

TECH-NJ 2007

Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities

The College of New Jersey, School of Education
Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy

Volume 18, Number 1

Transition:

Planning for College Success	1
Making the Transition	3
Advice for High School Students	5

Legal Issues:

Textbooks in Alternate Format: P-12 Standards	8
Higher Education	8
National Federation of the Blind	9

Resources:

Project Eye-To-Eye	6
Conference: Promoting Successful Transition to College or Community	7
Internet Sites for e-Text	10
Teacher of the Blind/Visually Impaired Masters Degree Center for Assistive Technology and Inclusive Education Studies	11
Career & Community Studies	13
NJ Regional Centers for College Students with Disabilities	14

New Products:

gh Player™ - Software for Access to Electronic Text	14
Digital Pen and USB Flash Drive	14

THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Contributors	2
Editorial	2
Reader's Response Form	15

TECH-NJ is written by students, staff and faculty in the Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy at The College of New Jersey. It is designed to support professionals, parents, and computer-users in their efforts to use technology to improve our schools and to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. In order to facilitate local networking, emphasis is placed on resources and innovative practices in and around the New Jersey region.

PLANNING FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

by Vincent J. Varrassi MA, LDTC

A student with a learning disability planning to attend college needs to take several steps to prepare for selecting the right college and for a successful college experience.

Preparing for College Success

The student must take a rigorous college preparatory program while in high school. It should be a program that is the most challenging in which he or she can experience success. It should be a program in mainstream classes at the "College Preparatory" level and in regular education to the extent possible. The time to get a sense of your strengths and weaknesses and the level of competition you can handle is now, in high school, not when you are 500 miles from home, without a support network, and attending a college.

Your successes and your challenges in high school will also help you in deciding the type of support you may need at college. Remember, there are no IEPs in college. Different legislation, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, will now provide you with access, but this is very different from what you may be used to in high school. You need to learn about this difference. Degree programs and course requirements will not be modified to fit you; you need to find the program into which you will fit. The only way to know that is to know more about yourself, and attempting a challenging curriculum in high school is one way to do that.

Another way to know what you will need in college is to really understand what your learning disability is and how it impacts on your academic studies. One

way to do that is to actively participate in your IEP meetings and in the Child Study Team evaluation process. It is all about you, and now is the time to understand all that is being said and discussed about you: your learning strengths, your talents and your areas of weakness.

Think about it. You spend hours and hours going through all the evaluations conducted by psychologists, learning disabilities specialists, etc. and too often, you do not really understand the results of all those evaluations. Meet with your case manager or guidance counselor. Make sure your evaluations are current. Ask that all those reports be explained to you. Understand why you were given certain accommodations in high school, and ask what accommodations you are likely to need in college. All of this information will help you and your parents decide what type of support you will need when you go to college; whether you can go to "Any college, USA" to which your grades and SAT's will admit you, or whether you must consider going to a college that has a specialized program of support where you can get services like tutorial support or help with organization and advisement. Not every college has this type of program, and even among the colleges that do have programs, the programs differ from college to college.

Choosing the Right College

Once you are equipped with knowledge of the level of competition you can handle,

(continued on page 12)



EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-Chief: Amy G. Dell
Managing Editor: Anne M. Disdier

Guest Contributors

LeDerick Horne
Vincent Varrassi

TECH-NJ is supported by the School of Education and the Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy at The College of New Jersey, and the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education Special Needs Grant Program.

© 2007 by The College of New Jersey. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce material in TECH-NJ for educational purposes. TECH-NJ should be credited as the original source of information.

Views expressed in TECH-NJ do not necessarily reflect policies or opinions of The College of New Jersey or any of its funding sources.

TECH-NJ
Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy
The College of New Jersey
P. O. Box 7718
Ewing, NJ 08628-0718
(609)771-2308
e-mail: technj@tcnj.edu
<http://adaptivetech.tcnj.edu>

TECH - NJ 2007

Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities
Volume 18, Number 1

EDITORIAL

As one of eight regional centers funded by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education to support college students who have disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Center provides training, technical assistance, and an equipment loan program to all colleges and universities in the state – two-year and four-year, public and private. The center strives to make students' academic experiences successful through the use of appropriate assistive technology. One of the lessons we have learned in the past seven years is that success in college for students with disabilities is very much affected by the preparation they had (or did not have) while still in high school. That is why we are sponsoring a full-day conference on April 20, 2007 called Moving On: Promoting Successful Transitions to College or Community, and the reason we decided to focus this issue of TECH-NJ on the topic of transition from high school to college.

Our cover story, Planning for College Success for Students with Learning Disabilities, was written by Vincent Varrassi, a director of the Regional Center at Fairleigh Dickinson University and a nationally-recognized expert on transition. His article speaks directly to high school students and includes a great deal of helpful, practical advice. Three students with learning disabilities who are currently attending college are featured in the second article in this issue of TECH-NJ. They discuss their initial experiences at college and coping strategies that they have found to be effective.

Keeping with the theme of practical advice for high school students, the article on page 5 is written by LeDerick Horne, a young man with learning disabilities who graduated from two colleges with regional centers: Project Connections at Middlesex County College and Project Mentor at New Jersey City University. LeDerick told his personal story in the 2004 issue of TECH-NJ; in this issue he tells high school students how to survive the transition to college and how to make the most of their college experience.

The sections on Legal Issues and Resources both focus on the need for students with disabilities to have access to texts in alternate formats in a timely manner. The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) and National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC) are explained, and the need for similar legislation at the higher education level is discussed. Under Resources, numerous internet sites are identified as good sources of electronic text and/or audio files. These files can be easily downloaded for reading with screen readers for students who are blind/visually impaired, with text-to-speech software for students with learning disabilities, and/or for listening on computers or MP3 players. Some of the web sites have files in braille format for blind students who prefer reading with refreshable braille displays.

We encourage you to share this TECH-NJ with high school students who have disabilities, their parents, special education teachers, child study team personnel, guidance counselors, and anyone else who is in a position to help students get ready to leave high school. Please contact us for additional copies -- (609)771-2610 or adaptivetech@tcnj.edu -- or access TECH-NJ online at <http://adaptivetech.tcnj.edu>.

You may also be interested in accessing the New Jersey Higher Education Disability Support Directory from our website. This directory lists the contact information for every disability support office at every college and university in the state. It will help high school students research the colleges they are interested in and the supports that are available here in New Jersey.

A. G. D.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

MOVING ON: THREE NEW JERSEY COLLEGE STUDENTS MAKE THE TRANSITION

by Anne M. Disdier

Plans were well underway for the upcoming conference at The College of New Jersey called Moving On: Promoting a Successful Transition to College or Community (see page 7). As our staff began putting the program together, the keys to ensuring a successful college experience weighed heavily on my mind. What constitutes a successful college experience? Is it connecting with the “right” college? Is it student-driven, college-driven, a combination of both? These, and many more questions, were running through my mind.

I was able to get some answers and gain some valuable insight when I recently had the opportunity to talk to three college students who have documented learning disabilities. They live in my town, Montgomery Township, New Jersey, and I have known them since they were in elementary school. All three had received supports in high school at varying levels. I was pleased to hear from their parents that they were doing well in college, and I was curious to see how they made the transition from high school to college.

Mickey Hover is a sophomore at Southern New Hampshire State University (SNHU) in Manchester, New Hampshire, majoring in Sport Management. Brian Colombero is a sophomore majoring in Business Administration at Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts, and Brendan Welch, also a Business Administration major at Dean College, is a freshman. They agreed to join me for lunch and share their experiences.

Influences in Choosing to Go to College

My first question to them was, “Why?” Knowing that they had struggled with academics in a highly competitive high school, I was curious about their decision to continue their formal education. What influenced their decision to attend college? Mickey’s response was that it was always expected within his family, he thought it would be more fun than

First Impressions of College Life

I thought that a good way to get the conversation flowing was to ask what their favorite thing was when they first got to college. To my surprise Brian responded that he hated his first semester. He was so worried about doing well that he never went out and spent all his time studying. He eventually learned to manage his time and assignments better, and by spring

semester he loved college life. Mickey said he loved his first semester, but troubles began in earnest during the second semester when schoolwork, combined with his lacrosse commitment, began to overwhelm him. With support from staff at his college, he muddled through and now loves college life.

Brendan commented that he loves the flexibility of the college class schedule. He had had a hard time with the six hour-a-day, five days a week scheduling in high school, and he is enjoying the freedom

of breaks between classes and shorter days in the classroom. He is doing much better academically than he did in high school. He attributes getting A’s in his classes to this more relaxed learning environment and being able to take classes that interest him.

Agreeing that having grown up in a small town could be limiting, they are all enjoying meeting students from around the country. It was the right time to spread their wings.



Brian, Mickey and Brendan relax after a lunch meeting to discuss college life.

high school, and he wanted to continue playing lacrosse. Brendan was quick to add that he too was looking for a fun, social environment, but he was also seeking more earning potential than a high school diploma would offer. Brian, who is continuing his baseball career at Dean, concurred with the lifestyle decision. He added that he has aspirations to take over his family’s landscaping business someday and wanted to be prepared with a solid foundation in business administration.

(continued on page 4)

Student Perspective

(continued from page 3)

Meeting the Challenge

I then asked them what their biggest challenge has been in college. The three were unanimous in that time management and organization were the most daunting. The boys were each able to overcome these problems by taking advantage of the support services offered on their campuses. Their colleges provide assistance to freshmen by requiring a course in academic and personal management strategies. All freshmen at Dean College take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during their first semester. Students enroll jointly in the seminar and a liberal arts course. The instructor from FYS, who is a learning specialist, attends the liberal arts class with the students and models learning strategies for successful completion of that course. Another part of FYS is a series of lectures that address critical issues faced by college students.

Time management and organization proved to be challenging. Taking advantage of the support services offered by colleges helped these students overcome these obstacles.

In addition to FYS, Brian participated in the Dean Arch Program. This program provides academic skill development for students with learning disabilities. It is offered for one or two semesters and combines the regular liberal arts coursework with additional instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, technology, study strategies and personal development. Brian feels that this program was instrumental in helping him manage his transition.

Brendan and Brian also utilize the Personalized Learning Services at Dean College. This is a one-to-one tutoring service with professional academic tutors. It builds fundamental learning, writing and math skills specific to students' current coursework. In addition to these supports, Brendan and Brian have been granted the accommodation of extra time

on tests (when needed), and Brian occasionally takes tests in a distraction-free room.

Southern New Hampshire University offers a similar freshman program through its First Year Experience. This course helps freshmen develop and refine critical, creative and analytical thinking skills. Students learn research tools and methods and how to communicate research in their writing. Mickey found this course to be very helpful.

Determining Reasonable Accommodations

One of Mickey's first stops after arriving at Southern New Hampshire University was the Disability Services Office. He had met his support contact during an admissions visit, so he felt comfortable knowing someone in advance. The services provided to Mickey through this office included weekly meetings to go over class assignments and helping him schedule and manage his time. The disability support staff worked with him to identify reasonable accommodations for his classes. It was up to him, though, to request these modifications from each professor. For the most part, he found the faculty to be cooperative. Some of the accommodations that he has used are taking tests in a distraction-free room, use of a computer for answering essay questions, extended time on tests, and getting copies of notes from another student in his classes.

One modification that Mickey requested was to not have to take multiple choice tests. This request was denied, so Mickey is working on strategies to help him do better with this testing format. Since he takes his tests in a separate room, he has found that reading the questions and choices out loud to himself has been helpful. In one instance, a faculty member was reluctant to allow Mickey to receive copies of notes, so the Disability Support Office intervened on his behalf, and it was agreed that the notes were an appropriate accommodation for the class. In addition to the support he receives from the Disability Support Office, Mickey utilizes the Walk-in Tutoring services offered by the Learning Center.

Future Plans and Parting Advice

Before we parted ways, I asked each of the boys about their future aspirations. Since Dean College is primarily a two-year institution, both Brendan and Brian plan to continue their education beyond the associates degree they will earn at Dean. Brian hopes to transfer to Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire to complete a bachelors degree in Business Administration and continue to play baseball. Brendan, who has more time to think about his options, is considering transferring to Bentley College in Massachusetts to get his bachelors degree in Business Administration. Mickey hopes to finish his B.S. in Sport Management at Southern New Hampshire University. Beyond that he would like to go to graduate school and pursue a degree in special education.

-
- Don't be afraid to ask for help or ask questions.
 - See the big picture. Don't get bogged down or discouraged by the day to day challenges.
 - It's not where you start, it's where you end.

When I asked them for some advice for students who are beginning to consider their options after graduation from high school, they had lots of encouraging thoughts. Mickey advised, "Don't be afraid to ask for help or ask questions." Brian recommended that students "See the big picture. Don't get bogged down and discouraged by the day-to-day challenges." Brendan, who had not been accepted to the four-year colleges of his choice and opted to enroll at Dean College, offered this, "It's not where you start, it's where you end." All three would encourage those who follow in their footsteps to keep reminding themselves of their goal. It is achievable with hard work and determination.

Anne Disdier is the Project Coordinator of the Adaptive Technology Center for New Jersey Colleges at The College of New Jersey.

GRADUATE PERSPECTIVE

ADVICE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by LeDerick R. Horne

High school can be a very scary time for young people with a disability. Believe me, I know. I was classified in the third grade and was placed in special education right up until I received my high school diploma. By my junior year I was so sick of school that I spent more time looking at the exit doors than the blackboards.

If you are a high school student with a disability, I would like to applaud you because I know how hard it has been for you to make it this far. And if you are thinking about continuing your education once you graduate, I have a few suggestions that I would like to give you that will help the transition go smoother. Whether you are thinking about a county college, technical school, or university, here is some advice that I wish someone had given me before I left high school.

The overwhelming majority of young people with disabilities have all it takes to get into a college or university and do very well once they make it to campus.

College is an Option

I need to start out by emphasizing that, "college is an option!" It may sound obvious to some of you, but it is still important for me to say because far too many teenagers with disabilities think that they are not smart enough to continue their education. I remember being in high school and thinking that I would be allowed into a college when pigs fly and dogs drive SUV's. Then, if by some stroke of luck I was admitted into an institution of higher education, I was sure my learning-disabled-butt would flunk out before the red ink on my midterm exams had a chance to dry. Given my experience in high school, this way of thinking is understandable, but it is simply not true. The overwhelming majority of young people with disabilities, me included, have all it takes to get into a college or university and do very well once we make it to campus.

Documentation is One Key

I owe most of my success after high school to the support I received. From extra time taking tests to using a computer to check my spelling, all the accommodations and other services I used were made available to me because I could prove I had a disability that warranted modifying my classroom experience. Disability support offices at colleges and universities need to see some kind of documentation to grant accommodation requests. For some of us, providing copies of our IEP (Individualized Education Plan) reports from high school will be all the proof we need to get our accom-

modations, but some of us may need additional documentation to prove we have a disability. The point I am trying to make is that you will need to have some kind of paperwork about your disability if you are planning to use services at college. Documentation is the key to unlocking the doors of higher education for folks with disabilities. Make sure you have your documentation before graduation from high school, and once you have it, keep it in a safe place. Some high schools actually destroy the IEP's of past students a few years after they graduate.

Connect With Your Campus Community

Once you get to college you will see that it is full of resources. There are advisers who will help you pick the right classes, the library will let you borrow books, and

the financial aid office will do its best to find you money. These are just a few of the many resources available to you once you are accepted. But one of the most

powerful resources available to you once you step foot on campus is something most people never think of -- your fellow students.

I recommend you make an effort to connect with the students on your campus. Join a club, sorority, fraternity, student government, or any campus based activity that will allow you to build relationships with the students at your school. Your fellow students will be able to offer academic support (like study groups or

working together on projects), as well as emotional support (like wiping your tears as you study for your final in Calculus III). So make an effort to get to know the folks at your school.

Some of the most powerful relationships I had while in college were the friendships that I built with other students with disabilities. In fact, one of the best ways to determine the quality of a college or university's disability support services is to talk with students with disabilities who have been at the school for a year or more. I recommend that you contact the disability support person at the college you are planning to attend and ask if they can connect you with two or three students on campus who have a disability like yours. Ask those students what they think of the school. The information they

(continued on page 6)



LeDerick Horne provides inspiration and encouragement to students with disabilities.

A Graduate's Perspective

(continued from page 5)

give you might be more valuable and relevant than any advice you get from a professional.

Get Used to Standing Up for Yourself and Others

One of the buzz words you will hear over and over again as you get ready to leave high school is "self-advocacy." In a nutshell, self-advocacy is all about you going out and getting what you need to be successful. It is one of the most important set of skills you should learn before you go to college. This is because your college will depend on you, not your parents, to make all the decisions related to your education. So I recommend you practice being in control of your education before you graduate high school. One way to practice self-advocacy is to begin taking a more active role in your IEP meetings. Make some of your own academic goals for the year and challenge your IEP team to help you reach those goals. Let the IEP team members know that you would like to continue your education beyond high school. Ask them to come up with a plan (that you can understand) which will help you transition to the institution of higher learning that fits you best. My point is that it is your education, so start getting accustomed to making some of the decisions about what kind of education you are going to receive.

Self-advocacy is one of the most important set of skills you should learn before you go to college. This is because your college will depend on you, not your parents, to make all the decisions related to your education.

Lastly, it is important for all of us to advocate for others, in addition to ourselves. People with disabilities have a long history of fighting for the opportunity to be treated as equal members of this society. As the next generation of people with disabilities, it is our responsibility to continue that struggle. While

Project Eye-To-Eye Empowering Students With Learning Disabilities Through the Power of Mentorship

Project Eye-To-Eye is a national mentoring program that matches college and high school students with Learning Disabilities/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (LD/ADHD), acting as tutors, role models and mentors, with elementary, middle, and high school students with LD/ADHD in order to empower these students and help them find success.

Mission

Project Eye-To-Eye's mission is to develop a coalition of mentoring programs for students who have learning disabilities and to empower these individuals to celebrate their differences. To achieve this mission, Project Eye-To-Eye partners with local communities, public and private schools, universities, and local businesses to bring adults who have learning disabilities into the lives of younger students who have learning disabilities.

Founders

Jonathan Mooney is a writer and activist with dyslexia who did not learn to read until he was 12 years old. He is a graduate of Brown University and holds an honors degree in English Literature. With the publication of *Learning Outside the Lines* when he was 23, now in its eighth printing, a book that is part memoir and part alternative study skills, Jonathan has established himself as one of the foremost leaders in LD/ADHD, disabilities, and alternative education.

David Flink, who graduated with honors and a double degree in Education and Psychology from Brown University, struggled with a learning difference through much of his pre-college education. His negative experience led him to co-found Project Eye-To-Eye in an attempt to empower others to overcome their difficulties.

Contact

For more information about Project Eye-To-Eye program locations or to start a site, visit the website at <http://www.projecteyetoeye.org>.

you are in high school, take the time to work together with other students with disabilities to improve the quality of your education. Invite other students with disabilities into your IEP meetings to help you advocate for yourself. Start self-advocacy clubs in your school to give students an opportunity to work together to address problems. Work together to take a stand against bullying and name calling of students with disabilities. This kind of team work will teach you things about others and yourself which will help shape you into the kind of student that any college would be proud to accept.

Editor's Note: LeDerick R. Horne, Board Chair of Project Eye-to-Eye, was recently honored as a Rising Star at the 2006 Equity Awards Dinner of the Educational Equity Center at The Academy for Education Development in New York (www.educationalequity.org). This honor was in recognition of his service as an advocate and mentor for students with disabilities. From his own personal experience with a learning disability, he has become a national speaker, reaching thousands of students, teachers and service providers.

LeDerick Horne is a guest contributor. He is a graduate of Middlesex County College and New Jersey City University.

Moving On: Promoting a Successful Transition to College or Community

The College of New Jersey

April 20, 2007

8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Co-Sponsored by NJ Commission on Higher Education Special Needs Grant Program

Conference Overview

The transition from school to successful adult life continues to be a critical issue for students, their parents, local school district personnel, and disability support staff at institutions of higher education. School systems and colleges have become increasingly more accountable for the post-secondary outcomes of their graduates, including youth with disabilities.

This conference presents current information and research-based practices on the planning and implementation of educational supports for youth with disabilities in the transition to college and the community. Within the fundamental context of inclusion and the use of assistive technology as a tool for successful transition, the conference offers a statewide forum for discussion and learning with local, state and national leaders.

Keynote Address

Rediscovering Our Right to Belong - Norman Kunc

In a fast paced and challenging presentation, Norman Kunc maintains that special education is not simply something we "do" to students with disabilities, but should involve a school and community making intentional commitments to build and maintain a sense of belonging for all students and adults.

A central tenet of Norman's message is that belonging is an inherent need of all people and must not be reserved solely for the "best of us." Learning to value and work with a diversity of people is the first step in building systems which foster a positive transition to adult life.

Break-out Sessions

Planning for Work and Community Life
Self-Determination and the Freedom of Assistive Technology
Non-Coercive Responses To Puzzling Behavior
Keeping it Real: Support You Need for the Life You Want
From Back Seat to Driver: A Student's Perspective
Technology to Support an Alternative Proficiency Assessment
Futures Planning to Promote Positive Outcomes
Preparing Augmentative Communication Users for Transition

Hands-on Workshops
Reading, Writing & Notetaking with Solo, Neo & Dana
Supporting Students with Reading & Writing Difficulties:
 Kurzweil 3000 Scan/Read
Customizing Windows Using Built-In Accessibility Features
Using What You Have: Maximizing Features in Microsoft Word
WYNN: Reading Accommodations for Students
 with Disabilities
Literacy Support Software: Read & Write 8 Gold

Planning for College
Listen to Our Voices: Perspectives of College Students
 with Disabilities
Tips from Faculty: What to Expect in College
Access=Success: Impact of Assistive Tech on Student Success
Understanding College Students with Psychiatric Issues
Counseling Students with Asperger's Syndrome
Exploring Speech Recognition Software
Transitioning from High School to College: Where's My IEP?
Transition Issues for Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing
Coaching/Mentoring Students for Transitioning to College

Registration

The registration fee is \$155 and should be sent as soon as possible. There will be no on-site registration. Online registration is available at <http://caties.tcnj.edu>. To request mail-in registration, contact CATIES at (609)771-3016 or contact the office via email at caties@tcnj.edu.

LEGAL ISSUES

Textbooks in Alternate Format Making Instructional Materials Accessible

P-12 Standards

NIMAS/NIMAC

In the most recent reauthorization of IDEA (2004) a provision was added to ease the problem of procuring textbooks in alternate formats. Called the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS), this provision was clarified in 2006 in Section 300.172 in the Final Regulations for the implementation of IDEA 2004. The NIMAS standards guide publishers in producing digital versions of textbooks that can be easily converted to accessible formats such as braille, audio, e-text, and/or large print (CAST, 2006). Publishers are now required to use these standards when preparing source files for textbooks and need to provide these files when requested by state and local education agencies.

The regulations also reaffirm the responsibilities of state and local education agencies to provide students who have print disabilities with alternate-format versions of textbooks in a timely manner. "The SEA [State Education Agency] must ensure that all public agencies take all reasonable steps to provide instructional materials in an accessible format to children with disabilities who need those instructional materials at the same time as other children receive instructional materials."

K-12 textbook publishers are now required to prepare NIMAS files sets for deposit in a national repository of digital materials (CAST, 2006). Known as the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC), the repository is housed at the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Kentucky. The IDEA 2004 regulations require that state education agencies either coordinate with the NIMAC or provide alternate format materials in some other way. All 50 states have decided to work with the NIMAC. NIMAC will provide states and local education agencies with textbook files that follow the NIMAS standard and therefore, should be easily converted to "student ready" alternate formats.

Reference:

CAST (2006). About NIMAS. <http://nimas.cast.org/about/index.html>

Higher Education

Copyright vs. Civil Right

Editor's Note: AHEAD is the premiere professional association committed to full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. AHEAD addresses current and emerging issues with respect to disability, education, and accessibility to achieve universal access. The information below was reprinted with permission from a Position Statement titled, "AHEAD's Perspective on the Issues of Textbook Access" which was published in December, 2006. For more information about AHEAD and the complete text of the position statement, visit the website at www.ahead.org.

The NIMAS/NIMAC requirements of IDEA 2004 apply only to P-12 and do not include higher education. Therefore, in December, 2006 the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) posted a position paper on the need to provide access to textbooks in college. The complete statement can be found on their website: www.ahead.org. Below are excerpts from this position statement.

Lack of timely access to print-based materials has long been one of the greatest barriers for postsecondary students with print-related disabilities. Braille, audiotapes, and use of human readers have historically been the means for access. However, technological advances, especially in the last decade, have greatly improved and increased the options for effective access to print materials for these students.

The publishing community is not directly bound by the civil rights laws, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as they relate to education access. However, postsecondary institutions are.

Colleges and universities are legally obligated to provide effective access to all course materials to students with disabilities. In the case of print or text-based materials, meeting that obligation frequently requires providing materials in an alternate format. Today, alternatives usually consist of a digital copy of the material, either for direct use by the student or to create the appropriate end-user format (e.g., braille, large print, audio).

Colleges and universities can and should be held to reasonable standards designed to protect the rights of all the parties involved. Print impairments are certified. Students should sign agreements not to share or reproduce converted material. No economic harm should befall the copyright holder; AHEAD believes colleges and universities must require that students purchase the materials being reproduced.

The Association of American Publishers argues that institutions should receive permission from copyright holders before any scan or other conversion occurs. Unfortunately, recent surveys indicate that requests to publishers for permission to scan books are frequently denied or ignored. If permission must be obtained and the publishing companies ignore requests or refuse permission to scan books, institutions are in a Catch-22 situation—they either risk a copyright infringement suit or risk violating students' federal rights to auxiliary aids and services under the ADA and Section 504.

AHEAD believes the civil rights of students with disabilities must be considered superior to publishers' contractual rights. In the end, it is the students who are damaged, not the publishers. It would be manifestly unjust not to allow colleges and universities to provide these accommodations in-house.

AHEAD supports the position that reproduction of course texts into digital forms is a fair use of copyrighted materials under Section 107 of the United States Copyright Act. Whether or not postsecondary institutions are considered authorized entities under the Chafee Amendment of the U.S. Copyright Law (Section 121), production of accessible print materials for students with print disabilities cannot be considered copyright infringement.

Access to digital text is a necessary and appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities that will become more necessary and appropriate as technology improves and more students with disabilities attend postsecondary educational institutions. Until publishers and copyright holders are willing and able to provide appropriate digital text, colleges and universities must have the legal ability to do so.

AHEAD applauds the many initiatives, including those of the publishers, taken to date to improve access to print materials for students with disabilities and will continue to serve as an active partner in finding solutions that strike an appropriate balance between accessibility for students with disabilities and copyright protections for authors and publishers.

National Federation of the Blind Legislative Agenda for Higher Education

With an estimated 1.1 million blind Americans, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) was formed to act as the voice of this population. At the second session of the 109th Congress, which met in 2006, the NFB proposed that Congress enact The Higher Education Textbook Access Act. The purpose of this act is to require publishers of textbooks used in higher education to produce electronic editions for blind students in an accessible, nonvisual standard format.

Taking a position similar to that of AHEAD, NFB contends that failure to provide equal access is a denial of equal opportunity. NFB's position is that this violates the equal access provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. NFB advocates for the enactment of a policy that contains specific standards for textbook access in higher education in order to ensure equal opportunity for blind students.

To implement such a policy, NFB is requesting that Congress enact legislation with clear, specific, and practical standards and procedures to address accessibility needs of blind students in higher education. As part of IDEA 2004, Public Law 108-446, publishers of elementary and secondary school textbooks are required to produce electronic editions which must be prepared in an accessible, nonvisual format, meeting a federally prescribed national standard (see NIMAS/NIMAC on previous page). NFB supports the enactment of The Higher Education Textbook Access Act which would require the publishers of higher education textbooks to meet the same standards.

For more information about the National Federation of the Blind, visit the website at www.nfb.org.

RESOURCES

Internet Sites that Offer e-Text

Non-profit or Free Websites

Project Gutenberg: The first producer of free electronic books (ebooks), Project Gutenberg offers 20,000 books that are in the public domain (that is, no longer under copyright). This is a great source for classic literature, such as Shakespeare's plays, and public documents such as the U.S. Constitution. www.Gutenberg.org

Bookshare.org: Bookshare.org is a membership-based online community that enables people with visual and other print disabilities to legally share scanned books. www.bookshare.org

The Blind Bookworm: The blind bookworm icon is named Milton, which is an acronym for the developer's pet project, Media Integrating Literature and Technology On the Net. MILTON's purpose is to offer resources for visually-impaired readers and digital bookworms. Pages on this site include links to Accessible Audiobooks, e-Texts and eBooks, and notes about Accessible eBook Formats. www.panix.com/~kestrell/

The Internet Public Library: Originally developed at the University of Michigan and now hosted by Drexel University, the Internet Public Library Project is a public service organization that seeks to redefine the roles and significance of libraries in an increasingly distributed and digital world. Its searchable database includes books, stories, essays, poems, articles, dramas, letters and speeches. www.ipl.org

The Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia: Holdings include approximately 70,000 on-and off-line humanities texts in twelve languages. 1,600 of these are available for the Microsoft Reader and Palm devices, including classic British and American fiction, children's literature, American history, Shakespeare, the Bible, and more. <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>

The Online Books Page: This site is hosted by the University of Pennsylvania and contains an index of thousands of online books freely readable on the internet. The Online Books Page is always looking for volunteers to help put books online, and includes a helpful beginners' guide called How To Put Books Online. <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books>

Bartleby.com: Provides free access to classical literature, reference works, non-fiction and verse. www.bartleby.com

Tiflolibros: Provides eTexts books in Spanish and other languages. www.tiflolibros.com.ar

Eserver: An e-publishing co-op based at Iowa State University that provides an alternative niche for quality work, particularly writings in the arts and humanities. More than 35,000 works are available free of charge to readers. www.eserver.org

Commercial Websites

Audible.com: After you download and install Audible's software to manage audio on your PC (or use iTunes 3.0 and above), you can purchase audiobooks, download them to your computer, and transfer them to your MP3 player for convenient, portable listening. Or, you can burn the files to a CD and listen in your car. www.audible.com

eBooks.com: Calling itself the "Digital Bookstore," eBooks.com sells whole books, chapters and pages of books online from the world's leading publishers. <http://usa2.ebooks.com>

Fictionwise.com: Offers eBooks in MultiFormat, which are encrypted eBooks that are available in 10 different formats for PDA's and computers; and "Secure eBooks" in four formats: Mobipocket, eReader, Microsoft Reader, and Adobe Reader. A Secure eBook is encrypted and can only be read in the format that you purchase. www.fictionwise.com

Websites for the Blind/Visually Impaired

Louis Database of Accessible Materials for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired: Produced and maintained by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH), this database contains complete bibliographic and location information for more than 163,000 titles of accessible materials from over 200 agencies throughout the United States. These materials include books in braille, large print, sound recording, and computer files; braille music; and American Printing House for the Blind (APH) products. www.aph.org

The International Electronic Braille Library: Offers downloadable braille books. www.braille.org/braille_books

Web-Braille: A service of the Library of Congress, Web-Braille provides electronic versions of braille books, music scores, and all braille magazines produced by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). The book catalog provides free public access to classic works of literature, serials, bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopedias and other reference works in a number of languages and countries around the world. www.loc.gov/nls

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired: This site provides educational and fiction books for children and links to many other sites providing e-Text. www.tsbvi.edu

Searching on Google and Microsoft

Both Google and Microsoft provide digitized copies of books from various library collections. To search the Google site (<http://books.google.com>), simply type the title, author, or key words into the "search" box. Next to the choices that appear is an indicator that the book is available in full view, limited view or snippet view. Choosing the "about the book" link provides information about the title, author, publication date, source, and length. Also provided are the details for purchasing and/or downloading the book. Most recently, Princeton University announced that they will share close to one million books from their public domain library with Google. These books are out of their copyright period and will be available online in full text.

The Microsoft book search feature is called Live Search Books. It can be accessed at (<http://search.live.com>). The Microsoft book search includes full text of books that can be downloaded as PDF files. Currently, most of the books come from university library collections and the British Library.

Teacher of the Blind/Visually Impaired Masters Degree Program at The College of New Jersey

Nationally there is a severe shortage of teachers skilled in educating students who are blind or visually impaired (American Foundation for the Blind, 2005). The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youth with Visual Impairments, a grassroots effort by professionals and parents, outlines a plan of action for making sure blind and visually impaired children receive the appropriate education to which they are entitled (Stryker, Huebner, & Hatlen, 1999). Goal 3 of the National Agenda specifically calls for colleges to educate a sufficient number of teachers to meet national personnel needs.

Exacerbating the problem in New Jersey is that until this year no institution of higher education offered a certification program for Teachers of the Blind/Visually Impaired. Teachers in New Jersey who wanted to teach students who are blind/visually impaired had to go out-of-state – to New York or Pennsylvania – to take courses toward certification. Now, however, teachers have an in-state option for graduate coursework. The College of New Jersey, with support from the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, is developing a masters degree program that will meet the state's recently revised certification requirements. (See New Jersey Department of Education (2004) for the new certification regulations.)

Students enrolled in this graduate program will be prepared to meet the varied demands of teacher of the blind/visually impaired positions. Coursework includes the following: Implications of Blindness/Visual Impairments, Braille Literacy, Nemeth Code, Strategies for Teaching Blind/Visually Impaired Students, Collaboration and Partnerships, Teaching Students with Severe/Multiple Disabilities, and Assistive Technology for Blind/Visually Impaired Students. Most courses will be scheduled only once a year and will be offered in the late afternoon (5:00) to accommodate the schedules of working people. The deadline for fall admission is April 15th. For information on the application process go to www.tcnj.edu/graduate.

References

American Foundation for the Blind (2005). AFB Comments in response to the December 29, 2004 Notice of Request for comments and recommendations on regulatory issues under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Sec. 602 Highly Qualified Personnel. Accessed online December 5, 2005: www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=3&TopicID=138&DocumentID=2698

New Jersey Department of Education (2004). Licensure and credentials, 6A:9-11.3. Accessed online: February 28, 2006: www.state.nj.us/njded/educators/license/certandend.htm

Stryker, D.; Huebner, K. & Hatlen, P. (1999). A call to action: Practical suggestions for the achievement of the National Agenda goals. Paper presented at Josephine Taylor Leadership Institute, Washington, D.C. Accessed online: December 5, 2005, www.tsbvi.edu/agenda/call.htm

College Success

(continued from page 1)

facts about your learning disability and how it will affect you in college, and the kind of support you are going to need, you can then begin to think about selecting the right college for you. There are many sources available in your guidance offices and in bookstores like Borders and Barnes and Noble which list colleges that have support programs.

Understand why you were given certain accommodations in high school and ask what accommodations you are likely to need in college.

But do not start there. Start by first asking the kinds of questions that all students should consider when looking for a college. After all, you are a student who happens to have a learning disability, but that is not all that there is about you. You have interests, you may be into sports, you may have a desire to commute or live away from home, you may be interested in an unusual major available at a limited number of colleges.

All of these things should go into your search as they would for any student. Once you go through all of this with your counselor and parents, your counselor can start to recommend schools for you to consider based on these criteria and your academic standing.

As that list is developed, you can then look up those schools in books like the "K&W Guide" or the Peterson's "Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders." These books will have lists of colleges with programs in every state in the country. They will also have brief descriptions of those programs and what kind of support you can expect to receive there. Contact information for each program and school will be available, and now it is time for you to start calling and visiting those programs to see and hear first hand what they can and will do for you.

Remember Section 504 is very different from IDEA, the Special Education legislation. Part of knowing that

difference is to know that colleges can determine the level of support they will put into their programs. Section 504 will enable you to receive the accommodations to which your testing and documentation entitle you, but...that is not the same thing as an organized support program.

Ask, Ask, Ask

Ask the director of the support program:

- How he or she selects students
- If SATs or ACTs are required
- How you apply to the program
- What kind of support you can expect to get (ask them to be specific)
- If their tutors are students or professional staff
- What accommodations are typically available to eligible students (not you!- They cannot tell you what you would get until you are a student and they have your material to review)
- If there is an additional charge for the program
- If there is a required summer component
- If there is an optional summer component to help you get started.

Remember, you are the client. You have a right to ask these questions, and it would be foolish not to ask them.

Summing Up

1. Take a challenging high school program, one that's challenging but one in which you can succeed.
2. Become familiar with all of your evaluations, IEPs, 504 Plans. Know who you are, what works for you, and what you'll need in college.
3. Make sure your documentation is current. When requesting accommodations at college, you must have documentation (testing) that is recent, within the last few years. Different colleges can require different timelines. Find out yours.
4. Research colleges not just by whether they have a "program" but also by whether or not you would be going there if you didn't need a program. If it is not a place you would ever consider if you didn't need a support program, why would you want to go there?

Start by first asking the kinds of questions that all students should consider when looking for a college. After all, you are a student who happens to have a learning disability, but that is not all that there is about you.

5. Be ready to work! College is going to be a challenge. It gets harder, faster. Semesters are just barely longer than a marking period in high school. No third marking period to make up work. No fourth marking period to ask for extra credit. Take control of your time so it doesn't take control of you.

6. Relax. Thousands have gone before you and succeeded. You can too if you follow the steps outlined here.

Vincent J. Varrassi MA, LDTC is the Campus Director of the Regional Center for College Students with Learning Disabilities at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

This article was reprinted with permission. Copyright 2007 by National Center for Learning Disabilities, Inc. All rights reserved.

Websites for Transition

KidSource Online
"College Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities"
<http://www.kidsource.com/kid-source/content3/college.planning.LD.html>

SchwabLearning.org
Parent resources for helping students make a transition to college
<http://www.schwablearning.org>

U.S. Department of Civil Rights
"Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities"
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY UPDATE

Center for Assistive Technology and Inclusive Education Studies

CATIES, the Center for Assistive Technology and Inclusive Education Studies, is a research and service initiative of The College of New Jersey's School of Education. It is dedicated to improving the educational experiences of children with disabilities by linking faculty and staff expertise with the needs of New Jersey's educational community.

Assistive technology evaluations have continued to be a very exciting component of the services provided by CATIES. Students from preschool through college have benefited from evaluations that identified assistive technology to support reading, writing, organization and computer access.

In addition to assistive technology evaluations, CATIES now provides augmentative communication evaluations. From low-tech, single message devices to high-tech, dynamic display devices, CATIES' staff provide assessments spanning the assistive technology continuum. Both assistive technology and augmentative communication assessments can be done at the CATIES center at TCNJ or in the student's educational placement.

CATIES' staff continues to provide software and hardware training to students, parents, teachers and support staff in order to increase the effective implementation of assistive technology in the classroom.

Last year marked the beginning of an exciting initiative between CATIES and Montgomery Township School District. CATIES staff provided monthly hands-on in-service opportunities for a select team of Montgomery teachers and then provided them with in-class technical assistance. Collaboration between Montgomery's Assistive Technology Team and CATIES' staff has increased district awareness, use and implementation of available assistive technology. To learn more about this unique professional development model, as well as assessments and trainings, please visit the Center's website at: <http://caties.tcnj.edu> or email caties@tcnj.edu

Career & Community Studies Program

The Career & Community Studies Program (CCS) is designed for students who have a disability that is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior. These students are highly motivated young adults who have received extensive educational services in either public or private schools and would likely have considerable difficulty succeeding in a traditional college degree program.

What is CCS at The College of New Jersey?

- An educational program for students with intellectual disabilities ages 18-25
- An opportunity to attend and receive instruction on a college campus
- An opportunity to attend classes/campus events with peers
- An opportunity to receive peer mentor support for both coursework and social recreation
- An educational program designed to provide vocational awareness and selection, specific skill development and on the job support
- An orientation to increased community independence through life long learning

What Does CCS Provide?

The CCS Program provides coursework and field experiences in the areas of liberal studies, vocational development, socialization/leisure, and independent life. Students who complete the program receive a Certificate of Completion and a digital portfolio of CCS accomplishments.

For more information about this program, visit the website at www.tcnj.edu/~ccs or contact Rebecca Daley at daley@tcnj.edu or (609)771-2381.

NJ Regional Centers for College Students with Disabilities

New Jersey supports eight centers located throughout the state that provide direct assistance to auditorily impaired, visually impaired, and learning disabled students. The goal of the centers is to provide integrated, individualized, direct services to students and technical assistance to other colleges and universities in the state. The Special Needs Grant Program is funded and administered by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education.

Adaptive Technology Center for New Jersey Colleges at The College of New Jersey

Director: Amy Dell (adaptivetech@tcnj.edu)
(609) 771-2610; <http://adaptivetech.tcnj.edu>

Learning Disability Centers

Project Assist at Cumberland County College
Director: To be announced
(856) 691-8600 ext. 282; www.cccnj.edu/projAssist

Regional Center at Fairleigh Dickinson University

Madison Director: Paul Vico (vico@fdu.edu)
(973) 443-8734
Teaneck Director: Vincent Varrassi (varrassi@fdu.edu)
(201) 692-2298
www.fdu.edu/studentsvcs/rcsld.html

Central Regional Connections at Middlesex County College

Director: Mary Jane Warshaw (Mary_Jane_Warshaw@middlesexcc.edu)
(732) 906-2507; www.middlesexcc.edu/acadsupport/control.cfm/ID/74

Project Mentor at New Jersey City University

Director: Leah Jackson (projmentor@njcu.edu)
(201) 200-2091; www.njcu.edu/PMentor

Project Academic Skills Support at Ocean County College

Director: Maureen Reustle (mreustle@ocean.edu)
(732) 255-0456; www.ocean.edu/campus/student_services/drc/pass.htm

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centers

Center for Collegiate Deaf Education at Bergen Community College
Director: Tia Gardner Ivanko (tgardner@bergen.edu)
(201) 612-5270, (201) 612-5325 TTY; www.bergen.cc.nj.us/oss/ccde.asp

Mid-Atlantic Postsecondary Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing at Camden County College

Director: Josie Durkow (jdurkow@camdencc.edu)
(856) 227-7200 x 4506, (856) 228-1897 TTY; www.camdencc.edu/dhoh

New Products

gh Player™

The gh Player™ is an inexpensive Windows software program that provides people with disabilities easy access to electronic text. It supports the following file formats: NIMAS, Simple text (.txt), DAISY 2.02 and DAISY 3.0. It will read AudioPlus books from Recording from the Blind and Dyslexic. It offers several features that help students with visual impairments and students with learning disabilities read, including:

- Text-to-Speech functionality
- Digital magnification
- Contrast enhancement
- Synchronized text highlighting
- Variable playback rate for recorded audio without changing pitch
- Word tracking ("bouncing ball")
- Enhanced Bookmark Editor

For people who are blind, the gh Player™ supports several refreshable braille display devices.

To download a free demo or for more information, go to:
www.ghbraille.com/ghplayer.html

Digital Pen & USB Flash Drive

by EPOS

This unique bundle combines a portable, wireless PC peripheral pen with flash memory.

Its miniature form, low battery consumption, and pinpoint-accurate positioning let users enjoy the benefits of Flash Disk Memory together with the latest digital pen technology.

- Write freely on any paper
- Store hundreds of pages of information
- Transfer notes and sketches to a computer
- Transform written notes to text
- Use as regular flash memory to store music, image, video files, etc.

For more information, go to:
<http://www.epos-ps.com/products.asp?pid=1275&ppid=1278>

I recommend the following program/product for consideration for inclusion in a future issue of TECH-NJ:

Part A

Name of Program/Product: _____

Brief Description: _____

Contact Person: _____

School/Company: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

My Name/Phone Number/E-mail Address: _____

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

TECH-NJ
The Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy
The College of New Jersey
P. O. Box 7718
Ewing, New Jersey 08628-0718

(FOLD HERE)

Part C

If you know anyone who would be interested in receiving a copy of TECH-NJ, please fill in below.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

**Moving On:
Promoting a Successful Transition
to College or Community**

Presented by
CATIES at The College of New Jersey
Center for Assistive Technology & Inclusive Education Studies

April 20, 2007
8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Keynote Speaker
Norman Kunc
internationally known disability rights advocate

Co-Sponsor
NJ Commission on Higher Education Special Needs Grant Program
(see page 7 for more details and registration information)

THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy
P. O. Box 7718
Ewing, New Jersey 08628-0718

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Trenton, NJ
Permit No. 44

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED