

# Lessons from Students with Learning Disabilities at the University of Florida.



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January 30, 2017

Emerson Alumni Hall

University of Florida

UAC's 11th Annual Advising Conference

# Learning Disabilities & Attention Disorder

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- **Most prevalent disorder on college campuses**
  - ~60 % of students reporting a disability<sup>1</sup>
- **Life long disorder; Invisible disability**
  - A neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store, and respond to information<sup>2</sup>
- **Learning Disabilities = “umbrella” term**
  - Specific LD diagnosis can vary from person to person
- **~ 31-45% of individuals with LD or AD have both<sup>3</sup>**

1. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). Digest of Education Statistics, 2013 (2015-011), Chapter 3.
2. Cortiella, Candace and Horowitz, Sheldon H. The State of Learning Disabilities: Facts, Trends and Emerging Issues. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014.
3. DuPaul, et al., 2013. DOI: 10.1177/0022219412464351

# Learning Disabilities at UF

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- Average of 1,325 students with disabilities registered with the DRC during 5-year period of 2009-2014 ( 2.6% of total UF student population)
- DRC Student Population July 2016
  - 26% Attention Disorders
  - 19% Learning Disorders
- Students with LD
  - 1/2 rate (21%) attendance at 4 year college versus general population (40%); 2x rate attendance at 2-year college<sup>2</sup>
  - College completion rates: 41% (LD) versus 52% in general population<sup>1</sup>
  - 11% of Students with LD report disability to college/university<sup>2</sup>

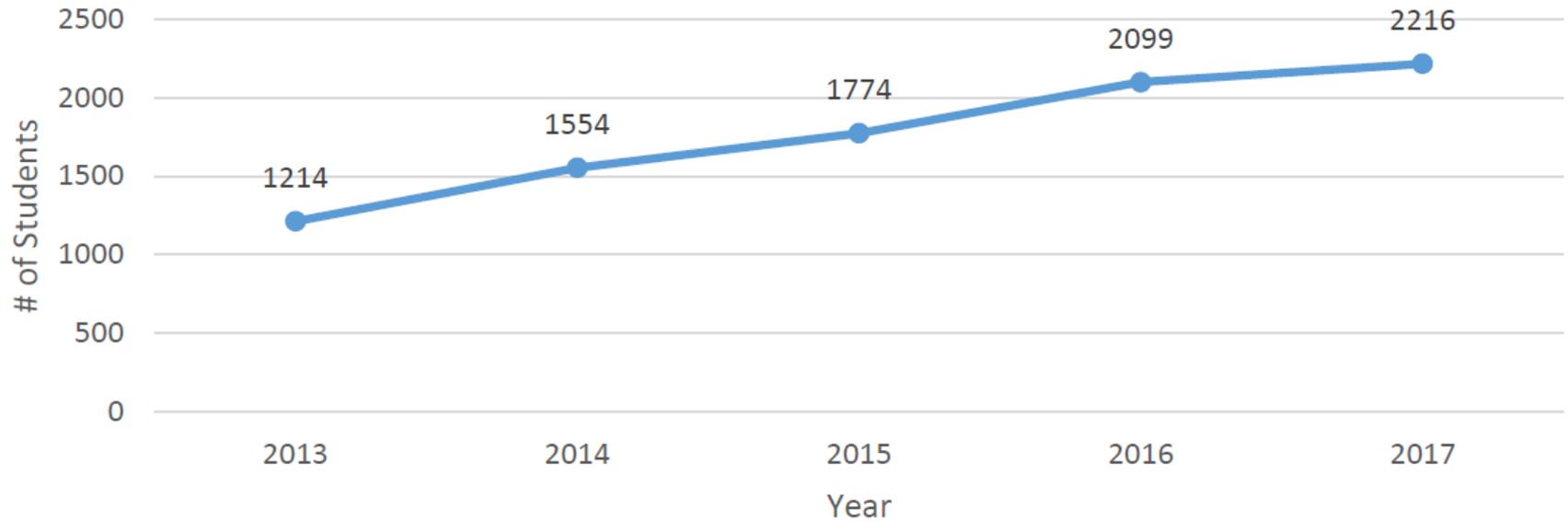
1. Cortiella, Candace and Horowitz, Sheldon H. The State of Learning Disabilities: Facts, Trends and Emerging Issues. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014.

2. NLTS-2, 2011 : [http://www.nlts2.org/data\\_tables/tables/14/np5S5i\\_K8g\\_YNfrm.html](http://www.nlts2.org/data_tables/tables/14/np5S5i_K8g_YNfrm.html) retrieved August 11, 2016

# UF DRC Student Population

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Students Registered



# Challenges for Students with LD/AD

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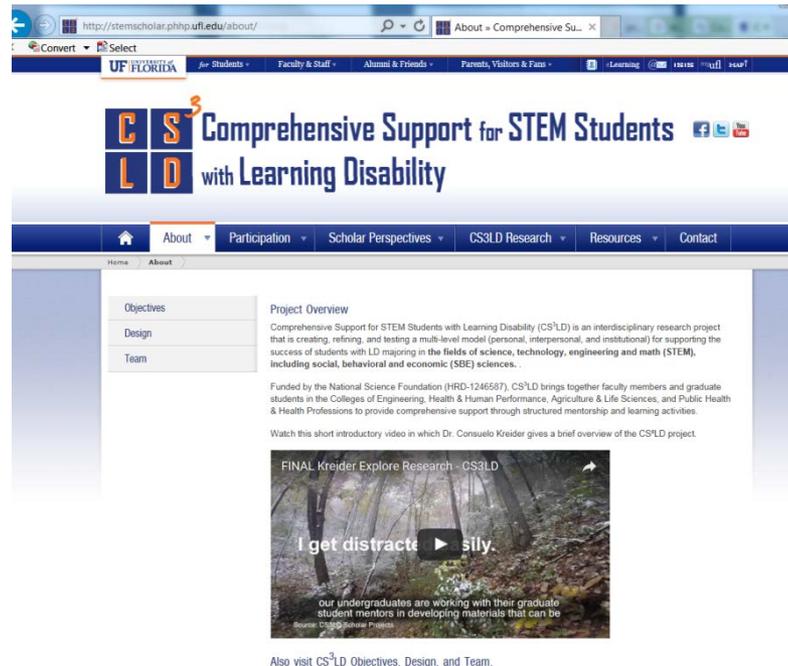
- Often unaware of how their LD symptoms impact their academic and essential life skills<sup>1</sup> – more difficulty with:
  - Time management; maintaining effective daily routines
  - Coping with stress; communicating needs
  - Organizational skills
  - Problem solving skills
- Need strong supports; lower self-esteem<sup>1</sup>
  - Often unaware of / under-utilize resources and support services
  - ↑ Self-efficacy, ↑ academic persistence, ↑ effectiveness of strategy use<sup>2</sup>

1. Reiff, H., Hatzes, N., Bramel, M., & Gibbon, T. (2001). The Relation of LD and Gender with Emotional Intelligence in College Students. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 34(1), 66-78.
2. Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of educational research*, 66(4), 543-578.

# Comprehensive Support for STEM Students with Learning Disabilities (CS<sup>3</sup>LD)



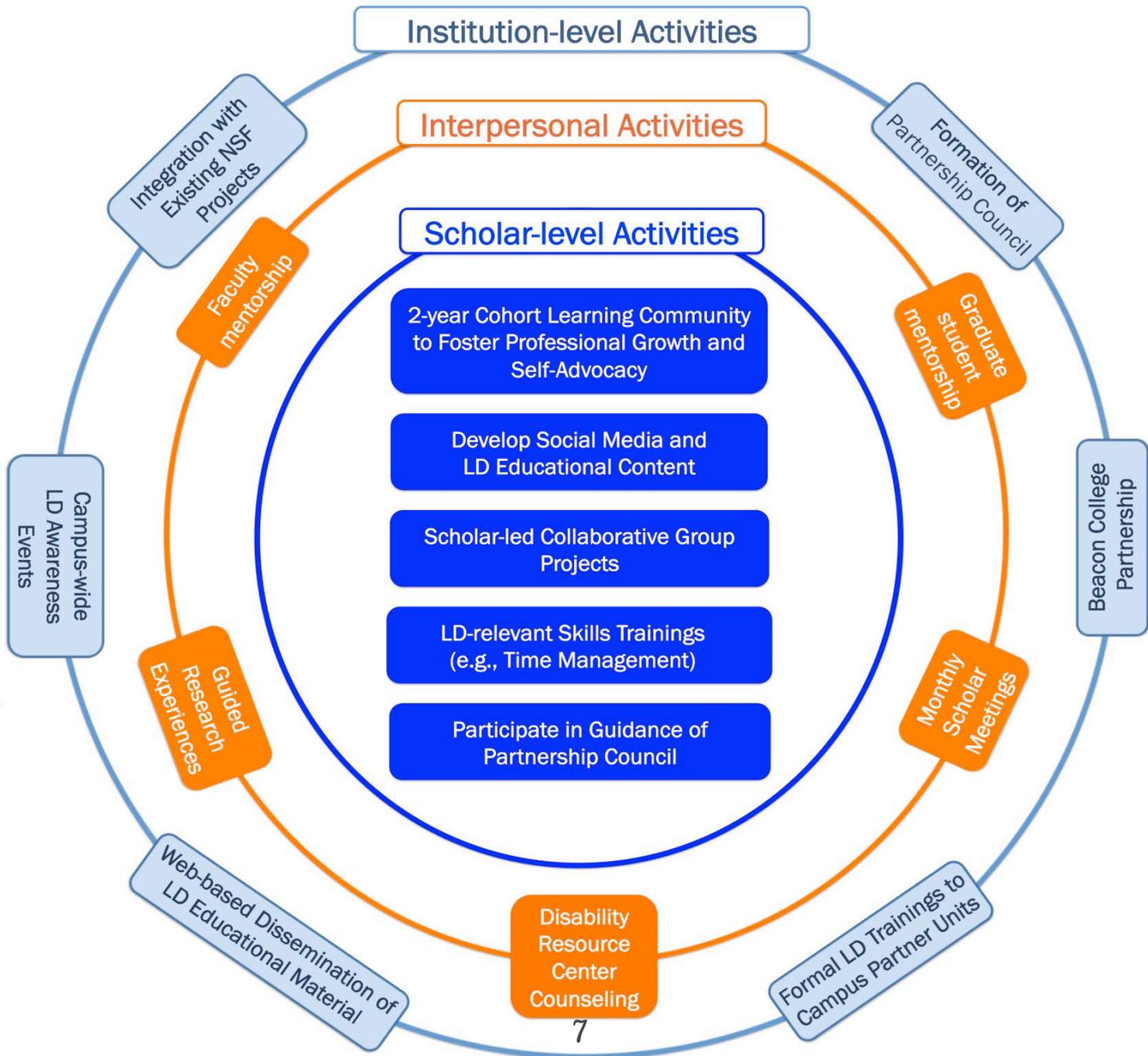
[HTTP://STEMSCHOLAR.PHP.UFL.EDU/](http://STEMSCHOLAR.PHP.UFL.EDU/)



The screenshot shows the website for Comprehensive Support for STEM Students with Learning Disability (CS<sup>3</sup>LD). The browser address bar displays <http://STEMSCHOLAR.PHP.UFL.EDU/about/>. The website header includes the UF Florida logo and navigation links for Students, Faculty & Staff, Alumni & Friends, Parents, Visitors & Fans, Learning, and News. The main heading reads "Comprehensive Support for STEM Students with Learning Disability". A navigation menu includes Home, About, Participation, Scholar Perspectives, CS3LD Research, Resources, and Contact. The "About" page content includes a "Project Overview" section with a description of the interdisciplinary research project, funding information from the National Science Foundation (HRD-1245597), and a video player titled "FINAL Kreider Explore Research - CS3LD". The video player shows a forest scene with the text "I get distracted easily." and "our undergraduates are working with their graduate student mentors in developing materials that can be".

Also visit CS<sup>3</sup>LD Objectives, Design, and Team.

# Academics



# Health

# CS<sup>3</sup>LD Activities

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- **Personal**: Undergraduate Group Trainings: self-advocacy; understanding symptoms & capacities; time & stress management
- **Interpersonal**: Mentors →
  - professional enculturation: helping understand the reality of their field – guided discovery
  - social support: acknowledging their hard work
  - empowerment mentor: instilling confidence to make decisions
- **Institutional**: Faculty & Administrators → Institutionalization of awareness & UDL training

# Meaningful Discussion Topics to our Scholars

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- **Neurology of LD/AD**
- **Cognitive Styles Common To LD/AD<sup>1,2</sup>**
- **Big Picture Thinking (Interconnected Reasoning)**
- **Dynamic Reasoning**
- **Narrative Reasoning**
- **3-Dimensional Spatial Reasoning**

1. Eide, B. L., Eide, F. F. (2011) *The Dyslexic Advantage Unlocking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain*. Plume: New York.
2. <http://www.dyslexicadvantage.org/mind-strengths-in-dyslexia-what-are-they/>

# Neural Differences

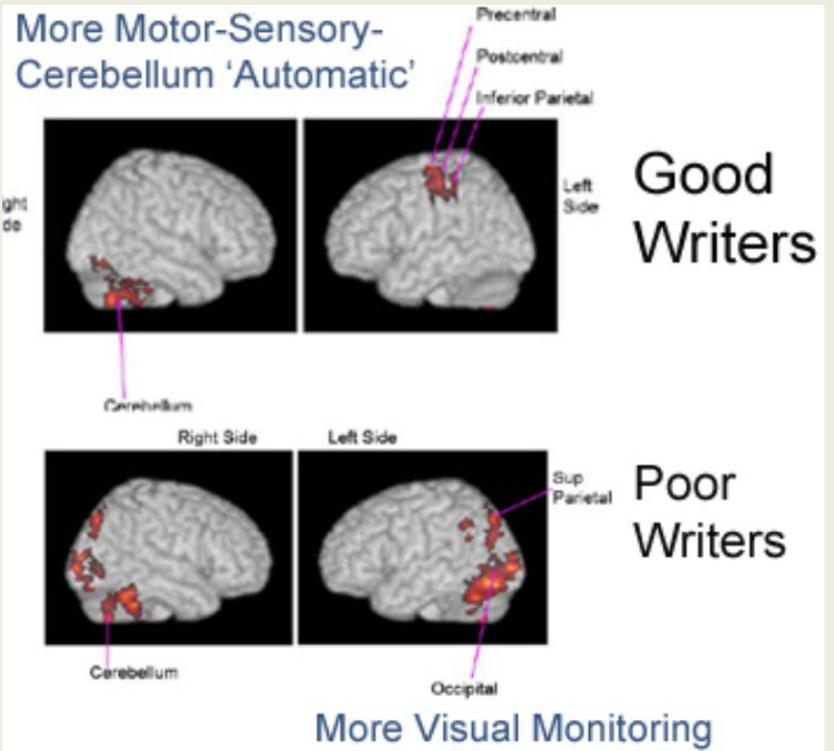
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**Dyslexia: ↓ Language Center activation**



Beneventi et al., Int J Neurisci, 2010

**Dysgraphia (writing)**



Richards et al., 2011

# Big Picture Thinking (Interconnected Reasoning)

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- Ability to spot relationships between different concepts & points of view
  - multiple points of view
  - borrows approaches from other disciplines
- Easily sees relationships of similarities or association/causation
- Strong conceptual ability in uniting disparate information into a single global view (i.e., gist)



# Dynamic Reasoning

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- Intuits solutions, then works backwards to check potential path(s) to solution
  - Slower, more difficult discernment of path(s)
- Uses the “best fit” cognitive processes rather than rule-based/deductive/formulaic thinking
- Career implications: cutting edge fields , inventors & researchers
  - Good reasoning for highly changeable or ambiguous situations where knowledge is incomplete



# Narrative Reasoning

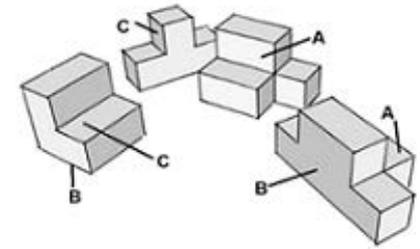
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- Tendency to use stories to recall the past, understand the present and imagine the future
- Career implications: Great for communicating a vision as a business leader, in the courtroom
- Students: can use stories to boost memory



# 3-D Spatial Reasoning

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- Non-verbal reasoning
- Enables reasoning about:
  - The shape, size, motion, position of objects in the physical world
  - Orientation in space
  - The way objects in physical world interact
- Spatially gifted → verbally challenged
  - Arduous process of putting thoughts into words

# What are your thoughts?

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**ANY QUESTIONS SO FAR?**

# Gold Standard Accessibility: What is UDL?

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## UDL Principles → Multiple Means of...

### Representation

Various ways of  
**learning the  
information**  
(e.g., hear & see)

The “**what**” of  
learning

### Expression/ Action

Alternative or various  
ways of demonstrating  
they **know the  
content**

The “**how**” of  
learning

### Engagement

Tapping into student’s  
**interests &  
challenging** them in  
**motivating** ways

The “**why**” of  
learning

# Multiple means of representation: The “what” of learning

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- “can you explain this in a different way?”
- “Recapping at the end of class...”
  - “...just a real quick recap”
- “..he just talks, I draw what he says.”
- “leave it on the board just a little bit longer”



# Multiple means of expression:

## The “how” of learning

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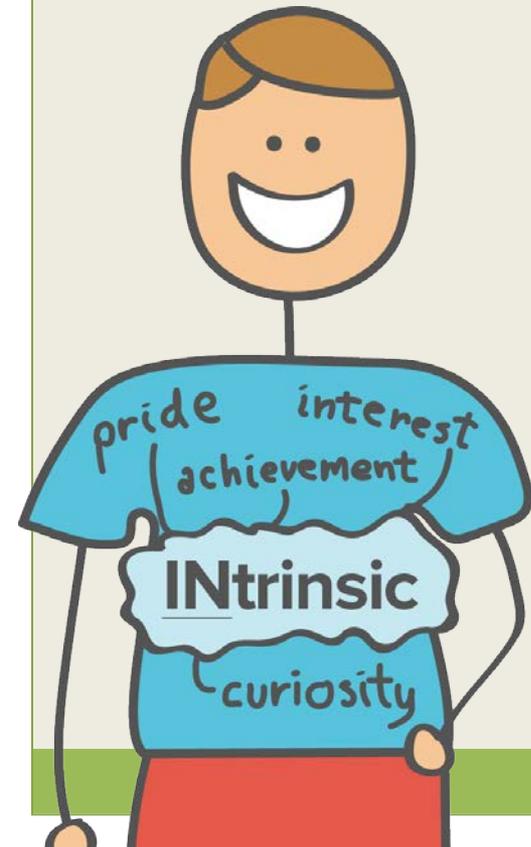
- “Please bear with me...It takes me longer to understand”
  - “Studying takes longer, taking my exams takes longer...”
- “Clear directions, in the right order...and all parts of the instructions in one place”
- “...looking around when I took my tests and getting accused of cheating when I wasn't. I need a small testing environment...”

# Multiple means of engagement:

## The “why” of learning

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- “...not a copout or an excuse”
- “I thought I wasn’t good enough for UF”
- “I tended to just blame it on myself for being stupid”
- “I never procrastinate. I don't trust myself. I do it early.”
  - Course calendar very important



# In a nutshell: Concerns

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- **Academic Misunderstanding**

- “...you’re just playing the disability card... oh you’re just not trying hard enough and I’m trying, like a lot”



- **Different Learning Styles**

- “...no one knows how hard it is to accommodate me having a learning disability because we all learn in different ways”

- **Health/Wellness**

- “ADHD can contribute... and that of course affects my overall health...without consistent medication and then when I’m down I don’t want to exercise.”

# In a nutshell: Concerns

21

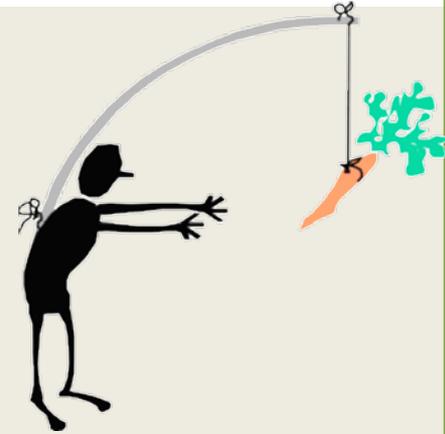


- **Academic Misunderstanding**
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# In a nutshell: Motivators

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- **External Support**
  - “Positive support is a major motivation and will be that extra support we need to succeed.”
- **Believing in Self**
  - “...a lot of my motivation comes from my own feelings of self worth, and how well I feel like I get along with society...”
- **Stress/Competition**
  - I need to do more to prove myself than others and/or to compensate for the history of medical withdrawals and time out of college.”



# Potential Advising Practices Related to LD

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- Temporal Sequencing
- Poor time management
  - Strategic class picking
- Visual learning
  - Visual Rubric
  - Course mapped out visually instead of with language



“...a nice table of the course number, what semester it was offered... so that way you knew when it was...the name of the course, the prerequisites and co-requisites ... all on one sheet “

**Aerospace Engineering - Bachelor of Science Curriculum ~ (Catalog Year: 2015-2016)**  
*Although this is a suggested outline - All courses listed below are REQUIRED for this degree. Refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for verification*

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ UFID: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ⓐThe tracking courses for MAE are: MAC2311, MAC2312, MAC2313, MAP2302, PHY2048, PHY2049, CHM2045 & Sci Elec: (CHM2046, BSC2010, PHY3101 or AST3018/3019) \*asterisk means that they require a Grade of "C" or better. ⓑAll undergraduate students (except those transferring to UF with an A.A. degree from a Florida State/Community College or University) are required to satisfy: 15cr-Humanities/Social Science(H/SS); 3cr-Diversity(D); 3cr-International(I). (Some D/N) courses will double count with H/SS courses, check the undergraduate catalog for further explanation, under "General Education Requirement". ⓐWriting Requirement-24,000 words(WR). ⓑSummer Requirement-9cr (Must be taken at any State of Florida University not State/Community Colleges).

Upper Division Courses that have an "#" next to them - requires a grade of "C" or better.

✓	Course Prefix and Number	Cr	Course Title	Projected Offer	Pre-Requisites
<b>Semester 1 (15cr)</b>					
	*CHM 2045 or 2095	3	General Chemistry 1 / Chemistry for Engineers 1	F S Su	Chemistry Readiness Assessment
	CHM 2045L	1	General Chemistry Lab 1	F S Su	
	*MAC 2311	4	Analytical Geometry & Calculus 1	F S Su	Mathematics Placement Exam (ALEKS)
	GE - C	3	Composition-[WR] (Ex: ENC1101 or any composition course)	F S Su	ACT/SAT scores do not exempt this requirement
	IUF 1000 (GE-H)	3	What Is The Good Life (Required)	F S Su	All incoming freshmen w/out an AA degree
	EML 2920	1	Departmental & Professional Orientation	F S	
<b>Semester 2 (14cr)</b>					
	*MAC 2312	4	Analytical Geometry & Calculus 2	F S Su	MAC2311
	*PHY 2048	3	Physics with Calculus 1	F S Su	MAC2311
	PHY 2048L or 2053L	1	Physics Lab 1	F S Su	
	EML 2023	3	Computer Aided Graphics & Design (Laptop Req'd)	F S Su	
	ENC 3246 (offered by the Writing Program)	3	Professional Communication for Engineers	F S Su	ENC1101 or test score equivalency
<b>Semester 3(Summer) (9cr)</b>					
	GE - SS	3	Social & Behavioral Sciences (State Core)	F S Su	
	EMA 3010	3	Materials	F S Su	CHM2045
	*Science Elective (Pick 1)	3	☐CHM2046/2096 ☐BSC2010 ☐PHY3101 ☐AST3018/3019	F S Su	Check catalog for Pre-requisites
<b>Semester 4 (15cr)</b>					
	*MAC 2313	4	Analytical Geometry & Calculus 3	F S Su	MAC2312
	*PHY 2049	3	Physics with Calculus 2	F S Su	MAC2312 & PHY2048
	PHY 2049L or 2054L	1	Physics Lab 2	F S Su	
	COP 2271 (Lab is optional) (offered by ISE Dept)	2	Computer Programming for Engineers Matlab No Substitutions-Degree Audits will be updated to reflect this change	F S Su	MAC2312
	EAS 3020C	3	Introduction to Flight	F S	PHY2048 & MAC2311
	#EGM 2511	3	Engineering Mechanics - Statics	F S Su	PHY2048

**Lets look at the handout – What are your thoughts?**



# Implications for Student Service Providers

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- **STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS**
- **DISABILITY PROVIDERS**
- **ACADEMIC ADVISORS**

# Implications for Student Mental Health Providers/Advisors

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- **Common co-occurring problems:**
  - ADHD and LD often co-occur
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Oppositional defiant disorder
  - Conduct disorder
  - Developmental coordination disorder
  - Tic/Tourette's disorders

ADHD or LD rarely stands alone. A proper evaluation of the student's struggles and needs is pivotal. It is also important to emphasize the student's particular strengths when the student's treatment plan is being developed.

# Implications for Disability Providers/Advisors

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- **Understanding LD/ADHD is important for the DRC to best support students**
  - **Informs intake process**
  - **Informs follow-up process**
    - ✦ Connects students with resources across campus
    - ✦ Work with students for Strategy/Support groups at the DRC
  - **Campus outreach efforts**
    - ✦ Helps DRC tailor presentations and include information about LD/ADHD
  - **Collaboration across campus**
    - ✦ Working with partners across UF including CRC, CWC, Gator Well, MCDA, Advisors!

# Implications for Academic Advisors

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- Proactively removing barriers to access and inclusion
- Mindset of proactive inclusion is important because very few students with disabilities have a visible disability
- Learning best practices – advisors would benefit from focused trainings on inclusive advising techniques
- Inclusive practices can become more automatic over time

# Tip Sheet

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- Asking questions such as, “Are there a particular times of the day in which you are more or less productive/attentive?”
- Being aware of the campus layout and access restrictions
- Understanding teaching styles for common courses and learning styles/strategies that pair with them
- Being knowledgeable about academic accommodations
- Creating an accessible office set-up
- Acknowledging the diversity of experiences brought by each student, increasing chances for building connections and rapport

# Campus Accessibility



- [UF Campus Map](#)

**UF CAMPUS MAP** Search

- ADA Accessibility
- Campus Safety
- Computers & Technology
- Dining
- Historic Resources
- Housing
- Libraries
- Transportation
- Places of Interest
- Recreation & Fitness
- Student Services

# Resources

- UF's CS3LD (Comprehensive Support for STEM Students with Learning Disability)  
<http://stemscholar.php.ufl.edu/>
- National Center for Learning Disability,  
<http://www.nclld.org/>
- Understood for learning & attention issues,  
<https://www.understood.org/en>
- Learning Disabilities Association for America,  
<http://ldaamerica.org/>
- LD On-line, <http://www.ldonline.org/>
- PBS misunderstood minds,  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/index.html>

# CS3LD team – it takes a village...

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## Our CS3LD team:



- Sue Percival, PhD, Food Science & Human Nutrition
- CY Wu, PhD, Environmental Engineering Sciences
- Charles Byrd, PhD, Center for Assessment, Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Research



- Anthony DeSantis, PhD, Associate Dean of Students, Disability Resource Center



- William Mann, PhD; Anthony Delisle, PhD; Jim Gorske, Med
- Beth Roland, M.A. C.A.G.S., Disability Resource Center  
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# Acknowledgements

- **HRD 1246587 National Science Foundation. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.**
- **K12 HD055929 National Institutes of Health – National Center for Medical and Rehabilitation Research (NICHD) and National Institute for Neurological Disorders & Stroke. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.**
- **NIH/NCATS Clinical and Translational Science Award to the University of Florida UL1TR000064 – REDCap**