

Suggestions for Helping Students with Trauma Brain Injury to Succeed in the College Classroom

1. Provide a detailed course syllabus with complete information on the grading system, tests, quizzes, papers, and other assignments. Meet one-to-one to discuss class expectations and perceptions.
2. Select, if possible, a textbook with an accompanying study guide for optional student use.
3. Begin lectures with a brief outline of material to be covered and conclude with a brief summary of key points.
4. Speak directly to students using natural gestures and expressions to convey meaning. It may be necessary to repeat instructions.
5. When introducing new material, link the new with the previously learned material. TBI students must know "why."
6. Present new or technical vocabulary on a handout. Use terms in context to assure complete understanding.
7. Encourage students to use tape recorders during class lectures to supplement their notetaking. Student notetakers may be available for some TBI students.
8. Monitor assignments. Provide regular progress reports throughout the semester.
9. Provide ample opportunity for questions and answers. Before a test, discuss the test format and examples of typical questions.
10. When necessary, allow TBI students to demonstrate their mastery of material using alternative methods. These might include extended time limits, oral exams, and individually proctored exams to minimize distractions. TBI

students do better on short, frequent tests than on comprehensive exams.

11. When appropriate, permit the use of calculators, scratch paper, and dictionaries during exams.
12. Students may need to leave class a few minutes early to avoid crowded halls and stairwells, and to arrive at the next class on time.
13. Avoid confrontations with students. Wait to explain situations when they are calm. Redirect their attention to positive goals or tasks at hand.
14. Do not assume personal responsibility if a student fails to progress.
15. Encourage students to use services such as the Learning Assistance Laboratory to improve their study skills and receive academic tutorial assistance.

All services for students with special needs are coordinated through the Learning Assistance Laboratory (LAL) located on the second floor, room 218 of the Campbell Learning Resources Center.

The LAL staff is ready to work with you to maximize student success and minimize instructor frustration.

For further information and assistance call Dr. Cindy Riedel, extension 4164.

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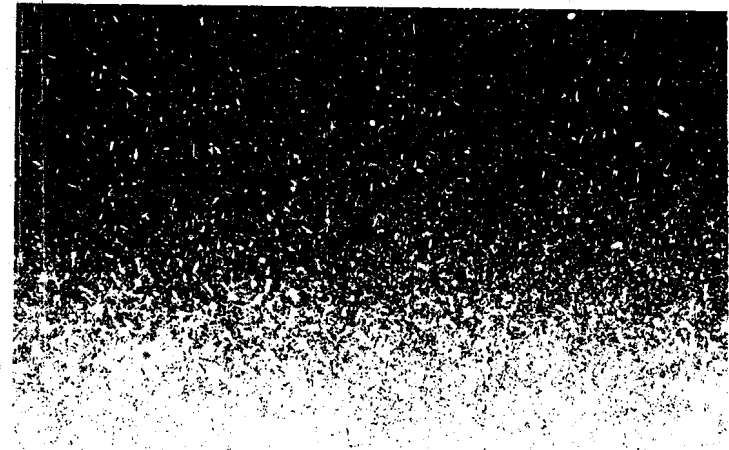
Monroe County Community College

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Helping students with

TRAUMA BRAIN INJURY

To **SUCCEED** *at*



Monroe County Community College

Learning
Assistance
Laboratory

Helping Students with Trauma Brain Injury

Some Facts about Trauma Brain Injury (TBI)

- Trauma brain injury is a suddenly acquired disability resulting from neurological damage to specific areas of the brain.
- Although TBI students may retain many skills and their IQ scores may return to the normal range, their cognitive skills are significantly impaired.
- TBI students often experience frustration because they must apply more effort and try new approaches to solve problems; now even routine tasks are difficult.
- Emotional adjustment often lags behind physical recovery. Reactions may include unexpected anger, elation, confusion, or loss of control. "I used to be able to ... Why can't I do it now?"
- Often TBI students have related physical complications, such as impaired hearing, vision, mobility, and fine motor skills.
- Because their lives have undergone dramatic changes, TBI students frequently suffer from low self-esteem and anxiety. New situations and new challenges may seem overwhelming. They come to class prepared to fail.
- Some TBI students have experienced distinct personality changes which may make socializing difficult.

Common Characteristics of TBI College Students

• Reading Skills

1. Reading rate is slow.
2. Comprehension and retention is poor.
3. Identifying key points is difficult.
4. The saturation level is low.
5. New or technical vocabulary requires repetition and examples.

• Written Language Skills

1. Sentence structure is faulty.
2. Because of impaired long term memory, spelling errors are frequent.
3. Mobility and motor skill problems may impede handwriting. TBI students may need assistance with classroom notetaking.
4. Writing and thinking at the same time are difficult.
5. Summarizing, drawing conclusions, and differentiating between fact and opinion are confusing.

• Oral Language Skills

1. Expressing ideas and finding the right words are difficult.
2. Events are placed out of sequence.
3. More processing time is needed to respond to oral questions.
4. Speech may be impaired.

• Mathematical Skills

1. Impairment to long term memory results in faulty recall of basic arithmetic facts.
2. Operational symbols are confused.
3. Numbers are often reversed, and problems are copied incorrectly.
4. The sequence of operations is out of order.
5. Understanding abstract concepts and reasoning are difficult.

• Organizational and Study Skills

1. Time management is difficult. TBI students must have an organized, structured schedule.
2. Many TBI students are perfectionists who are not satisfied with an assignment unless it is flawless.
3. Frequent review of information is necessary because of limited recall and retention.
4. Oral and/or written instructions are often misunderstood the first time they are given.

• Social Skills

1. Subtle messages, such as sarcasm or teasing, may be misunderstood.
2. Group activities requiring speed and accuracy are frustrating.
3. Quiet withdrawal is often the response to new challenges.
4. Criticism is sometimes viewed as a reflection on self-worth.
5. Overachievement, working much harder than others and experiencing excessive stress and anxiety, is a common trait among TBI students.
6. Networking with other TBI students can provide moral support.