



Learning Center Tutors “Certifiable”

by April Conkey, Learning Center Assistant

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Inside this issue:

*Blinn College LC,
Bryan Campus Data* 2

*Helping Students with
ADD/ADHD* 3

*CRLA Professional
Development
Scholarship* 3

*What is Critical
Thinking?* 4

*Test Your Critical
Thinking Skills* 4

*Tutor Spotlight -
Charity* 5

2007 NCLCA Learning
Center Bibliography 6

The Bryan Learning Center's Tutor Training Program has been awarded Level 1 certification by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).



The CRLA's International Tutor Program Certification “provides recognition and positive reinforcement for tutors' successful work from an international organization” and “sets a standard of skills and training for tutors.”

Tutors who successfully complete the training program, provide twenty-five hours of actual tutoring, and receive a favorable evaluation from a Learning Center Assistant will be certified as an CRLA Tutor.

Tutor training includes a minimum 10 hours

of face-to-face seminars and workshops covering tutoring philosophy, ethics and goals, tutoring techniques, communication skills, critical thinking skills, study skills, diversity, disabilities, professional conduct, and job expectations.

The Bryan Learning Center is currently working towards Level 2 and Level 3 certifications. Both certification levels will include a review of the previous levels' topics, new topics required by the CRLA, and other topics relating to the learning assistance profession.

Please contact María C. Murguía, Learning Center Director, Bryan, for more information or to participate in the training (979-209-



Learning Center Mission Statement:

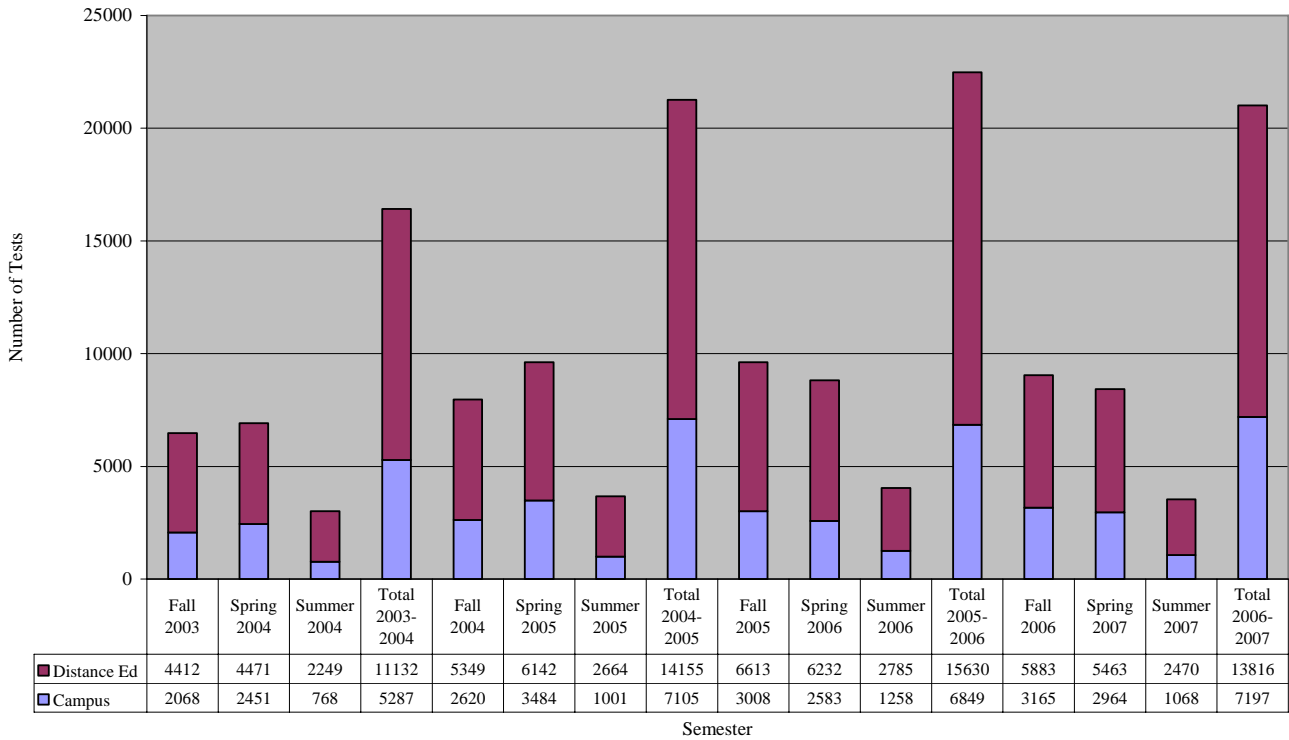
The Learning Center exists to help others become independent learners and to help them achieve academic success.

“We would accomplish many more things if we did not think them impossible.”

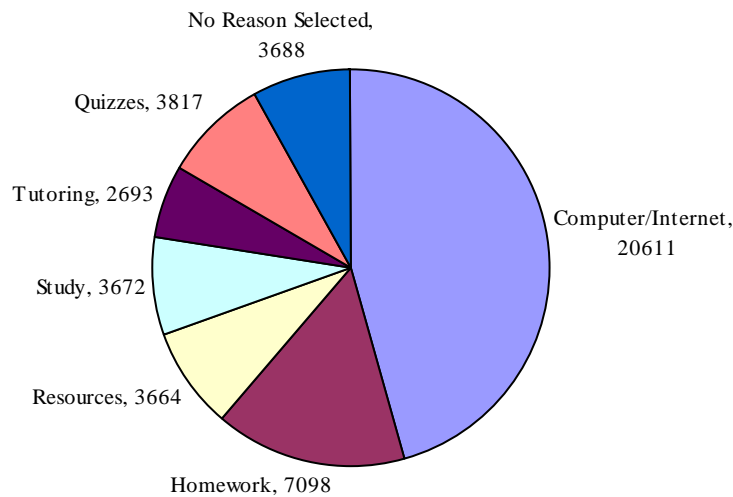
- Vince Lombardi

Blinn College Learning Center, Bryan Campus Data

Testing Fall 2003 - Summer 2007
Academic Year View



Learning Center Activity, 2006-2007 Academic Year



"I have never met a man so ignorant that I couldn't learn something from him."

- Galileo Galilei

Helping Students with ADD/ADHD

by Courtney Norris, Learning Center Assistant

Although more frequently associated with childhood, ADD/ADHD is an everyday obstacle in the lives of many adults. This includes 3-5% of the general population, which indicates that approximately 1-3% of the college population displays actions diagnosable as ADD/ADHD.

When these adults enter the world of upper education from high school or come back to pursue a degree after a prolonged absence, they often find the adjustment to the distinctive learning environment of colleges or universities a more difficult transition than the average student. One reason for this is due to the nature of the disorder. Another reason adults with ADD/ADHD have a difficult time adjusting is due to misconceptions and possible denial of the existence of this neurological condition.

However, there are things that professors and tutors can do to help people with this condition become more productive learners. The first is to understand the disorder, and the second is to adopt a teaching style that provides sufficient support for these students.

To understand ADD/ADHD, one must look at its three main characteristics: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness. Inattention can be things such as difficulty organizing tasks, being easily distracted by external stimuli, difficulty transitioning or prioritizing tasks, or problems mis-

placing things necessary for tasks. Hyperactivity is characterized by minor motor restlessness, difficulty remaining seated or regulating restlessness, or channeling their restlessness in productive directions. Impulsiveness can be speaking or acting without considering the consequences, having difficulty taking turns, or a need for high stimulus activities.

Not everyone who displays these characteristics is ADD/ADHD. To be diagnosed as such, one must display these behaviors over a period of time and the behaviors must create a real handicap in at least two areas of a person's life, such as school, home, work, or social settings.

Teaching Students with ADD/ADHD

- Give assignments both orally and in writing
- Allow students to take frequent breaks
- Provide outlines or study guides
- Simplify or repeat instructions when necessary
- Reduce distractions in surrounding area
- Encourage students to keep a planner

This disorder has a real presence in the college and university environment, and only by recognizing it can we ensure that all learners have the opportunity to get the education that they are seeking. Through both understanding ADD/ADHD and modifying teaching style to aid these students, their experience can be made more positive and useful.

REFERENCE

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd.html>

CRLA Professional Development Scholarship

by Amanda Krafft

The College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) awards five \$1,000 Professional Development Scholarships each year; three Institute Scholarships and two Graduate Study and Research Scholarships.

The CRLA defines eligibility as "participation in an intensive workshop such as the Technology Institute for Developmental Educators, Winter Institute, NCLCA Summer Institute, and Kellogg Institute."

Connie Murguía, Director of the Blinn Learning Center, has proudly received the Institute Scholarship and will use the scholarship to participate in the Winter Institute (http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/wint_inst/index.html) for Learning Assistance Professionals in Austin, Texas.

For more information regarding the CRLA awards and scholarships, please visit www.crla.net/awards.htm.

"The important thing is not to stop the questioning."

- Albert Einstein

What is Critical Thinking?

by Amanda Krafft

Critical thinking is a "higher-order thinking." It is about not being critical or negative, and it goes far beyond thinking creatively.

There are many definitions for critical thinking. Basically, thinking critically is the process of generating knowledge, analyzing and evaluating every reasonable option, and forming a solid judgment that reconciles scientific evidence with common sense.

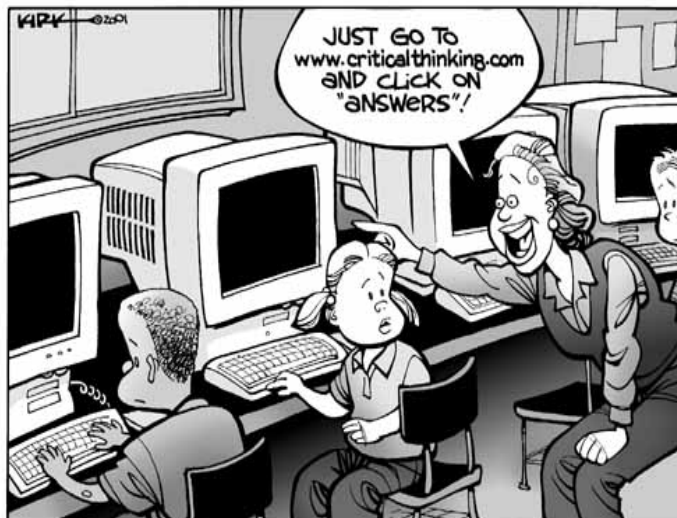
A person able to think critically gathers information from communication, experience, observation, reflection, and reasoning. Critical thinkers are generally more confident, inquisitive, open-minded, analytical, and truth-seeking.

There are two phases for learning information. The first occurs when transmitting new subject matter. Upon hearing information for the first time, an individual develops basic ideas and theories about the content. The second phase occurs when those ideas and theories are effectively used and applied. This is critical thinking.

Critical thinking is an important and vital topic in modern education. The current trend suggests that students able to regurgitate memorized facts will remember those facts once the test is complete and that they will have learned what they are supposed to have learned.

However, the ability to think critically gives students the ability to not only understand what they have read or been shown but also to build upon that knowledge without incremental guidance. This will enable students to distinguish between facts and opinions, assumptions and interferences, and inductive and deductive arguments.

As students learn to think more critically they become more proficient at historical, scientific, and mathematical thinking. They also become more active in their education. It is very important to improve the thinking skills of students and thus better prepare them to succeed in the world.



Test Your Critical Thinking Skills...

1. A mail plane was halfway from Dallas to Miami at a height of 2000 feet on a clear, still day. It dropped a 100 kg sack of airmail letters and a 100 kg steel rod at the same time. Which hit the ground first?
2. A man carefully pointed his car due east and then drove for two miles. He was then two miles west of where he started from. How come?
3. There is an orange in the middle of a circular table. Without touching or moving the orange or the table, how could you place a second orange under the first?
4. Joe went back to his hometown and met an old school friend he had not seen for years. His friend said, "I am married now but not anyone you know. This is my daughter." Joe turned to the little girl and asked her name. She said, "I have the same name as my mother." "Then you must be called "Louise," said Joe. He was right, but how did he know?

1. Neither. The plane was over the Gulf of Mexico, so they both hit the water.
2. He drove in reverse.
3. Put it under the table.
4. Joe's school friend was a woman named Louise.

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten."

- B. F. Skinner



Charity, 19, comes to the Learning Center from Fort Worth, Texas, where she was born and raised. She has been working in the Learning Center since June 2007 and tutors chemistry I, algebra, finite math, and calculus I.

From first grade through eighth grade, Charity was home schooled by her grandmother. Regarding that time, Charity says, "I loved my grandmother, but hated home schooling. However, I am grateful for the extremely thorough education that she gave me. She also taught me that you can do or have anything you want, you just have to work hard for it." For high school, Charity attended Bethesda Christian School. Charity graduated in 2005 with a class of 17.

After Charity got married, she and her husband moved to Bryan. Charity began attending Blinn Community College in the spring of 2006 and completed most of her basics



Charity (left) with her husband, Chris.

within the next year and a half. Currently, Charity is enrolled in four hours at Blinn College and another ten hours at Sam Houston State University.

At first, Charity planned to major in math but later changed her mind. She has always enjoyed reading and writing, and Mrs. Pocaterra, a Blinn instructor, inspired Charity to change her major to English. As a result, Charity has the unique combination of being an English major with a math minor. She plans to graduate in December 2008.

Charity is very busy these days. Other than being a full-



Charity (right) helping a student with calculus.

time student and working part-time at the Learning Center, she also tutors privately on the side and substitute teaches on Fridays for Bryan ISD.

In the spring of 2009, Charity wants to start the Blinn College TEACH program to receive her teacher certification. She is also interested in pursuing a master's degree in either English or math at Texas A&M University. Charity ultimately wants to teach English and/or math at the high school or junior college level.

Charity said, "I love Blinn. It's a great place to go to school and a great place to work." Her friendliness and positive attitude make her a pleasure to work with and an asset to the Learning Center.

"Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities."

- John F. Kennedy

2007 NCLCA Learning Center Bibliography

by April Conkey

There are only two programs in the U.S. that offer a degree in learning assistance studies which spans the subjects of tutoring, supplemental instruction, developmental studies, and services for students with disabilities. However, many universities are being pressed to offer tutoring and supplemental instruction for Quality Enhancement Programs, to fulfill Vision Statements, and to maintain their accreditation. The 2007 NCLCA Bibliography is a great resource for those who are new to the field and who need to get a program up and running in a short period of time, as well as for those who are looking for new ways to enhance learning assistance through technology, professional development, and best practices

I attended and presented at the National College Learning Center Association's 22nd Annual Conference, "Learning Centers by Design", in Atlanta, Georgia, on September 26 – 29, 2007. The conference was attended by Learning Center and Writing Center directors and professional staff, deans of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, and academic advisors.

As the lead author, I presented a session on "Supporting Research and Practice: The 2007 NCLCA Learning Center Bibliography". The bibliography is a collaborative effort

between five learning assistance professionals (at different universities across the U.S.) who volunteered to write and compile an annotated bibliography covering learning center creation and design, assessment and evaluation, faculty and student relations and issues, finances, management, marketing, professional development, technology, tutoring, and learning assistance theory.

The final document will be an official NCLCA publication, burned to a CD-ROM, and distributed to all NCLCA members, as well as be available to the general public.

My talk was well received, and I enjoyed meeting my co-authors for the first time, in person. Since the Learning Center profession is a relatively new field, it consists of a small group of people from many different backgrounds and specialties but all with a sincere desire to help students succeed. Because everyone fell into this field somewhat by accident, there is diversity of expertise and people. You meet professional LC staff with degrees in art, marketing, mathematics, science, and engineering, as well as those in education and language arts. Most of us started out as tutors and decided to pursue learning assistance as a career. It makes for an interesting group of people with different ideas and resources to share.

BLINN COLLEGE LEARNING CENTER NEWLETTER

Bryan Campus



Creating independent learners for academic success

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FALL & SPRING
Monday—Thursday
7:45am—9:30 pm
Friday:
7:45am—5:00pm
Sunday:
5:30pm—9:30pm

SUMMER I & II
Monday—Thursday
7:30am—9:30pm
Friday:
7:30am—Noon
Sunday:
5:30pm—9:30pm