Preparing Students, Staff and Parents for College

Sponsored by the Bristol Community College MAICEI Initiative

Tuesday Dec. 3 2019, 9-10:00 AM

Presenter: Maria Paiewonsky, Institute for Community Inclusion

ThinkCollege

CHANGING EXPECTATIONS. INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES.

Think College National Coordinating Center

Federally funded since 2010 to provide coordination, training and technical assistance to any college or university who wants to establish or improve postsecondary education opportunities to students with intellectual disability on their campus.

www.thinkcollege.net

COLLEGE SEARCH

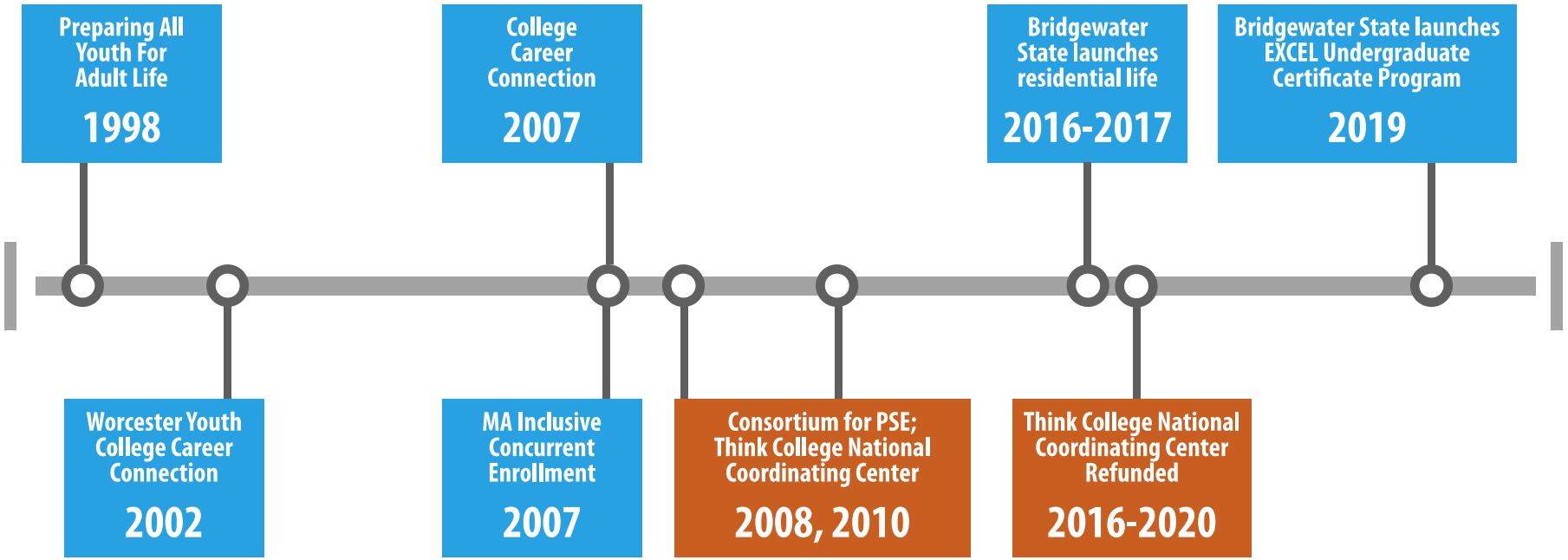
RESOURCE LIBRARY

INNOVATION EXCHANGE

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR STATE

Think College National Coordinating Center is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston, and is funded by the Office of Postsecondary Education, US Dept. of Education. Grant # P407B100002

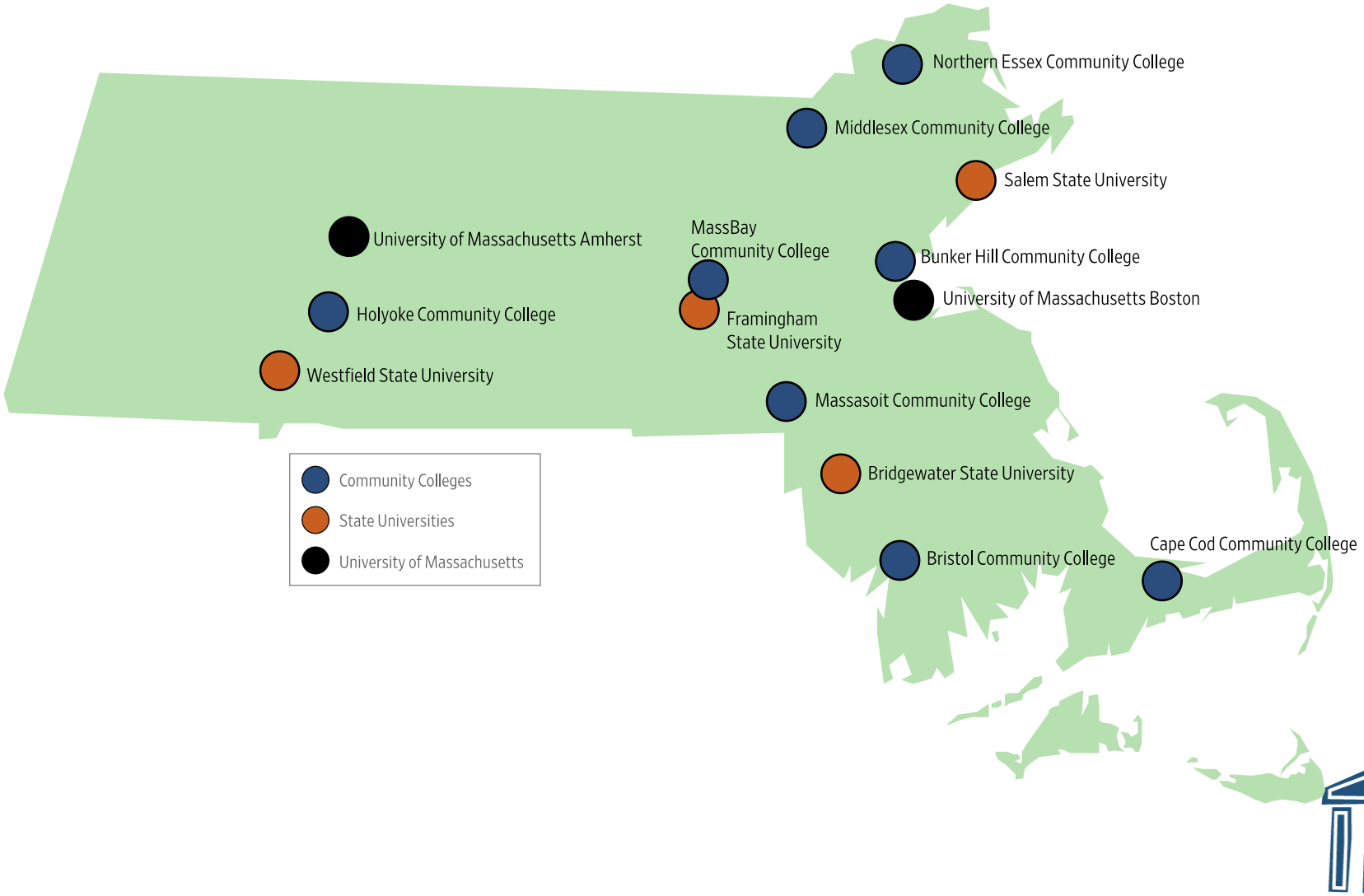
TIMELINE OF THE INCLUSIVE CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT INITIATIVE IN MASSACHUSETTS



MASSACHUSETTS INCLUSIVE CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT INITIATIVE

PARTNERSHIPS

All partnerships depicted in the graphic are currently funded, with the exceptions of Holyoke Community College and MassBay Community Colleges, which are independent partnerships.

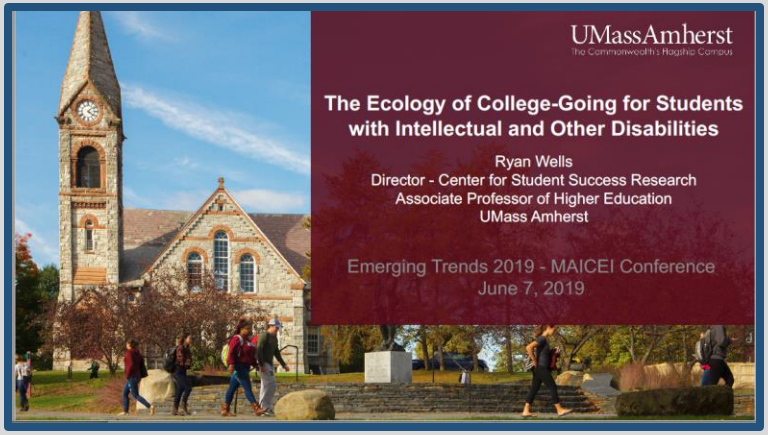


Ongoing research and feedback: 2010-present

Massachusetts
Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative

A Report to the Legislature: 2014-2016

Prepared by the Executive Office of Education
James Peyser, Secretary
© 2016 Executive Office of Education

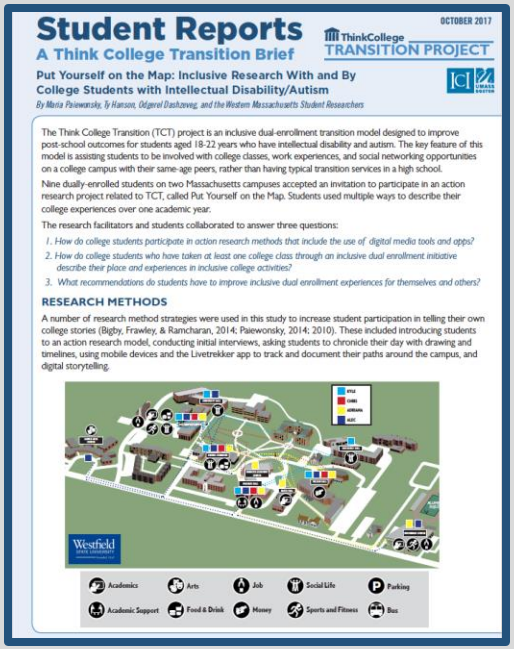


UMassAmherst
The Commonwealth's Flagship Campus

The Ecology of College-Going for Students with Intellectual and Other Disabilities

Ryan Wells
Director - Center for Student Success Research
Associate Professor of Higher Education
UMass Amherst

Emerging Trends 2019 - MAICEI Conference
June 7, 2019



Student Reports
A Think College Transition Brief

OCTOBER 2017

ThinkCollege TRANSITION PROJECT

Put Yourself on the Map: Inclusive Research With and By College Students with Intellectual Disability/Autism

By Maria Paiewonsky, Ty Hanson, Odgerel Dashzeveg, and the Western Massachusetts Student Researchers

The Think College Transition (TCT) project is an inclusive dual-enrollment transition model designed to improve post-school outcomes for students aged 18-22 years who have intellectual disability and autism. The key feature of this model is assisting students to be involved with college classes, work experiences, and social networking opportunities on a college campus with their same-age peers, rather than having typical transition services in a high school.

Nine dually-enrolled students on two Massachusetts campuses accepted an invitation to participate in an action research project related to TCT, called Put Yourself on the Map. Students used multiple ways to describe their college experiences over one academic year.

The research facilitators and students collaborated to answer three questions:

1. *How do college students participate in action research methods that include the use of digital media tools and apps?*
2. *How do college students who have taken at least one college class through an inclusive dual enrollment initiative describe their place and experiences in inclusive college activities?*
3. *What recommendations do students have to improve inclusive dual enrollment experiences for themselves and others?*

RESEARCH METHODS

A number of research method strategies were used in this study to increase student participation in telling their own college stories (Bigby, Frawley, & Ramcharan, 2014; Paiewonsky, 2014; 2010). These included introducing students to an action research model, conducting initial interviews, asking students to chronicle their day with drawing and timelines, using mobile devices and the Livetrekker app to track and document their paths around the campus, and digital storytelling.

INSIGHT
A Think College Brief on Policy, Research, & Practice

ISSUE NO. 5
NOVEMBER 2010

thINK COLLEGE!

Think, Hear, See, Believe College: Students Using Participatory Action Research to Document the College Experience

By Maria Paiewonsky, Allison Sroka, Meghan Ahearn, Antony Santucci, Grace Quiah, Cassidy Bauer, Joseph Fearnbay, Stephan Wright, Christine Chu, and Wilson Lee

INTRODUCTION

Nine Massachusetts college students who have an intellectual disability (ID) conducted research on their experiences in college as part of the national Think College initiative. The purpose of Think College is to assist people with ID in going to college. Participatory action research (PAR) is a series of steps the students used to document their college experience. For their research, they used digital and video cameras to collect information. To share their experiences with each other, they also used VoiceThread, a digital storytelling website. This issue of *Insight* describes how students are using PAR and digital storytelling on VoiceThread to discuss their college experience.

WHO ARE THE RESEARCHERS?

The student researchers are from four colleges that support students with intellectual disabilities. The only requirement was that the students had completed at least one full semester of college so they could comment on the whole experience.

Student Research in Massachusetts

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH?

Participatory action research is a way for a group of people to investigate issues of interest or concern. To do this kind of research, people first describe the issues as thoroughly as possible and then brainstorm solutions. Then they try out some of their solutions to see if they are effective. After giving these solutions some time to work, the researchers get back together to reflect on what happened and to make a decision about what else needs to be done. For this research, students used PAR and digital storytelling to report on college. Both these methods encourage participants to take and share photographs that help other people understand their college experiences.

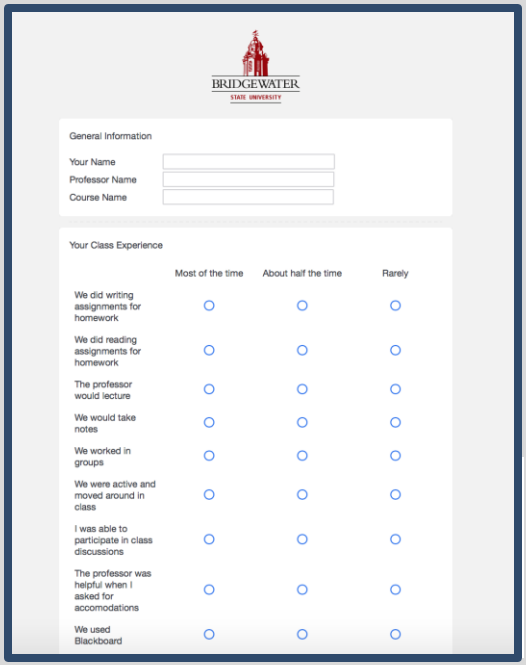
STEPS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The students followed six steps beginning in January 2009. Starting with the camera illustration, and moving to the right, the Participatory Action Research figure shows the steps of the students' work:

1. In the ***first step***, the students ***documented*** their college experiences with cameras or pocket video cameras.
2. In the ***second step***, the students ***shared*** their photos or video clips with the other students on the VoiceThread website.
3. In the ***third step***, the students ***discussed*** their data, commenting on their own and each other's research.
4. In the ***fourth step***, the students made ***recommendations*** for changes that they thought could help improve the college experience.
5. In the ***fifth step***, the students decided on ***actions*** they could take as a result of their research.
6. Finally, in the ***sixth step***, the students ***reflected*** on their research and decided if more needed to be done.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

www.thinkcollege.net



BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY

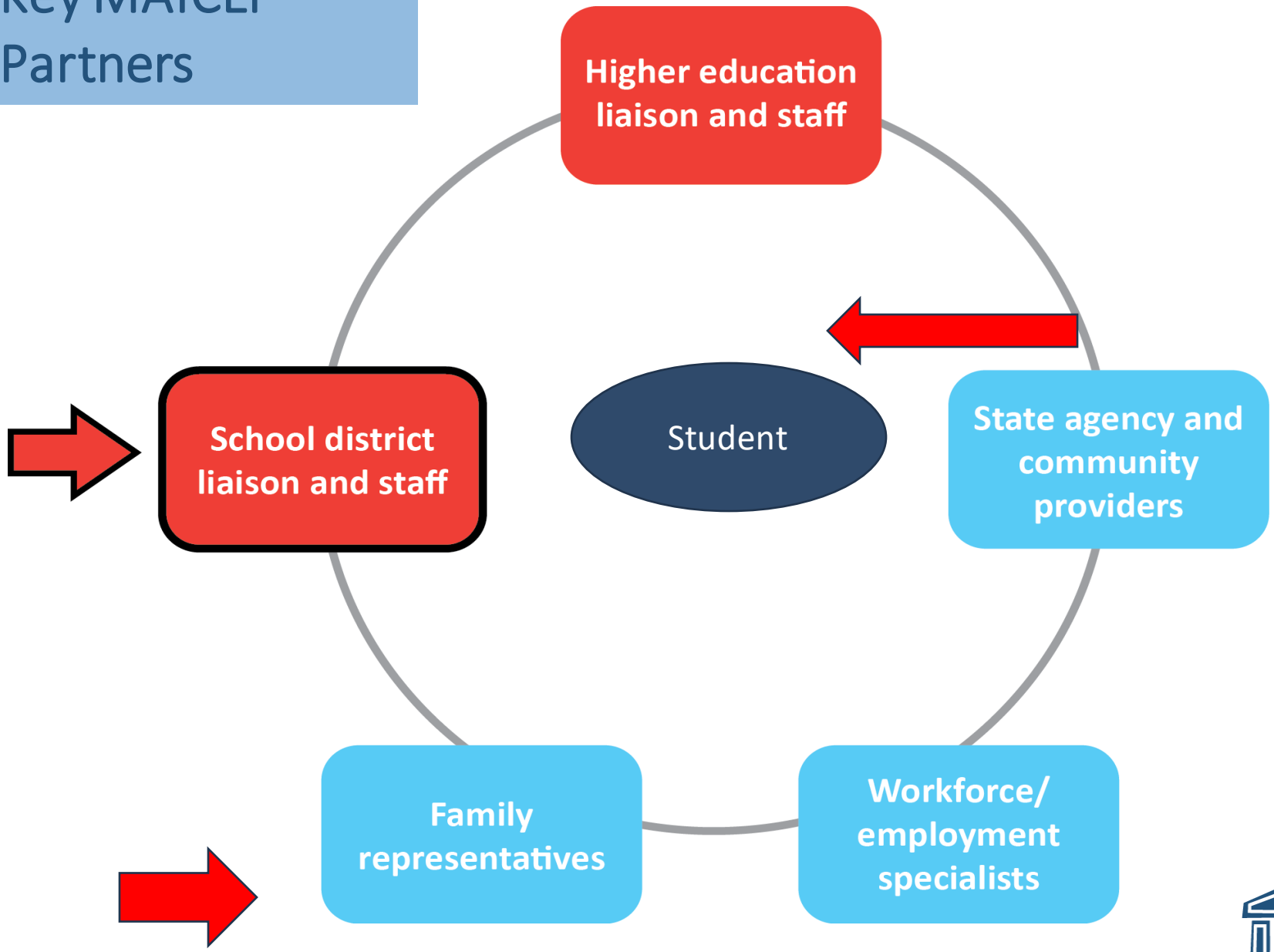
General Information

Your Name
Professor Name
Course Name

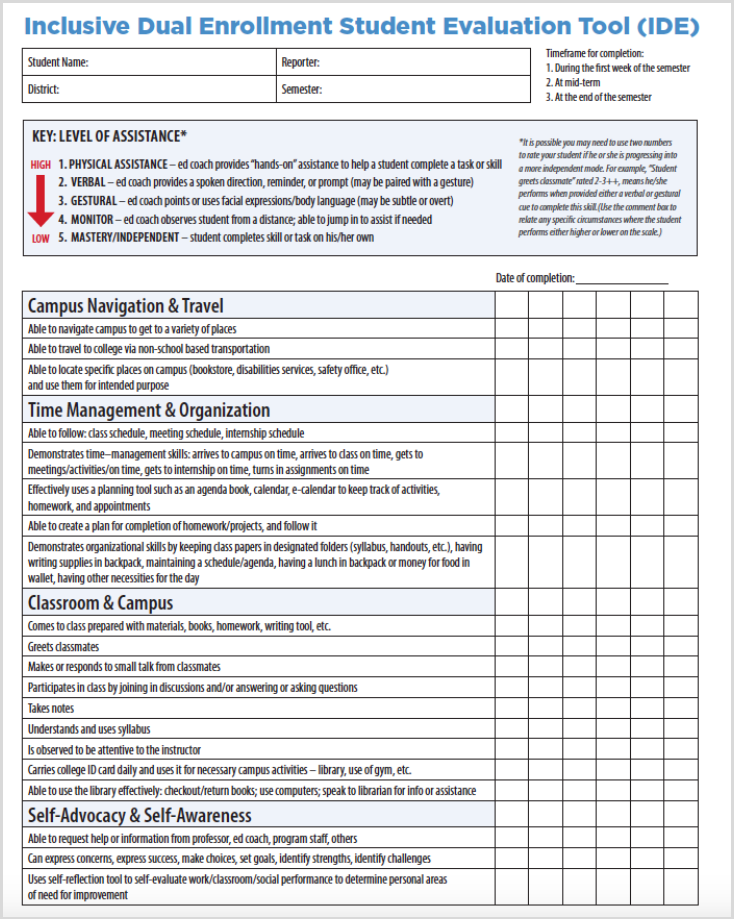
Your Class Experience

	Most of the time	About half the time	Rarely
We did writing assignments for homework			
We did reading assignments for homework			
The professor would lecture			
We would take notes			
We worked in groups			
We were active and moved around in class			
I was able to participate in class discussions			
The professor was helpful when I asked for accomodations			
We used Blackboard			

Key MAICEI Partners



Consider the IDE Student Evaluation Tool as a pre-assessment as well as ongoing assessment tool



Inclusive Dual Enrollment Student Evaluation Tool (IDE)

Student Name:	Reporter:
District:	Semester:

Timeframe for completion:
1. During the first week of the semester
2. At mid-term
3. At the end of the semester

KEY: LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE*

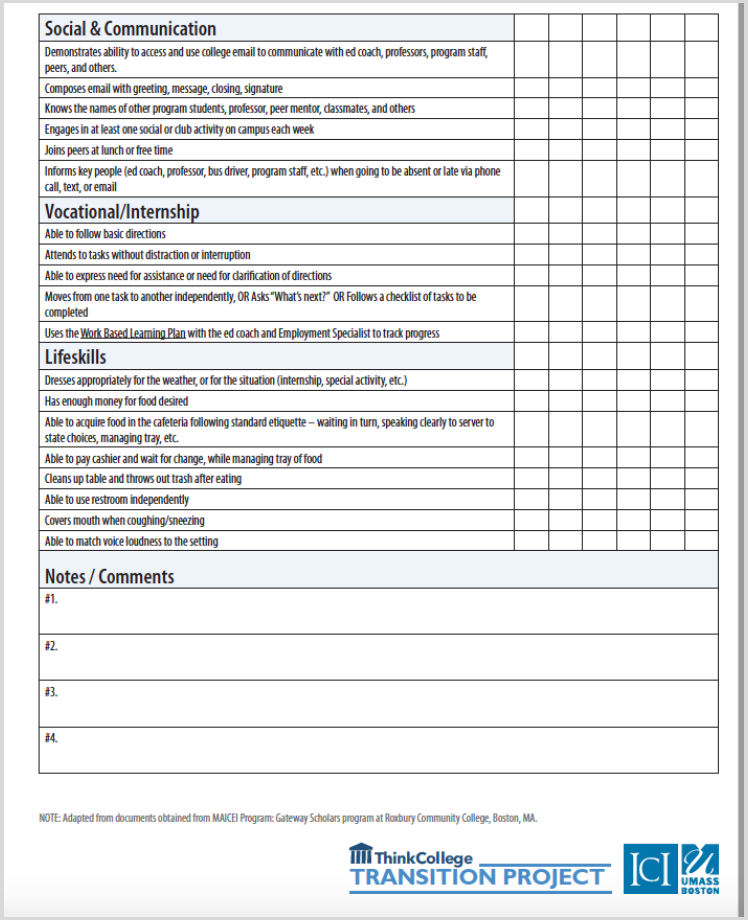
HIGH
1. **PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE** – ed coach provides "hands-on" assistance to help a student complete a task or skill
2. **VERBAL** – ed coach provides a spoken direction, reminder, or prompt (may be paired with a gesture)
3. **GESTURAL** – ed coach points or uses facial expressions/body language (may be subtle or overt)
4. **MONITOR** – ed coach observes student from a distance; able to jump in to assist if needed

LOW
5. **MASTERY/INDEPENDENT** – student completes skill or task on his/her own

*It is possible you may need to use two numbers to rate your student if he or she is progressing into a more independent mode. For example, "Student greets classmate" rated 2-3++, means he/she performs when provided either a verbal or gestural cue to complete this skill.(Use the comment box to relate any specific circumstances where the student performs either higher or lower on the scale.)

Date of completion: _____

Campus Navigation & Travel						
Able to navigate campus to get to a variety of places						
Able to travel to college via non-school based transportation						
Able to locate specific places on campus (bookstore, disabilities services, safety office, etc.) and use them for intended purpose						
Time Management & Organization						
Able to follow: class schedule, meeting schedule, internship schedule						
Demonstrates time–management skills: arrives to campus on time, arrives to class on time, gets to meetings/activities/on time, gets to internship on time, turns in assignments on time						
Effectively uses a planning tool such as an agenda book, calendar, e-calendar to keep track of activities, homework, and appointments						
Able to create a plan for completion of homework/projects, and follow it						
Demonstrates organizational skills by keeping class papers in designated folders (syllabus, handouts, etc.), having writing supplies in backpack, maintaining a schedule/agenda, having a lunch in backpack or money for food in wallet, having other necessities for the day						
Classroom & Campus						
Comes to class prepared with materials, books, homework, writing tool, etc.						
Greets classmates						
Makes or responds to small talk from classmates						
Participates in class by joining in discussions and/or answering or asking questions						
Takes notes						
Understands and uses syllabus						
Is observed to be attentive to the instructor						
Carries college ID card daily and uses it for necessary campus activities – library, use of gym, etc.						
Able to use the library effectively: checkout/return books; use computers; speak to librarian for info or assistance						
Self-Advocacy & Self-Awareness						
Able to request help or information from professor, ed coach, program staff, others						
Can express concerns, express success, make choices, set goals, identify strengths, identify challenges						
Uses self-reflection tool to self-evaluate work/classroom/social performance to determine personal areas of need for improvement						



Social & Communication						
Demonstrates ability to access and use college email to communicate with ed coach, professors, program staff, peers, and others.						
Composes email with greeting, message, closing, signature						
Knows the names of other program students, professor, peer mentor, classmates, and others						
Engages in at least one social or club activity on campus each week						
Joins peers at lunch or free time						
Informs key people (ed coach, professor, bus driver, program staff, etc.) when going to be absent or late via phone call, text, or email						
Vocational/Internship						
Able to follow basic directions						
Attends to tasks without distraction or interruption						
Able to express need for assistance or need for clarification of directions						
Moves from one task to another independently, OR Asks "What's next?" OR Follows a checklist of tasks to be completed						
Uses the Work Based Learning Plan with the ed coach and Employment Specialist to track progress						
Lifeskills						
Dresses appropriately for the weather, or for the situation (internship, special activity, etc.)						
Has enough money for food desired						
Able to acquire food in the cafeteria following standard etiquette – waiting in turn, speaking clearly to server to state choices, managing tray, etc.						
Able to pay cashier and wait for change, while managing tray of food						
Cleans up table and throws out trash after eating						
Able to use restroom independently						
Covers mouth when coughing/sneezing						
Able to match voice loudness to the setting						

Notes / Comments

#1.

#2.

#3.

#4.

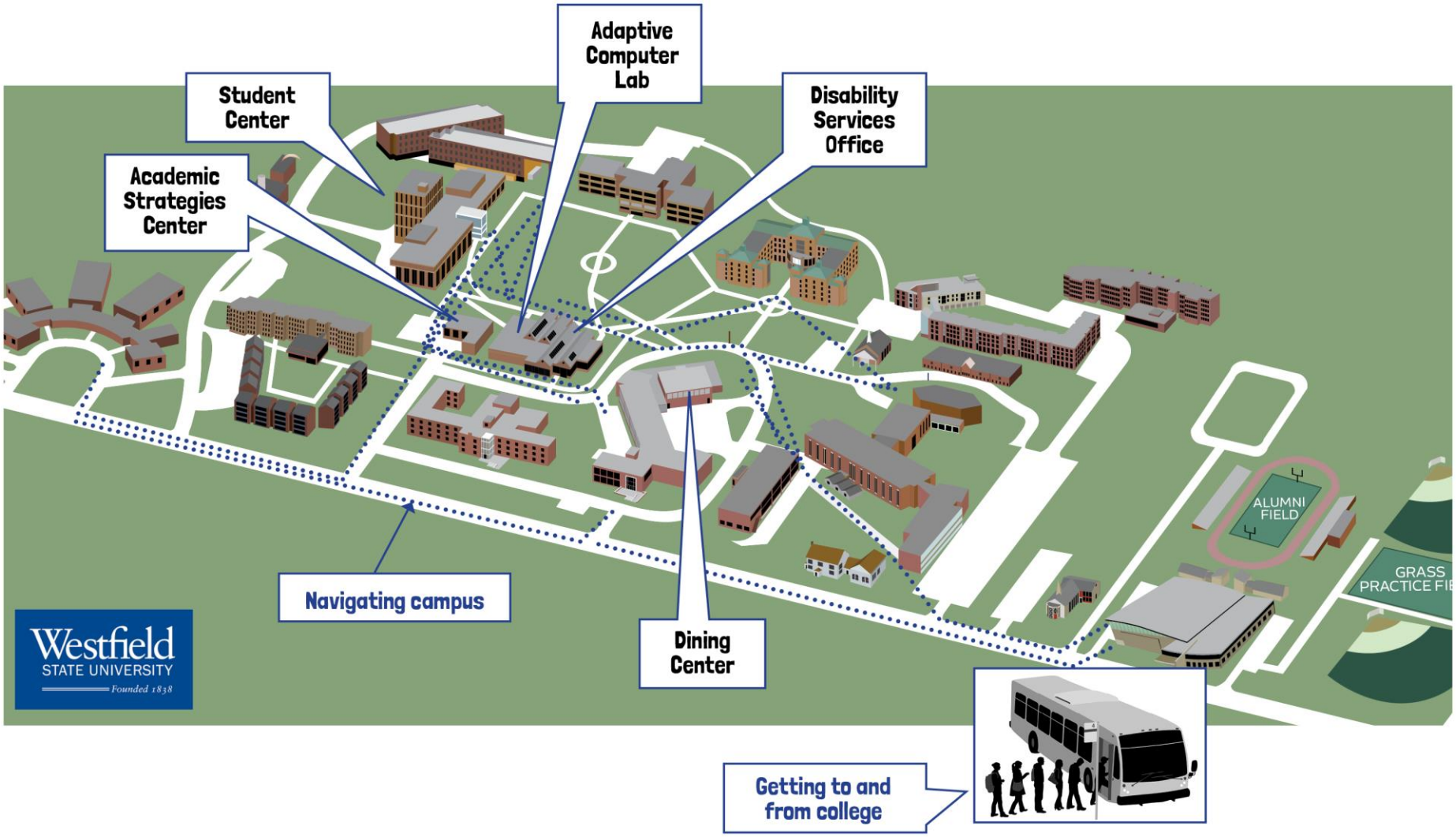
NOTE: Adapted from documents obtained from MAICEI Program: Gateway Scholars program at Roxbury Community College, Boston, MA.

ThinkCollege TRANSITION PROJECT

ICI UMASS BOSTON

RECOMMENDED CITATION: Boyle, A., (2018). Documenting Student Growth in Inclusive Dual Enrollment Experiences, Think College Grab and Go Practices, Number 5. Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston.

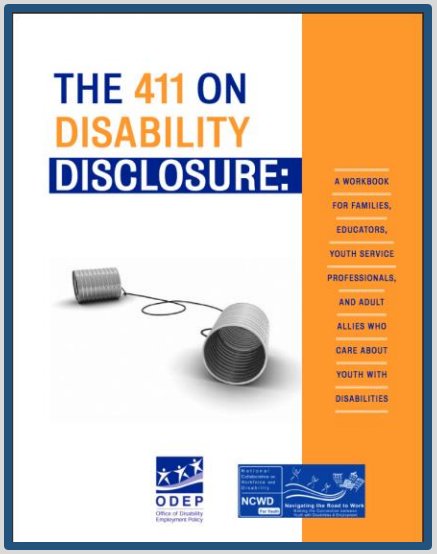
College Campus



College Campus Participation

College expectation	Secondary preparation
Getting to and from college	Early use of alternative public transport; apply for ADA/regional transit options. Build opportunities to plan travel to/from school
Navigating the campus	Build in opportunities to move about independently- increase duration, locations, time limits
Student Center	Create opportunities for students to plan their free time (e.g., meet friends, buy beverage/snack, managing campus card)
Disability Services	Review IEP for successful learning accommodation strategies/ self-identify disability
Academic Strategies Center/Adaptive Computer Lab	Build in opportunities to use accommodations rather than modifications/ review technology used in IHEs
Dining Center	Encourage students to buy lunch/ consider healthy choices/ socializing

Suggested resources



Community Transportation for Transition-Aged Youth with Disabilities

The transition years offer an opportunity for students to prepare for life after school-based services. While students pursue their dreams of employment, post-secondary education, or other opportunities, they should also prepare for how they will get to these locations after they no longer receive school transportation. Learning how to drive and/or use community transportation options in their communities can be an IEP and transition goal with classroom and community activities, and/or a family activity. Transition specialists can help students learn to use transportation, and can also provide referrals to community-based services such as travel training. Students who learn about transportation and how to self-manage their transportation needs while still in school will be better prepared for success after transition.

Finding Transportation Options

- **PUBLIC TRANSIT.** Find out if a transit authority is available near you and then contact them to learn more: *www.mass.gov/info-details/public-transportation-in-massachusetts*
- **RIDE MATCH.** Find services near you in this online, searchable database of public and private transportation services in Massachusetts: *www.massridematch.org*
- **CARPOOL DATABASE.** Sign up to find a carpool buddy. You don't have to have a car or be able to drive to travel as part of a carpool: *https://baystatecommute.com*

Explore more options: *www.mass.gov/im-looking-for-transportation*

Learning to Use Community Transportation

- **TOOL FOR EDUCATORS.** This new tool from Easter Seals helps educators support students in using a variety of modes: *www.easterseals.com/ma/explore-resources/transportation/transportation-guide.html*
- **TRAVEL TRAINING.** Professional service teaching people with disabilities the skills and information they need to ride fixed-route public transit independently and safely: *www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-to-ride-transit-with-travel-instruction*
- **DRIVING RESOURCES.** *www.mass.gov/service-details/driving-resources-in-massachusetts*

Creative Examples of Community Transportation Services

Transportation options in many communities – especially rural or suburban areas – can be limited. Human service organizations, transportation providers, and others can partner to coordinate services or implement best practices to help fill gaps. Here are some examples of creative approaches underway in different regions around Massachusetts:

- **CROSSTOWN CONNECT.** Acton and surrounding towns coordinate transportation resources to improve mobility for older adults, as well as for commuters coming from the city to suburban-based jobs
- **QUABAG CONNECTOR.** Organizations partnered with a municipality in rural Central Massachusetts to launch a new service in a low-income, underserved area
- **COMMUNITY ACCESSING RIDES.** Organizations in Southeastern Mass collaborated to fund Uber rides for their consumers when the bus was not running or in areas not served by public bus
- **CAPE COD ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION.** Transit authority partnered with a human service agency to offer wheelchair-accessible, taxi-like livery services because no wheelchair-accessible taxicabs were available on Cape Cod

To learn more about how transportation coordination can expand mobility, visit *www.mass.gov/info-details/community-transportation-coordination*. Learn about funding opportunities for creative transportation projects at *www.mass.gov/info-details/funding-for-community-transportation*.

MASSMOBILITY

Figure 1. Student view of augmented reality (AR) map.

Technology

The Adaptive Computer Lab offers a wide range of educational technologies for use by students with differing needs.

Cognitive/Perceptual Technology

Comprehension and Attention Tools

Kurzweil 3000
Read Write Gold
Natural Reader
Writing Tools
Inspiration Mind Map
ClearEdits Grammar Editor
Dragon NaturallySpeaking Dictation English Version
Dragon NaturallySpeaking Dictation Spanish Version

Vision Technology

Access and Fatigue Reduction Tools

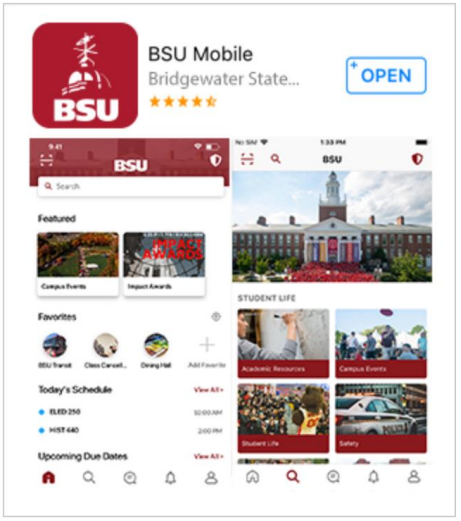
Jaws Screen Reader
ZoomText Magnification
Duxbury Braille Translator
Juliette Braille Embosser
Large monitors
Dimmable lighting

Mobility Technology

Access and Fatigue Reduction Tools

Adjustable tables
Click -N- Type on-screen keyboard
On-Screen keyboard
Alternative input devices
Ergonomic keyboards

BSU Mobile App

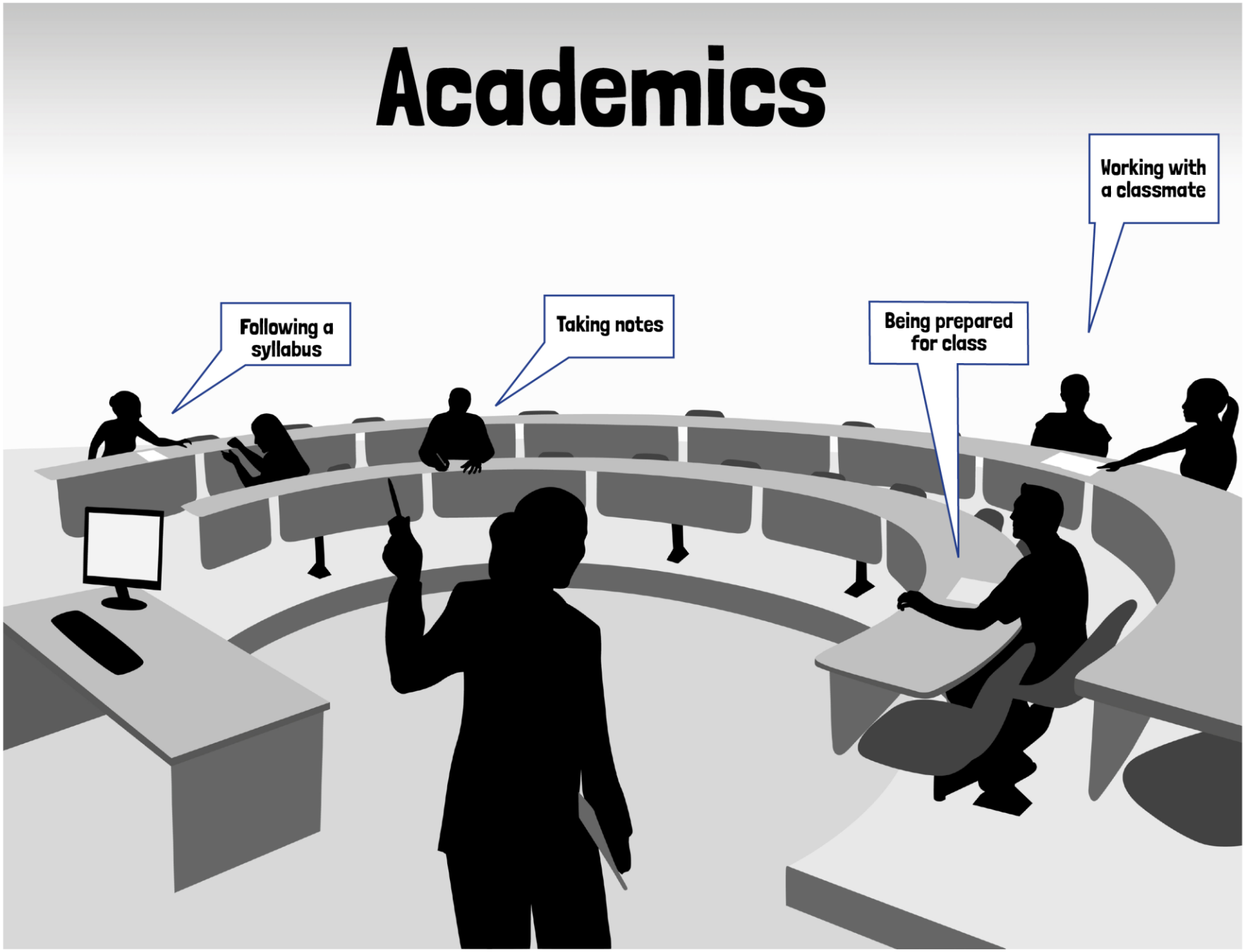


Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment: The University of Oklahoma

- Free transition resources
- Under tab: Transition Education Resources
- Me! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy
  - Strengths and Limitations
  - Disability Awareness

Link:
http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transition-education-materials

Academics


Following a syllabus
Taking notes
Being prepared for class
Working with a classmate

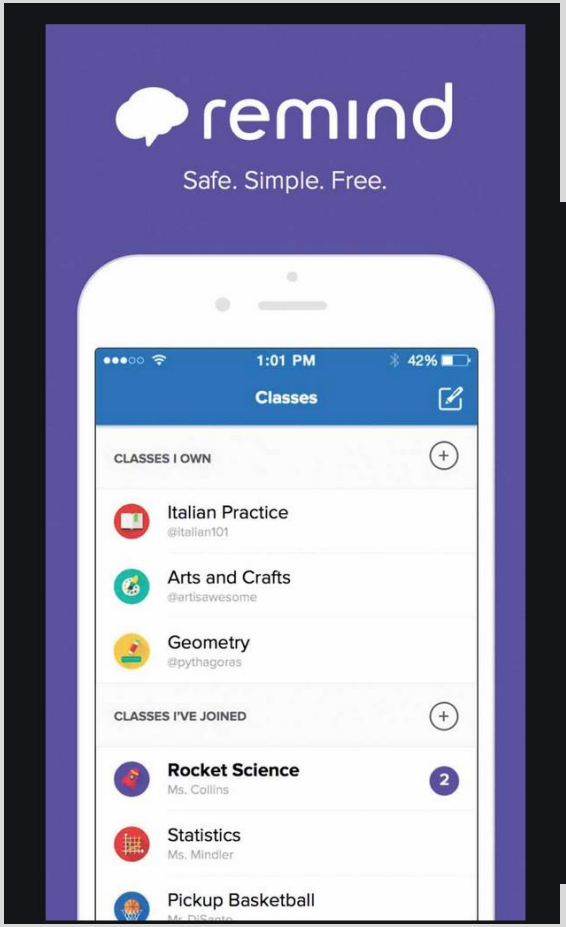
Academic preparation

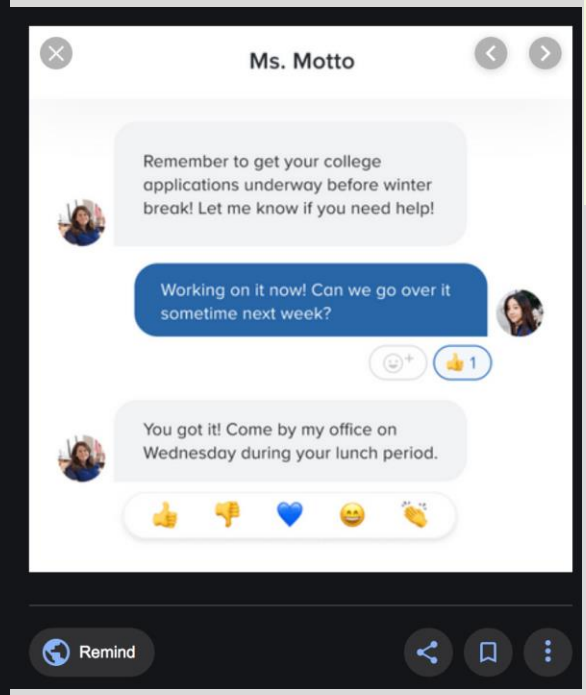
College expectation	Secondary preparation
Communicating with instructor	Discussing accommodations with teachers; discussing support; communication with teacher(e.g., absence, running late, set up meeting)
Following a syllabus	Reading and following a high school syllabus
Being prepared for class	Following checklist to complete prep: readings, notes, anticipated topics for discussion
Taking notes	Practice using smartpen (Livescribe), following and summarizing class discussions
Working with a classmate	Complete class projects with a partner; work in groups
Using learning management system (e.g. Blackboard, eLearning, PLATO)	Practice navigating with free tool such as Schoology

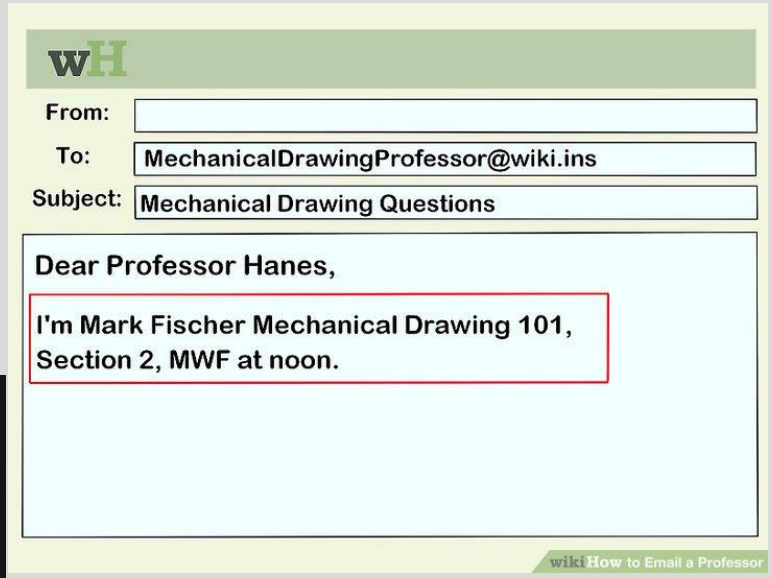
Sample syllabus review

Syllabus section	Reviewed
Course name	
Course information- days and time	
Instructor's contact information	
Office hours (to meet with instructor)	
Required and optional texts	
Course requirements- readings and assignments	
Course description	
Course schedule – topics for each class	
Grading and evaluation	
Disability statement	
Academic honesty	

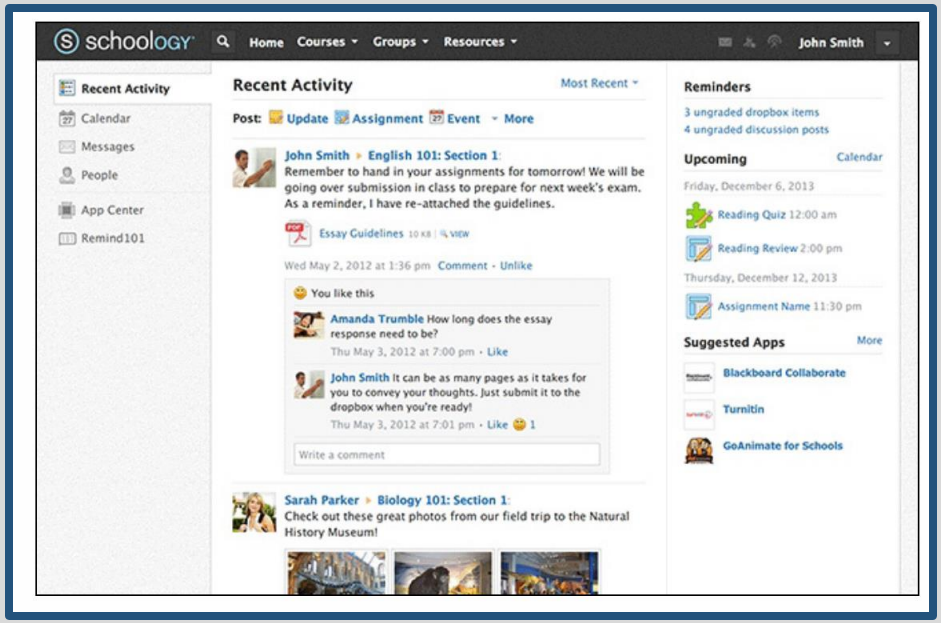
Suggested resource: Practice formal texting with an instructor







Suggested resources



Print Form | Print Blank Form | Clear Form

Your Name: _____

Choose the answer that best describes you.

Study Habit	Already Do	Plan to Do	Not Interested
Study every day.	○	○	○
Create a quiet place at home to study.	○	○	○
Turn off the phone, TV, and other distractions when studying.	○	○	○
Play quiet background music.	○	○	○
Study in a way that suits your learning style.	○	○	○
Take short but frequent breaks, like 5 minutes every half hour.	○	○	○
Study early (don't wait until the last minute).	○	○	○
Study the hardest things first and then move on to easier ones.	○	○	○
Spend the most time on things that are hardest.	○	○	○
Ask for help if you are struggling with something.	○	○	○
Take notes as you study, using your own words to simplify complex ideas.	○	○	○
Keep your notes in a notebook or folder.	○	○	○
Review your notes on a regular basis.	○	○	○
Make connections between what you are studying and what you know.	○	○	○
Take practice tests, so you don't panic when it's time for the real test.	○	○	○
Use a planner or agenda to keep track of your study progress.	○	○	○
Reward yourself after a good study session.	○	○	○
Quiz yourself about what you just studied.	○	○	○
Total			

Developing good study habits can be a challenge, especially if you already have a busy life. But don't dismiss the importance of studying.

Want to aim for the best study habits possible? The ultimate goal would be for all of your responses to appear in the "Already Do" column.

So take a look at your "Plan to Do" column and give one or two of the items listed a try. By improving just one or two additional study habits, you may soon see a jump in your test scores. And that's what developing good study habits is all about!

These materials have been developed and paid for by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) for informational purposes. Although the information contained in this document is believed to be accurate at the time of printing, PHEAA does not guarantee its accuracy. You should independently verify that this information is correct.

EDUCATIONPLANNER.org™

Academic Support

Read&Write Gold

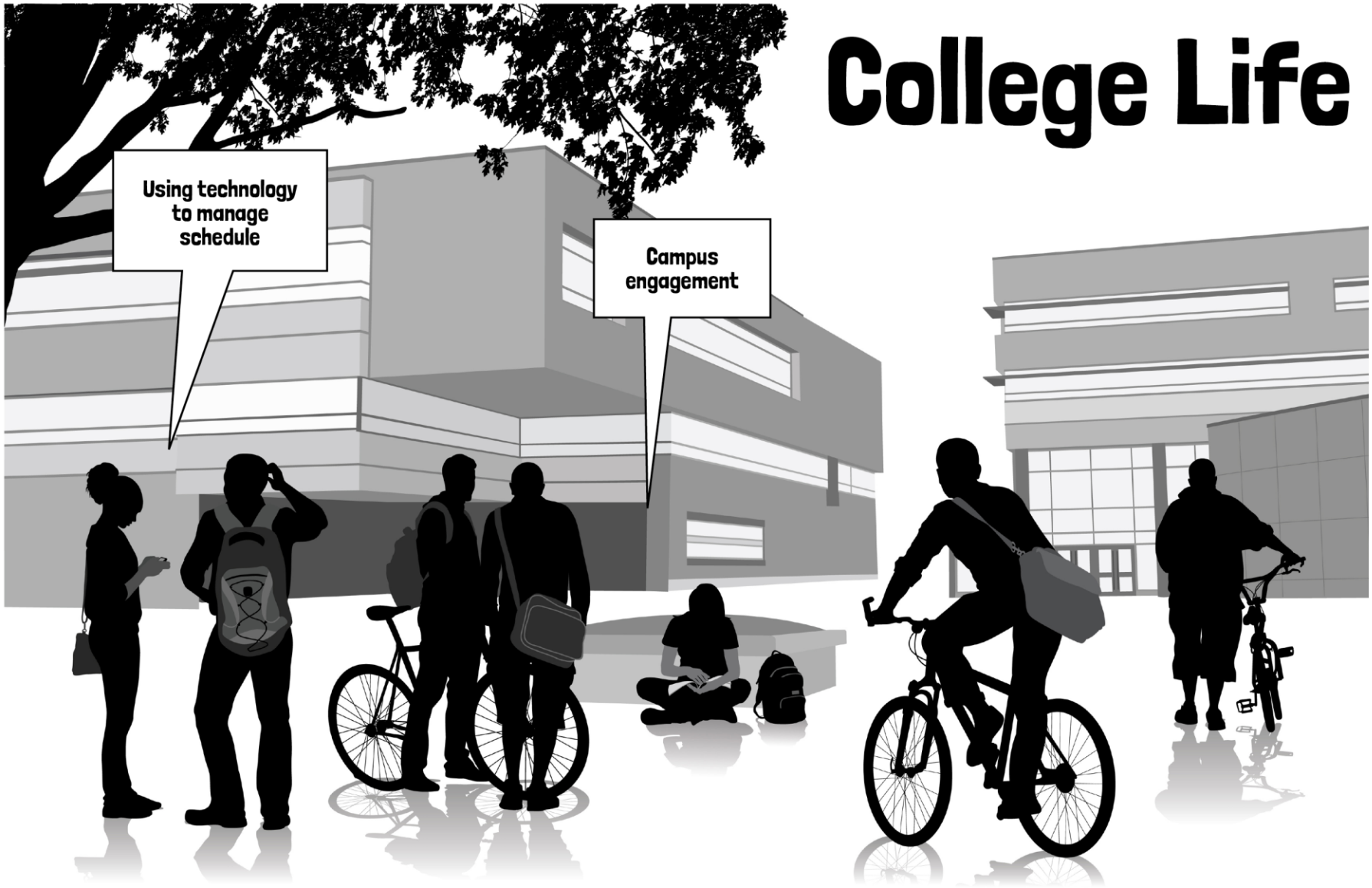
grammarly.com

DRAGON DICTATION

KHAN ACADEMY

Bookshare

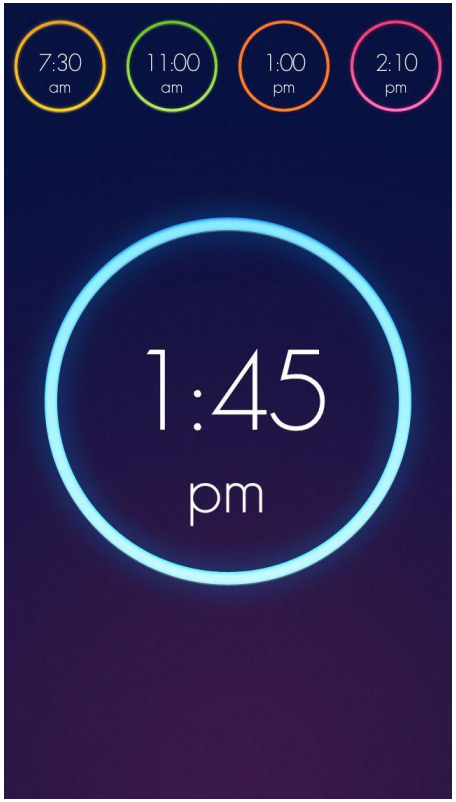
College Life



College Life Participation

College expectation	Secondary preparation
Using technology to manage schedule	Build in opportunities for students to develop their own weekly schedule, make and record appts
Campus engagement: fitness center	Support students to build in fitness and sports as preferred and with a partner
Campus engagement: clubs	Support students to explore interests in high school or community clubs
Campus engagement: socializing/campus events	Assist students to engage in inclusive social activities in and out of school

Suggested resources: Personal Management



Alarm apps

Keeping track of weekly budget

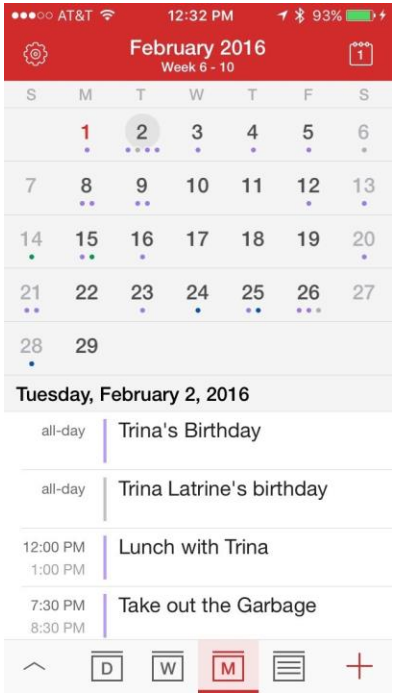
Text messaging apps

Following schedules

Remind: quick text reminder

Visual Schedule Planner

Visual calendar reminder



First Then (visual calendar

Suggested resources:

THINK COLLEGE
STORIES

BELONGING ON CAMPUS

JANUARY 2014

By Kenneth Kelty, with Seb Prohn

I am a student at Western Carolina University where I am a part of the University Participant (UP) Program. I want to share my thoughts and experiences about inclusion in college. To me, inclusion means that all people should be allowed to live fully without limitations and go places just as everyone else gets to go--like college! Inclusion is important because it gives people with intellectual and developmental disability (ID) a chance to do all the same things as everyone else with nothing holding them back.

There have been times in my life when I felt left out. When I was in the 5th grade, I was a member of the school safety patrol. Each year the school would take a group of safety patrol students to Washington, D.C. to see the sights and have fun, but because of my autism and ID the school did not want me to participate. I was excluded.

This made me sad because I really wanted to go to Washington, D.C. with my friends. I was also mad because they would not let me go even though I could do almost anything the other kids could do. In the end I got to go because my mom challenged the school. She let them know what I wanted everyone to know: I should not be denied an opportunity because of my disabilities.

To me, inclusion means that all people should be allowed to live fully without limitations and go places just as everyone else gets to go—like college!

A lot has changed in the last decade. I've gone from others wanting to leave me out to being invited to speak at the 2013 American Evaluation Association conference in Washington, D.C. When I speak at conferences, I try to spread awareness about including people with ID on college campuses and in communities.

At Western Carolina University (WCU), I took part in a social inclusion research project. Now I use my data--pictures I took on my college campus--as a way to reach out to others about the ways I feel very included on my campus. In this story I want to do the same thing and explain the ways I feel included, with the hopes that you will make your campuses and communities more inclusive.

This was the night that Vince first said "you are one of the brothers."

Academic Inclusion

At WCU, I take the same classes as all other college students. If I need to, I can go to the office of disability services and they help me access accommodations. In college classes, I do the same work as all of my peers. It was my choice to enroll in the four college classes I am taking right now, which are Global Issues, Facebook Generation Marketing, Career Exploration, and Foundations of Communication.

Each of my professors includes me personally. They want me to participate in their classes and they want to help out. In my communications class, the professor asks me if I understand the topic and makes sure I have a partner for projects. Also, my past and current professors know my name. They will say "Hi!" if they see me around campus.

My classmates include me by introducing me to people they know in the class, and when we are working on assignments together we help each other out. Over the semesters some of my classmates have become friends, and instead of just doing academic work together, we now just hang out and share meals together.

Work Inclusion

Every semester I've been in college I've had several jobs at WCU. I've worked in the campus mailroom, the International Studies office, enTOURage (a group of student guides hired by the Office of Admissions to give tours to prospective students), the Severe Disabilities Grant office, and campus creative services. In each of these jobs my co-workers always made sure I understood everything and we all worked

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ThinkCollege
TRANSITION PROJECT

GRAB AND GO PRACTICES

FACILITATING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS ON CAMPUS

by Mary Ann Brennen, Ty Hanson, Ross Hooley, and Lauren Nastari

Issue No. 4

INTRODUCTION

College is an ideal setting to develop and expand a person's social network. Using strategies that maximize social opportunities centered around shared interests and common experiences can often lead to the development of authentic friendships and increased campus membership.

Educational coaches are in an ideal position to recognize opportunities for social engagement and to support and encourage students to develop social networks and new friendships. Effective coaches believe that friendships are critical to a person's overall well-being, and that friendships are possible, regardless of a person's disability.

MAKE CONNECTIONS TO FAMILIAR PEERS

An important way for coaches to facilitate connections is to recognize who the student already knows on campus, and to consider how those casual acquaintances can be strengthened and deepened. For example, some students receive support from a classmate for note-taking, or have been connected to work on group projects by the instructor. Although those roles are different from being friends, coaches have opportunities to facilitate friendships through these experiences by encouraging the student to invite classmates to connect outside of class.

In another case, some students may recognize other people on campus who went to their high school. Coaches have an opportunity to capitalize on these connections by suggesting to the student that they invite this classmate to meet up for lunch or simply hang out at the campus cafeteria. Just spending time together at the cafeteria can lead to meeting each other's friends, thus widening both students' social network.

CONNECT STUDENTS THROUGH INTERESTS

Another way students get to know others is through shared interests. For instance, a student may have a talent using technology to create presentations or to find information on the college

Inclusive Dual Enrollment Student Support for College Success

The Student Support for College Success Grab and Go series summarizes best practices for coaches and mentors who support dually enrolled students with intellectual disability on college campuses. A checklist for educational coaches is included.

app. Less tech-savvy students may benefit from this expertise and appreciate learning from a college peer. This could then lead to increased time spent together as they get to know each other.

Similarly, a student who likes radio production may enjoy being at the campus radio station with other students who share the same passion.

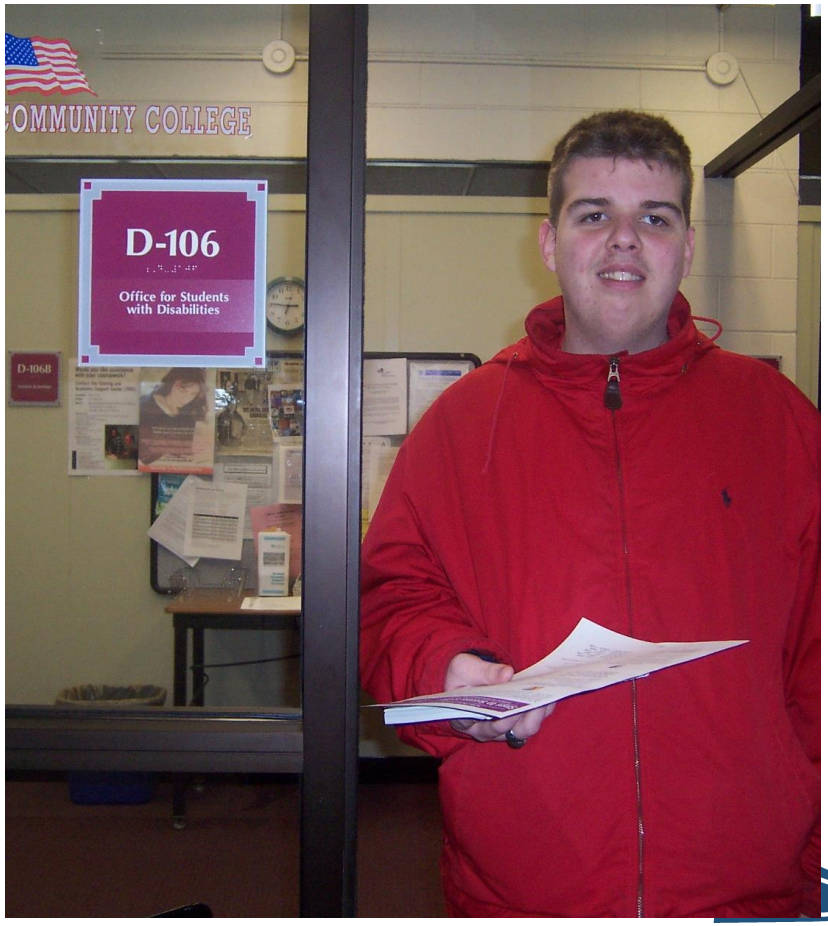
Finding out a student's interests can be accomplished by asking them directly, or by checking with others such as family, teachers, and friends.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

Teaching students how to pursue interests is a great way to make friends. Coaches can help students find time in their schedules to visit the student activities office to get a calendar of events and a list of clubs available on campus. Encouraging students to attend a campus club expo at the beginning of the semester is a perfect opportunity for students to explore the variety of club offerings. Remember, though, that going once to a club meeting will not provide enough time to make a friend. Coaches can help students build time into their weekly schedule to attend club events regularly, thereby providing maximum opportunities for students to get to know each other. Similarly, identifying volunteer opportunities on or off campus where students work together toward a common goal can foster social connections. Finally, encouraging students to work out at the campus athletic center is a natural way for them to make friends. Going to the gym on a regular basis at the same time and on the same days is going to increase the chances that they will see and become familiar with the same people exercising.

Preparing secondary staff

- Presenting college as a postsecondary option
- Advocating for raised expectations and access to curriculum with clear standards
- Attending IEP meetings to discuss PSE options
- Preparing students for the differences between high school and college expectations

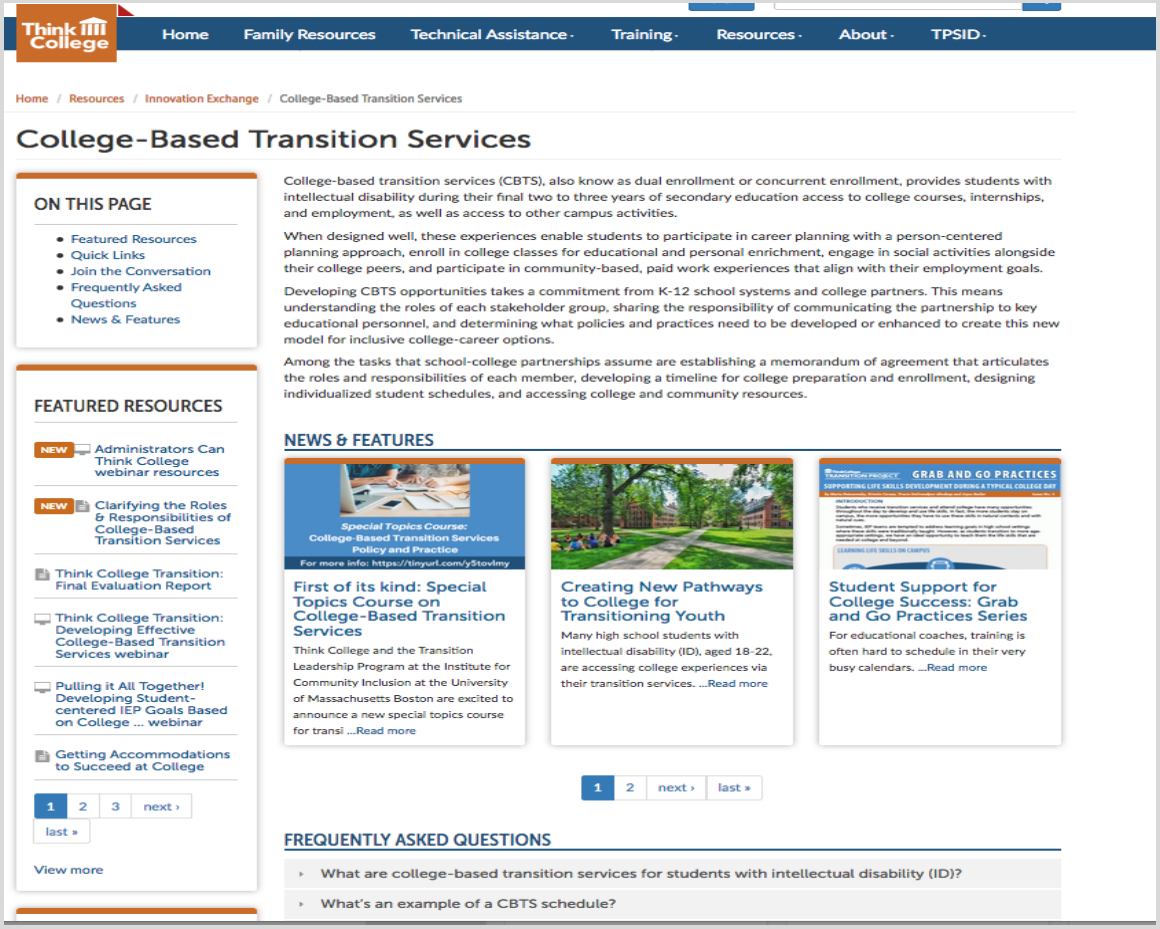


Preparing secondary staff

Taking into account:

- development of self-determination
- disability awareness,
- accommodation awareness,
- mobility training,
- emotional health, &
- safety

Suggested resources: Think College Innovation Exchange on CBTS



Preparing families

- College as an PSE option
- High school versus college expectations
- Changing role of families
- Community-based instruction
- Mobility and travel
- Safety and risk
- Flexible schedule

Suggested resources: Think College Family Resources

Family Resources

As the parent or family member of a young adult with intellectual disability, you may have heard a bit about Think College or seen videos or articles describing how students with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities are attending colleges and universities all over the United States.

We put this page together to respond to the most frequently asked questions that families have about college options. Let us know if you have more questions after reviewing these resources.

Is College Possible?

These resources illustrate students with ID accessing college.

- Read some Think College Stories that share the perspectives of successful college students with intellectual disability.
- Share info about college options for students with ID with teachers, parents and students with our We Can series.
- This Think College Learn module shares resources and videos that help families and students learn more about college options.

How to Prepare

Students in middle school and high school can be working on preparing for college!

- Suggested IEP Goals that help students get ready for college
- Suggestions for Parents to help students prepare for college
- Twenty Powerful Strategies to prepare for college
- Use this Foundation Skills for College and Career Learning Plan to help your son or daughter to prepare for college.

How to Apply

When students are applying to attend a college program for students with ID, there is typically a different admissions process than the one used by degree-seeking students.

Unlike students who are applying to college through the standard admissions process, students will **NOT** need a regular high school diploma or SAT or ACT scores. They **WILL** need documentation of disability and support needs. Check the website of programs you are interested in to learn more about specific requirements.

Can I afford it?

College is expensive, and paying for it is never easy. The good news is that students with intellectual disability can be eligible for financial aid even if they don't have a HS diploma. Students can also now save for college through the use of an ABLE account. Others may get support from a community agency such as Vocational Rehabilitation, or recieve scholarships to help cover costs.

Learn more about these and other strategies to pay for college on our Paying for College page.

How do we find the right college?

- Review program details in the College Search listings.
- Once you have a list of possibilities, contact the program to ask questions/schedule a campus visit.
- Use our How To Guide on Conducting a College Search and this Self-Advocates Guide to Selecting a College to learn more about programs you are interested in.
- Contact us if you need more information or help deciding on the best fit.

Differences Between High School and College

The transition to college is a big one – here are some resources to help understand the most important differences.

- Supports for Students with Disabilities: High School vs. College
- Understanding Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act for College Students
- Transitioning to College: Tips for Parents [PDF]
- Parents Discuss the Differences between HS and College [video]

For more information:

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