

L.A.C. News

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SPRING 2002

LAC Takes Nationally-Recognized Tutor

This spring the LAC has attained new heights with its tutoring program. The Xavier University Learning Assistance Center has now been certified by the College Reading and Learning Association's (CRLA) International Tutor Certification Program at all three levels: the Regular Level (level 1), Advanced Level (level 2), and Master Level (level 3). Obtaining this recognition is the result of the submission of a 47-page application assembled and written by the LAC's Assistant Director, Marie Gasper. The application details the nature, content, and duration of the training programs, and provides verification of the documentation of tutors' work experience.

This certification recognizes and affirms the quality of the LAC's training programs and the extent of its tutoring operations. The XU LAC's program is one of only 217 programs in the nation certified up to Level 3. As of April 2002, 615 tutoring programs had been certified by CRLA in for at least the Regular Level. The LAC's tutoring program was first CRLA certified at Level 1 in 1995, with several successful certification renewals since then.

Tutor certification involves two primary components: Training and experience. Each level of certification requires an additional 10 hours of training (eg. 10 hours for Level 1, 30 hours for Level 3). In addition, each level requires an additional 25 hours of documented tutoring experience (meaning level 3-certified tutors are required to have at least 75 documented hours of tutoring through the LAC).



Level 1 training includes a general overview of tutoring through the LAC. Topics covered include learning styles; tutoring strategies and scenarios; tutor expectations; learning disabilities,

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accommodations, and confidentiality; campus resources and referral skills; study skills; and paperwork and office procedures. Level 1 training occurs annually in August and September.

Level 2 training delves deeper into tutoring strategies and ways to help specific populations. This part of training is conducted primarily during regular LAC tutor meetings. Discussions of tutoring strategies and special cases are held, and training modules are presented. Some of the modules presented this past fall and spring include:

- Tutoring Strategies for AD(H)D
- Flashcards and Highlighting
- Active Listening and Positive Affirmation
- Team Building and Team Work
- At-Risk Students and the Student

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FACULTY CONFIDENTIALITY: SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

What are the limits regarding the confidentiality of a student's disability information? The following are some suggestions on how to be proactive with students, and how to avoid breaches of confidentiality:

When you receive a letter from the LAC regarding a student with a disability,

◇do open the letter immediately, read it, and save it aside in a safe place until the end of the semester, in case you need to refer back to it.

◇Don't ever disclose the information in the letter to anyone else, unless it is about the disability in a general sense, and not referring to the specific student.

Do ask the student to stay after the next class and arrange an appointment concerning "a letter I got about you." We encourage students to follow-up individually with their

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Faculty Confidentiality: Some Do's and Don'ts, continued from page 1

professors.

◇Do look at the accommodations agreement form and fill it out with the student present. That way, you will both be in agreement about what accommodations the student can expect.

◇Don't hesitate to call the LAC for clarification or questions. We are happy to help.

◇Don't hesitate to offer an alternative accommodation to one that has been presented to you. We do not know your classroom. You are in the best position to know what will work in your classroom and how together we can help the student.

◇Don't ever refer to the student in terms of their disability or accommodations in public, including in class.

For example, if you are discussing cancer in class,

◇don't say, "I bet John here has an interesting perspective on this, since he had cancer."

However, if you have discussed this with the student ahead of time and he is comfortable discussing his disability in public, this can be a powerful experience for the students.

If you receive a letter regarding a student needing a note taker in your class,

◇do say, "A student in this class needs a note taker."

◇Don't say, "Mary Smith here needs a note taker. ..."

◇In addition, don't discuss a student's testing accommodations in front of the class, although we realize that time is sometimes at a premium. This discussion should take place during your office hours outside of class, or during class in a quiet voice if the student approaches you.

◇We encourage students to be proactive with their test-taking accommodations. Do the same—it is the student's responsibility to arrange to take a test in the LAC, not yours.

◇Don't feel responsible if a student

does not make arrangements with you prior to class.

If a student discusses their disability with you, but you have not received an LAC letter about them,

◇do encourage them to visit the LAC to follow appropriate procedures for disability accommodations.

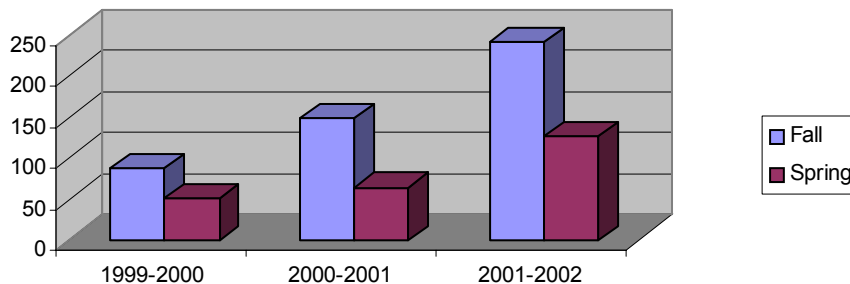
◇Don't arrange accommodations on your own because the LAC may not have verification of the disability, a necessary prerequisite to qualify for services.

The fundamental point about confidentiality is that it is the student's right to choose whom he or she informs about their disability. The student has chosen to inform us, the LAC, and you, the professor, because they need our cooperation in order to receive the accommodations necessary to have equal access. Just as any of us would not like to have someone inform our colleagues about private medical information, students would like to choose to inform others as they see appropriate. Some feel

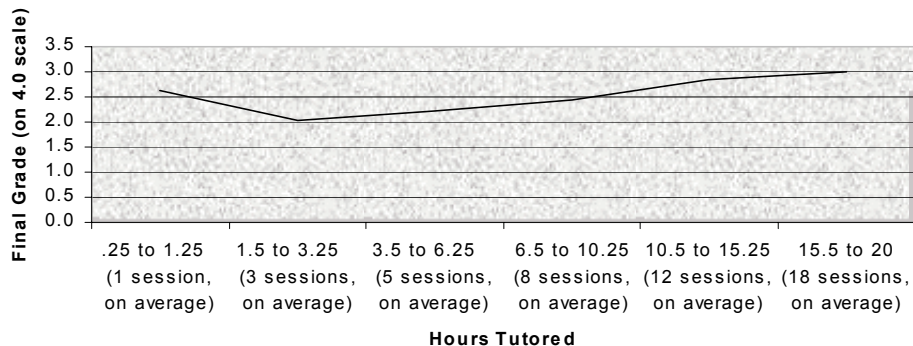
LAC TUTORING continues to grow and help students succeed

Despite the ever-increasing demand for tutoring, the LAC team of tutors has met this fall semester's challenge with enthusiasm and a strong desire to help others succeed. With 240 requests for tutoring—a 62% increase over requests from Fall 2000—the LAC tutors had more on their hands than ever before. Nevertheless, 138 of these students met with their tutors, as opposed to only 57 students in the fall of 2000. In addition, the tutoring seems to have paid off! Students who met with their tutor beyond the initial session (many students correctly realize they don't need tutoring after the initial session) showed a steady improvement in grades according to how many hours they received tutoring. In fact, students receiving 15.5 to 20 hours of

Number of Requests for Tutoring by semester (Spring 2002 up to 4/1/02)



Tutee grades vs. Hours tutored, Fall 2001



Instruction Techniques That May Help Students with Learning Disabilities

The following are a few tips on helping students with learning disabilities in the classroom. As with any teaching strategy, these will need to be adapted to your students' needs and your own teaching style

- ⇒ Take a short pause before calling on a student for an answer; don't always call on the first person to raise his hand in response to a question. Giving the student with a learning disability time to process both the question and her answer will allow her to contribute more actively to class discussion.
- ⇒ Ask students to explain how or why they came to an answer, and not just what the answer is. "Wrong" answers are often actually correct, but just follow a different thinking process. All students benefit from hearing the thought processes of others.
- ⇒ Use consistent vocabulary throughout the course, referring to the same concepts with the same words in lectures, discussions, tests, and textbooks. Present new vocabulary clearly—on the board, or in student handouts—and use new vocab in more than one contextual example.
- ⇒ Give assignments in both written and oral form to avoid any confusion.
- ⇒ Start each lecture with a brief summary of the material to be covered; conclude with a synopsis of key points just discussed.
- ⇒ Don't ask students with reading disabilities to read aloud in class. This probably will feel to the student like you are asking them to humiliate themselves in front of people who are "smarter" than they are.
- ⇒ Explain appropriate reading rates for class material. For example, the primary course text may require slow and careful reading and re-reading, while other readings may only require skimming for important points.

adapted from *Handbook to Accompany Tutor Training to Assist Students with Learning Disabilities*, Tyler Junior College.

CRLA Certification

(Continued from page 1)

- Support Services Program
- Math Tutoring Strategies

Modules planned for 2002-2003 include:

- Adult and Part-Time Student Needs
- Tutoring on a Multicultural Campus
- Special Needs of International Students
- Affective Issues of Learning Disabled Students

Since attendance is required at Initial Tutor Training and all Tutor Meetings, all LAC tutors should have Levels 1 and 2 training by the end of their first year of employment. In addition, with ever-increasing demands for tutoring (*see article on page 2*), LAC tutors should have no problem tutoring the necessary 50 hours for Advanced Tutor (level 2) certification.

The training at the Master Level (3) is for those employees who provide essential support, coordination, oversight, and grunt-work for LAC tutoring programs: the Student Leaders. The Head Tutor, Head Peer Advisor, and Head of Study Groups and Tables are all trained on an on-going basis according to individual needs. Topics addressed in individual training sessions include:

- Specific tutoring problems in LAC programs
- Communication Skills
- Assertiveness
- Advanced Documentation and Paperwork (what to do with all the paperwork!)
- Supervisory Skills
- Leadership and running effective meetings
- Training new tutors
- Interviewing skills
- Special research and other projects

LAC ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AND HEAD TUTOR TO PRESENT TUTORING RESEARCH AT NATIONAL

Marie Gasper, LAC Assistant Director, and Eric Peter, LAC Head Tutor, will present research in April at the National Tutoring Association's annual conference. Their presentation, titled "Fostering Tutors' Critical Thinking Through Tutor-Client Session Forms," explores methods to encourage tutors' reflective thinking about client needs and appropriate tutoring methods. Drawing from over a year's worth of documentation of tutoring sessions, Eric and Marie will focus on specific techniques that have previously inspired such thinking. For more information about the National Tutoring Association, please visit their website, www.ntatutor.org.

The case of the messy

Do you have students who suffer from "the messy paper syndrome"? There is a simple solution to this problem, which many learning disabled students practice as a compensation for inabilities (real or imagined) to perform certain tasks, such

as spelling, writing, or arithmetic.

The solution: Ask all your students to quit using erasers for work in your class. Instead, they should cross out work they would otherwise erase with a single line. This not only saves them valuable erasing time, but it will give you further insight into students' difficulties.

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The Learning Assistance Center
Xavier University
3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45207-2612
(513) 745-3280
e-mail: xulac@xu.edu
web: www.xu.edu/lac

We HAVEN'T Moved!
While everyone else seems to be moving into the new student center, the LAC is still located on the first floor of Kuhlman Hall. Stop by and visit our redesigned office!

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What is....

TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury)?

Traumatic Brain Injury (also known as ABI, Acquired Brain Injury or Closed Head Injury) results from a head injury which has impaired the brain's ability to function. Motor vehicle accidents account for roughly one-half of all brain injuries. Firearm-related injuries, falls and physical abuse are other causes.

There is great variation in the possible effects of a brain injury. Some of the effects may include memory deficits; distractibility; difficulty concentrating; increased information processing time; difficulties with spoken or written material; tendencies to interrupt, talk out of turn, dominate discussions, speak rudely or loudly, or stand too close to the listener; difficulties navigating without getting lost; difficulties with goal setting and planning; inflexibility; resistance to accept assistance; and increased needs for breaks to rest.

The effects of TBI can change over time as people learn to adapt and compensate for their injury. TBI can result in the need for extensive rehabilitation, with some patients having to re-learn toileting, feeding and basic self-care.

Our Seniors are Going Places!

Where are they going? Towards bright futures, that's for sure. We're very proud of them—and we're certainly going to miss them! This is what they'll be doing next year:

- ◆ Amy Aquino is hoping to teach middle school social studies in the Chicago area.
- ◆ Ray Decanio will be attending the University of Cincinnati Medical School. He intends to increase his involvement with the Cincinnati Latin American community and to eventually volunteer as a family physician for medically underserved areas.
- ◆ Kristina Jiner, LAC Head of Study Groups and Tables, will also be attending the University of Cincinnati Medical School. She is considering the field of pediatrics.
- ◆ Monica Unsel will be attending the University of

The accommodations for TBI can include extended test-taking time, test readers and scribes, note takers, special exam scheduling to allow for longer breaks between tests, and advocacy. Students with TBI who make it to a competitive institution like Xavier, typically have the ability to succeed with the proper accommodations and advocacy.