

LD Identity Development: Best Practices for Supporting a Positive Academic Self-Concept

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Workshop Objectives

Participants will:

Address issues of identity development among late adolescents

Explore the difficulties that LD college students encounter in their identity development

Review stages of LD social Identity development

Learn ways to support positive identity development among LD college students

Activator

Take a moment to think about a student you work with, or have worked with in the past who has, in your opinion, a positive academic self-concept.

What have been some of this student's academic and social experiences?

What are some words or phrases that describe the student's positive academic self-concept?

Activator

Take a moment now to think about a student you work with who has, in your opinion, a negative academic self-concept.

What have been some of his or her academic and social experiences?

What are some words or phrases that describe the student's negative academic self-concept?

Personal ownership

“Personal ownership may lead to a positive sense of self as LD and a LD identity.”

Pliner, 1999, p. 241

A Key Question for a LD College Student to Ask

What does my LD mean to me?

Student Voices

"Society is a kind of mirror, for we see ourselves through its perceptions and values. It is difficult to understand, especially when you are young, that the distortion or deficiency you see in yourself in this mirror may be partly a distortion in the mirror."



Keith
Landmark College student

from, *Learning to Learning*, 1996, Olivier C., & Bower, R., p. 249.

Challenges Facing LD College Students

- Identifying within the cultural milieu
- Making meaningful connections while perceiving the world differently
- Connecting with peer group

Student Voices

"I guess my first identity problem is just knowing who I am, and the second, becoming who I am, wherever and however that will change across my own lifetime."

-- Maria, 19-year old university student

(Kroger, 2007, p. 247)

Identity

A well organized conception of the self made up of values, beliefs, and goals to which the individual is solidly committed.

(Berk, 2003, p. 456)

Origins of identity

Erik Erikson (1956) was the first to focus popular and scientific attention of the meaning of identity

"... provides the ability to experience one's self as something that has continuity and sameness and to act accordingly."
(Erikson, 1963, p.42)

Origins of Ego Identity

First use of the term, "ego identity"

"What impressed me most was the loss in these men of a sense of identity. They knew who they were; they had an identity. But it was as if, subjectively, their lives no longer held together – and never would again."

(Erikson, 1963, p.42)

Nature of Ego Identity

Erikson (1968) noted that "ego identity" is shaped by three interacting elements:

1. a *biological* foundation
2. a *psychological* foundation
3. a *cultural* foundation

(Kroger, 2007, p. 8)

Identity vs. Role Confusion

Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development theorized that adolescents work at refining a sense of self by testing roles and then integrating them to form a single identity or they become confused about who they are.

Identity Status

Achieved Identity
Moratorium
Foreclosed Identity
Identity Diffusion

Identity Capital

Identity capital = the personal resources an individual brings to a social situation.

Two types

- Tangible identity capital
- Intangible identity capital

Cote & Levine (2002)

Changes in Adolescents Affecting Identity

Two major changes that have a profound on identity development

Self-Concept

Self-Esteem

Self-Conceptions

Self-conceptions are how a person regards him – or herself in relation to traits and attributes.



Self-Concept Triangle

James Blouin, Landmark College, 1996

Academic Self-Concept

One's feelings and perceptions about one's academic skills and abilities.

"Time is that wherein there is opportunity, and opportunity is that wherein there is no great time...healing is a matter of time, but it is also a matter of opportunity."

-- Hippocrates, *Epidemics*



SELF-ESTEEM

The overall evaluation we give ourselves as individuals of worth and determines our general acceptance of others.

Self-esteem grows with successful experiences that strengthen:

- Feelings of self worth
- Self confidence
- Self concept

SELF EFFICACY

THE DEGREE OF EXPECTATION THAT ONE IS CAPBLE OF ACHIEVING ONE'S GOALS IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS OR CONTEXTS.

Self-esteem-poker chips analogy

"To play this "game" a person must enter adulthood with many piles of "poker chips" (self-concept). Adults with lots of chips have a great self-concept. Those with a meager pile of chips have a poor self-concept. How do adults acquire these chips? During childhood and adolescence, when good things happen to people (such as success, victory, and being praised), they receive poker chips. Then when bad things happen (such as failure, frustration and being criticized), they loose chips. Simple.



-- Lovoie, 2000, p.16.

The Quality of Resiliency

Some people have remarkable resiliency and are able to preserve self-confidence and self-worth.

(Freiberg, 1993; Keogh, 2000; Luther, 1993)

Success against the odds

The stories of adults with learning disabilities who have succeeded against the odds are inspiring.

Their resilience is evident in their successes.

(Gerber & Brown, 1997; Gerber & Reiff, 1991; S.L. Smith, 1991)

(Lerner, 2003, p. 556)

Low Self-Concept

A Student's unsuccessful academic and/or social experiences leads to a poor self-concept.

(Silver, 1998)

Stages of LD Identity Development

- Denial
- Transition
- Acceptance



Denial

- Lack of firm commitments to values and to goal achievement
- General acceptance of "messages" from authority figures
- A need to "unpack one's LD bag"
- Learned helplessness
- General absence of self-efficacy



Transition

- Exploration of alternatives in an effort to find values and goals to guide their life
- Student "unpacks bag" doesn't like "contents"



Acceptance

Unpack fully LD bag: “contents” being named and acknowledged without guilt or shame.

Academic and social goals are being fully explored

Psychological well-being

Individual control



Universal Design

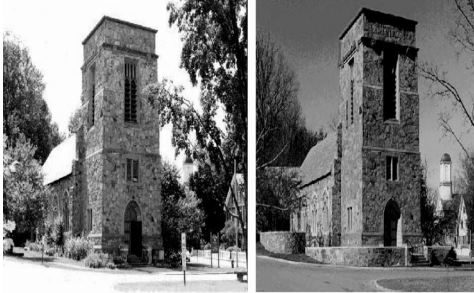
“The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design”

From: Center for Universal Design, N. Carolina State University, 1997

What’s the best way to make this building handicap accessible?



Design features to accommodate those with handicaps are built into the design as universal features that...



...benefit everyone at some point and improve the overall harmony of the design

Universal Design for Instruction

Based on premise that the planning and delivery of instruction and the assessment of learning can incorporate inclusive attributes that are held by a broad range of learners without compromising academic standards.

From: Center on Post Secondary Education and Disability, University of CT, 2002

Universal Design for Learning calls for ...

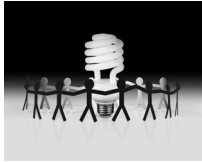
- *Multiple means of representation*, to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge,
- *Multiple means of action and expression*, to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know,
- *Multiple means of engagement*, to tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation.

(from CAST website: www.cast.org, 3/09)

Universal Design for LD Students

Build into approaches and strategies methods to make the learning universally accessible to the widest range of learners.

Areas of Support

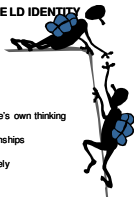


Self-awareness
Metacognition
Peer relationships
Remedial work
Utilizing resources
Self advocacy

Areas of Support

AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING A POSITIVE LD IDENTITY

<u>Area of needed support</u>	<u>Student may respond by</u>
SELF AWARENESS	learning about one's LD and one's learning needs
METACOGNITION	learning to self-monitor and think about one's own thinking
PEER RELATIONSHIPS	learning to make and maintain peer relationships
REMEDIAL WORK	learning to identify and respond appropriately when one's learning breaks down
UTILIZING RESOURCES	learning to ask for help
SELF ADVOCACY	learning to take responsibility for one's situation, question one's perceptions, and reframe one's context



Best practice: Self Awareness

learning about one's LD and how to identify and communicate one's learning needs.

Best Practice: Metacognition

learning to think about one's own thinking.

student voices

"Metacognition challenges your weaknesses and forces you to look for the light at the end of the tunnel...and when you do see the light, everything that was hidden and even frightening before becomes clear. You know then that no matter how hard things may be in the future...even when the light may flicker or even disappear, it is still there and you will be able to find it again."

Maria, Landmark College student

from *Learning to Learn* (1996)

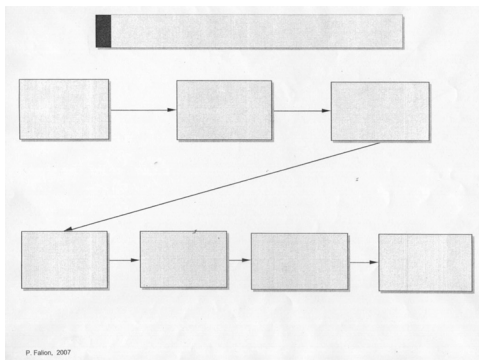
Best practice: Peer Relationships

learning to make and maintain peer relationships

Best practice: Remediation

learning to identify and respond appropriately when one's learning breaks down

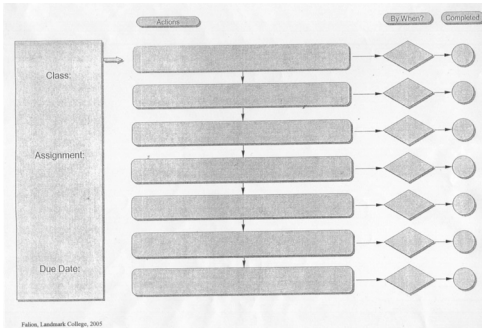
Sequencing



Master Notebook Study System

Need for Study System	- Study system can determine success, esp. in H.S. and college
MNB:	- MNB: product and process
Product for organizing information	- Product: portable filing system and information center - contains all notes, handouts, tests, papers, etc. from course - organized into different sections
Process:	- Process: daily and weekly steps for incorporating note taking, note revision, organization, various study skills - studying, test preparation
Instruction:	- 4 things instructor can do to assist: 1. Assess students to purchase materials 2. Micro-unit each step 3. Check notebook regularly 4. Give students feedback
TEACHING A STUDY SKILLS SYSTEM THAT WORKS! © 1993 Landonville College	

Planning a Long-term Assignment



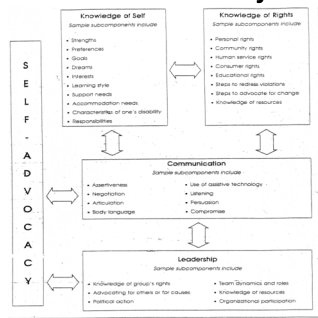
Best practice: Taking Advantage of Resources

learning to ask for help

Best practice: Self-advocacy

learning to take responsibility for one
one's situation, to question one's
perceptions and to reframe one's context

Conceptual Framework of Self-Advocacy



Continental University of Self-Advocacy
Tate, D. W., Fowler, C. H., Wood, W. M., Brown, D. J., Sells, S. (2005). A conceptual framework of self-advocacy
for students with disabilities. *Journal of Special Education, 39*(2), 95.

Student voices

"I would call myself a toolmaker!"

-- Nora, LD college student

as quoted in Pliner, 1999, p. 243

Small Group Activity

Apply best practices to your specific student in support of a positive academic self-concept

Identify the student's stage of identity development

Create an academic plan for the student in support of a positive academic self concept

Small Group Work Summarizer

An individual from each small group reports out a few of the major themes discussed.

Summarizer

What are the main ideas or questions that you're taking away from this session?

Behavioral Indicators of Successful LD College Students

- Develops knowledge of self as a learner
- Able to self evaluate academic and social strengths and limitations
- Develops goals based on self knowledge
- Able to self reflect and to learn from past mistakes
- Seeks out and uses feedback from faculty
- Pursues and uses appropriate resources on and off campus
- Experiments with strategies and sincerely tests to find out what works
- Develops capacity to think critically



You cannot control the wind,
but you can adjust the sails.

-- a saying among South Pacific islanders

Resources

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