

Transition to College and Self-Advocacy: Understanding Your Student's Perspective

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Self Advocacy is Not Easy!



➤ Think about it

- How easy would it be for you to ask your supervisor for a raise next week?

- How about telling your senior colleague that you simply will not be able to meet the client deadline because you need more time?

What is self advocacy?

- An individual's ability to effectively **communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her interests, desires, needs, or rights**
(Van Reusen et al., 1994)
- Assumes the ability to make **informed decisions**; and take **responsibility for those decisions**
- It is **developmental** – our approach to self advocacy changes as we grow
- **Gender and cultural differences**

When do we ask students to self-advocate?

- At IEP meetings
- College applications or interview
- Asking for accommodations in college
- Talking to college professors and academic advisors
- At an internship

What is the common thread?

1. Metacognitive Awareness

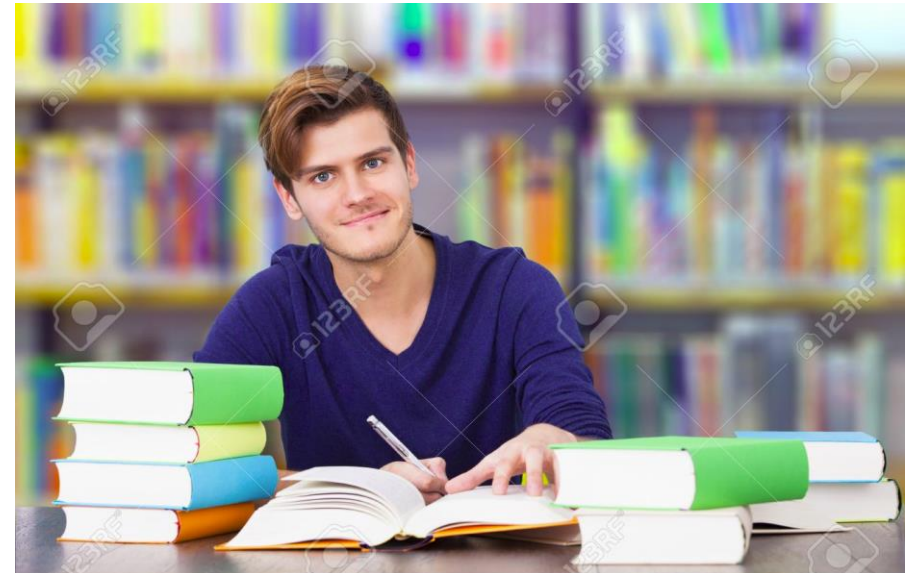
- Awareness of one's own thinking
- Active monitoring of one's cognitive processes (Hennessey, 1999)
- Knowing one's strengths and weaknesses

Joel



STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Austin



Metacognition - Insight from Neuroscience

- Higher order cognitive abilities continue to mature until early and sometimes late 20's
- Learning is dependent on excitatory signals between neurons; repeated excitation creates neural connections
- Experience with self-advocacy is critical for the brain to learn

2. Emotional Self-Regulation

- Being able to manage and modulate one's emotions
- Having the emotional self-confidence and self-esteem to speak up

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

- Stereotype threat
- Stress and anxiety

Self-Advocacy and Perceptions of College Readiness (Stamp, Banerjee & Brown, 2015)

- Extensive interviews with 12 students at Landmark College
- **Sample demographics:**
 - *average age-22*
 - *transfer students*
 - *ADHD*
 - *high to above average IQ*
 - *difficulty with executive function skills*

What the students said:

“If you sat me alone to do work, it wouldn’t get done. And I was always being told that I was capable of doing it because if you sat down with me, I could do it, but left alone it wouldn’t get done. So—I was always being asked why I wasn’t doing my work, and I didn’t know why...I just felt like I was letting everyone down...and **really ashamed.**”

“I did not ask for help. **I thought it was me just being very lazy**...being too lazy to put in the work...I knew when I would attempt to write papers and do those things—study for exams—it would breed such an awful feeling... I really had a really averse feeling to doing all of it...I really think about it as physical pain—going through writing papers—or studying.”

Emotional Regulation - Insight from Neuroscience

- Limbic system develops before the pre-frontal cortex

- **Paradox of the teenage brain**

The teenage brain is primed for learning,
but it is not yet fully developed (Jensen, 2015)

Self-advocacy is an adult skill

- Need to **validate the student's position**
- Invest in student **self-esteem; peer academic reputation**
- **Varied experiences**