates as soon as you have them, and then put in reminders in the weeks prior to the due date. Do not, under any circumstances, schedule something else at the time of a scheduled exam. Many teachers will not allow make up tests...no matter what the reason!

You should ask questions about your classes. Most faculty appreciate student interest in their classes, and they will encourage you to discuss the course with them. You should consider a couple of things before you stop by their offices.

First, does this teacher give you time to ask questions during class? If so, do you use that time and ask questions? If not, the teacher may be less willing to discuss things during office hours.

Second, are you adequately prepared? If you have attended the class and you have done the reading, but you still do not understand something, then it is very appropriate to ask the teacher to explain something more clearly. On the other hand, if you have not done your part, and you simply want the teacher to “re-teach” during office hours, you may receive a less tolerant reply. It is the teacher’s job to help you understand the material, but it is not the teacher’s job to give you private tutoring. This is a fine line, and your best bet is to do as much as you can on your own before you go for help. Once you have done that, don’t hesitate to visit your teacher.

Third, are you using the teacher’s office hours? Many faculty spend considerably more time in their offices than are required to fulfill their office hours. This is because they have many other duties. They not only need to prepare for their classes, but they conduct research, write articles, participate in committee work for the institution, and provide various services for the community at large. Even though their primary responsibility is teaching, they have many other responsibilities. If they set aside several hours per week to meet with students, you should do your best to meet with them during those office hours. If your own schedule conflicts with these hours, you should contact the teacher and formally set up an appointment that fits the schedule of you both. Do not miss that appointment! Remember that everyone’s time is valuable and you want to respect that.

Finally, do you have a clear idea of what you want to discuss with your teacher? Part of your teacher’s job is to help you clarify your thoughts, but it is a good idea to write some notes for yourself before you go to the office. This shows that you have given the problem some of your own effort, and it may help you make the best use of your time with your teacher.

Academic Advisors. Again, you may find some difference between high school and college in how you get academic advice. In high school you may at times have worked with a guidance counselor to discuss your schedule. This counselor was probably familiar with nearly every course available in the high school and was able to make suggestions about courses that would help you get into college. In college, there is no single counselor who can help every student. Instead, you will be assigned an academic advisor from your own discipline or Major.

The question you should expect to hear from all your friends and relatives is “What is your major?” Don’t worry too much about this. Most students don’t know their major when they first start college, and nearly all those who immediately choose a major will change it within the first two years! This makes academic advising a bit difficult when you first register for college courses.

Fortunately, most colleges have certain general education or liberal education requirements which take up a good portion of your first years in college. These requirements form a basic college curriculum which is appropriate for anyone with a college degree, no matter what your major is. These are classes which simply help you become a more educated person: someone who can think well, someone who can communicate accurately and persuasively, someone who can understand complex issues by recognizing connections between things that might not seem connected, and someone who is able to understand the consequences and values in making choices. No matter what you want to do or be in life, these general education courses will benefit you.

One additional advantage of the general education curriculum is that it gives you some additional time to decide on your major. If you take a wide variety of general education courses, you will probably find that you enjoy some more than others, or you may realize that you have a particular talent in one area. In the meantime, you may take some interest tests at the career services office or have some work experience that convinces you that you want to take more courses in a particular area. This is how most college students decide on a major.

Once you have decided on a major, or even if you are considering it, you should discuss it with one of the faculty members in that department. Ultimately, you will need an academic advisor from your major department. If you have been assigned an advisor from a different department you will need to change advisors. This is very important. The specific requirements of a department and the particular cluster of courses that fits your particular needs should be discussed with someone who is very familiar with them. Usually, college faculty have a great deal of knowledge about their own major requirements, but they may know very little about the requirements of majors in different disciplines.

Your academic advisor will be helpful when you schedule classes, in making sure you have completed graduation requirements, and also in your ultimate decisions about your career after college. Your academic advisor may be a person you will ask for a letter of recommendation. You should be sure to meet with your academic advisor at least once every term (semester or quarter).

Recommendations for Students with Disabilities. I have four points that I strongly recommend that you keep in mind when dealing with college faculty. I urge my own students to keep these things in mind when talking with faculty who do not know much about disabilities, and generally the students have found them to be helpful.

First, remember that in college the teachers have very few requirements to make accommodations for students with disabilities. The mandates are very different from high school, and a lot of times faculty will start with the attitude that they don’t owe you anything. They generally have very strong feelings about maintaining academic

integrity, and they will resist anything that they think of as “letting you slide by.” If they believe that you are requesting to be given a free ride, they will simply say no.

Don't be too discouraged by this, because it is not really a bad thing. After all, a college degree is meaningful because it demands a high level of performance from students. You aren't asking to be let out of learning, you simply need the appropriate accommodations so that you can learn. That leads to my second point.

Faculty members can be your strongest allies. Most faculty members do this job because they love it. They want to teach. They want young people to learn about the discipline they love. If you indicate that you want to learn about their subject, and that you are willing to do what it takes to overcome your own disability, most faculty members will then go out of their way to assist you with this.

That leads to point number three. Tell your teachers and your academic advisers about your disability before it becomes a problem. Go to see them early. If you can catch them before the semester starts, that is great, but at least be sure to stop in during the first week of classes. Discuss what your disability is (see the workbook section on Explaining Your Disability to Others) and what problems you may possibly face during the semester. Make an appropriate plan with them to get through any expected difficulties. If you have arranged for accommodations, be sure to give the professor the faculty notification form and make sure that the teacher understands his or her role. The more significant your accommodations, the more you are likely to need your teacher's cooperation in this, so be sure to be very specific.

Finally, you must remind your teacher of everything you have discussed. Faculty are notorious for forgetting things like sending testing materials to the Disability Services Office, or failing to make reading assignments available ahead of time. Almost always this is simply a matter of absent-mindedness and multiple distractions. It is in your best interest to remind the teacher of the accommodations and his or her responsibility. Do this politely and in good humor, and the teacher will likely respond the same way.

Here is a summary of my four recommendations:

1. Remember that the faculty don't owe you an easy way to get through their course.
2. The faculty may be your best allies if you show that you are willing to work hard.
3. Give them plenty of warning by explaining your disability early.
4. Remind them frequently of what you need from them for your accommodations.

How To Include Your Parents Without Going Crazy

Changing Roles. Obviously, this entire program has been about increasing your personal responsibility for your education, your career, and your life. From the time you were born, your parents have had primary responsibility for you. Their role in your education has been to be your advocate. That means that they are like your lawyer! They argue for your interests with teachers, counselors, and YOU. They try to figure out what is best for you, and they try to convince everyone else. It has been their job.

Of course, as you get older, you begin to have ideas of your own about what is best for you. You don't always agree with your parents (duh!), and the harder they try to convince you of their ideas, the harder you may fight with them. So you are wishing your parents would just leave you alone to make your own decisions, and they are predicting disaster if you keep doing things without listening to them. As psychologists will tell you, this is a normal part of adolescence, but that doesn't make it any more pleasant.

Students who live with a disability may experience this "storm and stress" with parents even more than other students. Because you may have had special educational needs, your parents have probably been even more vigilant in advocating for you. They may be like fierce mama bears, who are constantly watching out to make sure nothing happens to the cub.

This is not a bad thing. In fact, research shows that students whose parents are very involved in their education will do much better in school. But this situation can't last forever. Those of you who go on to post-secondary school must become responsible for your own education, and the only way to do that is to take on more and more of this responsibility.

On the other hand, you can't really expect your parents to wake up one morning and simply hand over the reins and walk away. As you are learning to take on more responsibility, they need to learn to give up more and more responsibility. It isn't an easy thing for them to do.

How can you make this work? How can you and your parents move in opposite directions and still work toward the same goal of your life success?

Good Communication. The best way to work together with your parents is to communicate well with them. Good communication does not mean that you will agree on everything, it does mean that you will understand each other on most issues. Understanding is the first, most important step in cooperation.

Assertiveness

There are some clear and fairly simple (but not always easy) methods for good communication. First, it is important to be appropriately assertive. How does one communicate assertively? Assertiveness does not mean the same thing as aggressiveness, in spite of some of the dictionary definitions you may find. Assertive communication is a clear, confident statement of what you think and feel as well as what you want. Assertive behavior is the ability to stand up for your own rights, while being careful not to infringe on someone else's rights.

Give three examples of behavior that you think is *aggressive*.

Give three examples of behavior that you think is *passive*.

Give three examples of behavior that you think is *assertive*.

Rules for Communicating Assertively

1. Acknowledge ownership of your thoughts, ideas, and wants
 - Use "I" statements
 - Clear expression of wishes and thoughts and feelings
 - Absence of "I don't know"
 - Statements rather than false questions
2. Use the "I feel... and I want..." formula
3. Deal directly with the individual rather than indirectly
4. Don't use blaming statements
5. Use congruent verbal and non-verbal communication.

Identify one specific thing that you want your parent to do to help you as you start school in the fall. (It doesn't have to be the most important thing; it just needs to be specific.)

Using the "I feel...and I want..." formula, write an assertive statement asking your parent for that thing.

Making your best guess, imagine what your parent would say to your statement and write that down.

Now write another assertive statement responding to your parent.

Did you use any blaming? Did you use the word "you" instead of "I"? If you need to, rewrite your statement so that it is more appropriately assertive.

Now, find a partner. With the partner playing the role of your parent, practice using your assertive statement to request your parent's help. Get some feedback from your partner on your assertive behavior and identify three areas in which you could improve.

Eye contact _____ Voice one _____ Posture _____
Clear speech _____ Facial expression _____ Hand positions _____
Other behaviors _____

Practice again while paying attention to your assertive behavior. Assess your own communication.

Good Listening

In addition to assertiveness, good communication requires good listening. Communication is a two-way process. A lot of the time we are so intent on making sure that the other person understands us that we don't spend any effort on trying to understand what the other person is saying. Both of us get frustrated, neither of us feels understood, and we end up angry and discouraged. Good listening can stop that cycle of frustration, and it is not particularly difficult.

Rules for Good Listening

1. Pay attention to WHAT the person says, and to HOW the person says it.
2. Repeat back what you heard, but put it into your own words. This helps you make sure you understand what the person said.
3. If you don't understand something, ask for clarification!
4. If WHAT and HOW don't match, ask for clarification.
5. Don't respond with your own feelings until you are certain that you understand what the other person said.
6. If the person has asked a question, be sure you understand what the question is about before you answer it. (Some questions aren't real questions!)
7. When you are SURE that you understand, use an assertive response. Try to avoid saying "I don't know" unless it is really true.

After practicing good listening, get feedback from your partner about how you did. List three things you should work on to improve your listening.

List three things that you think might make it difficult for you to be a good listener with your parent.

Using your personal academic, living, and disability management goals identify at least one way in which your parent might help you accomplish each goal. Remember, that sometimes it is helpful for your parent to refuse to do something for you. For example, if your living goal is to do all of your own laundry, your parent's role might be to agree not to wash your clothes for you.

Goal:

Parental Help You Want:

Assertive Statement Requesting Help (I feel/think...I want/need)

Gratitude

Everyone wants to be appreciated. One final part of good communication is giving positive feedback to those whose efforts benefit you. Parents frequently think that theirs is a thankless job, because most of us tend to take our family a little bit for granted. If your parent, or someone else in your life, has helped you accomplish one of your goals, it is more than just good manners to thank them. Thanks and positive feedback allow us to know that our efforts are worthwhile.

Telling someone something positive is another type of assertiveness. It is a way of taking ownership of our feelings of gratitude and appreciation. Like other types of assertive communication, positive feedback gets easier with practice.

List three things that someone has helped you with during the past week.

Help: _____ Person: _____

Help: _____ Person: _____

Help: _____ Person: _____

On separate sheets of paper, write assertive thanks for each of these three things and give them to the person or persons who have helped you this week.

List three things that your parent has helped you with during the past year. On a separate sheet of paper, write assertive thanks for these three things and be prepared to give it to your parent during the final program when you discuss your goals.

Glossary

Academic adjustments- sometimes known as accommodations, a service provided to a student to either give them access to information or to help them show what they have learned in a course. Frequently used accommodations include (but are not limited to) books on tape; note takers; testing out of class, with or without extended time; interpreters; priority registration.

Accommodations- sometimes known as academic adjustments, services provided to a student to either give them access to information or to help them show what they have learned in a course. Frequently used accommodations include (but are not limited to) books on tape; note takers; testing out of class, with or without extended time; interpreters; priority registration.

ADA- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This civil rights legislation prohibits discrimination based solely on disability in employment, public services, and accommodations. The individual must be otherwise qualified for the program, job, etc. Title II of the ADA requires that institutions must provide appropriate academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, and services to eligible students enrolled in their institution. (42 U.S.C. Ch. 126, SS 12101-12213)

Disability- a condition that affects one or more areas of an individual's life such as seeing, hearing, walking, speaking, breathing, learning, working or caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks.

Discrimination-treatment or consideration based on class or category rather than on individual merit; showing bias

Documented- a disability is documented by an appropriate professional in the disability area who will send a completed report indicating the assessments performed and the results of the assessments. They should also include appropriate recommended accommodations to help alleviate the problems.

IDEA-Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 and its amendments of 1997, which is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the U. S. Department of Education. This law mandates that eligible students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment with special education and related aides and services as the student needs. This program is concerned with graduating students from high school. (Title 20, U.S.C. 1400-1485; U. S. Statutes at large, 104, 1103-1151)

Priority registration- students with documented disabilities register for courses for the coming term before all other students register. The purpose of priority registration is to give students who need to order their textbooks on tape enough time to have their material taped; to arrange for sign language interpreters for the coming term; or to balance the types of classes a student enrolls in so as not to be overwhelmed in areas where their disability affects them.

Section 605- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended in 1990) prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability in any program or activity receiving federal funding, including education and vocational rehabilitation programs. Colleges and institutions must be free of discriminatory practices in their recruitment, admissions, and treatment of students. Institutions may not limit the number of students with disabilities that they admit, may not ask an individual if they have a disability prior to admitting them, exclude an individual from a specific course of study or counsel them to a more restrictive career based solely on the individual's disability. Institutions may not ban tape recorders or other auxiliary aids that may negatively affect the performance of an individual with a disability. Postsecondary institutions are required to provide students with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids that are necessary to provide the individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school's program of study. (29 U.S.C. s79, 1996)

Self-identify- a student with a disability has the right to choose whether or not they want the university or college to know they have a disability. The school may not inquire whether you have a disability and will not provide accommodations if you do not make them aware of your situation.

Appendices

TRANSITION TIME LINE (RECOMMENDED) FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

9th Grade

- Attend all IEP meetings. Learn about your disability. Why are you receiving the accommodations you have? Do your accommodations work for you?
- Begin enrolling in college prep classes. You need these courses to give you the skills and background information necessary for college coursework. Just because math or writing may be difficult for you, take the courses anyway. Think about tutoring, summer school or other aid the school can provide to help you with the coursework.
- Attend one college fair (MEA weekend in October is a good time to plan this).
- Begin career exploration. Work with your guidance counselor. Assess the kind of skills and education you need to do this career. Do you have the ability to achieve these skills and attain the level of education necessary to meet that goal?
- Engage in volunteer work at your school, church or in the community. Is there something related to what you are thinking about for a career? This is a good way to learn more about what the career entails and if you really want to do this kind of work. If you aren't sure about a career at this point volunteer at your church; if you like animals work as a volunteer at the humane society or walking pets. Check to see what is available in your community.
- Begin to learn about or continue learning about the technology that will benefit you most with your learning. If you use books on tape, learn the process to have your textbook material taped. Do you tape record lectures? Would it be beneficial if you were to tape your lectures to make sure you have the notes you need? How proficient are you on the keyboard (computer)? If you don't type you need to learn to type while still in high school. If you physically are unable to type consider computer technology that allows you to dictate to a computer through different software and hardware products. You need to start learning about technology now.

10th Grade

- Continue enrollment in college-prep courses.
- Continue attending your IEP meetings and learning about your disability and how it affects your learning. Get a folder and keep a copy of your high school IEP's and other personal information stored in there. Keep things together. Continue thinking about accommodations that you use in your courses. Do you take your exams with extra time; all exams or just certain types of exams; in all subjects or just certain subjects? Do you have your exams read to you?

Do you need your books on tape? Do you have someone read your textbooks to you (including your parents)?

How do you complete your homework assignments? Does someone work with you explaining the assignment in detail before you can do your homework? At home do your parents, brother, sister or a tutor help you with assignments? Do you always finish your assignments and hand them in on time? Do you do the same assignment as everyone else or do you have reduced assignments? (You must be able to complete the same assignments as everyone else in postsecondary education and they need to be handed in when they are due or you risk losing points or even failing the assignment. Many college professors refuse to accept late work).

If your accommodations aren't working have you talked to anyone about it? What can be done? Briefly make a note of how you handled this and whether or not changes were made that helped.

- Try to attend another college fair. Visit one or two campuses that you are interested in attending. What are their admission requirements? Plan to talk to someone from their Disability Services Office –make an appointment in advance and take your last assessment results with you as well as your most recent IEP. Would you be considered disabled under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973? If so, can they provide the accommodations that you need?
- Find out from colleges you are interested in entering whether they require the ACT or SAT? Do they accept scores from students who use accommodations **on the exams? Schedule to take one or both tests as needed and take them** with accommodations if you need accommodations.
- Work part-time and/or continue volunteering in a career area you are interested in or in a community event.
- Attend a **BSU College Prep** program at Bemidji State University in August.
- If you are on medication begin trying to monitor taking your medication on your own. Make a plan to double check yourself. You may want to have someone monitor this initially but there will be no one to help you monitor this when you are away at college so learn to do it on your own. It is imperative that you continue taking your medication as prescribed and that you have a solid habit of doing so.

11th Grade

- Continue taking college prep courses.
- Continue attending your IEP meetings, learning about your disability and the accommodations that you need. Refer to the questions posed in the 10th grade IEP information (second bullet). What, if anything, has changed in the accommodations you are using or in their effectiveness? Again, are your accommodations working for you? If not, what have you done to change the situation? Did the change help or work better? Make a note of what you did and if anything changed.
- Narrow down your college choices. Review the admission requirements at each college. If you have a career choice you feel strongly about, does the college or university that you are interested in attending have a program/major that will help you achieve your career goal? Be sure to visit the campus and visit with the Disability Services Office counselor.
- Retake the ACT or SAT assessments to raise your scores if you need to.
- Begin gathering personal information you will need for postsecondary education and keep it in the folder with your IEP's. Other information that you will need with you includes:
 - *immunization records
 - *social security card (your original, not a Xerox copy)
 - *copy of your high school transcript (an official transcript will be required for all schools that you apply to)
 - *copy of your medical records and names, doses and side effects of any medication that you are on
- Contact the rehabilitation counselor for the Department of Rehabilitative Services in the county which you reside to see if you are eligible for services through them.
- If you are visually impaired or blind, contact the counselor for State Services for the Blind for your area for an assessment of your needs and possible help with technology that may give you more independence.
- If you are profoundly hard of hearing or deaf contact your local Regional Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing counselor. Help with supportive technology or interpreters may be available to you.
- Begin talking with your parents about living accommodations while you are in college. Will you live on-campus in the dorms? Do you require a room by yourself due to your disability? If so, you must have a letter from a professional indicating the need and a rational why you must live alone. Will you live off-campus in an apartment or house? Will you live alone, have a roommate(s) or live with your parents?
- Begin talking with your parents about whether or not you will have a car while you are away at school. There are many pros and cons for having a car. Think about what is best for you (opposed to what do you want!).
- Begin addressing the goals you developed at the summer transition plan at BSU. List your goals and skills/objectives/action steps to help you meet them.

12th Grade

- Continue taking college prep courses.
- Continue attending your IEP meetings and learning about your disability and the accommodations that you need. Keep a list of the accommodations that you use in each subject area (if any is used) and whether or not it helps you learn the material or show you know and understand the subject matter.
- Send out college applications to all schools by September 15th. Many schools have deadlines for application for the following fall semester. Be sure to flag any schools that have earlier deadlines and mark your calendar so you don't let the date slip by.
- Retake the ACT or SAT (with accommodations) if necessary.
- In March or April, after you and your parents have done their income taxes, you need to fill out paperwork to apply for financial aid. This can be done online at www.fafsa.gov and you should apply for pin number a few days before you are ready to apply. This application should be done as early as possible since many kinds of financial aid are limited and are awarded on a "first-come-first-served" basis. Everyone should do the FAFSA application.
- Request scholarship information from the postsecondary school you plan to attend. Request information before Thanksgiving if possible. Watch all deadlines carefully.
- Contact your local community organizations for scholarships awarded to local high school students. Have them send you any information that they have available.
- HEATH publishes a bulletin listing national organizations that give scholarships to students with disabilities. There may be state and local branches of these organizations who have scholarships as well. HEATH's web address is [www.heath.org](#) to link to a copy of their latest bulletin.
- Check with your high school guidance counselor or career's office for scholarship information.

Just a note about scholarships: Almost all scholarships are merit based, including those from national and state disability organizations. They are looking for students with a minimum GPA that each organization will stipulate in their guidelines. They are seeking applicants who are involved in their community, church, school and other organizations. Scholarships usually require their recipients to have more than just a certain grade point average (GPA). They are awarded to students who exhibit well-balanced life styles and are interested in community involvement. This might include anything from helping and/or teaching Sunday school or Bible school, helping/volunteering at the local hospital or nursing home, humane society, or other area of interest. Joining boy or girl scouts, 4-H, organizations at school or in the community are also helpful. They aren't looking for who is involved in the most activities, rather a long-term demonstrated involvement that may lead to leadership positions.

- Once you receive an acceptance letter from the school you want to attend, contact the Disability Services Office to start a file. Be prepared to give them complete documentation of your disabling condition(s). Request any paperwork you may need to store the file. Fill out all the paperwork and return it to the school promptly. Plan to fill out the paperwork yourself—don't have another person do it for you.

Do you need a single dorm room? If you need one due to your disability, remember you need a letter from your documenting professional that you need a single room and the rationale for it. Do you need a private bathroom in your dorm room? Again there must be rationale for this in writing from your documenting professional. Most colleges have rules about new freshman students living on campus so be sure check the rules out at the school you plan to attend.

If you are planning to live off-campus, have you developed a plan for transportation? Will you have your own car? Is there public transportation in the town where you will go to college? Check the hours busses and/or cabs are available and the costs. Does public transportation run every day? What time does it start and end running? Even if you have your own transportation you need a good back-up plan if you have car trouble or something happens that you couldn't drive for some reason.

- In the spring or early summer you will register for classes for your first fall semester. You need to know where you will be living and what transportation you need and will have before you register. Remember any time constraints you may have so you don't schedule course when you won't have transportation to get there. If you are playing in sports, what time do you have to be at practice? Do you have practice in the mornings?

**Questions for Disability Services Staff
At Colleges You Visit**

Name of College: _____

Person you Interviewed _____

(It is always a good idea to get a business card if they have one because it will have all their contact information. Simply staple it to this form.)

1. What are school's admission requirements and what assessments are accepted?
ACT: _____ SAT: _____ Class Rank: _____
2. Are the requirements different for students with disabilities? If yes, how?
3. How many students are registered with the Disability Services Office?
Approximately how many students with disabilities graduate each year?
4. What services are provided on campus and who provides them?
5. What are the credentials of the person coordinating services?
6. Is there a cut off when students can no longer receive services?
7. Does the college provide remediation or support one-on-one? In a group setting?

8. Does the school have free tutoring? Who can access it?

9. What auxiliary aids and services are provided by the university to students with disabilities? Can the auxiliary aids be checked out to use in class.

10. How are accommodations and services accessed? What is the process to receive them?

11. If you have special living needs in the dorm can the institution provide them?
What do you need to give the university and when do they need it by?

12. Does the community have mass-transit or busses for students who don't drive?

13. Is there medical and psychological support available to students on campus?
Are the services free, billed and if so, how?

OTHER:

What is your overall impression of the campus?

What did you really like about the school?

What did you dislike about the school?

Did you schedule a campus tour?

Did you visit a dorm room?

List what was included in the dorm room:

What was your impression of the Disability Services Office?

Did you feel comfortable in the area? Were you greeted and made to feel welcome and at ease? Can you access their help when needed?

Did you receive contact information and were you encouraged to call with additional questions, concerns or to schedule another meeting if you felt it necessary?

Did you check out the town and area around campus? What was your impression of the town?

**Questions for Disability Services Staff
At Colleges You Visit**

Name of College: Bemidji State University Bemidji, MN

Person you Interviewed Kathi Hagen, Coordinator Disability Services

(It is always a good idea to get a business card if they have one because it will have all their contact information. Simply staple it to this form.)

1. What are school's admission requirements and what assessments are accepted?

ACT: 21 SAT: 990_(comb) Class Rank: Top 50% of class

2. Are the requirements different for students with disabilities? If yes, how?

Students who self-identify that they have a disability when they apply to BSU will be considered on a case-by-case basis for admission. Students who have enrolled in courses that prepare them for college will be reviewed for appropriateness for admission. Students who have not enrolled in courses to prepare them for college studies and do not meet the admission criteria will not typically be admitted.

3. How many students are registered with the Disability Services Office? Approximately how many students with disabilities graduate each year?

In 2004-2005, 303 students with disabilities had self-identified and received accommodations through the Disability Services Office. That year a total of 40 students with disabilities graduated; 36 had bachelor's degrees, 3 had Associate of Arts degrees and one student had an Associate in Applied Science Degree. In 2005-2006, the Disability Services Office served 261 self-identified students with a disability. In 2005-06 year 50 students graduated, 47 earned bachelor's degrees, 1 earned a Master's Degree, 2 earned an Associate of Arts degree. In 2006-2007, 271 students were served.

4. What services are provided on campus and who provides them?

Academic adjustments or accommodations are provided or coordinated by the Disability Services Office in 202 Sanford Hall. Accommodations may include (but are not limited to) interpreters, testing out of class with or without extended time, readers, books and assigned readings on tape, scribes, physical accessibility to classrooms, note takers, tape recording lectures, priority registration,

5. What are the credentials of the person coordinating services?

The Coordinator of Disability Services holds a Master of Arts Degree in Applied Behavioral Science. She has 17 years experience working with students with disabilities at Bemidji State University.

6. Is there a cut off when students can no longer receive services?

No, as long as students are enrolled in on- or off-campus and have a documented disability, a need for services (academic adjustments), and request them each semester.

7. Does the college provide remediation or support one-on-one? In a group setting?

BSU offers remedial math courses (group setting) to any student in need of this support. BSU also hosts a TRIO Student Support Services Program that provides

orientation, life career planning and reading and study skills courses to students in a small group setting. Students with disabilities will qualify for this program and are encouraged to explore enrollment in TRIO SSS.

8. Does the school have free tutoring? Who can access it?

BSU offers free peer tutoring in a variety of settings. The Academic Resource Center is staffed Sunday through Thursday evenings with peer academic assistants who help students in a variety of the liberal education classes. Any enrolled student can use this service.

BSU has a TRIO Student Support Services program and students who qualify and apply for the program may receive tutoring services through TRIO SSS.

9. What auxiliary aids and services are provided by the university to students with disabilities? Can the auxiliary aids be checked out to use in class.

Accommodations include (but are not limited to):

Taped texts

Note takers

Interpreters

Closed captioning

Readers

Library assistants

Testing out of class with or without extended time

10. How are accommodations and services accessed? What is the process to receive them?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) students are required to provide documentation from an appropriate documenting authority (i.e., medical doctors, psychologist, etc.) regarding their disability to the Disability Services Office. The coordinator is responsible for reviewing all documentation to determine if services are warranted and what services are appropriate.

If a student has a file set up with the Disability Services Office, they are requested to come in to the office the first week of classes and bring all of their syllabi with them. Based on course requirements and each student's individual needs, accommodations are then set up. Faculty are given a faculty notification form by the student. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that faculty are given the form in a timely manner to ensure accommodations as soon as possible.

If a student requires materials to be taped, it is their responsibility to bring the material to the Disability Services Office or to send it to their taping library if they use one. The Coordinator of Disability Services will hire students to read textbooks and other assigned reading material on tape.

It is also the responsibility to report when accommodations are not working and to discuss an alternative accommodation if necessary. If you are not receiving notes in a timely manner you must report it to the coordinator or a student worker in the Disability Services Office as soon as possible so that the situation may be corrected.

12. If you have special living needs in the dorm can the institution provide them?

BSU tries to accommodate students with disabilities residing in the dorms. The key to successful accommodation for students is to be sure to apply to live in the dorms EARLY. Make your needs known to the Disability Services Office and

Residential Life as early as possible, preferably by April 15th for Residential Life (for the following fall semester) to allow time to make sure that the appropriate and necessary accommodations/modifications in the room can be provided.

13. Does the community have mass-transit or busses for students who don't drive?
Bemidji has a bus system that can take students to the clinic, mall, Walmart, downtown, etc. The busses are a familiar sight around campus as they pick up and drop off students.

14. Is there medical and psychological support available to students on campus? Are the services free, billed and if so, how?
The Counseling Center, located in Student Health Services, provides free counseling for all students enrolled at BSU. Health services bills for services (\$5 office charge), file insurance claims, except for Medicare (Health Services is not a medicare provider); there are charges for medical tests equal to the cost of the test.

OTHER:

What is your overall impression of the campus?

What did you really like about the school?

What did you dislike about the school?

Did you schedule a campus tour?

Did you visit a dorm room?

List what was included in the dorm room:

What was your impression of the Disability Services Office?

Did you feel comfortable in the area? Were you greeted and made to feel welcome and at ease? Can you access their help when needed?

Did you receive contact information and were you encouraged to call with additional questions, concerns or to schedule another meeting if you felt it necessary?

Did you check out the town and area around the campus? What was your impression of the town?



Disability Services Office 202 Sanford Hall Box 43 1500 Birchmont Drive NE Bemidji, MN 56601 218 755-3883
KHagen@bemidjistate.edu

Dear New Student:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Bemidji State University and tell you about the services for students with documented disabilities that are available through my office. Services that may be provided on an individual basis, according to need include, but are not limited to:

- Note takers
- Large print exams and handouts
- Exams out of classroom
- Extended time for exams
- Readers and scribes for exams
- Priority registration
- Arrangements for books on tape
- Interpreters

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) students must provide documentation of their disability to the Disability Services Office in order to receive accommodations. If you have a disability I recommend that you submit your documentation to the office as early as possible to ensure accommodations for the coming year. (Documentation may be sent with your request for further information if you have a personal copy of your documentation.)

For further information, detach the bottom portion of this letter and return it to my office. I will be happy to mail you more information at your request.

Yes, I have a documented disability and request further information on services from the Disability Services Office.

Please send information to: _____
(Please Print) _____

Telephone: _____
e-mail address: _____

Mail to: Kathi Hagen, Coordinator, Disability Services Office, Bemidji State University, 1500 Birchmont Drive NE #43, Bemidji, MN 56601. Telephone (218) 755-3883 or e-mail KHagen@bemidjistate.edu

A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and University System, Bemidji State University is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Student Responsibility Checklist

Responsibilities to apply for and receive accommodations for a disability include:

- ◇ Student must contact the Coordinator, Disability Services Office and request the paperwork to start a file and document their disability. Paperwork includes an **Intake Form** and **Release of Information Authorization(s)** which must be filled out and returned to the Disability Services Office. The Disability Services Office will send out the **Release of Information Authorization** to the appropriate professional(s) along with a request for appropriate information to document the disability. Once a file is established you don't have to do this step again.
- ◇ Once classes begin students will be given a syllabus in each class. You need to read through each syllabus and learn what each course requires. Make a note of the accommodation(s) you will need for each course. You may not need an accommodation in every course. (You must do this step every semester.)
- ◇ By the second week of class you need to come to the Disability Services Office and meet with the designated person to set up accommodations for each course that you need them in. Along with the designated person you will fill out the **Faculty Notification Form** requesting appropriate accommodations.
- ◇ You are responsible for giving the **Faculty Notification Form** to your professor. The professor may choose to visit with you briefly to determine whether or not they can do anything else to enhance your learning. Not every professor will want to do this.
- ◇ If you have requested a note taker as an accommodation you are required to go to class and pay attention. Students who skip class or sleep through class (not disability related) will not receive notes for the missed classes or classes slept through. It is also your responsibility to notify the Coordinator of Disability Services if there is any problem with your notes. If you aren't getting them in a timely manner, they are illegible or don't have the information they should have you need to report this right away to the Coordinator so the situation can be corrected.
- ◇ If you have requested testing out of class as an accommodation you are responsible for filling out a gold **Exam Notification** form at least three days before your exam. You are responsible for reminding your instructor two or three days ahead of the test date to send the exam to my office. If you need a reader or scribe for your exams you must let the Disability Services Office know one week in advance. If you need to miss a test, you must contact your professor to see whether or not you can still write the exam. Exams are the property of the instructor and you must make arrangements with them regarding writing an exam earlier or later than the assigned time. Once you have spoken to your instructor contact the receptionist in Disability Services to reschedule your exam. This is to be done for every exam. A copy of the testing rules is attached.

- ◇ If you received textbooks on tape as an accommodation, it is your responsibility to get a copy of the syllabus so you know what textbook is being used for the course. If you work with Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic or some other agency that provides textbooks on tape, it is your responsibility to contact the agency and see if they have your book on tape already. If you they have the book taped, you need to order it; if it is not taped you need to send the book and the syllabus to the agency and request it be taped. This must be done several weeks prior to the start of the semester you need the book.

- If you have textbooks that need to be taped and you do not work with a taping agency you will need to buy the textbook and bring it to the Disability Services Office to be taped. You will need to purchase the textbook prior to the term it will be used so that readers can begin reading before the start of classes. You should meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services as soon as you have registered for classes to determine a timeline to have your books purchased to be taped for you.

- ◇ For students who receive **Priority Registration** you need to keep track of the date students with priority registration are scheduled to register. There are several things you must do EVERY semester:
 - You need to log on to the online registration and check to see if you have any holds. If you do have holds you need to find out what they are and take care of them immediately or you will not be allowed to register. If you need help finding out about your holds contact your advisor or the Coordinator, Disability Services Office.
 - You need to make an appointment with your advisor to meet regarding class choices for the next semester. In each term's class schedule the date that the next term's schedule will be available is given. It is important to mark your academic calendar with that date. Schedules usually are available on Monday and priority registration is Friday of the same week. It is your responsibility to make an appointment to meet with your advisor sometime that week so you are ready to register when your registration window opens that Friday morning. You must meet with your advisor and get your advisor access code before you can register. Every semester you must do this because the advisor access code changes every term.
 - Once you have met with your advisor and picked your classes for the next term it is your responsibility to go online on priority registration day. You will need to register for all your classes. If you have any problems with the registration process you need to contact your advisor or the Disability Services Office right away. If you need help registering for classes there are student workers available to help you in the Disability Services Office. Stop by and someone will help you register for your classes and give you a printout of your registration.

Questions to Ask Yourself to Determine Course Accommodations

The following are questions to ask yourself as you examine each syllabus for your course work. It will help you think about the academic accommodations you need and organize yourself before meeting with the Coordinator, Disability Services. This form may be duplicated as needed for your courses or more may be picked up at the Disability Services Office.

LECTURES

- Do you need a note taker to get the lecture information?

- Do you prefer to tape record lectures?

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Do you need to order books on tape? Do you need help ordering books on tape?

Title of Book	Author	Edition	Publisher and Date	ISBN Number

- Do you need your textbooks taped by the Disability Services Office? Have you notified them in advance that you need books on tape?

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- What kind of help do you need with written assignments? Please list/explain below.

- Do you need help in the library?

EXAMS/QUIZZES

- Do you need to take your exams with extended time?
- Do you need a reader or scribe for your exams?
- Do you need a computer for essay exams?

CLASS PROJECTS

- Are there assigned projects? What do they entail? Is there any support or accommodation necessary to complete the project?

The following questions are in respect to the support services offered by the Disability Services Office. Which of the following do you feel you need or would you like to participate in (if any)? Please note all support groups are limited to five (5) people for more comfortable, smaller interactions. There may be more than one of each particular peer group depending on interest.

- Weekly reading group to practice reading out loud and improve reading comprehension skills.
- Weekly peer support group for anxiety.
- Individual weekly meetings with the Coordinator of Disability Services, graduate student or an intern to help you with organization and/or time management. (You will work with one of those support people).
- Weekly peer support group for self-esteem building.
- Weekly peer support group for stress management skill building.

All information about who participates in a support group and information shared is kept confidential by the Disability Services Office and no information is shared with anyone without the student's written consent. All participants in the groups must be registered with the Disability Services Office prior to joining any support group or have the permission of the Coordinator, Disability Services and the group facilitator.

If you are a returning student and did not do well the last term you attended it is recommended you review your accommodation options and support services appropriate to your needs and consult with the coordinator regarding what accommodations and support services may be beneficial to you.