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A learning disabled student's guide to college

Abstract

The learning-disabled college student is a relatively recent topic in the history of postsecondary education. The passing of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 gives these students the opportunity to attend college and allows for the necessary accommodations needed to succeed. Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112) requires that colleges make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities so that they will not be discriminated against. "The accommodations are of three general types (1) the ways in which specific courses are taught, (2) use of auxiliary aids, and (3) modifications in program requirements" (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997, p. 198).

A Learning Disabled Student's Guide to College

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs

University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts
Master of Arts in Education

by

Julie R. Welter

July 2000

This Research Paper by: Julie R. Welter
Entitled: A Learning Disabled Student's Guide to College

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Education.

7.28.2000
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The learning-disabled college student is a relatively recent topic in the history of postsecondary education. The passing of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 gives these students the opportunity to attend college and allows for the necessary accommodations needed to succeed. Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112) requires that colleges make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities so that they will not be discriminated against. “The accommodations are of three general types (1) the ways in which specific courses are taught, (2) use of auxiliary aids, and (3) modifications in program requirements” (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997, p. 198).

Institutions or organizations receiving federal funds (this includes any institution receiving more than \$2,500 in grants, financial aid, or together federal financial assistance) may not discriminate against ‘otherwise qualified individuals solely on the basis of disability’ and must address the needs of children who are considered ‘handicapped.’ (Kravets, 1996, p. 26)

This definition includes learning disabilities. Learning disabilities are a life-long condition that can be modified through instruction. For the purpose of this paper the definition of a learning disability, which is endorsed by the federal government, is as follows:

‘Specific learning disability’ means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think,

speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997, p. 167)

Learning disabled students today who wish to attend college have far greater opportunities than students of the past because of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that there has been a significant increase in the number of learning disabled students attending college throughout the nation since the 1980s. Some also attribute this to the “increasing emphasis on transition programming and the recent effects of Public Law 101-476” (deBettencourt, Bonaro, & Sabornie, 1995, p. 102). Other reasons used to explain the increase in learning disabled students on college campus include:

(a) the provision of appropriate special education in elementary and secondary schools; (b) the coming of age of those who were provided an education with necessary support services over many school years; and (c) the growing awareness in postsecondary institutions that providing these support services allows students to succeed in college, technical schools and beyond.

(deBettencourt, Bonaro, & Sabornie, 1995, p. 102)

Nevertheless, it is important that the needs of this growing population of learning disabled students on college campuses be addressed to assure their success in higher education. “According to Siperstein (1988), colleges and universities should be prepared to work with students with learning disabilities in three major areas: (a) gaining entry into college, (b) managing academic and social changes in college, and (c) planning for the exit from college to employment” (Satcher, 1995, p. 102).

The most obvious change learning disabled students will notice at the collegiate level is who is held responsible for accessing these accommodations. P.L. 94-142, protecting children with learning disabilities states that the “local education agency is responsible for identifying, assessing, and serving students with disabilities. In contrast, under Section 504 of P.L. 93-112, college students are viewed as being best equipped to initially identify themselves and assess their own individual educational needs” (Brinkerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1992, p. 420). Learning disabled students, therefore, need accessible resources to provide them with the necessary information to advocate for their rights. The purpose of this paper is to: (a) identify the problems facing learning disabled students as they consider pursuing postsecondary education, and (b) propose strategies and identify resources for addressing these problems toward making a successful transition to college.

Determining If College is a Possibility

The passing of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has made it possible for learning disabled students to succeed in college; however, because of this disability, college will be more challenging than for their non-learning disabled peers. It is important for learning disabled students to make a decision about college early in their education. They should be weighing their options as early as junior high because there are a lot of things to do to prepare for college while in high school. To begin with it is very important for learning disabled students to have a career direction prior to entering college; therefore, the first step in deciding whether or not to attend college is to explore all options. “These explorations should be fairly wide-ranging and may include a look at vocational education, job training, work, and/or military service” (Coleman, 1994, p. 53). As with any student learning disabled students are much more likely to succeed if they are interested in what they are studying. Also, making a career decision early will be important in their college selection process.

Several studies have found that learning disabled students have a lower career maturity level than their non-learning disabled peers. This is why it is necessary for learning disabled students to consult their guidance counselor or a career counselor at an area community college or in the private sector. Counselors can assist in the career decision making process. They will provide career assessments to help LD students explore their interests, skills, values, and goals.

In addition, it is very important to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses related to the disability during this process. The counselor will provide an interpretation of these assessments and help these students explore their specific career interests. Other helpful things learning disabled students can do that a counselor can assist with in the career decision making process include job shadowing, volunteer work, summer and/or part-time jobs, internships, and other career awareness activities offered through the school. This process takes a lot of time; however, the more information these students have, the better their decision-making can be. “*Unlocking Potential: College and Other Choices for Learning Disabled People- A Step-by-Step Guide* (Scheiber & Talpers, 1987) is the single best resource available for working through these issues” (Coleman, 1994, p. 53). It is important to take all career possibilities into consideration at this point because even the decision not to attend college immediately after high school does not mean the student will never attend college; therefore, the students will want to prepare for possible future career decisions as well.

Planning for College while in High School

Besides making a career decision there are several additional concerns learning disabled students must consider in their college preparation. These concerns include deciding whether to retain the LD label, learning about appropriate accommodations, and determining which courses to take. Deciding whether to retain the LD label in high school is one of the first concerns to address. In order

for students to receive accommodations, institutions require documentation of the disability, some requiring recent documentation, by an educational clinic, hospital, or a professional in the private sector. This expense is incurred by the student, costing somewhere between \$500-\$1,500 (Kravets, 1996, p. 25).

“However, if the institution disputes the (recent) evaluation material offered by the student, it may have to pay for a second or updated evaluation” (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1992, p. 420). This diagnosis entitles students to certain accommodations that are determined by the student that will assist in their learning and is also approved by the institution and faculty. Although this label may be limiting in high school, it can provide several benefits to them in college. The LD label allows for certain modifications to be made on the ACT, SAT, and other standardized tests that are required for college admissions. The LD label also requires that an Individual Education Plan be developed for them. An IEP for a student with learning disabilities “should provide for an early determination of postsecondary goals agreeable to all concerned and specification of the curriculum, courses, time sequence, and support program appropriate for realization of those long-term goals” (Shaw, Byron, Norlander, McGuire, & Anderson, 1989, p. 2). This process allows learning disabled students to learn about their own strengths and challenges, helpful accommodations, and self-advocacy skills.

High school is the ideal atmosphere to develop strategies for “review, rehearsal, and retrieval of new information. They also refine their use of computers, calculator, electronic spellers, Dictaphones, tape recorders, books on tape, and other technologies that reduce the impact of their learning disability” (Coleman, 1994, p. 54). It is important to learn which accommodations assist in their learning before attending college and for them to have practice using the devices. College moves at a much faster pace; therefore, they will not have the time to make these adjustments there. Also, generally students who succeed in secondary and postsecondary education are those who organize for learning. “That is, they are efficient learners who have developed strategies for the organization of and alter retrieval of information. Such strategies include note taking, reading for later retrieval, test-taking skills, library skills, and time management.” (Skinner & Schenck, 1992, p. 373). “One of the greatest gifts that a secondary curriculum can give to a college-bound LD student is increased competency in organizational and study skills.” (Skinner & Schenck, 1992, p. 373). These are all very important skills to use throughout their life and learning them in high school will save a lot of time that they will need for studying in college.

Another important consideration is determining which courses to take.

A critical element of an effective high school program is determination of which curricula and courses will be taken by students with learning disabilities.

Too often, these students are counseled into a general studies curriculum that will disqualify them from admission to most 4-year colleges. In addition, many students with learning disabilities receive course waivers-often for foreign language or mathematics-which can significantly limit college options. Course waivers may be necessary and appropriate, but they should be provided only when based on valid diagnostic data. Furthermore, all parties should be made aware of the implication of waivers for postsecondary education. (Shaw, Byron, Nolander, McQuire, & Anderson, 1989, p. 2)

College-bound learning disabled students need to take college preparatory courses just as all other students. This will help them be prepared for college. However, because these courses are more challenging the course load is an important consideration. Taking more time to complete high school (4 ½ to 5 years) should be considered if it will better prepare them for the challenge of college.

Choosing the Right College or University

Choosing the right college is one of the most important decisions learning disabled students will make. It is a long process that will take much thought and evaluation and should be completed at least two academic quarters before they graduate. There are several ways to gather information about colleges. Students can start by developing a standard form letter to send to admission offices, call, or e-mail to request information about their institution. High school guidance offices also have catalogs and other information about various colleges. Information

about institutions can also be gathered using the Internet. It is helpful to call people at the college in the department they are considering and someone in the learning disabilities support services. Talking to people that have attended that college, especially other learning disabled students is very important in the decision making process.

There are colleges that offer structured LD programs. Most of these limit the number of students, charge an extra fee, and are bound by a contract. The Peterson's Guide to College with Programs for Learning Disabled Students (Mangrum and Strichart, published yearly) is a good resource to identify these colleges. However, it is not always necessary for the college to have a learning disability program. "The choice of classes and major field is as important as the choice of university" (Robinson, 1986, p. 4). Reasonably self-reliant students that are able to arrange for outside help on their own, do not necessarily need to attend a college with a LD program.

There are several general questions for learning disabled students to answer when gathering information on various colleges:

- (1) What areas of the curriculum are offered as majors, and do they meet with my interests?,
- (2) What size campus will I feel comfortable with?,
- (3) What are the students like? Will I fit in?,
- (4) What extracurricular activities are available that I would be likely to participate in (sports, music, drama,

fraternity/sorority, religious groups, etc.)?, (5) What support services are available to help me with my learning disability? (Coleman, 1994, p.54)

“As a general rule, the lower the faculty-to-student ratio, the higher probability of success for the LD student” (Skinner & Schenck, 1992, p. 372). However, this also depends on faculty attitudes toward LD students. It is important to find this out when gathering information about their college choices. Faculty need to be willing to modify classroom requirements and procedures to accommodate LD students. This means changing the form of presentation, not the content of the material. The faculty’s

flexibility in terms of classroom organization (e.g., large group versus small group instruction), classroom management (e.g., varying consequences), method of presentation (e.g., providing advanced organizers), method of practice (e.g., work sheets, texts, audio and visual materials), and testing procedures (e.g., verbal, written, and demonstration) will serve to assist students in compensating for specific weaknesses. (Skinner & Schenck, 1992, p. 373-374)

Once information is gathered from several colleges, they will need to narrow their selection down to five or so good choices. Next, they must visit each of these colleges. During this process it is particularly helpful for students to sit in on classes, especially those related to the student’s choice of major. This is helpful to LD students so that they may “personally judge the level of difficulty of

the instruction, observe the interaction of the students, and gain for himself or herself a sense of the relationship between the students and faculty” (Shaw, Byron, Norlander, McQuire, & Anderson, 1989, p. 3).

There are several things learning disabled students need to consider when choosing a college and several questions to answer before making a decision. Appendix A contains a list of questions gathered from various resources for learning disabled students to answer prior to making any decision. It is a good idea for students or their parents to write down the responses they receive to these questions and have the person answering them sign and date the paper. This document could be used as a future reference if problems arise.

It is also important to seek advice from financial aid offices on the federal regulations for eligibility requirements for financial aid, especially if the student does not anticipate taking a full-time course load. Other concerns include eligibility to participate in student life organizations, such as fraternities and sororities, if the student cannot meet the grade-point average or course-load requirements. It is important to get all their questions answered before making a decision. Designing a Decision-Making Matrix can be helpful in narrowing down the choices and making a college selection. Appendix B illustrates how to set up a Decision-Making Matrix chart.

After learning disabled students narrow their choices down they will start the application process. It is important to know that any question about disabilities

on an application for admission to an institution is generally prohibited; however, it is in the students best interest to “self-disclose their disability, identify their needs and provide professional documentation” (Kravets, 1996, p. 27). “Legally, institutions may not deny the student admission because of a self-disclosed disability if the student meets the academic qualifications for admission” (Kravets, 1996, p. 27).

Succeeding in College

College life is much different from that in high school. There is less time in the classroom in college; however, the amount of independent reading and study time outside of the class is much greater. Responsibility for learning is placed on the student. This is precisely why it is important for learning disabled students to learn time management skills and appropriate accommodations to assist their learning while in high school. “McCann (1991) indicated that 96% of the students using the accommodations reported that they helped them to be more successful in college” (Rogan & Havir, 1993, p. 14). “Research at the postsecondary level (McCann, 1991) also indicates that accommodations that help students with learning disabilities to succeed create confidence, independence, and success” (Rogan & Havir, 1993, p. 14).

Accommodations are techniques that eliminate or at least minimize the power of students’ learning problems by literally bypassing their disabilities in favor of getting information acquired, stored, or expressed in some atypical manner.

They are procedures, services, and techniques that students can use independently or with assistance to meet the demands of the curriculum.

(Rogan & Havir, 1993, p. 13)

“According to the Rehabilitation Act Regulations, postsecondary services are required to provide auxiliary aids, such as taped texts to students with disabilities.

These auxiliary aids are referred to in the educational literature as ancillary equipment, adapted computer technology, and assistive technology” (Day & Edwards, 1996, p. 488). These are all considered reasonable accommodations.

An assistive technology device (ATD) is, as defined by the Technology-Related Assistance Act of 1988 (P.L.100-407), “any item, piece of furniture, or system used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities” (Day & Edwards, 1996, p. 488).

Having access to accommodations does not mean that the expectations for students with learning disabilities are less. They are required to do the same assignments and take the same tests as every student in the class; however, LD students may be provided with accommodations to assist in their learning.

Appendix C lists several forms of accommodations. Learning disabled students should experiment with the different accommodations to determine which accommodations are the most helpful to them. Once students discover the most appropriate accommodations, they must advocate for their rights to these accommodations in order to use them.

At the college level, students should be provided a variety of modifications to assist them in earning a degree. Both public and private institutions must provide accommodations as long as they aren't excessive, meaning they cannot be "too costly, infringe on the academic freedom of the instructor, or violate the integrity of the curriculum" (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1992, p. 422). "If the proposed accommodation does not pose an undue financial or administrative burden on the institution, or result in fundamental alterations in program requirements, then the institution must ultimately bear the costs of the accommodation." (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1992, p. 421).

Not all LD students need the same accommodations to learn; therefore, each student needs to be evaluated individually. In the process of finding appropriate accommodations, additional testing of the student's strengths, limitations and needs may be needed. "This evaluation may be extensive and include assessment of receptive and expressive oral language, auditory functioning, visual perception, memory, mathematics reasoning, and mathematics computation" (Satcher, 1989, p. 6-7). There is no single formula to determine which accommodation will work best; therefore, learning disabled students must learn which one works for them through trial and error.

There are also other things learning disabled students can do to succeed in college. "The type of instruction that should be encouraged in college is training in learning strategies, including study skills, memory techniques, test-taking, and

organizational strategies” (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1992, p. 425). These strategies will greatly assist students in their success. Other successful tips include: studying in a quiet place and at quiet times, devising and following a daily and weekly schedule, planning or weighing their workloads across several days, reporting to class regularly and completing all homework to compensate for expected poor quiz and test grades, sub vocalizing (whispered reading), and purchasing previously highlighted textbooks (Hauser, 1994, p. 8).

Having good organizational skills will also increase the amount of free time to develop friendships. Research has found that “a close network of friends increases tremendously the probability of successfully completing the college curriculum” (Skinner & Schenck, 1992, p. 374). It is also helpful to meet other learning disabled students in any peer groups offered through the college. These groups are people to whom they can relate and can help in the areas of “social relationships and skills, developing self-esteem and confidence, and overcoming dependence” (Skinner & Schenck, 1992, p. 374).

Selecting Courses

There are essentially “two barriers to overcome when choosing college courses: a) emphasis on listening, reading, oral expression, writing, test-taking, and various study skills, and b) negative attitudes of faculty and staff toward them” (Satcher, 1989, p. 8). To overcome these barriers learning disabled students must evaluate each course and instructor’s teaching style before signing

up for the course. Some guidelines for evaluating college courses include the following:

become aware of materials which will be used in a course, the format of content presentation, instructional techniques used, personality traits of the professor that might affect student success in the class, the student's responsibilities both in and out of the class, how the student will be evaluated, and the acceptable standards of behavior set by the professor. (Satcher, 1989, p. 8-9)

Transitioning into the Work World

“Inactive learning styles, memory deficits, social imperceptiveness, as well as reading and written language deficits complicate the work lives of adults with disabilities” (Reekie, 1995, p. 165). Just as in college, however, accommodations in the workplace will assist in career success. Summer and/or part-time jobs, internships, and job shadowing experiences can help learning disabled students realize the potential effects the disability will have on their future career. This is a good time to identify what accommodations they will need in that career to be successful.

College graduates with learning disabilities who seem to have the most positive career outcomes are those who (a) recognize the limitations associated with their disabilities and make occupational choices based on their strengths, (b) are able to describe their learning disabilities to others, (c) accept that their

learning disabilities are real, and (d) request accommodations and services from their employers to alleviate the limitations associated with their disabilities. (Satcher, 1995, p. 103)

“Those who have identified and can explain their personal strengths and weakness can make more informed career choices and provide more accurate information to employers, coworkers, and employment agencies” (Hitchings, Horvath, Luzzo, Ristow, & Retish, 1998, p. 24).

The Career Services office and/or the Vocational Rehabilitation office at the institution can assist learning disabled students in their school-to-work transition. However, it is important for these students to clearly identify themselves as having a learning disability to these services in order to receive appropriate assistance from them. Areas in which learning disabled students need assistance are identification of needed accommodations for specific positions, job seeking skills including resume development and interviewing, and self-advocacy training which involves knowledge of disability legislation. Understanding their disability, how to compensate, and self-advocacy skills continue past postsecondary education to the workplace where the learning disabled student will use the ADA (American with Disability Act) to advocate for their rights. An advantage of working with career services and/or the vocational rehabilitation office is to learn “not only what the law specifies, but also what the advantages and disadvantages are of various approaches” (Friehe, Aune, & Leuenberger, 1996, p. 299). Career

Service/Vocational Rehabilitation professionals and college lawyers can assist these students in determining their rights in the workplace, reasonable accommodations, and whether they should provide disability information on an application or in an interview situation. Information regarding the ADA can also be found on the World Wide Web. JAN (Job Accommodation Network), a federally funded agency, can also assist learning disabled students and prospective employers in determining their rights. This information can be found at www.janweb.icdi.wvu.edu. These helpful resources provide information that learning disabled students will need upon entering the job market.

The following are a list of examples of just a few of the learning disabled students' rights under the ADA. The ADA guidelines states that it is illegal for employers to ask about disabilities on the application or during an interview; however, employers can ask about a learning disabled person's ability to perform a task if it is essential to the job. Employees, on the other hand, do not have to provide information about their disability, even if an employer requests it. Employers may require a test if all applicants must take it, but it must measure job functions.

Employers do not have to provide accommodations *until* employees ask for it. Reasonable accommodations include adaptive equipment, flexible job schedules, readers/interpreters, and restructuring of job schedules. Employers "cannot inquire about past compensation until after making a conditional job offer and

may not refuse employment to a person with a disability with the rationale that such hiring might cause an increase in insurance costs” (Herr & Cramer, 1996, p. 296). A related statistic provided by JAN states that “80 percent of all workplace accommodations for people with disabilities cost \$500 or less, many cost nothing” (Ryan & Harvey, 1999, p. 38). It is also important to know that an employer can be charged with discrimination for terminating an employee if the employee disclosed the disability and was refused the accommodation.

Conclusion

Colleges need to be prepared for an increasing population of learning disabled students. Institutions need to work with LD students in gaining entry into college, managing academic and social changes in college, and planning for exit from college to employment. Although student affairs professionals and faculty are there to assist these students, it is ultimately the learning disabled students who are responsible for their success. This is why it is important to begin preparing for college and the work world while in high school by learning self-advocacy skills and appropriate accommodations for their future success.

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Appendix A

Questions to Ask Colleges about Support Services Available for LD Students

Who Is Eligible For Support Services?

What identification information is required? (including dates of testing), Are further diagnostic tests required, or available? (IQ, achievement, learning styles, study habits, career inventory), What are the costs, if any, or referral to and/or placement in the programs offered?, Are qualified personnel available to interpret and explain results of testing?

What Academic Support Services Are Available Specifically For LD Students?

Individual Education Plans?, Note takers?, Modified test taking?, Learning strategy seminars? (test taking, note taking, time management, highlighting text, outlining/webbing, study skills)

What Counseling Support Services Are Available?

Personal adjustment issues?, Self-advocacy skills?, Career guidance?, Who counsels students with learning disabilities during registration, orientation, and course selection?

What Academic Support Services Are Available?

Math labs for extra help?, Writing centers for assistance?, Tutorial services?, Study sessions for classes?, Computer centers?

Which courses provide tutoring?, What kind of tutoring is available, and who does it-peers or staff?, Is tutoring automatic, or must the student request assistance?, How well do faculty members accept students with learning disabilities?, Are courses in study skills or writing skills offered?

(Shaw, Byron, Norlander, McQuire, & Anderson, 1989, p. 3)

What qualifications must tutors have? Do they just have to have a certain grade in a particular course, and/or do they also have to be able to “teach” the material so that it can be understood by others?

Questions Regarding Institutional Policies Relating To Learning Disabilities:

Number of credit hours required for full-time students?, Extended drop period for LD students?, Taping lectures and classes?, Transferring credits from other institutions, especially community colleges?, Auditing classes prior to taking them for credit?, Substitution of some classes (e.g. foreign languages)?, Grade point average required for graduation?, Priority scheduling for LD students?, Selection of advisors?, Academic probation and failure?, Office hours for professors and instructors?, Teaching load of professors? May students with learning disabilities take a lighter load?,

May students with learning disabilities take more time to graduate?, Whom can parents contact if they have concerns during the academic year?

(Shaw, Byron, Norlander, McQuire, & Anderson, 1989, p. 3)

What Compensation Strategies Are Available To Allow Students To Bypass Their Learning Disabilities?

Books on tape?, Voice compression tape recorders?, Computers?, Calculators?, Note takers?

What Lifestyle Modifications Can Be Made?

Private rooms?, Dorm noise?, Access to quiet study rooms?, Library study carrel?, Health services (especially if medication is used)?, Food services (especially if allergies are present)? (Coleman, 1994, p. 55)

Questions For Specific Learning Disability Programs:

Is the program monitored by a full-time professional staff?, Has the program been evaluated, and if so, by whom?, Are there any concerns for the program's future?, Have counselors who work with students with learning disabilities received special training? (Shaw, Byron, Norlander, McQuire, & Anderson, 1989, p. 3)

Appendix B

Decision-Making Matrix Chart

Decision-Making Matrix for College Selection

5=optimal; 4=good; 3=fair; 2=OK; 1=poor; 0=not acceptable

	Probable areas of study			Preferred extra-curriculars			Support services for my LD needs				Other important factors					Totals
	Campus	Cost	Location	Students												
Colleges I am interested in																

Coleman, M. R. (1994, Spring). Post-secondary education decisions for gifted/learning disabled students. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, 56.

Appendix C

List of Accommodations

The following is a list of accommodations that LD college students should inquire about. The list was compiled from the following sources: Assistive Technology for Postsecondary Students with Learning Disabilities by Day and Edwards (1996), Promoting Access, Accommodations, and Independence for College Students with Learning Disabilities by Brinckerhoff, Shaw, and McGuire (1992), Hidden Disabilities: Another Diverse Population by Kravets (1996), Learning Disabled Students: Making The Transition to College Life by Satcher (1989), Using Accommodations With Students With Learning Disabilities by Rogan and Havir (1993).

General Institutional Accommodations – Priority registration; Changes in length of time permitted for completion of degree; Substitution of specific courses; Student support groups to assist in making friends; Listings of outside services and support groups for use by students.

Coursework/Assignment Accommodations- Readers to read assignments; Books on cassette/VCR tapes; Kurzweil Personal Reader- “KPR is a computer assisted device that reads printed symbols” (Rogan & Havir, 1993 p. 13); Word processors/ personal computers with spell checking, proofreading, abbreviation

expanders (programs that allow students to type abbreviations for frequently used words or phrases and press the space bar to produce the complete work or phrase); Outlining software programs; Voice works; Writing assistance; Typing services; Proofreading/Editing services; Transcription services; Wilsonline Workstations, “Computer assisted library devices... students tell station what they are searching for and the computer accesses disk or on-line data banks to identify books, articles, and so forth to deal with that topic” (Rogan & Havir, 1993, p. 14); Extended time for class assignments, Tutors.

Other Assistive Technologies- Variable speech control tape recorders; Optical character recognition systems (reading machines); Listening aids (systems that use a microphone and headset designed for students with auditory deficits); Speech-synthesis/screen-review systems (voice output systems that read back text displayed on the computer screen); Speech-recognition systems (systems that allow the user to operate the computer by speaking into it); Data managers (technologies that store personal information for students with organization and memory difficulties); Talking calculators. (Day & Edwards, 1996, p. 487)

Lecture Accommodations- Tape lecture on cassette tape/VCR tape, Note taking services including getting a copy of class notes taken by another student (can use carbonless paper for this), or use preprinted notepaper to help organize notes;

Cooperative learning classmates can be assigned to help LD students express their ideas.

Testing Accommodations- Untimed tests; Test readers; Type or record responses to questions; Dictating exam responses to a scribe; Franklin Spell Checkers/Dictionaries/Thesaurus- “Enter an approximation and then see and/or hear the correct word/spelling or correct word usage” (Rogan & Havir, 1993, p. 14); Talking calculators; Taking test in separately quiet room.

Instructional Accommodations- The following is some suggestions LD students might offer to an instructor on ways they can assist them and others in their learning: Provide different forms of exams including oral, objective, essay, and take home; Use multiple forms of presenting materials; Share copies of outlines and notes; Provide description of assignments in oral and written form; Provide course syllabus at beginning of course and do not change it throughout the semester; Forewarn learning disabled students of pop quizzes.