SELF-ADVOCACY

TAking OWNERSHIP AND LEarning TO ADVOCATE FOR ONESELF

A project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Science in Counseling,

School Psychology

By

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my mother and father as they were my advocates throughout my educational career. Thank you mom and dad for always believing in me and inspiring me to share my passion for education and self-advocacy with others.
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ABSTRACT

SELF-ADVOCACY:

TAKING OWNERSHIP AND LEARNING TO ADVOCATE FOR ONESELF

By

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Master of Counseling in School Psychology

Student advocacy outcomes, in terms of developing advocacy for one’s self within the kindergarten through twelfth grade educational system is examined in this project. This project targeted special education students and their parents. The project was divided into a four workshop session series and the session topics were as follows: Session 1-What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and how does it impact me at school? Session 2-I Know Me. Session 3-Taking Ownership and Learning to Advocate for Oneself. Session 4-Encouraging Parents to Help their Children Learn Self-Advocacy Skills. Each session topic built on previously learned information from the session before. Results through the use of paper surveys found that participants enjoyed the workshops. Participants indicated that the workshops provided them with helpful tips that will enable them to advocate for themselves throughout their school career and beyond.
Keywords: student advocacy, self-advocacy, learning disability, learning styles, involvement in school
Chapter 1: Introduction to Project

Introduction

Having a child with a physical, cognitive, and or learning disability can be a heartbreaking experience for all parents who have a child with a disability. Parents experience the loss of their child’s future if the disability is severe enough, which warrants feelings of depression as well as thoughts of why did this have to happen to my child. After the realization of their child’s future sets in many parents seek immediate assistance for their child through local intervention providers such as regional centers, schools, and outside agencies to assist in interventions to help their child meet their appropriate developmental milestones and or full learning potential. Although most parents seek immediate assistance after finding out about their child’s disability, not all parents do so because they do not have the resources, money, and or community support to find appropriate interventions. Social economic status (SES), language, and familiarity of the dominant culture play a huge role in seeking assistance for many families. These factors also carry over into schools in terms of students learning self-advocacy skills; while also understanding their particular disability in order to self-advocate throughout their educational career.

Student advocacy in terms of learning successes and outcomes can be affected by a student’s exposure to knowledge of their own disability. When students are educated about their disability and taught strategies on how to work with or through their particular disability students tend to have brighter outcomes and they are more optimistic about their future. On the contrary, when students are not educated on their particular disability
and they are not given strategies and or tools on how to succeed many students fall into a pattern of “learned helplessness” and they tend to give up on themselves and they tend to be less optimistic about their future.

The ability of a student to learn about their disability when a student is in the traditional K-12th educational system can be influenced by parental educational levels, home language, and the schools involvement in educating the student on their disability. Along with these factors comes the students’ own knowledge of their particular disability by becoming a self-advocate for themselves. It is important for students to know about their own disability so that students can utilize self-advocacy skills. Self-advocacy skills are gained when students are able to understanding one’s own personal strengths and weaknesses, their particular learning style, and what particular learning strategies work best for them. Having this knowledge of what works best for the student plays a huge role in understanding how to successfully navigate the school system while learning to advocate for oneself.

**Statement of Need**

Now is the time more than ever to teach students to become self-advocates. Teaching students to ask questions is the first step that educators can take to prompt self-advocacy. Also guiding students on where to look for answers while weighing options is important. When students become critical thinkers and use a variety of resources to help themselves navigate the educational system as well as their specific disability they are becoming a self-advocate for themselves while gaining confidence and self-esteem. The goal is for students to use their voice and their self-advocacy skills to assist themselves
and or others such as in support groups in school, postsecondary institutions, and or overall in life. Developing effective learning strategies for students with learning disabilities comes from the process of evaluating options and evidence rather than immediately knowing a definitive answer. According to McCarthy, (2007) self-advocacy is a process that takes work and dedication on the student’s part. For students with disabilities self-advocacy is not preferred; but essential in order to be successful in school and in ones future career. When one is able to self-advocate the world becomes a beam of endless opportunities.

By having students learn about their disability while also gaining knowledge about their disability this is a first step for students who want to be self-advocates for themselves. Within the school system there should also be a self-advocacy class to help students with learning disabilities who are trying to navigate the way toward self-advocacy. A self-advocacy skills class would be very helpful to students who have learning disabilities because the class would be able to track each student’s progress and monitor student’s improvement in self-advocacy areas where students need assistance and or more guidance by the teacher facilitating the class. The self-advocacy skills class would teach students effective communication skills through the use of real life scenarios such at IEP meetings and through a variety of role playing activities where students could learn how to put their self-advocacy knowledge to use.

Purpose of the Graduate Project

The objective and purpose of this graduate project is to teach special education high school students and their parent’s effective self-advocacy skills and strategies.
Special education students and their parents were invited to participate in an afterschool self-advocacy workshop series. The workshop series is designed to teach help students and parents life-long self-advocacy skills. The workshop series will be divided into three sessions for students and one session for parents. The student workshop series will address topics such as understanding the difference between a learning disability and a learning challenge, processing deficits, learning styles, personal strengths, personal weaknesses, and self-advocacy strategies. In a very similar fashion the parent workshop session will discuss self-advocacy, how to be a support system for your child, how to identify academic and social strengths and weaknesses, understanding intrinsic motivation, and tips for on-going self-advocacy. This workshop series will enhance student’s self-concept as well as their ability to communicate their educational needs to teachers and staff members. The workshop series will allow students to analyze their learning style while also clarifying their particular learning challenges. Techniques will be taught to improve student’s areas of challenges which may help to increase success in their current and future coursework. Parents will also gaining knowledge in self-advocacy so that they can support and assist their child in their child’s journey towards self-advocacy.

**Terminology**

- **Self-Advocacy**: means that the student understands his or her disability, is aware of the strengths as of the weaknesses resulting from the functional limitation imposed by the disability, and is able to articulate reasonable need for academic or physical accommodation (Lynch & Gussel, 2001).
• Personal Strengths: an academic and or social area in which one strives and is accomplished and very good at a specific task (Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007).

• Personal Weaknesses: an academic and or social area in which one struggles and has a hard time understanding and or mastering a specific task (Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007).

• Self-Determinism: is a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-determination. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults (Field, Martin, Ward, and Wehmeyer, 1998).

• Resiliency: is the ability to survive, and thrive from, stressful experiences while building up protective skills to manage future hardship and or challenges (Finamore, 2008).

Conclusion

When students with learning disabilities are able to identify their disability and understand their personal strengths and weaknesses students in the long run tend to become better self-advocates. Having a strong sense of self-advocacy increases students’ self-esteem, self-determination, and provides a positive outlook on life. A lot of research has been conducted on self-advocacy skills and how it impacts students with intellectual
disabilities. Contrary to popular belief research on learning disabled students and self-advocacy skills is not dominant within the current literature review. Although self-advocacy for students with learning disabilities exists more research should be conducted to include current literature. The research that was reviewed in this literature review looks at self-advocacy, self-advocacy and communication skills, laws, self-advocacy in high schools, self-advocacy and student training, self-advocacy in higher education, self-advocacy and resiliency, self-determinism, and parent advocacy. It is noted that the self-advocacy workshop series that was designed within this project was tailored to address all of the current literature topics while also branching out to newer topics such as understanding one’s own learning style to specifically address students’ needs.
Chapter 2: A Review of Self-Advocacy Literature

Introduction

Various research studies have been conducted on empowerment, support, self-determination, self-advocacy, and how developing effective-self advocacy skills early in life leads to successful outcomes later in life. It is noted that current research tends to highlight intellectual disabilities prominently in the current literature review and learning disabilities and self-advocacy skills are not as prevalent in the literature review when examining current meanings of self-advocacy skills for students with learning disabilities.

Lynch and Gussel (2001) define self-advocacy as, “the ability for a student to understand his or her disability, is as aware of the strengths as of the weakness resulting from the functional limitation imposed by the disability, and is able to articulate reasonable need for academic or physical accommodations.” The need for knowledge of one’s own disability as one moves throughout the educational system is imperative if one is going to be able to communicate their needs to others in higher education in the forms of community college or a four year university as well other career ventures such as beauty school, the military, and or full employment.

Self-Advocacy Skills

Research by Izzo and Lamb (2002) found that self-advocacy skills and opportunities to self-advocate are frequently not included in the instruction of students with disabilities in their school setting. When students are not taught self-advocacy skills and they are asked to explain their disability in terms of their areas of struggles, many students are unable to do so because they themselves were never educated on their own
disability. Most students in higher social economic status (SES) schools in K-12th education system have parents and or staff members who advocate for them if they are in special education due to their individualized education plan (IEP) and the legal mandates that follow that IEP. As a result due to the way that the current special education system is set up many of these students do not learn how to advocate for themselves because others advocate for them. On the contrary, when looking at students in lower SES schools in the K-12th education system many parents do not self-advocate for their children due to cultural and language barriers, educational level barriers, and or SES barriers. As a result the students’ school advocates for the student leaving the student out of the process all together. In turn, most students never learn self-advocacy skills because there is no need to learn since their parents and or teachers do all of the advocacy needed for them at school and or in the community. Izzo and Lamb (2002) also noted that when students with disabilities leave the supportive environments of their schools, they do not understand their strengths and needs well enough to explain the accommodations that they need beyond school life. In turn, it appears that many parents and schools unintentionally are setting students up for failure as they get older and move beyond the traditional K-12th education system.

When examining self-advocacy Test, Flowler, Wood, Brewer, and Eddy (2005) developed a conceptual framework for self-advocacy to teach students early on about self-advocacy skills. The researchers defined four tenets of self-advocacy. The tenets included: knowledge of oneself, knowledge of rights, communication, and leadership. The researchers found that knowledge of oneself includes knowing ones strengths, preferences, goals, dreams, interests, learning style, accommodation needs, and support
needs. Knowledge of rights includes knowing one’s personal rights, community rights, consumer rights, educational rights, the steps to advocate for change, and knowledge of resources. Test et al. (2005) found that knowledge of self and knowledge of rights are viewed as the foundations of self-advocacy because it is necessary for individuals to understand and know themselves so that they can communicate effectively with others when seeking academic and or life assistance.

Advocacy for one’s child and for oneself as they move throughout the educational system is a key element that must be learned by a student’s parent if the child is young and then by the student themselves as they mature and when they are old enough to understand what their disability is and how it effects them. Astramovich and Harris (2007) found that individuals who come from low SES and or low educational backgrounds often feel intimidated by their child’s school and often feel uninvolved when it comes time for their child’s IEP meetings and or educational placement meetings. According to Astramovich and Harris (2007), many parents feel this way due to their SES level and or educational level. On the other hand, parents who come from higher SES feel as if the school welcomes them and allows them to participate within the educational placements for their child. These parents also feel as if the school provides helpful insights at IEP meetings that help to make a difference with their child. Parents who advocate for their children inadvertently teach their children how to self-advocate for themselves. Children learn how to self-advocate by seeing their parents advocate for them through modeling of the behavior which results in children learning how to self-advocate. The overall goal for all parents regardless of race and or minority is to advocate for their children, so that children can see self-advocacy taking place and model and
participate in self-advocacy. When students are able to self-advocate it increases their self-esteem, self-determination, and their outlook on life (Astramovich and Harris, 2007).

Self-Advocacy and Communication Skills

When examining communication, Test et al. (2005) found that it is very important for individuals to develop effective communication skills so that individuals are able to communicate their needs to others through the use of assertiveness, negotiation, articulation, body language, persuasion, compromise, and listening techniques. The final component of leadership of being able to help others through group advocacy was found to enable a person to move from individual self-advocacy to advocating for others as a group of individuals with common concerns. Test et al. (2005) found that leadership increased with knowledge of group’s rights, advocating for others or for causes, political action, team dynamics, knowledge of resources, and organizational participation in groups. These four tenets of self-advocacy skills are important for students to master so that they know and understand themselves as well as their rights. When a student knows themselves and their rights they are then able to help and or assist others who are struggling with a similar issue and empower them by encouraging them to use self-advocacy skills. When teaching self-advocacy skills to students by utilizing these four tenets Arnold and Czamanske (1991) found that it is important to teach young children self-advocacy skills so that transitions later on in life are not as difficult and shocking such as when students transition from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college. When children themselves take on the role of decision making they gain confidence, assertiveness, and a sense of self-reliance. Wehmeyer (1999) suggests that students of all ages can develop self-determinism and
self-advocacy skills so that they can be effective advocates for their interests, needs, and rights. When one is able to develop self-determinism Astramovich and Harris (2007) found that one is also able to cultivate self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, a high sense of self-efficacy, and a sense of control over one’s life.

Wertheimer (1988) believes that self-advocacy is about expressing one’s own needs and feelings and gaining autonomy while also increasing self-confidence, self-awareness, and the ability to know one’s mind while also understanding the power of resiliency and empowerment. As children develop and work their way through the educational system, many individuals with disabilities, when provided support and modeling from parents and teachers learn how to self-advocate. Children learn how to self-advocate through modeling of their parents and teachers as well as through practice and role playing at school and in the community when appropriate.

Many students with disabilities often go on to postsecondary institutions to pursue higher education. Anctil, Ishikawa, & Scott (2008) looked at this concept in a research study that examined academic identity development through self-determination of successful college students with learning disabilities. The study looked at three clearly stated research objectives. The first objective looked at cognitive and behavioral manifestations of self-determination in successful college students with learning disabilities. The second objective explored ways in which participants’ self-determination had affected their transition and their current success and the third objective sought to seek narratives of behavioral manifestations of self-determination, which could then in turn help other young adults with learning disabilities as well as educate and give insight to special education teachers, rehabilitation counselors, and policy makers who are
interested in the success of young adults with learning disabilities. The results of the study showed that persistence enhances competence, acting persistent develops competence, experiencing competence influences career decision making, and self-realization develops through persistence and competence. Numerous research articles have shown that when students have a sense of control over their education then they are more inclined to take a strong interest in their academic needs and educational success (Anctil et al., 2008).

An unfortunate fact is that many students with learning disabilities often lack self-advocacy skills because they are too embarrassed to ask questions in class and seek help and or assistance when they are confused. The reason why many learning disabled students don’t seek assistance is because they do not want to be perceived as stupid or dumb by their peers. As a result many students with learning disabilities silently suffer and fail classes because they are too embarrassed to self-advocate and seek assistance when they need it. McCarthy (2007) explains that self-advocacy is crucial to learning and is a life-long skill that is needed for all individuals. All individuals with disabilities and or without disabilities need to be able to communicate effectively with others in society so that basic, academic, and spiritual needs are met. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) the goal of IDEA is for parents and teachers to work together on behalf of the student to make sure that the students’ needs are met. Where does that leave the student? How is the student involved in the IEP and special education process and what self-advocacy skills are students learning? The answer is simple in most cases the student is not involved in the self-advocacy process and they do not learn life-long self-advocacy skills. As a result of the way that the law is
written many students are left out of the process and they are unaware of how to self-advocate and they are unsure about their rights as a student with a disability and the services and accommodations and or modifications that they may be eligible to receive.

Downing, Earles-Vollrath, and Schreiner (2007) holds similar views on self-advocacy. They believe that students as early as elementary school should be involved in their IEP process so that students can become aware of their IEP goals and work towards achieving them. Currently, many students in the K-12th special education system have no idea what their IEP goals are let alone the specifics of their disability, their areas of strengths and weaknesses, and helpful learning strategies that work best for them. As a result of the lack of knowledge that many students have many students are completely uninvolved and have no interest in developing their IEP goals and or learning self-advocacy skills. Downing et al. (2007) found that if self-advocacy skills are embedded in a school curriculum that is mandated for students to take starting in elementary school and continue throughout middle school and high school, students in turn develop an interest in investing time in self-advocacy skills because the self-advocacy skills become realistic and personal.

Some of the goals within the class that Downing et al. (2007) developed were that the student would be able to describe the nature of his or her special education services, define content within his or her own IEP, and name characteristics associated with his or her specific disability. Additionally, the student would be able to generate situations that might be challenging due to his or her disability, communicate effectively about the type of help he or she feels would be necessary in a situation where the disability presents
challenges and he or she would be able to access appropriate helpers and resources to address challenges presented by the disability.

Although self-advocacy is a key component for all students with disabilities, the ability to communicate and disclose one's disability is sometimes an intimidating feat for students. Physical disabilities can visually be seen and understood by others through visual appearance. Learning and mental disabilities on the other hand cannot be seen which sometimes is harder for students to disclose to others since students don’t want to be viewed as stupid and or slow. Hadley (2004) views communication and disclosure of student’s disability to teachers and staff members as essential if students are looking to receive services in school beyond the traditional K-12th education system. Many students with IEP’s and or 504 accommodation plans do not need to disclose their disability or hardship to staff members because all information is discussed in the students’ IEP or 504 meeting. After discussing all of the pertinent information with all of the IEP team members from the meeting such as accommodations and or modifications plans for the student are then distributed through the schools information system to the student’s teachers. As a result the student is not held accountable for talking with their teachers about their disability because they schools data system informs teachers about the student’s disability.

Law

This universal dispersal of information regarding a student’s disability is not given freely to others in postsecondary institutions due to privacy laws that protect student’s autonomy. This privacy law is known as the Family Educational Rights and
Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the United States Department of Education (US Department of Education, 2014). As a result of this privacy law students are now the ones who decide if they want to disclose their disability to professors and disability staff members so that they can receive accommodations and or modifications if appropriate (Hadley, 2006). Thus, the student needs to develop a sense and understanding of their own disability and needs so that they can effectively communicate their needs to their disability service center in order to seek appropriate services. Along with access to seeking services includes effective communication skills with professors and or supervisors. Effective communication skills are needed so that accommodations and or modifications may be set in place for the student with the disability through the student’s disability services center. If a professor does not know that a student has a learning disability and the student did not disclose their disability to their professor, how can the professor help the student with accommodations if the professor did not know that the student had a disability in the first place?

Self-Advocacy in High School

Brinckerhoff, Shaw, and McGuire (1992) found that many high school students with learning disabilities often begin their postsecondary education with little or no knowledge about their disability and how to access support networks on campus. As a result many learning disabled students are unprepared for postsecondary institutions. One of the primary reasons why self-advocacy skills are lacking among postsecondary learning disabled students are that learning disabled students never needed to seek
resources for themselves in high school. Resources were always provided and given directly to learning disabled students such as separate testing environments, extra time on tests, and assistive technology. Providing accommodations without participation and involvement in the process of acquiring accommodations on the part of students with learning disabilities results in future lack of self-advocacy skills. Most learning disabled students are never taught these skills in elementary school, rarely in middle school, and occasionally in high school. As a result most students are very confused about seeking services when they enter postsecondary institutions (Brinckerhoff et al., 1992).

Brinckerhoff (1994) conducted an informal survey on 30 learning disabled high school graduates who were enrolled in Boston University’s Disability Services college orientation program. Nearly half of the students in the group ever recalled having an IEP in high school and only a few knew what an IEP was designed to do and even fewer knew what the letters IEP represented. Due to the fact that learning disabilities are “hidden” and not visually seen many high school students have found it easier to sit on the sidelines and let others with more authority in their eyes such as parents, teachers, and administrators, represent their interests at IEP meetings. Students with learning disabilities also allow others to make decisions for them without any input from the student themselves on the particular issue that is being discussed.

**Self-Advocacy Student Training**

According to Brinckerhoff, (1994) in order to prepare learning disabled students to successfully enter postsecondary institutions, Boston University developed a series of seven workshops that addressed self-advocacy skills. The purpose of Boston University’s
workshops were to give learning disabled participants a greater understanding of learning
disabilities, rights under the law, how to effectively advocate and negotiate with staff
members, and how to access accommodations and or modifications at the university site.
The workshops were taught by a disability staff member and two graduate students who
have a learning disability and who have gone through the program themselves.

The workshops consisted of the following sessions. Session One: What is Your
Learning Disability in Plain English? This workshop explored the definition of learning
disabilities and also taught students to find their areas of strengths and weaknesses while
reminding students that learning disabled individuals tend to be persistent, goal directed,
creative, and as a result students needed to learn to reframe their disability as an ability
rather than a “disability.” The second session: Understanding Legal Rights Under IDEA
and Section 504 and the American Disabilities Act (ADA) informed students about their
rights under the law and encouraged students to keep up with modern disability
legislation. The third session entitled Self-Advocacy Basics taught students how to
negotiate for their rights; if rights are denied. This session taught students how to discuss
their disability with others such as professors and other staff members at the college or
university (Brinckerhoff, 1994).

The fourth session entitled: Determining Reasonable Accommodations in the
Classroom explored accommodations that students may take advantage of if their
disability warrants the accommodation along with strategies and tips on how to take
initiative in asking for accommodations. The fifth session entitled: Independence Versus
Dependence Issues taught students how to be independent self-advocates and rely on
themselves not their parents and or guardians for acquiring accommodations. The sixth
session entitled: *The I-Plan Strategy and Role Playing* session allowed students to practice self-advocacy skills in a safe environment with other learning disabled students who worked with participants by coaching and encouraging them through one on one sessions that dealt with a variety of scenarios. This session attempted to teach students about their personal strengths and weaknesses while providing students with helpful tips such as teaching students to ask questions when they are confused. Listen attentively while in all academic classes and set short term and long term goals. The seventh session entitled: *Putting Self-Advocacy to Work* taught students to use self-advocacy skills with professors in mock discussions. In this session students received feedback from faculty which helped students to improve in their areas of personal weakness while also giving student’s confidence in areas that they were already strong in (Brinckerhoff, 1994).

Brinckerhoff (1994) according to session surveys that the 20 participating students filled out, found that all of the students who participated in the program felt confident in their ability to communicate their needs to others in postsecondary institutions. Student’s felt confident due to the role-playing and feedback that they received from professor, staff members, and peers. Students noted that they felt prepared and fully informed on their disability and their personal rights as a student with a disability in a postsecondary institution due to the information that they received throughout the workshop series. Students reported that they were more likely to disclose their disability to professors because they felt that they gained effective communication skills and self-advocacy skills by attending the workshops. By being knowledgeable about oneself while by being competent in using self-advocacy skills students with
learning disabilities can make informed choices that can assist them now as well as in the future.

**Self-Advocacy in Higher Education**

Hadley (2004) found that many university students reported a lack of clarity and confusion for receiving campus services such as locations for “test proctoring” because they themselves were not involved previously in high school with establishing and developing their services and or IEP plan. In order to be successful in higher educational institutions Hadley (2004) found that the disclosure of one’s disability to professors and or supervisors is essential for students with learning disabilities. It is essential so that students can seek appropriate accommodations that they may need such as extra time on tests, a separate testing environment, recorded lectures, use of a calculator, and or spell check. If a student does not disclose their disability to their professor then these services cannot be provided and or approved by the professor. When students are able to effectively communicate their needs to professors and or staff members they are demonstrating positive self-advocacy skills. Thus, developing effective self-advocacy skills is essential for all individuals seeking to transition to colleges, universities, job training programs, and even full time work employment.

**Self-Advocacy and Resiliency**

When one is able to develop self-advocacy skills one in turn is also able to develop self-determinism, empowerment and resiliency skills. Goodley, Armstrong, Sutherland, and Laurie (2003) found that resilience as a phenomenon questions how individuals understand the concept of learning difficulties through trials of success and
failure. When looking at resiliency it is important to keep in mind that a key aspect of resiliency is feelings of empowerment and empowerment comes from self-advocacy. Pennell (2001) found in her research on self-determination and self-advocacy that self-advocacy is attributed to strong self-determinism. Self-advocacy focuses on the ability to stand up for oneself by speaking up, speaking out, and knowing yourself through your personal strengths and weaknesses (Pennell, 2001). It also means that an individual knows her or her rights while empowering others with disabilities. When one is able to self-advocate for themselves he or she in turn has a positive outlook and a strong self-concept which shows strong self-determination and the drive to succeed.

**Self-Determinism**

Pennell (2001) found that self-determinism focuses on four main principles: freedom, authority, support, and responsibility. The principle of freedom acknowledges an individual’s ability to freely choose one’s life path while gaining emotional support among family and friends. It is important for an individual with a learning disability in particular to understand the freedom that one can possess when planning and looking towards one’s future. According to Pennell (2001) most learning disabled students if not given the proper emotional support from family members and or school staff end up feeling “stupid” and often repeat a very harmful pattern of “learned helplessness” behavior in which individuals see themselves as failures and not successful individuals. In turn, most students who hold a view of “learned helplessness” often tend to view themselves as less worthy and less capable of achieving their dreams and life goals. As a result it is very important for parents, school staff members, and friends to encourage and emotionally support students with learning disabilities so that thinking patterns of
“learned helplessness” can disappear and instead feelings of confidence and support can emerge.

As children develop and work their way through the educational system, many individuals with disabilities, when provided supports from others, learn how to self-advocate for themselves. These students often go on to postsecondary institutions such as community colleges and or four year universities to pursue higher level degrees. Anctil et al. (2008) looked at this exact concept in a research study that examined academic identity development through self-determination of successful college students with learning disabilities. The study looked at three clearly stated research objectives. The first objective looked at cognitive and behavioral manifestations of self-determination in successful college students with learning disabilities. The second objective explored ways in which participants’ self-determination had affected their transition and their current success. The third objective sought to seek narratives of behavioral manifestations of self-determination, which could then in turn help other young adults with learning disabilities as well as educate and give insight to special education teachers, rehabilitation counselors, and policy makers who are interested in the success of young adults with learning disabilities. The results of Anctil et al. (2008) study showed that persistence enhances competence, acting persistent develops competence, experiencing competence influences career decision making, and self-realization develops through persistence, competence, and career decision making. When a student knows how to advocate for themselves the educational opportunities for that student are boundless.
Self-Advocacy and Self Determinism

According to Pennell (2001) when examining the concept of authority, authority refers to an individual’s ability to self-advocate and stand up for one’s rights. Regardless of what disability one possess self-advocacy and the ability to stand up for one’s rights is extremely important. Every child needs to understand their disability and in turn every child needs to be able to effectively communicate their needs to others. The ability to communicate needs and supports is essential for all individuals with disabilities. For learning disabled students this skill is especially important because in postsecondary institutions students themselves are the ones who advocate for their needs and supports, not anyone else. According to Pennell (2001) support is an essential component that all students with disabilities need in order to thrive. Support refers to an individual’s ability to assist and provide emotional support as well as a safe and nurturing environment for the student. Without support many students with disabilities would not thrive and hold themselves in high regards. Positive emotional support from family members, friends, and school staff members allows students with disabilities to develop a strong sense of themselves as well as a confident frame of mind. This confident frame of mind allows students to work up to their true potential and not settle for anything less. When a student with a disability knows their freedom, understands their rights and authority, and has a supportive environment the last component needed to achieve self-determinism is responsibility (Pennell, 2001).

Responsibility refers to a student’s ability to give back to others and educate and support others with similar disabilities. When students are able to give back to others through the form of peer mentoring, peer tutoring, and or peer education students are
showing other students with disabilities the power of self-advocacy and self-determination. According to Pennell (2001) the biggest gain for individuals with disabilities is when individuals realize that they have the power and authority to create change in their own lives. Self-determinism is a call for change and it allows individuals to shift power from systems to the individual themselves. Self-determinism allows individuals with disabilities to choose how they want to live their lives. Self-determinism is an awareness of personal needs, an ability to choose ones goals, the ability to make ones needs known, evaluating progress toward meeting one’s goals, adjusting performances in order to meet one’s goals, and creating a unique approaches to solve problems (Pennell, 2001). Thus in schools when students with disabilities understand their disability as well as their personal strengths and weaknesses the students in turn are shifting the power of self-advocacy from their parents and teachers to themselves. Self-determinism in an essential feature that all students with disabilities need to master. Self-determinism is a way of thinking that should be taught to students as early as elementary school so that students can begin to change the way that they view themselves and their disability (Pennell, 2001).

Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1998) found that self-determinism is associated with a greater quality of life and more positive adult outcomes later on in life. When individuals with disabilities are able to engage in goal directed behavior in terms of understanding one’s own strengths and limitations then one is able to take control of their life and have successful outcomes. In research study conducted by Merchant and Gajar (1997) the most effective self-advocacy skills that are taught to students in schools include role playing activities, the I-PLAN curriculum which teaches students to inventory their strengths and
areas of improvements while also teaching students to listen and ask questions while
developing and establishing goals that they would like to work towards. Other helpful
skills that are taught to students include providing direct instruction to students by using
rehearsal, practice, and feedback. Students are able to gain confidence and self-assurance
through the practice and feedback stage while learning to self-advocate. According to
Merchant and Gajar (1997) research has shown that self-directed IEP’s in which students
are heavily involved in the IEP process tend to help students increase their self-advocacy
and communication skills.

In a study conducted by Pocock, Lambros, Karvonen, Test, Algozzine, Wood, and
Martin (2002) the researchers examined successful strategies for promoting self-
advocacy among students with learning disabilities. The researchers examined a program
entitled Learning and Education about Disabilities (LEAD) the programs objectives were
to promote self-advocacy and other self-determination skills to students with learning
disabilities. The LEAD group was run by students with disabilities and worked on the
following topics: educational activities such as the referral process for special education
and any other topic that is related to special education, mentoring others, and support
group meetings to help students with disabilities.

When examining self-awareness and disability knowledge the disability student
leaders found that many students in the LEAD group knew that they had a disability but
they had no knowledge about their specific disability and or their personal strengths and
weaknesses. As a result of the lack of knowledge from the incoming LEAD students the
LEAD group peer educators educated students by using their IEP’s, test scores, and other
data to teach students about their personal strengths and weaknesses which helped
students to understand themselves and their specific disabilities better. According to Pocock et al. (2002) when students attended the support group they were able to discuss the challenges that they were facing in coping with their disabilities. This outlet for students was reported to be a very positive support group. Students in the LEAD group also participated in community presentations in order to educate others about learning disabilities. Many presentations were made to parents, students, professionals, and various educators in the community. The LEAD group’s purpose for presenting was to educate others on learning disabilities while providing first hand experiences to others on what it is like to be a student with a learning disability. According to Pocock et al. (2002) by having learning disabled students engage in disability awareness, mentorship activities, and community outreach all of these activities helped the learning disabled students in the program increase their self-advocacy skills as well as their self-confidence.

Pocock et al. (2002) determined that the following components helped to shape the success of the LEAD program. The first component was mastering self-determination skills. By teaching learning disabled students how to master self-determination skills students learned about their personal strengths, challenges, learning style, and interests. In turn by understanding these facets students were able to communicate these skills to others. The second component was maintaining a philosophy of student ownership with an appropriate balance of support, guidance, and independence. The third component was effective modeling of self-advocacy skills. The fourth component was an opportunity for improving self-advocacy skills which were embedded in activities outside of the classroom and the fifth component was creating a school culture that supported self-
advocacy develop among learning disabled students. When schools support disabled students, students in turn tend to strive towards excellence and engage in self-advocacy. The LEAD program was found to be very successful and should be explored in the future as a possible program that could be implemented across the country at all schools (Pocock et al. 2002).

According to House and Sears, (2002) self-advocacy, self-determinism, and self-esteem are concepts that all students regardless of their disability should possess but unfortunately most students don’t possess these skills because they have not been taught how to gain these skills. Minority students in particular often never develop these skills due to the fact of cultural barriers and feelings of inferiority in the school culture in which the student attends. House and Sears (2002) found that counselors today have been called upon to advocate for minority students with disabilities, due to the fact that parents don’t always advocate for their children because they themselves feel inferior to the school and the school culture due to their own personal low educational levels, their low SES, and language barriers. When parents are not able to advocate for their children; children in turn do not develop effective self-advocacy skills because they are not exposed to the correct modeling of self-advocacy skills. House and Sears (2002) noted that many schools do not teach their students self-advocacy skills. This lack of teaching often hurts many learning disabled minority students because most learning disabled minority students are not seeing self-advocacy skills being modeling within their home environment.
**Parent Advocacy**

According to research conducted by Turnbull and Winston (1984), in order to be an influential advocate for a child with a disability the child’s parents need effective communication skills, extensive familiarity with legal mandates and available services, and technical knowledge about assertive confrontation. Parents with little education and limited English proficiency find it difficult to participate in their child’s school program and or IEP meetings since they don’t understand the school system. As a result, these parents may seek a passive role in the educational decision making for their child because they feel as if they have no power. Many of these parents as a result of their personal feelings of inferiority due to their education levels, SES, and language barriers are not teaching their children self-advocacy skills because they are not participating in advocating for their child at school because they feel that they don’t have the power and or authority to self-advocate.

A research study conducted by Warger and Burnette (2000) looked at school personnel and their views on culturally and linguistically diverse parents as well as parents with low education levels. Similarly, the results of the study found that educators perceive culturally and linguistic diverse parents as well as low education level parents as having low enthusiasm and commitment towards their child’s school and their own child’s IEP meetings and or placements based on a simple parent involvement questionnaire. When examining the lack of self-advocacy skills that parents are demonstrating for their children it is no wonder why many students do not participate and or feel that self-advocacy skills are necessary. What type of message does this send to students? Regardless of parent education levels, their SES, and their home language
parents have a responsibility to model self-advocacy skills to their children so that children can understand how to stand up for themselves and their rights.

Epstein and Becker (1982) in a research study found that many teachers doubted that parents could be involved in schools if they did not have much of a formal education. As a result of this assumption the school staff members at this particular school often responded inappropriately with the child’s parents if the child’s parents had a low education level or if they were linguistically or culturally diverse. The school justified their actions in this research study by saying that many of the staff members acted in that manner because they had little expectations of people with low SES as well as with little or no formal education (Grant & Sleeter, 1986). With negative perceptions towards parents such as these that have been cited in various research studies, it is important looking forward at current educational law to identify and communicate parent rights and procedural safeguards as well as students’ rights and responsibilities when working with special education students and their parents so that as a team parents and children can self-advocate together.

According to IDEIA which encompasses and services children from 3 to 21 years of age and the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) which services children from birth to three years of age, these laws provide parents and children with educational rights. These educational rights allow parents to become equal partners with school professionals when making legal education and placement decisions for their child. Although parents and staff members make the legal education and placement decision students should be involved throughout the entire IEP process as well as through the special education eligibility process so that they are aware of their own disability, their
IEP and what it is and what it stands for, their personal strengths and weaknesses, and effective learning strategies that work best for the student based on their personal learning style. When students understand these concepts, they are able to self-advocate for themselves and students tend to have a positive and optimistic attitude about their future (Warger & Burnette, 2000).

According to a research study conducted by Spann, Kohler, and Soenksen (2003), in spite of the understanding the legal rights that parents possess, many parents felt that their role in their child’s IEP meetings was not noticeable and that they have no say or influence in the decision making of the placement and educational accommodations and services for their child. Parents in this study felt that they were not being treated as an equal partner with school professionals, but instead as “ignorant individuals who knew nothing”. According to Spann et al., (2003) many parents in this study often reported that they felt that they were “passed up” or that they had no say in their child’s educational placement due to cultural barriers such as language and parental educational levels. The research study also looked at SES and the way that parents presented themselves to school personnel at school meetings such as initial IEP intakes, annual IEP’s, and or triennial IEP’s. It was found by Spann et al., (2003) that parents who presented themselves in a more formal and educated manner such that they matched the dominant culture of the school in which their child attended these particular minority parents felt more welcome within the school community. The opposite effect also showed to be significant within in the study. If parents presented themselves in a sloppy manner, then school personnel unfortunately were more likely to write off these minority parents and not include them in their child’s educational placement meeting decision making. The
study showed that most of these parents were not informed of their basic educational rights and if they were informed of their basic educational rights then some of them simply did not understand them. Future research in this area should look at other minority cultures such as Hispanic, African American, and Asian cultures in other populated cities to see if the same effect would take place by reversing the roles of the dominate culture and the minorities (Spann et al., 2003).

In a very similar study, Lian and Fontanez-Phelan (2001), conducted a study that investigated perceptions relating to cultural and linguistic issues and advocacy among Latino parents whose children participated in school programs for limited English proficient students with disabilities in a large urban school district. Parents were given a Spanish-English bilingual questionnaire, called the Parent Assessment of Knowledge and Advocacy Scale (PAKAS) which included 56 Likert scale items that addressed cultural and linguistic issues, parent rights, and home-school partnership. The results of the survey indicated that there is a high need for parent workshops to help educate parents on expectations of schools and parents role within the school community. It was also found that a high number of parents reported that they were less confident in pursuing the parental rights to which they were entitled because they did not have much of a formal education (e.g. no high school diploma or they were not English proficient). Lian and Fontanez-Phelan (2001) suggested that prior to an IEP meeting parents should be prepared with knowledge of parental rights as well as communication skills so that they can appropriately communicate with school personnel, thus demonstrating self-advocacy skills.
A research study on urban parents of children with special needs advocating for their children was conducted by Joseph and Evans (2008). These researchers looked at how parent educational levels and school involvement as well as parent-school relationships affect family’s involvement with their child’s special education placement. In the study, the researchers examined three families that came from the same economically distressed neighborhood that was home to predominantly African American families that attended the same local elementary school. All of the families that participated in the study had children who had been receiving special education services for more than a year.

Joseph and Evans (2008) found that the families conveyed the message that they wanted to be able to work with the school to produce the best outcomes for their child. Family involvement with the school ranged from proactive to reactive depending on the child’s age, history of disability, and family expectation. Joseph and Evan (2008) noted that family involvement in the lower to working class families possessed limited or less effective social resources as compared to middle and upper class income families. According to Joseph and Evan (2008) the implications of this study are that educators should work to increase their awareness of parent perspectives and adopt policies that allow for the coordination of resources that are useful for families to use as needed. Overall, the school community should be a place where parents are encouraged to self-advocate for their children and in turn children will learn to self-advocate for themselves. When families feel safe and confident enough to work with school personnel in a positive collaborative manner, successful outcomes are produced for both the family and the school.
In a research study that was conducted by Murray and Curran (2008) they looked at this exact principle. The researchers wanted to examine parent and professional relationships and see how individuals learn and work together in a positive productive manner when all parties involved feel as if they are working towards a positive common goal. The goal of the research study conducted by Murray and Curran (2008) was to help students learn about family centered practices in meaningful and transformational ways. The results of the study indicated that students who were enrolled in the college’s upper division education class were able to recognize and value the experiences of parents of children with disabilities and use that knowledge to facilitate and maintain effective and rewarding parent professional partnerships. Overall by teaching a group of qualified parents to help other parents of children with disabilities in turn in helps parents to become confident, empowered, and collaborative advocates for themselves and their children. By teaching children self-advocacy skills they will be able to better understand their own disability, their personal strengths and weaknesses, helpful learning strategies that will allow them to self-advocate in the classroom, and the ability to know their best learning style (Murray & Curran, 2008).

**Conclusion**

In summary, self-advocacy is a skill that students need to master as they work their way throughout the educational system. Without self-advocacy skills most learning disabled students would not be able to function independently in post-secondary institutions due to the independent nature that post-secondary institutions represent. Students also need to understand the educational laws that affect their personal disabilities so that they are able to make informed and educated decisions as they move
throughout their educational career. When students are able to self-advocate it increases their self-esteem, self-determination, personal knowledge, and their outlook on life. Self-advocacy is a lifelong skill that students can continue to work on every year.
Introduction

According to the lack of current research that has been conducted on self-advocacy skills specifically when looking at students with learning disabilities this graduate project was designed to address self-advocacy skills with high school learning disabled students through workshops. This graduate project was designed to help teach learning disabled students in their quest to increase their self-esteem, self-determination, personal knowledge, and their outlook on life. This chapter will discuss the development of the project, the workshop attendees, the presenter’s qualifications, the workshop’s themselves and the content covered in each workshop, and all materials used in the workshops with the session participants.

Development of Project

This project was designed by creating four unique PowerPoint presentations that addressed four different session topics. The first three session workshops were designed for the students who attended the workshop. The student workshop topics were as follows: Session One- *What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and How Does it Impact me at School?*; Session Two- *I Know Me.*; Session Three: *Taking Ownership and Learning to Advocate for Oneself.* The fourth session workshop was designed for students’ parents to help support students in their quest towards self-advocacy skills.; and Session Four was titled: *Empowering Parents to Teach Self-Advocacy Skills to their Children.*
I created the various PowerPoint presentations by obtaining information from Sage Publications about learning disabilities. Specifically, information was also obtained from the National Center for Learning Disabilities, the National Resource Center on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the University of Michigan, the Eastern New York Post-Secondary Transition Team Student Handbook on Self-Advocacy Skills, the Human Development Institute, the National Association of School Psychologists, and The Center for Literacy and Education University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I drafted up a proposal letter to the special education high school principal at a high School located in Valencia, California. This school site was chosen because this is where the presenter was completing her school psychology internship. The letter to the principal addressed the session objectives and what would be accomplished during each workshop. After she received the letter she had a meeting with the presenter and one week later she approved the objectives and the content for the workshops. The principal then asked the presenter to create a parent letter that would be sent home to special educational students and their parents. The presenter drafted up a letter that informed parents about the afterschool free workshop series. The letter that special education parents received included each workshops objectives and session topics, date, and time of each session workshop. The letter also included a parental consent form so that interested special education students and their parents could sign for the workshop. Interested special education students and their parents were asked to fill out the consent form and return it to the school psychologist’s intern’s office or the school psychologist’s mailbox. Please see Appendix A for the full letter.
Intended Audience

During the fall of 2013, special education high school students in ninth through twelfth grade at West Ranch High School were invited to participate in a self-advocacy after-school workshop series. The workshop informational letters were sent out to 139 male and female special education students who participate in the Special Day Class One (SC 1) program which is designed to help learning disabled students and the Resource Specialist Program at the high school which monitors learning disabled students. Of the 139 students who received the workshop information the breakdown of the special education student demographics is as followed: 81 of the students have a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), one student has an Orthopedic Impairment (OI), one student has a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), 29 students have an Other Health Impairment (OHI), and 27 students have a Speech and Language Impairment (SLI).

Of the 139 students, four students returned the consent form. Of those four students three of them are in tenth grade and the other student is in twelfth grade. Two of the tenth grade students qualify as special education students under the education code criteria for a Speech and Language Impairment. The other tenth grade student qualifies under Autistic-Like Behavior (AUT). This student who qualifies under Autistic-Like Behavior was not initially included in the 139 students who were invited to participate because he is not part of the SC 1 and or resource specialist program at the high school. This student participates in the Special Day Class Seven (SC 7) program that assists students with high functioning Asperger’s disorder. This student heard of the workshops through friends and he became interested in attending so he sought out information on the program. Although this student was not initially included in the original population
sample, he was welcomed to attend since he had an interest in the session topics. The twelfth grade student who responded qualifies under an Other Health Impairment (OHI). It is also noted that each of the student’s parents who signed the consent form also indicated that they would attend the parent workshop on its designated day.

At the first workshop only two of the four students showed up. The two boys who attended the workshop were in the tenth grade. One of the boys qualifies for special education services as a student with a Speech and Language impairment and the other student qualifies under Autistic-Like behavior. For the following two student workshops only one student showed up. It was the student with Autistic-Like Behavior and for the parent workshop only one set of parents came to that session. For the parent workshop the parents who showed up were the parents of the student who qualified for special education services under Autistic-Like Behavior.

It is noted that before each session workshop on the day of the session workshop each student would receive a reminder note. The reminder note listed the session date, time, and location of the workshop. The workshop date, time, and location would also be highlighted to make it extremely clear to the participants so that they knew where they needed to go for their workshop. Please see Appendix B for the full reminder note. It is noted that parents also received a reminder about their parent workshop via email and a telephone call to their home and cell phone number to remind them of their parent workshop.
Presenter’s Qualifications

The presenter of the workshop was a third year school psychology intern graduate student. The graduate student has received extensive training in the areas of research principles, individual and group assessment, counseling theory and practice, lifespan development, assessment and intervention, multi-systematic behavior intervention, behavior disorders, law and ethics, school psychology principles, and program evaluation. The graduate student has also completed more than 450 hours of school psychology fieldwork at a preschool and elementary school site and currently the graduate student is working on completing a 1200 hour school psychology internship.

Workshops Themselves

Each student and parent workshop lasted one hour. The first student session workshop was entitled: *What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and How Does it Impact me at School?* This workshop was created by obtaining information from the World Psychiatric Association (2003) on ADHD, The National Center for Learning Disabilities (2013) on what is a learning disability, the National Resource Center of ADHD (2006) on other disabilities related to specific learning disabilities, Bradley, Danielson, and Hallahan (2002) on the identification of learning disabilities such as reading, writing, mathematical, and processing disabilities, and Merrell, Ervin, and Gimpel (2006) on understanding the difference between a learning challenge and a learning disability. These topics were chosen to help teach learning disabled students about the academic and processing areas that relate to their specific learning disability.
This workshop addressed four main objectives. The first objective was to understand the difference between a learning challenge and a learning disability. This objective was accomplished by students learning the core differences between a learning challenge and a learning disability. The second objective was to discuss specific types of learning disabilities and processing areas. This objective was accomplished by discussing reading disabilities, writing disabilities, and math disabilities. After discussing the academic disabilities that a student can have processing areas were discussing. Students learned about attention, visual processing, auditory processing, sensory-motor processing, association, conceptualization, and expression. Then students were taught when you put it all together how a significant weakness in an academic area coupled with a processing deficit leads to a specific learning disability.

The third objective was to acknowledge very famous individuals who had learning disabilities; while also understanding how they overcame their challenges and became leaders within their own field of study. This objective was accomplished by having students view a YouTube video that highlighted very famous individuals and their disabilities. The point of the video was for students to see that just because you have a significant area of weakness and or a specific disability it doesn’t mean that you can’t accomplish great things. The video was meant to inspire students and show them that one day they too can achieve great things. The fourth objective asked students to reflect on how they think and study differently. This objective was accomplished by having students connect their individual talents to their unique and special way of thinking. Student also partook in a marshmallow tower building activity that allowed students to challenge their own unique way of thinking. The activity allowed students to see how
they can become innovators themselves by designing a marshmallow tower individually and then after a certain amount of time had passed then with a partner. This activity allowed students to foster their own creative learning style while building their own unique design. Throughout the workshop students were engaged in a back in forth discussion which allowed for creative and open dialogue among all workshop attendees. For the full PowerPoint presentation please see Appendix C.

The second student workshop was entitled: I Know Me. This workshop was created by obtaining information from the Student Advocacy Handbook (2007) on learning how to identify academic and social strengths and weaknesses, The Center for Literacy and Education of Tennessee, Knoxville (2006) on taking responsibility for your learning, The National Center for Learning Disabilities (2013) on knowing your own learning style, and the University of Michigan (2013) on understanding various learning styles. These topics were chosen to help teach students that they need to understand their own learning style in order to be able to identify their personal academic and social strengths and weaknesses.

This workshop addressed five main objectives. The first object was to have students become familiar with different learning styles. This objective was accomplished by having students recognize their area of academic weakness and know what specific academic tasks might be challenging for them. Students were then introduced to three different learning styles: auditory, visual, and tactile / kinesthetic learning. The second objective was to have students learn how to take responsibility for their own learning by understanding what learning style or styles works best for them by cognitively processing and understanding how they learn. After learning about the various learning styles that
students can possess. This objective was accomplished by having students participate in a learning styles inventory activity. The goal of this 24 question inventory was to help match students with their best learning style (i.e. visual, auditory, and tactile). Please see Appendix D for the full inventory.

The third objective was for students to take responsibility for their learning by learning to take ownership for their own work habits and not making excuses for poor performances. This objective was accomplished by having students understand that in order to make a change you must take action for your own learning. This was accomplished through a short discussion on understanding one’s own learning style while also being able to identify one’s own personal strengths and personal weakness. The fourth objective was for students to understand their own areas of personal strengths and personal weaknesses. This objective was accomplished by having students complete a worksheet that asked them to place a check mark next to an item that they deemed a personal strength and or a personal weakness. Please see Appendix E for the full worksheet. After students identified their personal strengths and personal weaknesses a small discussion was held to discuss student’s results and interpretations of their findings. The fifth objective was to have students learn how to change personal weaknesses into strengths and or areas that can be managed. This objective was accomplished by having students identify their personal weaknesses. Then students were taught to seek out appropriate strategies which in turn was also teaching the students self-advocacy skills. Throughout the workshop students were engaged in a back in forth discussion which allowed for creative and open dialogue among all workshop attendees. For the full PowerPoint presentation please see Appendix F.
The third student workshop was entitled: *Taking Ownership and Learning to Advocate for Oneself*. This workshop was created by obtaining information from the Human Development Institute (2007) on self-advocacy skills for students which included information on understanding appropriate instructional and testing accommodations. Information was also obtained from the Student Advocacy Handbook (2007) which discussed information on learning how to articulating one’s strengths and weaknesses to educators as well as self-advocacy strategies for confidence, time-management, memory, and test-taking skills. These topics were chosen to help teach learning disabled students how to advocate for themselves in their classroom environments while also learning how to feel more comfortable when they need to articulate their needs to teachers and counselors.

This workshop addressed five main objectives. The first objective was for students to link together and understand their own particular learning style as well as their personal strengths and personal weaknesses. This objective was met by having students view a short YouTube video that worked towards empowering students to advocate for themselves at school. The second objective was for students to develop strategies so that they would be able to effectively articulate their personal strengths and personal weaknesses to others when needed. This objective was accomplished by having students learn self-advocacy skills strategies, self-confidence strategies, time-management strategies, memory strategies, and test-taking strategies.

The third objective was for students to learn how to work with educators so that students can learn how to turn their personal weaknesses into strengths or “doable” weaknesses. This objective was accomplished by having students learn self-advocacy
strategies so that they can feel comfortable seeking assistance from their teachers when they need additional support. These strategies were then practiced through role playing exercises. The goal of the role playing exercises were to have students start to feel comfortable using self-advocacy skills when working with educators. The fourth objective was for students to understand appropriate academic accommodations. This goal was accomplished by teaching students about instructional accommodations, testing accommodations, and other supports such as counseling for a student is experiencing a variety of social-emotional issues. The fifth objective was to teach students about self-determination and how they can develop a positive outlook on life. This goal was accomplished by having students learn about self-determination while also engaging in a talk and share session. The goal of the talk and share session was to have students discuss what they want in life and how they can work towards achieving their goals. Throughout the workshop students were engaged in a back in forth discussion which allowed for creative and open dialogue among all workshop attendees. For the full PowerPoint presentation please see Appendix G.

After each workshop concluded all session attendees were asked to complete a session survey. The session survey asked participants to rate the workshop on its overall content, the workshop instructor’s delivery of the material, the workshop’s results in terms of the information being useful and helpful to the participants, and any other additional comments that the participants wanted to leave. The survey was scored using a Likert scale. The Likert scale ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree (lowest), 2 = Disagree, 3= Neither Agree or Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree (highest). Please see Appendix H-J for a full view of each session survey.
The fourth session and parent only workshop was entitled: *Empowering Parents to Teach Self-Advocacy Skills to Their Children*. This workshop was created by obtaining information from the Human Development Institute (2007) on how parents can assist their children in becoming an effective self-advocate, Kelley and Davidson (2011) on tips for self-advocacy, the National Association of School Psychologists (2003) on teaching students about intrinsic motivation, the Student Advocacy Handbook (2007) on identifying academic and social strengths and weaknesses, The Center for Literacy and Education University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2006) on teaching children to take responsibility for their learning, and the University of Michigan (2013) on learning styles. These topics were chosen to help teach parents how to empower their children towards a life-long goal of self-advocacy.

This workshop addressed five main objectives. The first objective to help parents effectively assist their child in their development towards self-advocacy. This objective was accomplished by discussing strategies and reminding parents to have open-ended conversations with their children about their disability and how it effects them in their classroom environment. The second objective was for parents to understand self-advocacy. This objective was accomplished by having parents view a YouTube video on self-advocacy as well as engage in an open ended dialogue with the group on how parents can help their child take responsibility for their own learning.

The third objective was for parents to understand their child’s learning style and in turn understand how particular learning styles can affect their child’s strengths and weaknesses. This objective was accomplished by educating parents on the various learning styles that exist as well as helping parents to identify their child’s personal
strengths and weaknesses. Then parents worked towards understanding their child’s personal weakness by seeking out effective strategies that can help students to reduce their areas of frustrations with personal weaknesses. The fourth objective was for parents to understand intrinsic motivation. This objective was accomplished by teaching parents that intrinsic motivation develops from persistence, choice of challenge, and emotion. Parents also discussed what motivates their individual child and then related the key factors of intrinsic motivation to the desire for the development of self-advocacy skills. The fifth objective was for parents to be exposed to helpful tips so that can help assist their child toward self-advocacy. The objective was accomplished by discussing self-advocacy when communicating, identifying supporters, meeting with teachers, participating actively in individualized education program (IEP) meetings, and overall on-going tips for self-advocacy. Throughout the workshop parents were engaged in a back in forth discussion with the presenter which allowed for creative and open dialogue among all workshop attendees. For the full PowerPoint presentation please see Appendix K.

After the parent workshop concluded all session attendees were asked to complete a session survey. The session survey asked participants to rate the workshop on its overall content using a 1 to 5 Likert scale. The Likert scale ranged from 1 = Insufficient (lowest) to 5 = Excellent (highest). Then session attendees were then asked to list the aspects of the workshop that they found most interesting. After completing that task then participants were asked to circle Yes or No if they felt that the workshop achieved the programs objectives, if they gained knowledge and information from participating in the
event, and if the workshop met their expectations. Please see Appendix L for the full session survey.

**Materials Used**

The afterschool workshop was conducted in an empty classroom on the high school campus for the three student sessions and the workshops ran from 2:45pm-3:45pm. The parent workshop was held at the high school in the school psychologist’s intern’s office and the parent session ran from 7:15 am to 8:15 am. In all locations where the workshop was being held there was a computer with speakers that was used to display the PowerPoint presentation. In all locations there were also student desks that participants sat in to view the presentation. All participants received a copy of the PowerPoint presentation as well as any handout’s that went along with the PowerPoint presentation. During the first student session it is noted that small marshmallows about 60 were used along with 60 tooth picks to assist students in their marshmallow towering building activity.

**Conclusion**

Over 139 students who are part of the special education program at West Ranch high school were invited to participate in the free afterschool self-advocacy workshop series. Four students in total signed up for the workshop and one student and their parent actually attended all sessions. Self-advocacy and the need for knowledge about self-advocacy is extremely important in today’s society. The results sections in chapter four will discuss this topic further.
Chapter 4: Results and Evaluation

Introduction

The results of the workshop will be discussed in this chapter along with the evaluation of the workshop. This chapter will also address the workshops outcomes for students and parents who attended. It be noted that self-advocacy skills are essential for success in higher education but yet many high school students who are in the special education system don’t even have the true foundational skills for self-advocacy that will benefit them in post-secondary institutions. This disparity in self-advocacy skills will be addressed in this chapter.

Results

The results of the first student session workshop was cultivated by two students who attended the session. Both students noted that they were well informed about the objectives of the workshop and they felt that the workshop lived up to their expectations. They noted that the workshop objectives were clear and the workshop activities stimulated their learning which helped them to understand what was being discussed. They both noted that the activities in the workshop helped them to connect topics to what was being discussed. Both students also noted that the pace of the workshop was appropriate but one student thought that the workshop was a bit fast but indicated that it was ok though because the workshop was straight forward and to the point. Both students felt that the instructor was well prepared and that the instructor was helpful. One student felt that he did not know if he would be able to use what he had learned in the workshop but on the contrary the other student who attended felt that he would be able to use the
information. Overall, both students who attended indicated that the workshop was a good way for them to learn about the difference between a learning challenge and a learning disability. In the comments section one student noted that he would like to increase the content covered in the workshop and he also wanted more time allotted to the workshop. The other student who attended indicated that he felt that the workshop should be sped up and the workshop should have more activities. He also felt that the least valuable part of the workshop was viewing the YouTube video about famous individuals who overcame their disabilities and achieved great success. He did indicate on the contrary that he felt that the workshop helped to understand that people work at differences paces and that it is ok to do so. On the student session one surveys the participants rated all questions as 5’s which is rated as, “strongly agree” or the highest, most positive impressions except for one question on each student survey in which a question was rated a 4 which was rated as, “agree.” Please see Appendix M for the completed session one surveys.

The results of the second student session workshop was rated by the one student who attended. The student who attended the workshop rated all of the questions as 5’s which is rated as, “strongly agree” or the highest, most positive impression. It is noted that he suggested that the workshop can be improved by increasing the content covered in the workshop while also allowing more time for the workshop. He noted that most valuable aspect of the workshop was the suggestions for application. He indicated that the concrete identification of strengths, weaknesses, and learning strategies was very helpful to him. Please see Appendix N for the completed session two survey.

The results of the third student session workshop was rated by the one student who attended. The student who attended the workshop rated all of the questions as 5’s
which is rated as, “strongly agree” or the highest, most positive impression. It is noted that he suggested that the workshop can be improved by increasing the content covered in the workshop while also allowing more time for the workshop. Please see Appendix O for the completed session two survey.

The results of the parent session workshop was rated by a mother and father. Both individuals who attended the event were related to the child who attended all of the student session workshops. Both parents indicated that their overall assessment of the event was excellent and the workshop achieved its program outcomes. Both parents also indicated that they gained knowledge from participating in the event. The mother noted that she had zero expectations about the workshop and the father indicated that the workshop met his expectations. The father indicated that the workshop was definitely helpful in providing information and strategies and the mother noted that the workshop was mostly helpful in doing the same. The mother noted that the topics that she found most interesting from the workshop were the specific strategies that students can become familiar with. The inclusion of academic weaknesses. Stressing knowledge (self-awareness) as a very important tool for self-advocacy. The mother also noted that she felt that this workshop should include an introduction before the parent workshop to inform parents about its constructive experience. The father indicated that the parts of the workshop that he found most interesting were how all of the concepts were brought together and how he is now able to identify his son’s strengths and weaknesses more easily. The father also noted that he wanted to keep in touch and work together more in the future if opportunities arise. Please see Appendix P for the completed parent surveys.
Conclusion

The workshop was successful for the participants who attended the event as evidenced through their workshop surveys. The workshop though lacked participants as only one student consecutively attended all three student workshops and his parents were the only parents who attended the parent workshop. Current research in self-advocacy and its importance among learning disabled students is lacking. Chapter five will explore this concept deeper.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Future Work and Research on Self-Advocacy Skills

Introduction

Self-advocacy across all grade levels is important but it is especially important in the high school setting as it is the stepping stone towards independence as one moves towards post-secondary institutions and or other career paths. Understanding one’s own personal strengths and personal weaknesses while also being able to articulate one’s needs is essential for students with learning disabilities. Unfortunately, most schools in the USA don’t promote self-advocacy skills to students. Self-advocacy is a hidden curriculum that might be touched upon once in a resource class but most of the time it is not discussed thus this is why future work as well as research needs to be conducted on self-advocacy.

Discussion

Although the student and parent sessions received good ratings from the participants who attended in which it was one student and one set of parents. The workshop overall lacked participants. I feel that the workshops lacked participants not due to a lack of promotion or advertising on behalf of the graduate student running the workshop series but instead due to the cultural unimportance of self-advocacy among our current culture.

Self-advocacy across all grade levels is important but it is especially important in the high school setting as it is the stepping stone towards independence as one moves towards post-secondary institutions and or other career paths. Understanding one’s own personal strengths and personal weaknesses while also being able to articulate one’s
needs is an essential skill for all students with learning disabilities. Unfortunately, most schools in the United States of America (USA) don’t promote self-advocacy skills to students. Self-advocacy is a hidden curriculum that might be touched upon once in a resource class but most of the time it is not discussed. 

Due to self-advocacy being a hidden curriculum that may or may not be taught to students with learning disabilities I feel that due to the cultural unimportance of this topic this is why the student and parent outcomes were so low. If self-advocacy became a trending and or mainstream topic within schools and lots of researchers were discussing its importance through current research studies than perhaps it would be automatically included in resource and special education classrooms across the country. Without new research on self-advocacy and it’s important within schools unfortunately this pattern of not discussing self-advocacy skills will continue

**Future Work**

Future work on self-advocacy needs to be examined in order to educate and provide students with effective self-advocacy skills. Perhaps a change in the special education system would be beneficial in which students would start to learn self-advocacy skills as early as elementary school and continue throughout middle school and high school. Students in this newly reformed system would have 25 to 30 minutes a day depending on their age level to learn about self-advocacy skills from their credentialed classroom teacher. Essentially, this 25 to 30 minutes would be a school mandated self-advocacy skills elective class in which students would learn about their personal disability, their personal strengths and weaknesses, and strategies to help them
successfully navigate the special education system now and beyond in the future. The goal of the class would be for students to understand their disability in regards to how it impacts them at home at school and in the community, while also teaching students to understand their personal strengths and weakness, their Individualized Education Program (IEP), and overall self-advocacy skills. In turn, by learning these skills which would be embedded in the self-advocacy class students would be learning life-long self-advocacy skills that will empower them to be leaders as well as active and engaged learners who are fully involved in their own individualized education process.

Also within various school districts monthly self-advocacy workshops could be put on the county’s Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) for both parents and students to help reinforce concepts that students are learning in school. These workshops put on by the child’s SELPA would be a good place for parents and students to openly discuss topics that they are learning about in their self-advocacy skills class as well as topics that they have not yet address but they have questions on. Also by having various district wide student and parent self-advocacy skills workshops students can meet other students and parents can meet other parents and form self-advocacy skills clubs and or parent support groups.

Research

Within the field of special education there are not a lot of studies that have been done recently that specifically look self-advocacy for students in the traditional K-12\textsuperscript{th} education system. In the past, research has mainly focused on self-advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). Although, it is important to look at self-
advocacy outcomes for students with ID it is equally important to conduct studies that look at self-advocacy skills for students with learning disabilities. By conducting current research on student outcomes and self-advocacy skills this research will help to bring current information and possible political and cultural changes to the traditional K-12th education system. By creating, implementing, examining, and discussing new self-advocacy research this topic will once again become important in the field of education. Although self-advocacy has always been important in education specifically in special education it is often forgotten and never taught due to the demands that are placed on teachers teaching their special education classes. Hopefully, future longitudinal research as well as individual case studies will be able to examine the positive outcomes that come from continuous self-advocacy skills taught through mandated school electives as well as continuous workshops throughout one’s lifetime

**Conclusion**

Although there has been research that has been conducted on self-advocacy skills in the past, currently there is an extremely large need for self-advocacy research. Past self-advocacy literature had focused on self-advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Currently, there is an extremely large need to conduct research on self-advocacy skills for learning disabled students in the traditional K-12th education system. There is a large need due to the lack of knowledge that students have about their own disability, the IEP process, and their individual strengths and weaknesses. Future research in this area could help to lead to the development of self-advocacy skills classes that students would be required to take in school. Through the development of self-advocacy skills classes as well as student and parent workshops session’s students with learning
disabilities would in turn be able to gain knowledge and lifelong self-advocacy skills that would benefit then now as well as into the future.
References


APPENDIX A

Dear West Ranch Parents / Guardians,

Your son or daughter is invited to participate in a free interactive afterschool workshop series that is designed to help teach your child meaningful life-long self-advocacy skills. The Self-Advocacy Skills workshop will enhance your child’s self-concept as well as their ability to communicate their educational needs to teachers and staff members. This workshop series is designed to be fun and interactive for all students. The afterschool workshop series will allow students to analyze their learning style while also clarifying their particular learning challenges. Techniques will be taught to improve their areas of challenge which may increase his / her success in their current and future coursework. Please see the attached paper for session topics and dates.

The workshops will last one hour and there are a total of three student workshops and one parent workshop. Each student who attends the workshops is required to attend all three sessions. Also after-school transportation is not provided by West Ranch High School so please arrange to provide transportation for your child after the workshop. There is also an optional parent workshop session that will be held in the morning (please see attached paper for session topic and date). Please take advantage of this wonderful learning opportunity and I hope to see you and your child at the Self-Advocacy Workshop Series.

Sincerely,

Nicole Jamison-Dinowitz
West Ranch High School
School Psychology Intern
njamison@hartdistrict.org
Self-Advocacy Workshop Series Information

Tuesday November 5, 2013 (2:45-3:45 pm)

Session 1: What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and how does it Impact me at School?

- The goal of this session is for the student to understand their unique learning style difference and how it impacts them at school. The session will help students to recognize their strengths, as well as their ability to think creatively. This will be demonstrated through an interactive activity involving all students.

Tuesday November 12, 2013 (2:45-3:45 pm)

Session 2: I Know Me.

- The goal of this session is for the student to understand their own learning style in terms of their personal strengths and weaknesses. This will be done by examining what learning strategies work for each student and what learning strategies do not. This will be demonstrated through an interactive activity with students in groups based on their learning style.

Tuesday November 19, 2013 (2:45-3:45 pm)

Session 3: Taking Ownership and Learning to Advocate for Oneself.

- The goal of this session is for the student to understand what learning strategies work best for them while also understanding their personal areas of strength. Students will explore techniques that will help them to “advocate” for themselves within the school environment. Overall, the goal of this session is to teach students to communicate their needs to others while knowing what learning styles work best for them so that they can be successful as they move throughout the educational system and beyond, such as enrollment in college, joining the military, attending trade school, or joining the work force.
Tuesday December 3, 2013 (7:15-8:15 am)

Session 4: Encouraging Parents to Help their Children Learn Self-Advocacy Skills
(Optional Parent session which will occur in the morning).

- The goal of this session is to teach and educate parents on how to empower their children through the use of self-advocacy techniques. The session topics will cover areas in how parents can empower their children to be independent and successful as they move throughout the educational system and beyond.

Please sign below and return to the School Psychologist Intern’s office 430 or Leana Duzdabanyan School Psychologist’s mailbox in the main office if you would like to participate in the Self-Advocacy Workshop Series. I also understand that my son / daughter are required to attend all three sessions and I have the option to attend a parent workshop.

Students Name: ____________________________________________

Students Grade: ________________________________

I, ____________________________________________________ give my son or daughter permission to participate in the Self-Advocacy workshop series with Ms. Jamison-Dinowitz. I also understand that transportation is not provided by West Ranch High School and I am responsible for transportation arrangements for my son / daughter.

Please check the following:

Yes _____ I, plan to attend the Parent Workshop on Tuesday December 3rd at 7:15 am.

No _____ I, do not plan to attend the Parent Workshop on Tuesday December 3rd at 7:15 am

X ________________________________________________________

Signature __________________________ Date ____________________________
This is just a reminder that you are signed up to attend the Student Advocacy Workshop Series. All sessions of the workshop series will take place in room 425 on the following dates:

**Student Sessions:**
- Tuesday November 5, 2013 (2:45-3:45 pm)
- Tuesday November 12, 2013 (2:45-3:45 pm)
- Tuesday November 19, 2013 (2:45-3:45 pm)

**Parent/ Guardian Session:**
- Tuesday December 3, 2013 (7:15-8:15 am)

I'm looking forward to meeting you at the workshop.

Thank you,
Nicole Jamison-Dinowitz
School Psychologist Intern
West Ranch High School
Session 1
What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and How Does it Impact me at School?
Today’s Objectives

* We will learn the difference between a Learning Challenge and a Learning Disability.

* We will discuss specific types of learning disabilities and processing areas.

* We will identify famous individuals who had learning disabilities; but overcame their challenges and became leaders within their own fields of study.

* We will challenge ourselves through an innovate and create activity.
What is a Learning Challenge?

What is a Learning Disability?
A Learning Challenge

* A specific topic or subject such as Math, English, History, or Science that is difficult for you to understand.
  (Example: You just don’t get English, but you do your homework and classwork and you go to intervention to seek help since you feel lost).

* A mismatch between your teachers teaching style and your particular learning style.
  (Example: In English class you learn best by watching PowerPoint’s and seeing things visually; but your teacher only reads from their notes which causes you to have a hard time understanding what they are teaching since you learn best visually, not auditory).

* It is a situational case that can be changed by talking to your teachers and seeking help when confused.

(Merrell, Ervin, & Gimpel, 2006)
A Learning Disability

- Is a distinct and **unexplained gap** between a person's level of expected **achievement** (IQ) and their **performance** (academic tests, work and grades).

- Learning disabilities **affect every person differently** and they present differently at various stages of development.

- It is a **chronic condition** that stays with the individual throughout their life.

(The National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2013)
Let's Do a Quick Comparison

**Learning Challenge**

- Is specific to a topic or subject that is difficult to understand.

- A mismatch between the teachers teaching style and your particular learning style.

- It is a situational case that can be changed.

**Learning Disability**

- Is a distinct and unexplained gap between a person's level of expected achievement and their performance.

- It is not a mismatch between the teacher and your learning style.

- It is a chronic condition that stays with you throughout your life.
Types of Specific Learning Disabilities

Reading Disabilities

Writing Disabilities

Math Disabilities
Reading Disabilities

- A Reading disability is an **extreme area of weakness** for a student in the following areas:
  - **Basic Reading Skills** (Word Recognition)
  - **Reading Comprehension** (Understanding what one is reading)
  - **Reading Fluency Skills** (The rate or speed at which one reads.)
  - **Oral Expression** (The ability to express wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas meaningfully using appropriate syntactic, pragmatic, semantic, and phonological structures.)
  - **Listening Comprehension** (The ability to listen and understand what one is hearing.)

(Bradley, Danielson, & Hallahan, 2002)
Writing Disabilities

* A Writing disability is an **extreme area of weakness** for a student in the following areas:

* **Spelling** (Correctly spelling word such as: “Cat” Not “Kat”.)

* **Oral Expression** (The ability to express wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas meaningfully using appropriate syntactic, pragmatic, semantic, and phonological structures.)

* **Written Expression** (The ability to write sentences, paragraphs, and stories by organizing and sequencing ideas.)

* Students often experience this disability as thoughts that move faster than their hand can translate them into written ideas on the page.

  (Bradley et al., 2002)
Math Disabilities

- A Math disability is an extreme area of weakness for a student in the following areas:

- **Math Calculation** (Affects the learner's ability to perform basic mathematical operations. People with learning disabilities in basic math do not understand the relationship between numbers and the quantities they represent.)

- **Math Problem Solving** (Students have difficulty solving math problems that involve using math computation to solve real world problems. They may have no difficulty solving problems in basic form, but they are unable to solve work problems because they cannot determine what elements are important or what operations to use.

  (Bradley et al., 2002)
A student must also show a significant weakness in one or more of the following process areas:

* **Attention** (A student’s ability to pay attention to small and or large details.)

* **Visual Processing** (Refers to an individual’s visual perceptual ability without any motor involvement to make a response)

* **Auditory Processing** (What we do with what we hear. A person must attend to, analyze, store, and retrieve information related to the signals).

* **Sensory-Motor Skills** (Refers to the process by which the following two systems sensory and motor communicate and coordinate with each other.)

(Merrell et al., 2006)
* **Association** (The process of remembering basic units of information and establishing units for relating these units to each other. Memorizing and learning by repetition.)

* **Conceptualization** (Involves the process of using information in an increasing complex manner. Information can be combined and rearranged in multistep operations. Information can be used for inferences, conclusions, and or judgments.)

* **Expression** (The process of organization and communication of thoughts in a form that can be understood by others.)

(Merrell et al., 2006)
In order for a student to be eligible as a student with a Specific Learning Disability according to the California Code of Education a student needs to exhibit a significant weakness in one or more of the following academic areas:

- Oral Expression
- Listening Comprehension
- Written Expression
- Basic Reading Skills
- Reading Fluency Skills
- Reading Comprehension
- Math Calculation
- Math Problem Solving

Along with one or more psychological processing weakness in the following areas:

- Attention
- Visual Processing
- Auditory Processing
- Sensory-Motor Processing
- Association
- Conceptualization
- Expression
Other Disabilities Related to Specific Learning Disabilities

* **Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** - is a psychological term that currently applies to anyone who meets the DSM IV diagnostic criteria for:

* **Impulsivity** - a tendency to act on a whim, displaying behavior characterized by little or no forethought.

* **Hyperactivity** - excessive restlessness and movement.

* **Inattention** - lack of attention; distraction.

(National Resource Center on ADHD, 2006)
ADHD

ADHD is a neurobehavioral disorder

Prior to 1994 students were diagnosed as ADD. Now the disorder was divided into three types

- **Inattentive type**
- **Hyperactive-impulsive type**
- **Combined type**

3%-7% of school age children have been diagnosed with ADHD

ADHD affects 1 in every 20 American children+

(World Psychiatric Association, 2003)
Famous Individuals Who Learn Differently

- This short video will show you some of the world's most famous individuals who had a hard time learning in school. I think some of the individuals in the video will surprise you.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoeZAXUZbqQ
What Do You Think

After viewing the video that showed some very famous individuals such as:

- **Albert Einstein** (Most recognized and well known scientist)
- **Tom Cruise** (One of the top five movie stars)
- **Charles Schwab** (Head of one of the largest investment firms)
- **Thomas Edison** (One of the most innovative inventors of all time)
- **Richard Branson** (Founder of Virgin Enterprises)
- **Henry Ford** (Invented the modern assembly line)

How do you think these distinctive individuals used their personal strengths to contribute to society; since they had learning disabilities?

Did have a learning disability stop them from achieving great things?

- Discuss with a partner and we will do a group share in a few minutes.
Learning to Think and Study Differently

A unique and special way of thinking.

Your Self

Individual Talents

Individual Skills

An ability to become an innovator.
Learning to Think and Study Differently

* Every individual in this room has a unique set of talents and skills that you use each day that helps you to be successful.

* Every individual in this room has a unique set of thinking abilities that allows you to be successful.

* Every individual in this room that the ability to become an innovator.
Marshmallow Tower Activity

**Individual Student Directions**

1. Each student will be given marshmallows and toothpicks to build the tallest tower possible.

2. The tower must be able to stand on its own without any helping hands or other objects; it must be freestanding. This means no holding the tower or leaning it against another object.

3. Try your best; you will be given 5 minutes to work on building your tower.
Group / Partner Directions

1. Each student will be given marshmallows and toothpicks to build the tallest tower possible.

2. The tower must be able to stand on its own without any helping hands or another object (freestanding). This means no holding the tower or leaning it against another object.

3. Try your best you will be given 5 minutes to work on building your tower.
Reflection Discussion

1. Was it easier to work alone or with a partner?

2. Did having a partner help you to increase your Marshmallow Tower height by incorporating your own unique thinking and learning strategies with your partner’s unique thinking and learning strategies?

3. What do you think you could have done differently if any to increase the height of your Marshmallow Tower?
Reminder

* Time to fill out our **Session 1 Surveys**

* See you next time on **Tuesday November 12, 2013 from 2:45-3:45 pm in Room 425**


# APPENDIX D

## Learning Styles Inventory

This exercise is intended to help you understand how you learn best and to help with ideas about approaching coursework based on those strengths. To better understand how you prefer to learn and process information, print out this page and place a check in the appropriate space after each statement below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I can remember best about a subject by listening to a lecture that includes information, explanations and discussion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I prefer to see information written on a chalkboard and supplemented by visual aids and assigned readings.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I like to write things down or to take notes for visual review.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I prefer to use posters, models, or actual practice and other activities in class.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I require explanations of diagrams, graphs, or visual directions.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I enjoy working with my hands or making things.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I am skillful with and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I can remember best by writing things down several times.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I can easily understand and follow directions on a map.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I do best in academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I play with coins or keys in my pocket.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I learn to spell better by repeating words out loud than by writing the words on paper.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I can understand a news article better by reading about it in the newspaper than by listening to a report about it on the radio.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I chew gum or snack while studying.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I think the best way to remember something is to picture it in your head.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I learn the spelling of words by &quot;finger spelling&quot; them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I would rather listen to a good lecture or speech than read about the same material in a textbook.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I am good at working and solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>I grip objects in my hands during learning periods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I prefer listening to the news on the radio rather than reading about it in the newspaper.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>I prefer obtaining information about an interesting subject by reading about it.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>I feel very comfortable touching others, hugging, handshaking, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I follow oral directions better than written ones.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Scoring Procedures**

**DIRECTIONS**: Place the point value on the line next to the corresponding item below. Add the points in each column to obtain the preference score under each heading.

**OFTEN** = 5 points

**SOMETIMES** = 3 points

**SELDOM** = 1 point

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>PTS.</th>
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VPS = ___

APS = ___

TPS = ___

VPS = Visual Preference Score

APS = Auditory Preference Score

TPS = Tactile Preference Score

If you are a **VISUAL learner**, by all means be sure that you look at all study materials. Use charts, maps, filmstrips, notes, videos, and flash cards. Practice visualizing or picturing words and concepts in your head. Write out everything for frequent and quick visual review.

If you are an **AUDITORY learner**, you may wish to use tapes. Tape lectures to help fill in gaps in your notes. But do listen and take notes - and review your notes frequently. Sit in the lecture hall or classroom where you can hear well. After you have read something, summarize it and recite it aloud. Talk to other students about class material.

If you are a **TACTILE learner**, trace words as you are saying them. Facts that must be learned should be written several times. Keep a supply of scratch paper on hand for this purpose. Taking and keeping lecture notes is very important. Make study sheets. Associate class material with real-world things or occurrences. When appropriate, practice role playing.
LEARNING STYLES

AUDITORY • VISUAL • TACTILE/KINESThETIC

Auditory Learners
Remember stories better if they hear them than if they read them, can follow spoken instruction better than written ones, and say every word in their head as they read silently.

Auditory Learners can try the following studying tips:

- Record lectures and listen to them several times
- Read notes and textbook material into a recorder
- Discuss concepts with others by participating in class discussions
- Join a study group
- List the steps of a task aloud.
- Read and repeat important points out loud.
- Explain what has been learned to other people.

Visual Learners
Learn best from reading, like to see things written out, and picture things in their heads to remember them.

Visual Learners can try the following studying tips:

- Watch the instructor and take notes during the lecture.
- Draw out diagrams, charts or tables.
- Organize, rewrite, and highlight notes.
- Visual words or facts that need to be memorized.
- Use an outline to organize information.
- Review notes often.

From “A Compass for Campus” Premier, Higher Education Division. Www.premier.us/he
_The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People_—source for much of the Compass for Campus content—is copyrighted and trademarked content of Franklin Covey Co.
Tactile/kinesthetic Learners

Enjoy hands-on learning, are good at puzzles and mazes, and can often put things together without instructions.

Tactile/kinesthetic Learners can try the following studying tips:

- Memorize or drill while walking, pacing or exercising.
- Make lists or write things out several times.
- Use computers and hands-on study aids.
- Learn by doing and practicing, or by role-playing.
- Get a study partner.
- Use flash cards to organize facts and information.
- Participate in discussions and ask questions.

Everyone uses all three main learning styles, but relies on one or two for most of their studying and learning. As you can see, each type uses different methods to learn and study. By helping you identify your specific learning styles, you are able to:

1. Understand and remember information more effectively.
2. Achieve higher scores on tests.
3. Use the study strategies that work for you.
4. Determine the areas in which you need help.
5. Adjust your style of learning if you don’t understand what is being taught.

What is your main learning style?

What are some strategies you currently used that were recommended in the material? What are some strategies not listed that you use to learn?

From “A Compass for Campus” Premier, Higher Education Division. Www.premier.us/he

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People—source for much of the Compass for Campus content—is copyrighted and trademarked content of Franklin Covey Co.
APPENDIX E

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<th>Strength</th>
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<td><strong>Visual Perception</strong></td>
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Session 2
I Know Me
Today’s Objectives

- We will become familiar with different learning styles for SLD and ADHD.

- We will learn how to take responsibility for our own learning by knowing a particular learning style that works best for ourselves.

- We will understand how to take responsibility for our learning.

- We will understand our strengths and weaknesses.

- We will learn how to change personal weaknesses into strengths or areas that can be managed.
Knowing Your Own Learning Style

- For LD students who have trouble with reading it is important to know that the following areas might be of challenge:
  - Reading age-appropriate content with good fluency.
  - Reading aloud or silently with good understanding.
  - Feeling confident and interested in reading.
  - Remembering sight words and other printed words.
  - Learning and remembering new vocabulary words.
  - Accurately analyzing unfamiliar words.
  - Understanding word problems in math.

It is important to know these facts when looking for a learning style that will fit your needs.

(The National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2013)
Knowing Your Own Learning Style

- For LD students who have trouble with writing it is important to know that the following areas might be of challenge:
  - Trouble organizing thoughts on paper
  - Trouble keeping track of thoughts already written down
  - Difficulty with syntax structure and grammar
  - Large gap between written ideas and understanding demonstrated through speech.

It is important to know these facts when looking for a learning style that will fit your needs.

(The National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2013)
Knowing Your Own Learning Style

- For LD students who have trouble with math it is important to know that the following areas might be of challenge:
  - Counting and calculating rapidly
  - Learning/memorizing basic math facts (addition, subtraction)
  - Learning counting strategies (such as by 2, by 10, by 100, etc.)
  - Developing math problem-solving skills
  - Learning multiplication tables, formulas, and rules
  - Learning math vocabulary
  - Making comparisons such as more than/less than
  - Estimating numbers and quantities
  - Measuring things
  - Telling time

It is important to know these facts when looking for a learning style that will fit your needs.
Knowing Your Own Learning Style

- For ADHD students who have trouble with attention and or hyperactivity it is important to know that the following areas might be of challenge:

  - Move and fidget constantly
  - Talk nonstop
  - Have trouble with quiet activities
  - Often act without thinking about the consequences of their actions
  - Have trouble taking turns or often disrupt games and conversations
  - Have trouble controlling temper outbursts
  - Appear to not pay attention to details or to listen when spoken to
  - Daydream a lot
  - Be slow to process information
  - Struggle to follow instructions
  - Not sustain attention long enough to learn something new
  - Have trouble completing homework
  - Misplace things needed to complete tasks
  - Become bored easily
  - Be poorly organized

It is important to know these facts when looking for a learning style that will fit your needs.

(The National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2018)
Take Responsibility for Your Learning

1. Do away with excuses for not performing.

2. Accept that you must take action or make a change.

3. Understand your learning style.

4. Identify your areas of strength and weakness

(Center of Literacy and Education University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2006)
Learning Styles

1. Auditory Learners

2. Visual Learners

3. Tactile / Kinesthetic Learners

4. A combination of two or possibly all
Auditory Learners

- Remember things better if they **hear them**. Auditory learners can follow spoken instructions better than written ones and they tend to say every word in their head as they read silently.

- **Auditory Learners can try the following study tips:**
  - Record lectures and listen to them several times.
  - Read notes and textbook material into a recorder (I.E. i-Pod / iPhone).
  - Discuss concepts with others by participating in class discussions.
  - Join a study group.
  - List the steps of a task aloud.
  - Read and repeat important points out loud.
  - Explain what was been learned to other people.

(University of Michigan, 2013)
Visual Learners

- Visual learners learn best from reading. They like to see things written out as well as picture things in their head, which helps them to remember.

- Visual learners can try the following study tips:
  - Watch the instructor and take notes during the lecture.
  - Draw out diagrams, charts, or tables.
  - Organize, rewrite, and highlight notes.
  - Visualize words or facts that need to be memorized.
  - Use an outline to organize information.
  - Review notes often.

(University of Michigan, 2013)
Tactile / Kinesthetic Learner

- Tactile / Kinesthetic learners enjoy hands on learning and they are good at puzzles and mazes. These learners can often put things together without instructions.

- Tactile / Kinesthetic learners can try the following study tips:
  - Memorize or drill while walking, pacing, or exercising.
  - Make lists and write things out several times.
  - Use computers and hands-on study aids.
  - Learn by doing and practicing or by role-playing.
  - Get a study partner.
  - Use flash cards to organize facts and information.
  - Participate in discussions and ask questions.

(University of Michigan, 2013)
Learning Styles Video

- Sit back and enjoy this video as we learn about the variety of learning styles that one can have.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=delk5NngXps
Learning Styles Inventory Quiz

- Please go to the learning styles inventory page in your packet.

- Read each question and place a check mark in the box that is most fitting for each question.
Learning Styles Inventory Quiz

Scoring Procedures

- **Directions:** Place the point value on the line next to the corresponding item on your scoring sheet. Add the points in each column to obtain the preference score under each heading.

- **OFTEN** = 5 points

- **SOMETIMES** = 3 points

- **Seldom** = 1 point

- **Talk and Share Questions:**
  - What is your main learning style?
  - What are some strategies you currently used that were recommended in the material? What are some strategies not listed that you can use?

(University of Michigan, 2013)
Taking Responsibility for Learning

Strengths and Weaknesses

- **Strength** - a good or beneficial quality or attribute of a person or thing.
- **Weakness** - The condition or quality of being weak.

(Merriam-Webster, 2013)
Identifying Academic and Social Strengths and Weaknesses

**Academic**
- **Organization**
  - Following Schedules
  - Study Skills
  - Note Taking
  - Assignment Recording
  - Staying on Task
  - Organizing Material
  - Assignment Completion

- **Learning**
  - Word Recognition Skills / Reading Skills
  - Reading Comprehension
  - Math Concepts: Computation and Problem Solving
  - Written Language / Composition
  - Spelling
  - Grammatical Structure

**Social**
- Appropriate Classroom Conduct
- Interpreting Corrective Feedback
- Developing Peer Relationships
- Developing Adult Relationships
  - Personality
  - Coping with Stress
  - Coping with Teasing
  - Helping Others
  - Dealing with Conflict

(From Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
Reflecting on Individual Strengths and Weaknesses

- **Worksheet:** Identifying Personal Strengths and Weaknesses.

- **Directions:** Place a check mark in the column either under strength or weakness if you feel that the item being asked is a strength or weakness.

- **Discussion Question:** If an item is a weaknesses for you. How do you think you can turn your personal weakness into a strength or a “do-able” weakness.

* Group Discussion*
Ways to Accomplish Turning Weaknesses into Strengths or “Do-Able” Weaknesses

1. Identify Your Personal Weaknesses
   - It is important to know what areas are challenging for you, so that you can work on improving these particular areas.

2. Seek out Strategies
   - It is important to seek out strategies that help address areas of weakness. When one is able to identify their weakness and implement successful strategies one tends to grow in their area of weakness.

3. Advocate for Yourself
   - Learn to advocate and communicate your needs to others so that if you are struggling; others can help and assist you.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
Reminder

- Time to fill out our **Session 2 Surveys**

- See you next time on **Tuesday November 26, 2013 from 2:45-3:45 pm in Room 425**
Works Cited


APPENDIX G

TAKING OWNERSHIP AND LEARNING TO ADVOCATE FOR ONEWSELF
OBJECTIVES

- Linking together and understanding your own particular learning style as well as your strengths and weaknesses so that you can articulate this to others.

- Strategies to help articulate strengths and weaknesses.

- Working with educators to turn weaknesses into strengths.

- Understanding appropriate academic accommodations.

- Self-Determination and a positive outlook.
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Knowing your own strengths and weaknesses.

Knowing your learning difference and strategies to help you.

Knowing your own learning style that works best for you.

Self-Advocacy

The ability to communicate your needs to others so that you can be successful in school, at home, and within the community.
VIDEO: STUDENTS WITH LD: ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AT SCHOOL

- This video that we are going to watch will empower you to follow your personal goals and use the accommodations and or modifications that are given through your IEP to help you to succeed and achieve your goals and dreams.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=he7id16O6UE
LEARNING TO ARTICULATE ONE'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES TO EDUCATORS

**Strengths**

- Identify your strengths and communicate those to teachers and peers who you work with.

- In areas that you are strong assist others who may be struggling and be a “mentor.”

**Weaknesses**

- Let teachers know areas that you are weak in so that can provide extra assistance as need and monitor your progress.

- Ask teachers and or staff members for help when you are struggling. Asking for help is the first step towards success.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
**Self-Advocacy Strategies**

- **Self-Advocacy**
  - Inform faculty members/teachers about your disability and needs if needed.

- Provide peer counseling and support to other students with disabilities.

- Join student and professional organizations that advocate and educate individual with learning disabilities about current issues and laws as a student member.

- Find out if there is a support group for students with disabilities on your campus and become an active member and meet other students with similar disabilities.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
SELF-CONFIDENCE BUILDING STRATEGIES

Identifying a realist goal and working towards it.

Keep a list of past success and accomplishments and read it over frequently.

Self-Confidence

Take credit for your achievements and work well done.

Identify your strengths and keep expanding the list of things you do well.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Keep a calendar/planner so you can record assignments, exams, and social events.
- Start early on assignments. Don’t wait until the last minute to complete them.
- Seek assistance in a timely manner if you are confused.
- Commit to 30 minutes of study time daily to review notes which will help you to study for future exams.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
MEMORY STRATEGIES

Memory

- Frequently review notes daily so that current information is retained and clearly understood.
- Color code, underline, and highlight your notes to strengthen visual memory.
- Copy your notes over.
- Tape record lectures and listen to the material again if the teacher allows his or her class to be tape recorded.
- Paraphrase notes with a study partner.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

1. Read test directions carefully and underline any important information that will help you.

2. Be sure to go into the exam rested.

3. If you memorized certain facts for the exam; write them on the back on the test once you receive the exam so that you don’t forget them.

4. Pace yourself; even if you have extended time.

5. Ask your teacher for practice tests and or study guides to assist you in your studying process.

6. If you come to a question that you don’t understand raise your hand and ask for clarification.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
ROLE PLAYING: PARTNER ACTIVITY

Directions:

1. Choose a partner.

2. Read the follow scenarios and pick 1 and act out each role. One person plays the student advocate and the other person plays the other character (i.e. teacher, parent, etc.)

3. Once you have finished acting out your role; switch and act out the role that your partner just had. Try to make it different and give different advice or directions for the second role that you play.

4. After each person has had a turn acting out each role. One group will be able to act out their scenario for the class.
ROLE PLAYING: PARTNER ACTIVITY

Role Playing Scenarios for Practicing Self-Advocacy Skills

1. The novel being assigned in your English class is longer than you will be able to read in the expected time period. You must try to convince your teacher to let you start the novel earlier than the rest of the class.

2. You are part of a group in your History class. Three other students want to do a project that will not be very challenging and will not earn a very respectable grade. You want to convince them that your idea is a better one.

3. You do not like being singled out by your teacher at the end of each class when she asks if you are okay and if you understood the lesson. How can you tell her you appreciate her concern, but you would prefer to speak with her quietly, only when you have a concern?

4. You need to ask the teacher for help because you don’t understand the material that was taught in class for the past week.
SELF-ADVOCACY WHEN WORKING WITH EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS

- Ask teachers to share their opinion of your strengths and weakness relative to their class.

- Ask teachers to with you in regards to your particular learning style.

- Ask teachers to explain concepts that you do not understand. It’s ok to ask again, again, and again because it’s their job to explain and make sure that you understand the material.

- Ask teachers for frequent feedback so that you can improve in areas where you are struggling and celebrate in areas where you are thriving.

(Human Development Institute, 2012)
SELF-ADVOCACY FOR STUDENTS

Know accommodations and skills needed for success.

Know what services are available to you.

Self-Advocacy

Identify your support system (i.e. People you trust).

Know how to ask for help (i.e. Who, when, and where).

(Human Development Institute, 2012)
UNDERSTANDING APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- Instructional
  - Use alternative format (Braille / Large Print)
  - Use Auditory Amplification Devices
  - Use Visual Magnification Devices
  - Use Auditory Tape
  - Use Reader
  - Use Scribe
  - Use Calculator
  - Use Books on Tape
  - Use Assistive Technology

( Human Development Institute, 2012)
UNDERSTANDING APPROPRIATE TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Testing
- Use Extended Time (time in a half or double)
- Use Oral Test
- Administer Test in Distraction Free Location
- Use Alternative Format
  - Braille
  - Large Print
  - Reduced Number of Items per Page
  - Dictate Answers
- Read, Simplify, or Provide Additional Information

Examples of Directions
- Explain Auxiliary Vocabulary
- Use Visual Magnification Devices
- Use Auditory Amplification Devices
- Use Auditory Tape
- Use Reader
- Use Calculator
- Word Processor
- Use Assistive Technology
- Use Interpreter

(Human Development Institute, 2012)
UNDERSTANDING APPROPRIATE OTHER SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

- Counseling
  - Personal
  - Peer
  - Group
  - Career

* It is important to realize that not all individuals need the same accommodations and or modifications. Each individual student is different with special and unique needs*

(Human Development Institute, 2012)
SELF-DETERMINATION AND
A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

- Deciding what you want in life and setting your own goals.
- Honoring and respecting yourself and your choices.
- Having enough support to not be confined by your disability.
- Becoming more confident and feeling comfortable about yourself as you do things your way.
- Having a purpose in life and being successful working towards it.
- Having freedom to make choices and taking responsibility for the choices that you make.

(Human Development Institute, 2012)
Reflection Question

- Talk and Share Question

- Directions:
  1. Pick a partner and discuss the following question.

Question

1. Based on what we have just discussed regarding self-advocacy. What ways can you self-advocate at school and at home?

Take a few minutes to reflect on what we have learned today and then discuss with your partner. For those of you who will be willing to share remember your ideas because we will also do a group share after everyone has shared with their partner.
REMINDER

- Time to fill out our Session 3 Surveys

- Thank you for attending the workshops and I hope you learned some important information that can help you now and in the future.
WORKS CITED


APPENDIX H

Session 1
What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and How Does it Impact Me at School?

Workshop Name: ______________________________________

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 Scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression
2 = "Disagree"
3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression
4 = "Agree"
5 = "Strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

2. This workshop lived up to my expectations.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

3. The workshop objectives were clear to me.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

4. The workshop activities stimulated my learning / helped me to understand what we were discussing.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

5. The activities in this workshop helped me to connect what we talked about.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A
6. The pace of this workshop was appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR)

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

7. The instructor was well prepared.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

8. The instructor was helpful.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP RESULTS

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

9. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

10. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this information.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

11. How would you improve this workshop?
(Check all that apply.)

___ Provide better information before the workshop.
___ Clarify the workshop objectives.
___ Reduce the content covered in the workshop.
___ Increase the content covered in the workshop.
___ Update the content covered in the workshop.
___ Improve the instructional methods.
___ Make workshop activities more stimulating.
___ Improve workshop organization.
How would you improve this workshop (cont'd)

___ Slow down the pace of the workshop.
___ Speed up the pace of the workshop.
___ Add more time for the workshop.

15. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

16. What is least valuable about this workshop?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

17. What is most valuable about this workshop?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX I

Session 2
I Know Me

Workshop Name: ________________________________

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 Scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression
2 = "Disagree"
3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression
4 = "Agree"
5 = "Strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

2. This workshop lived up to my expectations.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

3. The workshop objectives were clear to me.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

4. The workshop activities stimulated my learning / helped me to understand what we were discussing.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

5. The activities in this workshop helped me to connect what we talked about.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A
6. The pace of this workshop was appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR)

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

7. The instructor was well prepared.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

8. The instructor was helpful.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP RESULTS

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

9. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

10. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this information.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

11. How would you improve this workshop?
(Check all that apply.)

___Provide better information before the workshop.
___Clarify the workshop objectives.
___Reduce the content covered in the workshop.
___Increase the content covered in the workshop.
___Update the content covered in the workshop.
___Improve the instructional methods.
___Make workshop activities more stimulating.
___Improve workshop organization.

How would you improve this workshop (cont’d)
___Slow down the pace of the workshop.
Speed up the pace of the workshop.
Allot more time for the workshop.
Add more video to the workshop.

15. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?


16. What is least valuable about this workshop?


17. What is most valuable about this workshop?


Appendix J

Session 3
Taking Ownership and Learning to Advocate for Oneself

Workshop Name: ________________________________

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 Scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression
2 = "Disagree"
3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression
4 = "Agree"
5 = "Strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

______________________________________________________

WORKSHOP CONTENT

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=S strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

2. This workshop lived up to my expectations.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

3. The workshop objectives were clear to me.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

4. The workshop activities stimulated my learning / helped me to understand what we were discussing.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

5. The activities in this workshop helped me to connect what we talked about.
   
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A
6. The pace of this workshop was appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR)**

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

7. The instructor was well prepared.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

8. The instructor was helpful.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**WORKSHOP RESULTS**

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

9. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

10. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this information.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

11. How would you improve this workshop?
  (Check all that apply.)

___ Provide better information before the workshop.
___ Clarify the workshop objectives.
___ Reduce the content covered in the workshop.
___ Increase the content covered in the workshop.
___ Update the content covered in the workshop.
___ Improve the instructional methods.
___ Make workshop activities more stimulating.
___ Improve workshop organization.
How would you improve this workshop (cont'd)
___ Slow down the pace of the workshop.
15. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?

16. What is least valuable about this workshop?

17. What is most valuable about this workshop?
EMPOWERING PARENTS TO TEACH SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS TO THEIR CHILDREN

PRESENTER: NICOLE JAMISON-DINOWITZ
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST INTERNS
DECEMBER 2, 2013
TODAY’S OBJECTIVES

• Understand how to effectively assist your child in their self-development towards self-advocacy.

• Understand what is self-advocacy.

• Understand your child’s particular learning style and how their particular learning styles effects their personal strengths and weaknesses.

• Understand intrinsic motivation.

• Provide tips to help assist your child to self-advocate.
SELF-ADVOCACY: TIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH LD

Let's watch a short video on ways for parents to encourage self-advocacy among their children.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsYX_ZqLhQI
HOW PARENTS CAN ASSIST THEIR CHILDREN IN BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE SELF-ADVOCATE

• Model self-advocacy in a variety of environments (i.e. in the community and in the home) and link connections for your child on why and how you self-advocated. It is important that children understand why one should self-advocate.

• Have open-ended conversations with your child about their disability and ask your child how their learning challenge affects them in the classroom. It is important for students to know about their own disability and how it effects their learning.

• Discuss strategies with your child on how to compensate for weaknesses. It is extremely important that children recognize their areas of weakness and develop strategies to help them overcome and or compensate for these areas so that they can be successful as they move throughout the educational system.
A COMMON SCENARIO: DO YOU THINK THIS HAPPENS TO YOUR CHILD?

• Your child’s teacher is teaching a lesson in math class and he introduces three new concepts to the class. Your child only heard two of the concepts.

  1. Will your child raise their hand and ask for the third concept to be repeated or will your child sit quietly and miss out on the new concept that is being taught because they don’t want to call attention to themselves by asking for help?

Unfortunately, most students with learning disabilities and or learning challenges sit quietly and miss out on the concept being taught because they don’t want to call attention to themselves.

(Kelley and Davidson, 2011)
A LITTLE FACT ON SELF-ADVOCACY

In the past, self-advocacy was a term applied mostly to adults with disabilities.

Currently, more focus has been placed on teaching self-advocacy skills to pre-teens and teenagers.

(Kelley and Davidson, 2011)
DEFINITION OF SELF-ADVOCACY

- **Self-Advocacy**: is the ability to understand your personal strengths and needs, your personal goals, the ability to know your personal rights, responsibilities, and the ability to communicating these needs and rights to others.

(Kelley and Davidson, 2011)
HELP YOUR CHILD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR LEARNING

1. Do not allow your child to make excuses for not performing.

2. Remind your child that they will need to take action to make a change (self-advocacy).

3. Help your child understand their learning style.

4. Help your child identify their areas of strengths and weaknesses.

[Center of Literacy and Education University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2006]
LEARNING STYLES

1. Auditory Learners

2. Visual Learners

3. Tactile / Kinesthetic Learners

4. A combination of two or possibly all

(University of Michigan, 2013)
IDENTIFYING ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

**Social**
- Appropriate Classroom Conduct
- Interpreting Corrective Feedback
- Developing Peer Relationships
- Developing Adult Relationships
  - Personality
- Coping with Stress
- Coping with Tearing
- Helping Others
- Dealing with Conflict

**Organization**
- Following Schedules
- Study Skills
- Note Taking
- Assignment Recording
- Staying on Task
- Organizing Material
- Assignment Completion

**Learning**
- Word Recognition Skills / Reading Skills
- Reading Comprehension
- Math Concepts: Computation and Problem Solving
- Written Language / Composition
- Spelling
- Grammatical Structure

(Student Advocacy Handbooks, 2007)
WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH TURNING WEAKNESSES INTO STRENGTHS OR "DOABLE" WEAKNESSES

It is important to know what areas are challenging for your child, so that you can help your child work on improving these particular areas of weakness.

It is important to seek out strategies that help your child address their areas of weakness. When your child is able to identify their weakness and implement successful strategies your child will tend to grow in their area of weakness; so that their weaknesses is not negatively effecting them.

Help your child learn to advocate and communicate their needs to others so that if they are struggling; they can seek help and assistance.

(Student Advocacy Handbook, 2007)
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Knowing your child’s own strengths and weaknesses.

Knowing your child’s learning difference and strategies to help them succeed.

Knowing your child’s own learning style that works best for them.

Self-Advocacy
The ability to communicate your needs to others so that you can be successful in school, at home, and within the community.
HELP YOUR CHILD WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY SUCCEED IN THE CLASSROOM

This helpful video will provide some tips on what parents can do at home to help their child succeed in the classroom.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQyUB_R-Xuc
TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

- **Intrinsic motivation**: a desire from within oneself without outside influences to achieve a goal or to complete an activity.

Below are a number of behavioral characteristics that are high indicators of high intrinsic motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persistence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children learn persistence when they are successful at a challenging task. The art in building persistence is in offering a task that is just challenging enough, but not overwhelming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choice of Challenge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who experience success in meeting one challenge will become motivated, welcoming another. The challenge for parents is helping their child find an appropriate challenge while still allowing the choice to be the child’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who are clearly motivated have a positive display of emotion. They are satisfied with their work and show more enjoyment in a variety of activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(National Association of School Psychologists, 2003)
TIPS FOR ASSISTING YOUR CHILD TO SELF-ADVOCATE: COMMUNICATION

Practice Communication

• Your child must be clear in his/her request and be prepared for explanations.

• Role playing is a great way to practice communication skills with your child.

• By helping your child with his/her ability to anticipate different situation in turn you are also raising his/her level of confidence by providing your child with this skill set.

{Kelley and Davidson, 2011}
TIPS FOR ASSISTING YOUR CHILD TO SELF-ADVOCATE: IDENTIFY SUPPORTERS

Identify supporters

• It is important to help your child identify his/her support system.

• Your child needs people who are trustworthy and comfortable to talk to such as: parents, teachers, case-managers, relatives, administrators, counselors, and tutors.

• There must be people in your child life who they feel comfortable turning to for help.
TIPS FOR ASSISTING YOUR CHILD TO SELF-ADVOCATE: MEETING WITH TEACHERS

Meeting with Teachers

• High School is a great place to begin practicing communication with teachers and other school staff.

• Encourage your child to schedule times to meet with teachers to see what’s going well and what isn’t, get feedback, and work out a plan to do better.

[Kelley and Davidson, 2011]
TIPS FOR ASSISTING YOUR CHILD TO SELF-ADVOCATE: PARTICIPATING ACTIVELY

Participating Actively

• It is important for your child to attend and participate in meeting to develop his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

• Your child should be able to identify their strengths, goals, and learning preferences so that they can share these with the IEP team.

• The IEP meeting is a safe testing ground for your child to work on self-advocacy skills.

(Kelley and Davidson, 2011)
TIPS FOR ONGOING SELF-ADVOCACY

• By empowering your child to self-advocate, you’ll help him/her develop skills necessary for success in learning and life.

• Encourage your child to take time to reflect on what’s going well and what is not.

• If something is not going well encourage your child to decide on what next action to take (self-advocacy).

• Encourage your child to engage in self-evaluation because after all, self-evaluation is often where the greatest learning takes place.

(Kelley and Davidson, 2011)
PARENT RESOURCES

• Additional parent resources and articles on topics such as: Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Self-Advocacy, and Learning Strategies can be found on the West Ranch High School Library under: Databases

• Here is a helpful Databases: Gale Infotrack (Just type in wrwildcats for the password)
QUESTIONS AND PRESENTATION SURVEYS

• Time to fill out our **Session Surveys**

• Thank you so much for coming to the parent workshop; I hope you gained some helpful information that you will be able to use with your child now and in the future.
WORKS CITED


Parent Workshop Evaluation Form

1) What is your overall assessment of the event? (1 = insufficient - 5 = excellent)

   1  2  3  4  5

2) Which topics or aspects of the workshop did you find most interesting or useful?

   •
   •
   •
   •
   •

3) Did the workshop achieve the program objectives?

   Yes  No

   If no, why?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4) Did you gain knowledge and information from participating in this event?

   Yes  No

5. Did this workshop meet your expectations?

   Yes  No  Somehow  Not at all

6. Was this workshop useful and helpful in providing you with information and strategies?

   Definitely  Mostly  Somehow  Not at all

   __________________________________________________________
7. Further comments or suggestions


THANK YOU!
Session 1
What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and How Does it Impact Me at School?

Workshop Name: Session 1

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 Scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression
2 = "Disagree"
3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression
4 = "Agree"
5 = "Strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

(Circle your response to each item.)

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
N/A = Not applicable

1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

2. This workshop lived up to my expectations.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

3. The workshop objectives were clear to me.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

4. The workshop activities stimulated my learning / helped me to understand what we were discussing.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

5. The activities in this workshop helped me to connect what we talked about.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

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6. The pace of this workshop was appropriate.

   1 2 3 4 (5) N/A

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR)

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

7. The instructor was well prepared.

   1 2 3 4 (5) N/A

8. The instructor was helpful.

   1 2 3 4 (5) N/A

WORKSHOP RESULTS

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

9. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.

   1 2 3 4 (5) N/A

10. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this information.

   1 2 3 4 (5) N/A

11. How would you improve this workshop?
(Check all that apply.)

   __ Provide better information before the workshop.
   __ Clarify the workshop objectives.
   __ Reduce the content covered in the workshop.
   __ Increase the content covered in the workshop.
   __ Update the content covered in the workshop.
   __ Improve the instructional methods.
   __ Make workshop activities more stimulating.
   __ Improve workshop organization.
How would you improve this workshop (cont’d)
____ Slow down the pace of the workshop.
____ Speed up the pace of the workshop.
____ Allot more time for the workshop.
____ Add more video to the workshop.

15. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?

More activities

16. What is least valuable about this workshop?

Watching famous people and how they were like as a kid.

17. What is most valuable about this workshop?

The workshop helps you understand people work in different places.
Session 1
What is a Learning Disability and a Learning Challenge and How Does it Impact Me at School?

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 Scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression
2 = “Disagree”
3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression
4 = “Agree”
5 = "Strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

(Circle your response to each item.)
1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree
N/A = Not applicable

1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

2. This workshop lived up to my expectations.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

3. The workshop objectives were clear to me.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

4. The workshop activities stimulated my learning / helped me to understand what we were discussing.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

5. The activities in this workshop helped me to connect what we talked about.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A
6. The pace of this workshop was appropriate.
   1 2 3 4 6 N/A
   It was a bit fast, but it was 2 the point

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR)

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

7. The instructor was well prepared.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

8. The instructor was helpful.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP RESULTS

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

9. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.
   1 2 3 4 5 N/A I don't see how exactly it could be

10. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this information.
    1 2 3 4 5 N/A

11. How would you improve this workshop?
    (Check all that apply.)

    __ Provide better information before the workshop.
    __ Clarify the workshop objectives.
    __ Reduce the content covered in the workshop.
    __ Increase the content covered in the workshop.
    __ Update the content covered in the workshop.
    __ Improve the instructional methods.
    __ Make workshop activities more stimulating.
    __ Improve workshop organization.
How would you improve this workshop (cont'd)

☐ Slow down the pace of the workshop.
☐ Speed up the pace of the workshop.
☐ Allot more time for the workshop.
☐ Add more video to the workshop.

15. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?


16. What is least valuable about this workshop?


17. What is most valuable about this workshop?


I feel they all have the same valability
APPENDIX N

Session 2
I Know Me

Workshop Name: I KNOW ME: SESSION 2

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 Scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression
2 = "Disagree"
3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression
4 = "Agree"
5 = "Strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.

   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

2. This workshop lived up to my expectations.

   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

3. The workshop objectives were clear to me.

   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

4. The workshop activities stimulated my learning / helped me to understand what we were discussing.

   1 2 3 4 5 N/A

5. The activities in this workshop helped me to connect what we talked about.

   1 2 3 4 5 N/A
6. The pace of this workshop was appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR)

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

7. The instructor was well prepared.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

8. The instructor was helpful.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP RESULTS

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

9. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

10. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this information.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

11.
How would you improve this workshop?
(Check all that apply.)

___Provide better information before the workshop.
___Clarify the workshop objectives.
___Reduce the content covered in the workshop.
___Increase the content covered in the workshop.
___Update the content covered in the workshop.
___Improve the instructional methods.
___Make workshop activities more stimulating.
___Improve workshop organization.
How would you improve this workshop (cont’d)
___Slow down the pace of the workshop.
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Speed up the pace of the workshop.

X Allot more time for the workshop.

___ Add more video to the workshop.

15. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop? None

16. What is least valuable about this workshop? None

17. What is most valuable about this workshop? Probably the suggestions for application, and the concrete identification of strengths, weaknesses, and learning strategies.
APPENDIX O

Session 3
Taking Ownership and Learning to Advocate for Oneself

Workshop Name: Session 3

INSTRUCTIONS

Please circle your response to the items. Rate aspects of the workshop on a 1 to 5 Scale:

1 = "Strongly disagree," or the lowest, most negative impression
2 = "Disagree"
3 = "Neither agree nor disagree," or an adequate impression
4 = "Agree"
5 = "Strongly agree," or the highest, most positive impression

Choose N/A if the item is not appropriate or not applicable to this workshop. Your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

1. I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

2. This workshop lived up to my expectations.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

3. The workshop objectives were clear to me.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

4. The workshop activities stimulated my learning / helped me to understand what we were discussing.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

(sadly, I was the only student attending. =C

5. The activities in this workshop helped me to connect what we talked about.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A
6. The pace of this workshop was appropriate.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR (FACILITATOR)

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

7. The instructor was well prepared.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

8. The instructor was helpful.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

WORKSHOP RESULTS

(Circle your response to each item.)
1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree
N/A=Not applicable

9. I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

10. The workshop was a good way for me to learn this information.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

11. How would you improve this workshop?
(Check all that apply.)

___Provide better information before the workshop.
___Clarify the workshop objectives.
___Reduce the content covered in the workshop.
___Increase the content covered in the workshop.
___Update the content covered in the workshop.
___Improve the instructional methods.
___Make workshop activities more stimulating.
___Improve workshop organization.

How would you improve this workshop (cont’d)
___Slow down the pace of the workshop.
15. What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop? 

16. What is least valuable about this workshop? 

17. What is most valuable about this workshop?
APPENDIX P

Parent Workshop Evaluation Form

1) What is your overall assessment of the event? (1 = insufficient - 5 = excellent)
   1  2  3  4  5

2) Which topics or aspects of the workshop did you find most interesting or useful?
   - Putting it all together.
   - I am happy that other teachers can see
   - Jan's strengths and needs to help him
   - with his class and IEP.

3) Did the workshop achieve the program objectives?
   Yes  No

   If no, why?

4) Did you gain knowledge and information from participating in this event?
   Yes  No

5. Did this workshop meet your expectations?
   Yes  No  Somehow  Not at all

6. Was this workshop useful and helpful in providing you with information and strategies?
   Definitely  Mostly  Somehow  Not at all
7. Further comments or suggestions

Would like to keep in touch and work with you more. Thank you. Good job.

THANK YOU!
Parent Workshop Evaluation Form

1) What is your overall assessment of the event? (1 = insufficient - 5 = excellent)  
   1  2  3  4  5

2) Which topics or aspects of the workshop did you find most interesting or useful?
   - Specific strategies student can become familiar with
   - Inclusion of academic with social weaknesses
   - Supporting knowledge (self-awareness) as an important tool for student’s advocacy

3) Did the workshop achieve the program objectives?
   - Yes
   - No
   If no, why?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4) Did you gain knowledge and information from participating in this event?
   - Yes
   - No

5) Did this workshop meet your expectations?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Somehow
   - Not at all

6) Was this workshop useful and helpful in providing you with information and strategies?
   - Definitely
   - Mostly
   - Somehow
   - Not at all
7. Further comments or suggestions

Intro for parents before the session
to encourage them that it's actually a constructive experience.

THANK YOU!