

Preface: Activities for the Week(s) Prior to Week 1

This course is designed to assist students who have a disability succeed in college. It is not about academics, but about understanding the vast differences between high school and college and being able to deal with a totally different educational system without the benefit of case management or IDEA.

Note: All words that are Underlined, **Bolded**, and *Italicized* and in blue can be clicked upon to provide a direct connection to that document or website.

Preliminary Activities:

Explain to students the purpose, process and expectations for the *E-College* class. Pages 2-4 of the [Guide](#) publication will provide you with the necessary information.

The mentors and mentees are matched by the college disabilities services coordinator based upon the high school student's courses of study. Therefore, prior to beginning E-College, students have two decisions to make and one "assignment" to complete.

The first decision is to pick a career path or a college course of study. The second is to identify the college they wish to attend. Having the students review their IEP Measureable Post-Secondary Goals should narrow the career decision and the website, "[Minnesota State Colleges and Universities - Go Places](#)" will help students find colleges that offer those studies. The assignment is to identify and locate contact information on the disability services coordinator at the college of their choice. This will likely involve searching specific college websites.

Have students review and discuss the Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters and Pathways on pages 42 & 43 of [Postsecondary Resources Guide](#).

Use this time to determine and practice the emailing process. Decide when and how students will compose their emails and when you will forward them. It is important that a specific day of the week be decided upon and that emails are sent consistently on that day of each week. It is also suggested that a time be established for students to share the responses which they received from their mentors.

Have students become familiar with the [Postsecondary Resource Guide](#) by completing the [My Post High School Learning Map](#) individually or in groups.

Suggested weekly activities:

Have each student create a portfolio for the class. A section for each week might be helpful but creativity is always allowed. This is where students place copies of their correspondence, materials they create, projects they complete, data they collect, documents they or you feel are important; ideas that occur to them, etc. Using a filing system not only provides students with quick access to important information, it teaches them organizational and communication skills.

The downloadable document, [Filing System](#), provides start-up information related to the development of a hard copy portfolio. Dependent upon student interest and available technology, an electronic portfolio could also be developed and maintained. The State of Minnesota provides a free and secure site for students to build their electronic portfolio. The site contains detailed instructions

Have each student keep an ongoing "New Vocabulary list" with definitions of all the new words and terms they will encounter.

Resources:

<http://www.efoliomn.com/>

<http://www.mnscu.edu/>

Week 1: Introductions

The fact that these students are going on to college means that they have far more abilities than disability, but that they need to understand themselves and their disability.

Focus to the student:

This first week you will be given an introduction or overview of the class and “meet” your mentor. Your mentor will be a successful college student who also has a disability. Your introduction, however, is not about your disabilities. It is about telling him/her about you; asking questions about them; and finding things you both enjoy.

Possible activities for week 1:

Discuss basic email etiquette. Though almost antiquated to high school students, it remains the primary mode of communication at colleges. Correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and syntax are important. Text speak is unacceptable. Proofing is essential. See [Email Etiquette](#) worksheet and [Email Etiquette Answersheet](#).

Discuss the concept of mentoring...what it is, where it is used and how it can be helpful.

Discuss how to make new friends when in a place where no one knows you. Practice the techniques for meeting new people. Have each student “meet” someone from the school that they did not know previously and share the scenario with the group.

Have students research the etiquette of introductions in various situations. Practice in a role play. Have students introduce themselves, a guest and/or each other to the group or another individual.

Discuss “having a conversation”. How is it initiated? How do you keep it going? How is it ended?

Have each of the students write a short description of themselves which includes some information about how they spend their free time, what they like or dislike, what they are interested in or good at, and where they go to school. If students are willing to share their descriptions, read them out loud and see if the students can guess who wrote each or have each student add a positive attribute about the author that s/he did not include.

Have each student compose 3-5 questions that will lead the mentors to talk about themselves and their interests. Incorporate the questions into the description for the first e-mail to mentor.

Resources:

- www.efoliomn.com An electronic portfolio and a tool to showcase your achievements/skills.
- <http://www.cccoe.net/social/skillslist.htm> Contains lessons and rubrics for a wide variety of social skills.

Student email tips:

In your introductory email to your mentor, stress the positive things about yourself and the activities and interests you enjoy. You can talk about your hopes for the future or why you are taking the class. Thanking the college student for being your mentor would be a very nice touch. Ask questions that will help you know your mentor and find things you have in common.

Many people find that the friends they make in college are friends they keep for life.

Week 2: Who am I?

Focus to the student:

We all have strengths and weaknesses. You have many talents and abilities. For this week, we want to focus on understanding your disability so that it does not become a weakness. We will also look at how you learn best; what helps you be successful and what your strong points are. You must understand and be able to discuss your disability or you will not get the accommodations that are your right.

Possible Classroom activities:

Have students research and report on their disability. Discuss the idea that disabilities are natural and not preventable and that everyone will have one (hard of hearing, in a wheel chair, glasses) at one point in our lives.

Have them identify one or two famous people with their disability and talk about how those individuals compensated.

As a group activity, have students complete the “*Famous People Matching*” activity on page 3-7 of [411 on Disability Disclosure](#). This activity will require internet access. There are also several other sites which students can research that identify famous people with disabilities.

Have them take a [Learning Style Inventory](#) and discuss how they learn best. Brainstorm ideas for using their strengths to compensate for the weaknesses.

Have each student review the PLAAFP and adaptations section of their IEP. Do they agree or disagree, understand or not; and would they change anything and why?

Have each student list their TOP 10 BEST QUALITIES and then have other students rearrange or edit the list. Discuss the differences.

Have each student review the section on their disability in the [Tools for College](#) booklet.

Talk about self-disclosure. Who, what and when to tell about my disability? Under what circumstances and how do I go about doing so?

Print, review, and discuss the article [10 Steps to Life Long Learning](#). Help students become aware of the opportunities to learn new things by having them daily record or identify one thing they learned outside of the classroom on the previous day. Continue for a minimum of five days. Alternately, have student choose to engage in one of the suggestions from the list and report to the group the results of their attempt at a later date.

Discuss the purpose of the [Self-Discovery Questions](#) and have the students complete the questions. Students may share parts with which they are comfortable. Have students store the document in their portfolio for review at the end of the course.

Have students complete the [Self-Discovery-reaction Sheet](#). Discuss the results as a way to focus on the benefits of setting short or long terms goals and to improve self-awareness.

Additional self-discover activities can be found in the document [Activities for Self-Discovery](#) and [Finger Print Patterns](#).

Resources:

- <http://www.youthhood.org> An interactive life planning, decision making website
- <http://askjan.org/> (A-Z of disabilities and how to make your workplace or college setting meet your needs.)
- <https://www.nlsec.org> *Tools for College* & *Education Beyond High School* are available free under “Secondary Transition” Then click on “e-college”.
- <http://www.ldpride.net/> Student friendly information about Learning Disabilities
- <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure> *A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities* is designed for youth and adults working with them to learn about disability disclosure.

Student email tips:

Talk to your mentor about your talents and strengths but also about what it is like to have an IEP in high school and ask how it is different in college. Do they have a case manager? Is there a resource room? Does your mentor tell others about his/her disability and if so who and how? What are the college professors told about your disability?

Week 3: What to do? Career exploration and college programs

Focus for students:

College is very expensive and not the place to be trying to decide what to do. Many people do change their mind about their career path while in college; however, it is best to have a good idea about what you want to do before you attend. Take the time to learn about a variety of careers. Also consider that one of your talents might be something you could turn into your own business.

Possible classroom activities:

Have students take a free online interest inventory or career exploration survey. (See “Resources”) and compare and discuss results.

Have students meet with the guidance counselor to get information and suggestions or have the counselor talk to the class about what a guidance counselor can help do, and what assistance they can offer, related to careers and college.

Take a field trip to your local WorkForce Center to view the resources they have available.

Explain and have students work with the MNCareers booklet, especially the section on “Career Decisions”.

Assign each student a random career or have them choose one in which they have an interest. Have them visit the counselor to find out what colleges might have a program in that field. Have them research the college website to find out as much as they can about the program (number of credits, criteria for entry, types of courses, etc.) and then discuss/present the results.

Have students complete the “Questions you should ask yourself” (page 8) of [*Education Beyond High School*](#) booklet.

If offered at your school, require that students take the ASVAB. Explain that you are not suggesting that they enter the military but that the test will give them excellent career suggestions based upon their interest and skills.

Encourage students to attend local college open houses and any college preparatory events such as “College for a Day”.

Your high school counselor will have (or can get for you) copies of *MNCareers*. Under your guidance, have students work through the *Assessing Yourself* section of the book. (<https://www.iseek.org/mncareers>)

Resources:

www.iseek.org Minnesota’s career, education, and resource center.

www.mynextmove.org Career Exploration and Interest Inventory.

www.mncis.intocareers.com/ Minnesota Career Information System

www.bls.gov (Bureau of Labor & Statistics)

www.minnesotaworks.net (State resource for available jobs/employment available in Minnesota.)

www.mnscu.edu A guide to all Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

www.whatcareerisrightforme.com Career Aptitude Assessment and Exploration

Student email tips:

Tell your mentor about a career you hope to pursue and how you feel about attending college. Ask what made them decide to go to college and about their college program; when they chose it and why; if they are happy with it; how long it will be before they graduate; who gave them help in picking a program; etc. Think of two or three things that interest you about college or that confuse you and ask your mentor about them.

Week 4: Getting in: Applications, Admissions and Financial Aid

Focus for students:

This week will look at what the requirements are for getting into colleges and how you go about doing so. It is much easier to get into a college than to get out with a degree. Also, as we said, college is very expensive so you need to figure out how you will pay for it

Possible Classroom Activities:

Have students use college websites to review the admission requirements and tuition costs from a variety of area colleges.

As a general overview, read and discuss the section “Choosing and Paying for College” on pages 14 -16 of the [Postsecondary Resource Guide](#).

Have students practice application completion using smart board, blank hard copy examples or from college websites. Make note of information required on most and have students complete and save a “Frequently Ask Information” guide.

Attend a “College for a Day” event or arrange to visit a college disability coordinator. Many colleges are also willing to have an individual come to your classroom to talk about these issues.

Visit the FAFSA website or have the guidance counsel talk to the students about financial aid and scholarships.

On their vocabulary sheet, have students record the various acronyms they encounter and for what they stand. (SNN, FAFSA, SSI, etc.)

Have your school’s Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor talk with your students about assistance they might provide.

Have students complete and discuss the “Questions to ask the College” section of [Education Beyond High School](#) booklet.

Discuss loans, grants and scholarships and how they differ.

Have students identify a two and four year college they might potentially attend. “Using the College Exploration Worksheet” on pages 44 and 45 of the [Postsecondary Resource Guide](#) and college websites, have students locate as much information as they can.

Have students research a variety of college disability services and identify what the college provides and how services are accessed and who is the contact person. Have them email a disability counselor with questions.

Review and discuss the section “Choosing and Paying for College” on pages 14-17 of the [Postsecondary Resource Guide](#).

Arrange for students to take the Accuplacer or the Plan (pre-ACT).

Resources:

www.going-to-college.org/ A multiple resource site for teens with disabilities going to college.

www.mnscu.edu/admissions Answers all admissions questions for MN state colleges and universities.

www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/People_with_Disabilities/index.aspx Vocational Rehabilitation Services may be a resource to assist in paying for college.

www.fafsa.ed.gov/ Where to apply for federal aid/grants and student loans.

www.studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships Indicates the types of grants or scholarships for which students might be eligible.

www.db101.org The site gives quick and easy facts and tools to help students access disability benefit for which they may be eligible.

<http://demo-test.accuplacer-test.com/> Free sample Accuplacer test questions. Simply Googling “accuplacer” will yield a variety of such sites.

Student email tips:

Describe to your mentor the topics you have been discussing during the week and what some of your concerns or fears are. Ask if they have any suggestions for how to pay for college. Ask if they work and go to college and how hard it is to balance the two. If they are working, how many credits are they taking. Ask if there are a lot of extra expenses (books, meals, travel, fees) in addition to tuition. Ask when they first contacted the Disability Coordinator.

Week 5: You are not in Kansas any more!

Focus for students:

High school and colleges are very, very different. Classes, atmosphere, amount of work, kinds of people, types of teachers are all different than high school, but the two biggest differences that get most students into academic difficulty are: freedom and responsibility. In college, you are free to do what you want, no one watches over you, but you alone are also responsible for everything you do or should do.

Possible Classroom Activities:

Review and discuss the differences between high school and college. As a guide, use pp 3 and 4 of [*Education Beyond High School*](#) or pp 5-7 of the [*Tools for College*](#) or 30 to 37 of the [*Postsecondary Resource Guide*](#) booklets. Discuss by category or item.

Have students review the Adaptations section of their IEP and have them identify those accommodations or modifications that would likely not be permitted in college.

Provide students with the worksheet [*IEP Accommodations*](#). After they have completed the worksheet, provided them with the college disability coordinators' responses in [*IEP Accommodations Answer Sheet*](#). Discuss the differences.

Outline what a typical schedule for a week of college might be and compare it to high school.

Have students compose a letter which they can present to or read to one of their general education teachers that explains the student's disability and their IEP accommodations and/or modifications. See sample: [*Disclosure Sample Letter*](#).

Review "Answering your 'Whys?'" section on page 12 of [*Education Beyond High School*](#).

Discuss topics with which students may be unfamiliar or have miss conceptions such as syllabus, what a 'credit' represents; study groups; course withdrawal; course registration; elective vs. program credits, etc.

Talk about the differences between accommodations and modifications and about IDEA and ADA. See [*IDEA vs ADA*](#).

Invite a local college's Disability Services Coordinator to talk to the class about disability services and about the types of accommodations the college provides.

Discuss with students how their IEP might be changed to better reflect the realities of college life.

Discuss personal responsibility as it relates to the freedom of college and possible strategies for dealing with problems.

Resources:

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/wwwwh.htm> Why, When, What and How of Disclosure in an academic setting after High School.

<http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/support/940-disclosing-learning-disabilities.gs> Guides young adults with when and how to disclose their disability.

<https://eosc.edu/sites/www/Uploads/files/Downloads/IDEA%20vs%20ADA.pdf> One page document summaries the basic difference between IDEA and ADA.

Student tip for email:

Tell your mentor a bit about how independent you are: do you cook your own meals; do your own laundry; have a checking or debit account; Ask your mentor what were the biggest changes to get used to in college. Have your mentor describe what a typical day is like. Talk about some of the things you are worried about and ask if they are really a problem. Ask what are some of the ways college is better than high school; what it is like to live on their own (if they do) or get along with a roommate. Do they eat better, sleep better, have more fun, work hard, study more?

Week 6: Practicing Adulthood & Taking Control of your life

Focus for students:

As you learned in the last unit, college has many, many differences from high school and all of them have one thing in common: you are now an adult and you need to be responsible for yourself. This week will focus on skills you can learn and practice while you are still in high school that will help you be successful in college.

Possible Classroom Activities:

Have students review and discuss the “Skills to Practice” on page 2 and/or “What to do When” on pages 5 and 6 of [Education Beyond High School](#) booklet or “Practical Learning Strategies” on pages 9 – 13 of the [Postsecondary Resource Guide](#).

Though he did not actually compose the list attributed to him, Bill Gates’ article “Eleven things they never taught you in high school” is worth reviewing with students. [11 Things you Never Learned in High School](#).

Require students to carry, in plain sight, and use a planner for two weeks, accurately recording all assignments and due dates and to turn in all assignments on time without being reminded.

Have the students prepare a presentation for their next IEP meeting in which they tell the team about their hopes for college and that they want their senior year to be as close to college as possible so they can “practice” being a college student. Have them describe the changes they would like to see to their IEP.

Discuss the idea of self-advocacy, what it is, what it means and some ways and scenarios when it is applied. Have students begin with the [Self Advocacy Pre Test](#). Provide them with the answers, [Self Advocacy Pre Test Answers](#), following your discussion.

Have each student meet privately with one of their teachers to explain their disability and talk about needed accommodations.

Have students complete the [Student’s Guide to the IEP](#) or the [Helping Students Develop their IEP](#) workbook.

Have students practice S.L.A.N.T. and other techniques from the Kansas Strategies.

Resources:

<http://www.youthhood.org> (see previous)

www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/softskills.htm Soft Skills, The Competitive Edge

Student email tips:

Tell you mentor some things you feel you do very well when it comes to school work and some of the things with which you struggle. Ask your mentor what things they would do differently if they were back in high school. Ask where they go or who they talk to if they need information or help. What made them decide to disclose their disability? Do they still feel it was a good idea? When or how do they approach a professor?

Week 7: Survival: How to Succeed at College

Focus for the Students:

College can be a very rewarding experience and time of great personal growth. No longer are you studying what you “have to” but now “what you want to”. You are learning about things that will make your life better and that will allow you to do the kind of work you want. It is the time when you can become the person you want to be. Even though it is exciting, it is also very difficult. Colleges expect their graduates to be good representatives of their college and push students hard to excel. Expectations are high. In addition, you are on your own, with no case manager to guide you or run interference for you. This week will talk about some ways to help you be successful in college in addition to all those you have already learned.

Possible Classroom Activities:

Have students research apps or organizational systems for managing time and keeping schedules. Have students present their findings to the group for discussion with recommendations for good approaches.

Research “Smart Pens”. This is an assistive technology most highly recommended by college disability service coordinators more and any other single accommodation.

Have each student write down a short term goal for the next week or two (I will attend all my classes and be on time; I will record every class assignment and it’s due date; I will complete every outside class reading assignment; I will study 1 hour every night even if I have no assigned homework) and chart their progress; I will turn in all assignments on time.

Contact a local college disability services coordination and ask for assistance in recruiting a current college student talk to your class about time management and study responsibilities.

If students did not do so in the previous chapter, have them review and discuss the “Skills to Practice” on page 2 and/or “What to do When” on page pages 5 and 6 of [*Education Beyond High School*](#) booklet or “Practical Learning Strategies” on pages 9 – 13 of the [*Postsecondary Resource Guide*](#).

Discuss how, when and why you might drop or withdraw from a class and what the consequences of that action are (financial, permanency of transcripts, academic suspension).

Discuss study groups, student resource centers, tutors, faculty office hours.

Because connecting with other students is often critical for success, use college websites to search for the types of organizations and activities that are offered. Have students identify 2 or 3 of which they might enjoy being a member.

Have students discuss [*Time Management for Students*](#) and [*Take Control of Homework*](#) documents.

Resources:

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/> Provides numerous resources for prospective college

Student email tips:

Tell your mentor about how much time you now spend on school work and the amount of free time you have. Tell your mentor a bit about how independent you are: do you cook your own meals; do your own laundry; have a checking or debit account; etc. Ask how their life is different. Ask about study groups or who they go to for help if they do not understand some of their class work. Ask how they balance the school responsibilities and fun time. Do they have any suggestions that they could offer to help you be successful.

Week 8: Wrap up: Ask what we missed, say thank you, good bye:

Focus for the student:

You will never be completely prepared for college life. That may be scary but also is exciting. If you encounter difficult situations it is important to know how you go about getting the help you might need. You have had a mentor to help you with your questions. There are many more people who are willing to help you, if you only ask and say thank you! This week should be spent asking questions regarding college issues about which you might still wonder or worry. It is also about thanking your mentors.

Possible Classroom Activities:

E-College is a “living” product and we would like it to grow. Have students complete a course evaluation or have a wrap up discussion. Identify what went well and what did not; what was helpful but not suggested by this outline; what might be included that would be beneficial. Send or have students send those comments to the NLSEC webmaster at this website contact form: <http://www.nlsec.org> and click on “Contact Us” in the Quick Links.

If possible, you can try to arrange a meeting with your mentor by connecting with the college disability coordinator.

[*Postsecondary Resource Guide*](#), [*Education Beyond High School*](#), and [*Tools for College*](#) all contain information that was not covered in this curriculum. Reviewing any of them in more detail would be beneficial.

Review the etiquette of introductions and techniques of polite conversation.

Many of the topics discussed in this course are also covered in the related curriculum [*TREC*](#) (Transition Related Employment Curriculum). TREC has addition activities and materials that can be used to supplement those contained in this document.

Student email tips:

Send your mentor a genuine and personal thank you note perhaps identifying some things the mentor said that you found very helpful or that you had never considered. If you say “thank you” you always leave the door open to ask again!