

Structured programs for College Students with LD
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Structured programs are increasingly available for students with learning disabilities starting college. These programs share several features:

- contact with learning specialists
- tutoring
- structure beyond what normal college courses provide
- intensive mentoring or other advisor contact
- study skills classes, including time management

Also they cost significantly more money beyond the normal tuition. Fees within a particular program might vary, based on tutoring hours or level of support.

On the one hand, colleges are getting up to speed with their responsibilities to students with disabilities. Moreover, more students than ever are overcoming their disabilities and attending college. Services formerly not particularly available are now becoming a new educational niche.

Formats:

- Summer “bridge” (Pre-college) (For a list of these programs, prepared by HEATH Resource Center, including an interesting version for college graduates beginning medical school, see <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>.)
 - Rising high school juniors and seniors
 - Freshmen starting college
- Ongoing during the first school year
- Ongoing through college

Examples:

- Landmark College (2 year) <http://www.landmarkcollege.org/index.html>
Exporting practices; workshops for college educators
- Curry PAL Program <http://www.curry.edu/> Multilingual students included
- SALT (Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques) at the University of Arizona <http://www.salt.arizona.edu/progserv/> Very large school; fee-based services; includes graduate students

These programs focus on learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, and ADHD. Newer programs, including residential programs, are being developed for students with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Issues addressed by structured programs:

- Longer adjustment period in starting college
- Self-advocacy
- More pieces to get in place (e.g., help learning how to obtain accommodations)
- Students with disabilities may have to work harder and longer on their studies
- Time management
- Training, incorporation of assistive technology

Issues not usually addressed by structured programs:

- None of these programs guarantees success for students.
- Competitive aspect of college grading
- Initial success versus continued success. In general, college students who fail do so early on, but is that equally true for learning disabled students? College continues to become more difficult in more advanced classes, although if a student likes the major and sees a career path, that makes the hard work more meaningful and positive.
- Undiagnosed learning disabilities continue to be found in college students
- Local therapist, psychiatrist, medication provider
- Emotional issues
- Maturation

Continued Research is Needed. These programs are providing a golden opportunity to obtain solid, useful information about how to work with college students with LD. Hopefully, program evaluation and tracking of student outcomes are being included.