Integrating Tutor Training into Faculty Mentorship Programming to Serve Students with Disabilities

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Abstract

Students with disabilities face a vast array of physical, cognitive, social, and external barriers. The combination of barriers and negative attitudes faced by students with disabilities makes it difficult to develop skills to be more independent in future academic and career-related settings. This article examines the importance of faculty mentorship and peer mentoring programs in relation to the academic success of students with disabilities as well as the need for additional tutor training in working with students with disabilities. The article reports on the Faculty Mentorship Program and tutor training sessions that were developed and implemented at Ball State University.

In the United States, there have been several legislative decisions to create equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the education system. Vogel, Fresco, & Wertheim (2007) highlight that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, "protect the rights of these students, guaranteeing them the right to reasonable accommodations both in the admission process and once they have matriculated"(p. 485). Odom et. al. (2005) state that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) required free public education be afforded to individuals with disabilities. The authors further state that the general focus in the education system today is to provide quality education for all students in the United States. Vogel, Fresko, & Wertheim, however, maintain that as the number of students with disabilities entering colleges and universities increases, it becomes increasingly more important to examine the learning environment of these students.

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In recent years, there has been a call for more mainstreaming and inclusive practices to be implemented in the education system (Parasuram, 2006; Vogel, Fresko, & Wertheim, 2007). According to Bender, Vail, & Scott (1995), mainstreaming education "refers to placement in general education classes with some time spent in a separate resource room placement," while inclusive practices call for "ending all separate special education placements for all students" (p. 87). When addressing mainstreaming and inclusive practices in the education setting, faculty and staff at various institutions need to be aware of the numerous factors that affect the potential for success of students with disabilities. The current literature suggests that faculty and peer tutors have the potential to greatly impact the self-efficacy of these students.

Background

During the transition from high school to college, students with disabilities often face confusion and a sense of being overwhelmed. Vogel, Fresko, & Wertheim (2007) maintain that students with disabilities also experience a myriad of issues not faced by those with disabilities that include academic struggles and negative views of self that may contribute to high attrition rates. Students with disabilities can view themselves as being less competent than their peers, which can greatly impact a student's ability to succeed, develop, and adjust to changes. Madaus (2005) further contends that the transition to college can also be difficult due to differences in the services offered at the high school and college level. In both places, discrimination based upon a disability is prohibited and equal access to all students is required by law. In higher education settings, equal access results in students receiving reasonable accommodations such as having extra time to take exams or the ability to use a closed captioned television. Students at the college level have the responsibility to disclose their disability and to utilize available services if they choose. This is a vast difference from the high school environment where the school collaborates with both student and parent to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The added stressors experienced by students with disabilities may contribute greatly to the empirical evidence reporting these students are at higher risk for depression and suicide (Bender, Rosenkrans, & Crane, 1999). Bandura (1986) defined the belief in one's capabilities and potential for success as self-efficacy. Powers, Sowers & Stevens (1995), build on Bandura's definition by submitting that self-efficacy has been correlated with academic success, which can be achieved by providing the student with opportunities to develop independence through exposure of skills training events and exercises, observational learning, and interactions with role models. Further, Dwyer & Cummings (2001) proffer that "high self-efficacy may act as a moderator of stress for university students" (p.209). While Bandura addresses the cognitive level of self-efficacy, social support systems can present added benefits to students with disabilities. Dwyer & Cummings report that social support systems are important for students with disabilities because students are not left feeling isolated in their struggles. In light of this information, it is imperative that colleges and universities work to systematically address ways in which they can best serve students with disabilities.

Mentorship programs provide students with structure as well as social support. Such programs are important not only because they help students with disabilities transition to the college learning environment, but they also assist in expanding upon current skills and cultivating new ones in order to overcome the numerous challenges they may face during their academic careers. Parents, friends, family members, mentors, and teachers can serve to endorse or discourage independence and self-confidence through verbal and nonverbal interactions with these students (Powers, Sowers, & Stevens, 1995). Mentorship programs ensure that students will have positive interactions with individuals that will foster their development of confidence, independence, and other life skills. Powers, Sowers, and Stevens demonstrated that mentorship provided students with the opportunity to identify ways in which they could advocate for themselves as well as learn about "adaptations and strategies they could use to increase their independence in the larger community" (p. 39).

Campbell-Whately (2001) provides guidelines for developing and implementing an effective mentorship program. Those guidelines include: involving those who have contact with students (i.e., teachers and advisors), selecting program staff that can support organization, establishing clear program goals that focus on the needs of students with disabilities, identifying a specific target population (i.e., undergraduate freshman who receive services from disability services), developing activities and procedures (i.e. how often a mentor meets with a student), training mentors and peer tutors, monitoring the mentoring process and gathering feedback from mentors and students, actively ensuring compatible matches between students and mentors, and finally, evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

Faculty and student interaction is critical for all student success, but it is even more crucial for students with disabilities who struggle with transitioning into a college environment. Abundant research suggests tremendous outcome benefits can be achieved by including disability education training for faculty members instructing students with disabilities. While a comprehensive analysis of the importance of including faculty members in a mentorship program is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note the abundance of literature reporting the benefit of faculty inclusion in such a program (Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Campbell & Gilmore, 2003; Fichten, Amsel, Bourdon, & Creti, 1988; Nelson, Dodd, Smith, 1990; Odom, et al., 2005; Parasuram, 2006; Rao, 2004; Scott & Gregg, 2000; and Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). It is important to detail the necessity of including peer tutor training in a quality mentorship program aimed at assisting students with disabilities.

The collaborative interaction between students and peer tutors has been shown to have a positive effect on students (Watkins & Wentzel, 2008). Heron, Welsch, and Goddard (2003) reported that social validity data suggests students favor peer tutoring, and this setting allows them the opportunity to interact with fellow students, further develop social skills, improve memory and cognition, enhance feelings of self-efficacy, and increase testing ability. Britner, Balcazar, Blechman, Blinn-Pike & Larose (2006) suggest that the social support theory is beneficial when working with students with disabilities because the emphasis is placed on providing information and resource to those in need. Social support systems can help

combat various negative outcomes such as high attrition rates for students with disabilities. These relationships are capable of providing social support which can prevent against negative outcomes such as dropping out of school.

Vogel, Fresko, and Wertheim (2007) examined the perceptions of peer tutors and of students with disabilities who were receiving tutoring in college settings. Tutors and clients both reported that the most severe difficulties presented by the students with Learning Disability (LD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) were problems with attention and concentration. Both groups also felt that the greatest problem in the tutoring relationship was related to the tutors' insufficient skills and knowledge in working with the clients' various learning disabilities. Jameson, McDonnell, Polychronis, and Riesen (2008) indicate that mistakes made by tutors are most often made due to lack of confidence in working with assorted tutoring methods and procedures. While it is clear that peer tutoring is an integral part of a comprehensive mentorship program, the information provided by Vogel, Fresko, and Wertheim along with Jameson et al. suggest the need for continual monitoring and training of students providing services to students with disabilities. Campbell-Whately (2001) suggests that an integral part of a mentoring program is the continual training of mentors and students in addition to monitoring the mentoring process. Campbell-Whately further advocates for the use of self-report measures as a means of monitoring tutors' training as well as the effectiveness of the mentorship program. While Heron, Welsch, & Goddard (2003) maintain that tutoring has been shown to be effective and cost-efficient, implementation of a tutoring program alone is not enough. Stenhoff & Lignugaris/Kraft (2007) noted that given the plethora of research supporting evidence-based tutoring practices, it is of great importance that tutor training take place prior to initiating tutoring sessions.

Method

Participants

Participants in the present study were undergraduate and graduate students working as peer tutors in a Learning Center on the campus of a Midwestern university. Recruitment emails were sent to all tutors working in the Learning Center, in addition to informational flyers that were posted in the Learning Center regarding upcoming training sessions. Due to its longitudinal design, the number of participants involved in the training varied each session, ranging from as few as four to as many as 20 undergraduate and graduate tutors in attendance. The tutor training program was developed to serve as an additional facet of an already existing mentorship program. Training sessions were open to all undergraduate and graduate level tutors. Tutors who attended training sessions received credit that went towards their College Reading and Learning Association certification. The tutor training was offered to undergraduate and graduate tutors beginning in the Spring semester of 2009 (February) and ending in the Fall semester of 2009 (October). During each semester, tutors were given the opportunity to attend four tutor training seminars throughout the duration of the semester. (For the schedule of the tutor training sessions, see Figure 1 below; for outlines of the training sessions, see Appendixes 1-4 at the end of the article).

Figure 1

Schedule of Tutor Training Sessions

Session Title	Date
Providing Quality Tutoring for Students with Disabilities	February 27, 2009
Providing Quality Tutoring for Students with Disabilities: An Overview of Learning Disabilities	March 20, 2009
Tutoring Students with Visual Impairments	April 9, 2009
Tutoring Students with Asperger's	April 17, 2009
Strategies for Tutoring Students with Learning Disabilities	October 9, 2009
Peer Tutor Discussion on Strategies and Techniques for Working with Students Who Have Disabilities	October 29, 2009

Note. Four of the outlines for the in-service tutor training sessions are included in Appendix B

Procedure

The research was conducted at a four-year, public, Midwestern university, where nearly 600 students receive eligibility for accommodations from the office of disability services. Approximately two-thirds of these students have non-apparent disabilities such as learning disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, psychological disorders, Asperger's Disorder, or chronic illnesses. In light of the research on students with disabilities, the university has constructed and orchestrated a comprehensive approach to address these concerns and provide equal learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Recognizing that actively engaging students with faculty could result in more successful transitions to college, the Faculty Mentorship Program (FMP) was first implemented in the fall of 2006. In 2008, a grant from the United States Department of Education, entitled "Ensuring a Quality Education for Indiana's Students with Disabilities" (also referred to as Project P333A080021-10) was applied for and received, which provided funding in order to expand upon the existing FMP and services offered to students with disabilities.

The goal of the existing Faculty Mentorship Program is to enhance the learning experience for students with disabilities by assigning faculty mentors to each student participating in the program. This program provides faculty members with training on and exposure to a myriad of disabilities, thus serving to disseminate education, offer collaboration among colleagues, and increase faculty members' comfort in working with students in this population. The faculty mentors then meet with students on a regular basis and assist students in dealing with the complexities of the academic experience at the university. Interaction with faculty members provides students with a collaborative environment where they can establish a stronger connection to the university and a better understanding of the academic expectations.

Specifically, the FMP seeks to do four things for students involved in the program:

1. Personalize the university experience for students with disabilities
2. Assist students in understanding and meeting the academic challenges and expectations of college students.
3. Connect the departmental major to future occupational goals.
4. Inform students about requirements of students majoring in the faculty member's department as well as student clubs, organizations,and internships available with that major (Ball State University,2011, para. 3).

Some of the activities encompassed by the FMP are weekly meetings between program developers for event planning, correspondence from program developers to students with disabilities involved in the FMP via email, and frequent meetings and seminars for faculty mentors, tutors, and program developers to address current issues requiring greater focus within the program. The emails sent by the program developers to the students with disabilities in the Faculty Mentorship Program provided information regarding on-campus resources, on-line academic assistance, study tips, time management strategies, as well as ways the students could help structure their tutoring sessions. The regular meetings for mentors and program developers provided further development and training in the area of disability issues. During tutor training seminars, peer tutors were given the opportunity to ask questions, receive feedback, hear guest speakers share information about campus resources, and connect with other academic disciplines in order to best serve students with disabilities. Tutors also were provided with a comprehensive brochure detailing the Learning Center, the University, and outside resources available to them and students with disabilities. This brochure also contained relevant information that could be utilized in these tutoring sessions such as the following: helpful campus and web resources, and some tutoring tips.

In light of the research reporting the effectiveness of tutoring and its role in providing positive social support (Britner, et al, 2006; Heron, Welsh, & Goddard, 2003; Stenhoff & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2007; Watkins & Wentzel, 2008), it is of great importance that tutor training take place prior to initiating tutoring sessions. Clearly, tutors need to receive training and more specifically, a need has been demonstrated for additional education and instruction in tutoring students with disabilities. Therefore, an expanded tutor training program was developed in the spring semester of 2009 in order to meet this need. The program is focused on providing undergraduate and graduate students with formal presentations, current literature, institutional resources, and collaborative opportunities focused on tutoring students with disabilities.

Within the tutoring sessions, tutors were exposed to a myriad of educational resources (on-campus referral sources, on-line sources of information, faculty and staff with particular expertise, and current research literature). Throughout the training process tutors were able to obtain valuable information from individuals with expertise in this field of work and study, such as the director of the disability services office and the Learning Center's Study Strategies and Writing Coordinator, both of whom

are also co-founders of the Faculty Mentorship Program (FMP). During these presentations, undergraduate and graduate level tutors were given an introduction to the FMP, an overview of the demographics of students with disabilities on campus, current legislation, the inclusive and mainstreaming practices being implemented, and the services provided to students with disabilities. In subsequent training sessions, an Adaptive Computer Technology Specialist presented information on resources and current technology available for students with visual impairments, and a counseling psychologist presented tutors with information on tutoring students with autism and Asperger's Disorder.

The training sessions were focused on providing tutors with additional education on various disabilities and informing them of available on-campus resources. Tutors in this training program were given the opportunity to enter into collaborative discussions with the presenters and colleagues about effective means of approaching various tutoring scenarios with students who have different disabilities. These training sessions also fulfilled College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) topic requirements. After each training session, participants were administered a survey to provide critical feedback regarding the benefits of the particular seminar, what information they gleaned from the process, as well as suggested changes for future training seminars. Data regarding the academic success and utilization of support services for incoming freshmen who took part in the FMP was compared to those who did not participate in the FMP. This information was aggregated for analysis and comparison during the two years the tutor training portion of the FMP was enacted.

Results

Qualitative, self-reports from tutors provided a great deal of information regarding the effectiveness of the tutor training sessions for those students involved (Figure 2). Tutors reported that the training sessions provided them with the opportunity to gain information and develop skills for tutoring students with disabilities. During the analysis of the data, it became apparent that common themes were expressed by participants of the tutor training seminars.

Figure 2

Qualitative Feedback from Tutors Reporting Skills Obtained Due to Training

Tutors reported learning the following skills

- Basic guidelines of how to interact with students with disabilities
- Accommodations available to students with disabilities
- Strategies for helping students with different learning styles
- "Having a learning disability does not mean you're not smart"
- "I learned to ask questions of the client to learn how the disability impacts his/her learning"
- Information about the different learning disabilities
- Strategies for how to handle various tutoring situations
- Learning about the adaptive technology
- Varying degrees of visual impairments
- Approaches to working with clients who have varying degrees of blindness

Effective Communication Skills

Participants reported learning effective communication skills to implement when tutoring students with disabilities. Participants also reported obtaining information about basic guidelines that would help them interact better with students with disabilities during tutoring sessions. One participant reported, "I learned to communicate with the clients about their strengths and weaknesses." Several participants reported learning strategies and tips to employ when working with individuals diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder. They further indicated this information was helpful due to the fact that Asperger's can impact an individual's ability to effectively communicate with others. One participant stated "I learned strategies for helping students with different learning styles." Another participant indicated he or she was taught strategies to help in a myriad of tutoring environments. A third participant stated, "I obtained knowledge of various approaches that would be effective and helpful when working with clients who have varying degrees of blindness."

Utilizing the Student's Strengths

Participants also reported they obtained greater knowledge regarding how to emphasize and utilize students' strengths within session to create positive change outside of the tutoring environment. This was highlighted by one student's report of better appreciating the fact that "having a learning disability does not mean you're not smart."

Resources Available to Tutors

Participants indicated they learned of further resources available to them in the Learning Center and as well as on-campus resources that could increase their effectiveness when tutoring students with disabilities. One participant reported that "I am aware of the resources available at [the] Adaptive Computer Technology lab." Participants also reported that educational web pages and texts used and referenced during the training were helpful resources to have when tutoring students with disabilities. Several participants reported they obtained helpful information regarding the on-campus resources and accommodations available to students with disabilities.

Knowledge about Various Disabilities

Participants also reported gaining knowledge about various physical and cognitive disabilities, and how these disabilities could impact a student's learning. One participant reported "I learned about physical and psychological disabilities, how they are different from each other, and how to go about understanding the client's needs." Other participants reported they received helpful training of the symptoms and "red flags" that indicate a particular learning disability may be present. The participants reported the knowledge of on-campus resources for necessary referrals would be important to have in future work.

Discussion

Based on the results of the tutor self-reports, tutors reported receiving numerous benefits from the Faculty Mentorship Program. Tutors reported the acquisition of basic communication techniques when working with students with disabilities, strategies to implement in their tutoring sessions, understanding a disability is not equated with poor intelligence, information regarding resources available to tutors, and technology available to help guide tutoring sessions. Vogel, Fresko, and Wertheim (2007) reported a major problem to be addressed in the tutoring environment is when tutors do not have "sufficient skills to enable them to deal with the tutees' learning disabilities" (p.489). The results of the present study reinforce the importance of including tutor training in mentorship programs. For a mentorship program to successfully assist students with disabilities, a multi-faceted approach must be taken. Watkins and Wentzel (2008) reported that peer tutoring can positively impact students with disabilities. Furthermore, Heron Welsch, & Goddard (2003) report that students favor peer tutoring and that such an environment can provide not only academic benefits but also interpersonal gains.

For tutors to provide high quality service and create an environment that supports effective learning, they must be comfortable and knowledgeable in what they are doing. Greater comfort and knowledge comes from training and practice in providing services for students with disabilities. Qualitative data provided immediate feedback regarding ways to best address the tutors' needs. This information was then implemented into future training sessions for tutors. The evidence provided in the present study suggests that tutor training programs can serve as an integral component of mentorship programs. As college and university campuses continue to become more diverse, it is imperative that faculty, staff, and administrators actively pursue means of serving all students on their campuses.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study utilized qualitative self-reports as a means of tracking progress and the effectiveness of the current program. However, future researchers would do well to incorporate quantitative analytic methods of assessing tutor development throughout the duration of a training program. Measures administered to tutors at the outset of a program can provide a baseline for future comparison. Post-training assessment would then provide an overall picture of whether tutors developed as a means of the training program. However, administering a quantitative assessment measure at the end of each tutor training seminar would provide a more detailed analysis of change and development in tutors. Another limitation of the present study is that no correlations can be made between the effectiveness of the tutor training program and the outcome of students with disabilities receiving tutoring services. Future research would benefit from analyzing the relationship between the training of tutors and the outcomes of those students receiving tutoring services. Another limitation is the lack of attention given to attitudes tutors had towards students with disabilities. Future research would benefit greatly from assessing the attitudes and perceptions individuals have of persons with disabilities. Finally, the present study experienced fluctuations in participation as well as

participant attrition. Future studies may benefit from altering the schedule of the training, in addition to considering requirements that tutors attend to ensure participation.

Conclusion

Based upon the review of the literature and the results of the present study, it is apparent that a multi-faceted approach would be beneficial to take when providing services to students with disabilities. The results of the present study indicate this approach of offering services to students with disabilities has been effective due to careful consideration of barriers that students face and of ways to assist students in achieving academic success. The tutor training was implemented in order to provide a higher quality of tutoring to students with disabilities. Such a program is especially important for Non-FMP students because it provides additional support by well-trained and effective tutors. Efforts will be made in the future to build upon the foundation that has been established. We recommend that future programs examine current attitudes towards students with disabilities in general education classroom settings, and continue to address ways to advocate for the rights of these students as well as foster their own independence.

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Appendix 1
Providing Quality Tutoring for Students with Disabilities

Overview of the In-Service
In order to provide quality tutoring for students, tutors need to be aware of the resources and accommodations available for their clients. This in-service outlined the transition to college for students with disabilities, the responsibilities of the Disabled Student Development office, the services provided to students with disabilities, and knowledge of different learning styles.

Outline of the In-Service
I.   Description of the various types of disabilities represented amongst students at Ball State

II.   Introduction of the responsibilities and services provided by the DSD office
        A. Determine a student's eligibility for disability services
        B. Determine and implement reasonable and appropriate accommodations
        C. Balance the legitimate civil rights of the student with a disability while protecting the standards and expectations of the university

III.   Explanation as to why the transition to college can be difficult for students with   disabilities

IV.   Characteristics of different learning styles
        A. Reading skills
        B. Spelling Skills
        C. Written Language Skills
        D. Oral Language Skills
        E. Mathematical Skills
        F. Organizational Skills
        G. Social Skills
V.   Group discussion about the tutors' past experiences and encounters with students with various disabilities and different learning styles.

Session Evaluation
Tutors reported learning the following skills:

- Basic guidelines of how to interact with students with disabilities
- Accommodations available to students with disabilities
- Strategies for helping students with different learning styles

CRLA TOPIC REQUIREMENT: AWARENESS OF DISABILITIES, COMMUNICATION SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO TUTORS AND STUDENTS, DEFINITION OF TUTORING RESPONSIBILITIES

Appendix 2
Providing Quality Tutoring for Students with Disabilities: Overview of Learning Disabilities

Overview of the In-Service
Before delving into the specifics of various learning disabilities, tutors were provided with a general definition of what a learning disability is and what areas of learning they can affect. Information was given regarding how tutors could best gather information from clients when meeting them for the first time. After the presentation, tutors broke into groups to participate in two activities to discuss strategies for working with various learning styles as well as how to respond to several tutoring scenarios. At the end of the session, confidentiality between tutors and clients was stressed.

Outline of the In-Service
I. "I have a learning disability...
    a. What to do when a student discloses that they have a learning disability
    b. What does a learning disability mean?
II. Learning Disabilities
    a. Definitions
    b. Where LDs manifest themselves in the student's learning – reading, writing, listening,
        speaking, spelling, or mathematics
III. Gathering Information
    a. When a student discloses a learning disability, it doesn't provide much information
    b. How to ask questions to obtain more knowledge
    c. Awareness of accommodations available to clients in the Learning Center
IV. Activities
    a. Strategies that can be used when working with students with various learning styles
    b. Respond to scenarios
        i. How would you approach the situation?
        ii. What are the key points you'd observe?
        iii. How would you address them?
        iv. What strategies would you try?
        v. Have you had a client like this?
V. Additional Points
    a. Confidentiality is paramount
    b. Referrals to DSD office are always appropriate
    c. Students with disabilities are held to the same standards
    d. Ask the expert!
Session Evaluation
Tutors reported learning the following skills:

- "Having a learning disability does not mean you're not smart"
- "I learned to ask questions of the client to learn how the disability impacts his/her learning"
- Information about the different learning disabilities
- Strategies for how to handle various tutoring situations

CRLA TOPIC REQUIREMENT: INFORMATION GATHERING, USE OF PROBING QUESTIONS, ACTIVE LISTENING

Appendix 3
Tutoring Students with Visual Impairments

Overview of the In-Service
There are disabilities that students have that present particular challenges to not only the student but to the tutor helping them as well. Students with visual impairments provide tutors with a particular challenge, for tutors may have to employ new techniques they are unfamiliar with. Techniques were discussed for working with students who have various visual impairments. Furthermore, tutors were presented with information regarding the adaptive technology offered to students with visual impairments at the university.

Outline of the In-Service
I. General Information
      a. Not all people with visual impairments are completely blind
      b. Specific devices and aids the client may bring with them (cane, dog, Braille translator
         device)
II. Techniques when working with students with visual impairments
      a. Outlining things in black marker can be beneficial, use manipulations, auditory
         methods
      b. Asking clients how they best learn
      c. Strategies and techniques for when tutoring specific courses

III. Adaptive Technology
      a. Use of software that enlarges text
      b. Drawing board, tactile graphics, CCTV
      c. Computer software that reads text aloud
      d. Software that converts text into Braille
Session Evaluation
Tutors reported learning the following skills:
- Learning about the adaptive technology
- Varying degrees of visual impairments
- Approaches to working with clients who have varying degrees of blindness

CRLA TOPIC REQUIREMENT: KNOWLEDGE OF ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND VARIOUS USES, USE OF VARIOUS RESOURCES AVAILABLE, CREATIVITY IN INSTRUCTION, COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Appendix 4
Tutoring Students with Asperger's

Overview of the In-Service
There are a variety of difficulties faced by individuals with Asperger's. It affects a person's social communication, understanding, imagination, as well as sensory and information processing. The purpose of this session was to help tutors become more aware of the characteristics of this disorder. Furthermore, tutors were educated regarding the many areas of life this syndrome affects and were presented with alternative approaches to helping students with this diagnosis. Tutors were given the opportunity to engage in discussion with their peers as well as with the presenters regarding effective approaches to working with these students.

Outline of the In-Service
I. Overview of Asperger's
      a. What is it?
      b. Who it affects

II. Areas of life and learning affected by Asperger's
      a. Three main areas affected:
            i. social communication
            ii. social understanding
            iii. imagination
      a. More specifically:
            i. sensory overload
            ii. social interactions with peers
            iii. dining hall experiences/ dietary issues
            iv. housing issues
            v. interactions with professors or instructors
            vi. difficulty with change
            vii. navigating campus and the community/ transportation
            viii. hygiene and self care
            ix. stress tolerance

III. Video Presentation giving example of interaction between two individuals with Asperger's

IV. Open discussion among tutors and presenters regarding tutoring strategies

Session Evaluation

- Overview of symptoms and cues (red flags)
- How individuals with Asperger's learn/process information
- Personal testimonials from other tutors/staff members
- The video clip
- Strategies and tips for tutoring individuals with Asperger's

CRLA TOPIC REQUIREMENT: TUTORING GOALS, PLANNING, STRATEGIES, STUDY SKILLS, LISTENING AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES