

MENTOR HANDBOOK



Manchester College
Learning Center
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Dear ADAPT Mentor:

Welcome to the Manchester College Learning Support Services (LSS), housed in the Manchester College Learning Center (LC). We are excited to work with you.

The LSS is an office devoted to the mission of helping students succeed in and beyond their collegiate experience. As a mentor for Academic Development and Program for Transition (ADAPT), you will be an integral part of the academic support community. You will discover and develop strategies for success in academia and introduce students to those strategies.

ADAPT mentors are expected to be patient, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable students that inspire their peers toward academic excellence.

The following orientation manual was designed to give you easy access to information that may be useful, to indicate the expectations of LSS, and to provide a place to record your personal and professional awareness of your mentoring experience.

Thank you for joining LSS. We offer a positive, open environment of support, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Denise Howe

Denise Howe
Director of Learning Support Services

LSS Contact Information

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in Winger Hall,
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Learning Support Services Mission and Purpose

Mission

Learning Support Services (LSS), housed in the Learning Center (LC), seeks to provide a positive, enriching, and inspiring environment of academic support and encouragement to the students and faculty of Manchester College.

LSS strives to promote and inspire the academic and personal advancement of students beyond the classroom experience in an effort to produce independent, life-long learners.

LSS works to promote values of integrity, leadership, and unity in the students it employs and serves.

Purpose

Learning Support Services utilizes and creates resources and techniques to enhance and support the academic community at Manchester.

To promote the academic success of students, LSS provides individual and small-group tutoring assistance to attend to student strengths and weaknesses. Tutors listen to individual needs; identify problems, progress, and success; and document sessions for the benefit of the student and instructor.

LSS also provides peer mentors to ADAPT students who benefit from advice and orientation concerning the world of higher education. Mentors commonly address issues such as study skills, test taking abilities, critical thinking skills, and time management, which are necessary for success in the liberal arts institution.

LSS provides a positive environment for teaching and pedagogical development and growth to tutors and mentors by encouraging them to relate and respond optimistically to various learning styles and personalities at the same time enhancing their own thinking and skill levels in their academic disciplines.

LSS provides additional opportunities for educational enhancement through interactive seminars and workshops that illuminate various aspects of liberal arts education.

For faculty, LSS strives to provide an academic venue that supports the educational growth of students, complements classroom experiences, and reinforces the student's role and responsibility in his or her learning. LSS also provides programs and workshops to support the development and variety of pedagogical methods and strategies for MC faculty.

LSS strives to involve all students and faculty at Manchester College in the promotion of successful supportive services in an effort to help strengthen the academic success and integrity of the college.

LSS Mentor Job Description

Qualifications: Mentors for Learning Support Services work with confidential information. It is very important that the mentors be trustworthy, and they must be responsible and professional when working with this information and students. Mentors are successful students who should be compassionate towards students and have a positive attitude and enthusiasm for higher education and effective learning. All mentors must have a minimum cumulative 2.5 GPA (unofficial transcripts are required), provide one faculty recommendation, and have at least sophomore standing.

Primary Functions: 1) To provide students with tools for study skills, learning strategies, and college life development in order to acclimate students to academia and produce successful students; 2) To provide positive, enriching, and inspiring academic support and encouragement to students beyond the classroom experience.

Duties:

1. Assist individual students (or small groups) with study skills on a weekly basis, or as needed;
2. Help students identify study and learning weaknesses and strengths;
3. Help students develop schedules and study plans and keep to deadlines and schedules;
4. Encourage student and personal success and provide methods for achieving success;
5. Share experiences from own college life / academic career;
6. Use resource available through the LC and other methods;
7. Follow up with students in a timely manner;
8. Refer students to tutors or the LSS Director if necessary;
9. Communicate with the LSS Director regarding issues, concerns, and suggestions;
10. Complete Session documentation forms, semester plans, and other paperwork;
11. Other duties as necessary for effective mentoring.

Standards:

1. Attend training sessions;
2. Maintain a professional work ethic and dress;
3. Meet with supervisor to set schedule and as necessary;
4. Show up for appointments and scheduled hours on time and as scheduled. If unable to work, student should notify student and supervisor ahead of time or as soon as possible after the related absence. It is the mentor's responsibility to contact student/supervisor, schedule make-up time, and provide any required documentation;
5. Never discuss an instructor, staff member, or student in a negative way;

Expectations of a Mentor

Preliminary Expectations:

Once hired, ADAPT mentors must initially complete an orientation session, which includes reading the LSS Mentor Handbook and meeting with the director to discuss the contents of the manual. Before mentoring begins, the mentor should develop his or her personal, professional, and academic objectives for the job by completing the "Statement of Objective." The director will work with the mentor to find ways of meeting those objectives throughout the semester.

General Expectations:

Once in place, mentors are expected to work one-on-one and occasionally in small groups with students who need assistance. Effective mentors guide students towards success. Throughout the semester, mentors will periodically meet with the director to discuss questions, concerns, and success on the job.

As a member of the LSS staff, mentors are also expected to:

- Be on time.
- Keep appropriate documentation. Mentoring Documentation Forms are found at the LC website under "Tutor / Mentor Resources."
- Attend staff meetings and orientations.
- Be positive, courteous, and patient with students and staff.
- Be honest.
- Have fun, but also be professional.
- Use resources (reference books, Internet, and people) when questions arise that you don't have an immediate answer for.

Remember:

- You are not a counselor, academic advisor, or instructor. If you suspect that a student might need counseling, please talk to the LSS Director before referring the student. This can be a sensitive issue and you do not want to risk breaking the mentor relationship.
- Your job is not to tutor, unless you are also a LSS tutor. You are to provide academic skills "coaching" and encouragement.
- You are not to talk down about any MC staff, faculty, or students. If a student asks you about a certain instructor, please remain professional and as objective as possible.
- You are not required to give out your contact information to the student. However, if you do, that is your decision and should be done at your discretion.

Qualities of a Great Mentor

1. **Challenger** – A mentor helps a student set ambitious goals and be more productive.
2. **Inspector** – A good mentor is detail-oriented. The mentor helps the student record and analyze progress towards his or her goals. This involves tracking key accomplishments as well as identifying areas that need further development.
3. **Strategist** – An effective mentor is a great strategist – and knows how to help others become strategic learners, thinkers, and planners.
4. **Historian** – A mentor has reached his/her position because of experience, and consequently, can offer wisdom and perspective drawn from this experience – both successes and mistakes.
5. **Friend** – A mentor allows the student to let his/her guard down and, on occasion, the mentor lets his/her guard down to create a trusting environment and allows for an exchange based on camaraderie and sharing.
6. **Guide** – A great mentor is always prepared to serve as a “travel guide” to help the new student navigate through new experiences.
7. **Partner** – The mentor revels in the student’s success and, in many ways, shares in it.
8. **Liberator** – At some point, the student becomes something more. He or she realizes the full extent of his/her own abilities and assumes greater responsibility for academic and personal growth. A great mentor encourages this independence.
9. **Recipient** – An experienced mentor realizes that he or she gains as much as he or she gives in this partnership – and thanks the student for it.

Adapted from “Marks of a Great Mentor” by Samuel J. Gualardo, CSP

Meeting a Student for the First Time: Establishing Rapport

When you meet a student for the first time, consider the following approaches:

Introduce yourself to the student. Offer some information about yourself – your major, your hometown, your hobbies, etc. Ask the student to do the same. Be yourself and SMILE! Spend time creating a comfortable, supportive environment for the student.

Listen actively and carefully. Allow the student to explain his or her reason for seeking mentoring and discuss his or her academic history, current academic situation, and future academic goals. The student may not realize what he or she needs, but give the student time to explore the situation before offering advice or suggestions. Together, try to determine the most important and necessary objectives.

Ask the student questions that will help provide the information that you need to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses. Some questions may include: “In which classes are you successful?”, “How much time each week (day) do you study?”, “Do you read the textbook?”, and “Do you attend each class?”. You should also have the student complete a “Study Skills Inventory” found in the LSS or on the LSS website under “Student Resources.”

Request information such as class syllabi, paper due dates, and work schedules that may help you further assess the student’s needs.

Discuss scheduling. Will you meet throughout the semester on a regular basis? Even if you only meet for 15 minutes, the student can utilize this time to assess his or her progress and have confidence in knowing that someone is there to listen and offer wisdom and advice.

Stay focused. When you meet with the student throughout the semester, determine a specific goal or focus for each meeting. For example, if Bill feels stressful in general, try to determine a specific catalyst for the stress. Maybe he has an essay test coming up, and he feels quite anxious about it because of poor past performances on essay exams. If so, consider spending time discussing strategies for taking essay exams then relating those strategies to the material being tested. Develop practice questions and discuss how the student would approach those questions. Determine if the student needs to do any outside research for the material on the exam. Determine if the student should meet with the instructor or a tutor to get a clearer idea of the material being covered on the exam. By feeling more confident about one task, the student should have a better outlook for other tasks.

Don’t judge. Be reassuring. Remember that your tutee may be intimidated or lack confidence during your session. Do all you can to reassure your tutees and show them that you are not there to judge; you are there to help them become independent learners.

Nonverbal and Verbal Communication

Effective communication is essential to the building of trust, the imparting of information, and to the successful resolution of any problem-solving effort. It is through both verbal and non-verbal messages that mentors and mentees discover accurate meaning from each other.

- Non-verbal communication includes body posture, gestures, and facial expressions, which are commonly used to communicate messages and meaning.
- Cultural aspects can influence non-verbal communication. Although it is helpful to understand various cultural practices, it is important not to stereotype and typecast students based on their culture.
- Body posture often reveals much about a person's physical, mental, or emotional state and communicates added meaning to verbal messages. For instance, if a mentor is sitting erect and not slouching, it conveys to the student that the mentor is confident and ready to assist. If a student is sitting with shoulders hunched, the mentor may assume that the student is tired, bored or disinterested.
- Gestures such as tapping feet, shrugging shoulders, clenching fists, and using hand movements may communicate added meaning. Also, excessive hand gesturing may interfere with verbal messages by being distracting.
- Smiling, frowning, and the lack of or use of eye contact are examples of facial expressions that convey meaning during communication.
- Verbal communication involves listening, attending to, and responding to the students in such a way so that they know they have been heard and understood.
- A mentor should not interrupt a mentee.
- Effective teaching and learning can take place when mentors communicate encouragement, support, respect, and non-judgmental acceptance. The following verbal communication behaviors facilitate learning: paraphrasing, clarifying, reflection, interpretation, and indirect and direct questioning.

Mentoring Non-Traditional Age Students

Characteristics of Non-Traditional Students

- 25 years or older
- May be returning to school or coming for the first time
- May have different reasons/motives for being in school - home life transition (children leaving, divorce), mid-life transition (change in career/employment), or workplace transition (more technology)
- May have rusty basic skills, which need to be reinforced before new technical or academic skills can be acquired
- May need their self-esteem and self-confidence reinforced since the current educational environment may be quite different from their previous education experience.
- Success in learning experience in later years generally depends on motivation and access to instruction rather than public school performance in elementary or high school

Theories of Adult Learning

Adults bring to any new learning situation a body of knowledge, ideas, concepts, and understanding which they have developed from prior learning and experience. Adults use this knowledge as a sense-making mechanism to interpret, comprehend, judge, connect, and store new information.

Malcolm Knowles (1984) addresses the learning needs of adult students:

- To be motivated to learn,
- To participate in setting their own goals,
- To learn in an environment which respects, is related to, and fully utilizes their accumulated wisdom attained through a lifetime of experience,
- To participate actively in the learning process,
- To share responsibility for planning, operating, and monitoring the progress of the learning experience,
- To experience a sense of progress towards mastering their goals,
- To benefit from peer support and reinforcement, as well as individual attention,
- To participate in problem solving exercises that simulate real-life situations.

Strategies Needed by Adult Students

Adult non-traditional students may benefit from:

- Time Management Skills: Non-traditional students often have many competing demands in their lives that reduce the time available for education. Their ability to manage time well will spell success in dealing with the many commitments they possess.
- Note-taking Skills: The capacity to identify and isolate the main ideas presented in the classroom lecture with accompanying supporting material will result in more efficient review sessions. Students may tend to, *but should not*, write everything down in their notes.
- Test-taking Skills: Knowledge of how to evaluate test items, how to plan answers, and how to allot time to test sections are vital to success in taking exams.
- Positive attitude application: Confidence in ability to learn and intending to learn are active processes that must be practiced to be developed well.
- Awareness of learning style: An understanding of how a person processes new information from short-term to long-term memory is important. Learning how to learn, discovering how learning styles affect teaching and learning, and understanding reading as a search for meaning may help the adult student be successful.

Source: Judith S. Craig "Non-Traditional Age Students." CRLA Tutor Training Handbook.

Helping Students to Recover from Failure

Learners who have failed often feel that it's entirely their own fault and that they should not expect any help from others. However, there is much that mentors can do to help learners recover from failure. The following suggestions may help you to help those learners who, for one reason or another, have not succeeded academically.

1. When learners have failed at something, **help them to accept it**. Running away from it may be an instinctive reaction, but it does not help them to prevent a similar thing happening in the future. Once learners have accepted that a particular episode was unsuccessful, they can begin structured preparations to guarantee that it will be successful next time.
2. Help learners suffering from depression after failure **to look at the failure as a learning opportunity**. Point out how unimportant and fruitless it is for them to dwell on "letting people down" feelings. Remind them that every successful person has recovered from failure at one time or another. Advise them to work out constructively exactly what they were not able to do.
3. Explain that "failure" is a **transient stage**, when what the learners managed to do simply did not match what they were required to do at that stage. Having failed does not mean that they "can't ever do it," it simply meant they "couldn't yet do it" on a particular occasion.
4. Remind learners how useful it is for them to know exactly **what they can't do yet**. Only when they have this knowledge can they systematically fine-tune their learning to eliminate the possibility of the same thing going wrong in the future.
5. Give examples of how "getting something wrong" is one of the most **effective ways** of eventually getting it right. Knowing what can cause problems is useful knowledge for the future. In life in general, probably more is learned by getting it wrong first, than by getting it right the next time.
6. Encourage small groups of learners who have failed something to **work together** to find ways of analyzing what caused the failure. Sharing problems with other learners in the same situation can be comforting.
7. Make sure that learners who have failed something **don't feel themselves to be failures**. An exam failure may seem daunting at the time, but it is only a very small and quite artificial measure of what a person can or can't do. Remind them that it is not themselves who are failures – it is simply a matter of something that at a particular time, and in particular circumstances, they did not manage to achieve.

Source: Race, Phil, and Sally Brown. 500 Tips for Tutors.

Referral Skills

Peer mentoring sessions can often bring with them a wide variety of issues. Mentees are often comfortable enough with the mentoring relationship to ask the mentor for advice about any number of things. Thus, a mentor must be knowledgeable about the types and locations of campus services available to students and how to access those services.

Recognizing When to Refer Students to Services

- If a student is using mentoring time inappropriately (i.e. socializing or discussing personal issues, repeatedly coming to mentoring unprepared)
- If the mentee is very tense, shy, non-verbal, and uncommunicative
- If the mentee's behavior changes dramatically from earlier sessions
- If the mentee exhibits any of the following behaviors:
 - Depression: general sadness, slow moving, weepy, hopeless or very agitated, nervous, worried, unable to focus on academics
 - Anxiety: agitated, unable to focus, hyper, consistently fearful, acting startled
 - Signs of substance abuse: failing to meet obligations, erratic behavior, inability to function effectively

Knowing How and Where to Refer Students to Services

- Mentors should discuss a problem situation with the LSS Director. Mentors need to understand that the student's problems are not the sole responsibility of the mentor. The LSS Director might need to intervene to insure that the right services are suggested.
- Offer information to the student about available support services. Ask the LSS Director for a list of Student Support Services if needed.
- Suggest a particular service to the student as appropriate, explaining its location, services, hours, etc. The mentor could accompany the student if the student desires. However, the student is the one who should make the initial phone call or contact.

Important Reminders

- Mentors ARE NOT trained psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, health care personnel, or counselors. Mentors should not exceed the role as a peer mentor. Mentors should always go to the LSS Director if there is an issue that needs attention.
- Mentors ARE NOT expected to solve all problems for their students.
- Mentors MAY NOT be successful with every assigned student. Mentors should recognize and acknowledge that no amount of mentoring will be enough for some students who bring their personal issues into the sessions.

Source: Penny A. Kelley, "Referral Skills." CRLA Tutor Training Handbook.

Various Resources for Mentors

1. **Resource Library** –LSS has several books listed under “Study Skills” available for use and for check-out. Please consult these books for information related to study skills and exercises. It would be a good idea for you to check one out for preparation, and also encourage the student to check one out as well. There are duplicate copies of some of them, and some are instructor manuals. There are also books in the “Tutor Resources” section that might be useful:

Ender, Steven C., and Fred B. Newton. Students Helping Students: A Guide for Peer Educators on College Campuses. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Gall, M.D., Joyce P. Gall, Dennis R. Jacobsen, and Terry L. Bullock. Tools for Learning: A Guide to Teaching Study Skills. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1990.

Paul, Richard, and Linda Elder. A Miniature Guide for those who teach on How to Improve Student Learning. The Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2002.

Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. Changing Attitudes: A Strategy for Motivating Students to Learn. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.

US Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Hard Word and High Expectations: Motivating Students to Learn. 1992.

2. **Student Resource File** – The file cabinet located in W112 of the LC is full of useful handouts and materials. The top drawer contains information related to a variety of study skills. Please become familiar with these resources and use them in your sessions or give to students.

3. **Look at the websites:**

<http://www.manchester.edu/OAA/Programs/learningsupport/index2.htm>

The website includes extensive information on LSS services and programs and access to numerous resources in a variety of subjects. There are links to study skills self-assessments and online tutorials for certain subjects. You might refer a student to the website for further study and practice, work with it in a tutoring session, or refer to it in your preparation for a session. Printed lists of useful websites related to study skills and learning strategies are also located in the LC.

4. **Other** – Any resources that you develop or discover along the way may be useful to other mentors, LSS staff, and students. Please share your resources with LSS staff. These can also be considered a part of your Learning Project.

Resources for Students

LSS offers the following resources for check-out and use for all Manchester College students:

- **Learning Resource Library** with textbooks and workbooks in many disciplines.
- **The Student Resource File** holds various handouts and resources that students can take pertaining to study skills, grammar, writing, and various subjects.
- **Internet Resource Handouts** are available for many subjects and are filed in the third drawer.
- **Videos** – math, study skills, writing, and grammar -- are also available for check-out.
- **Computer software** is also available in some subjects.
- **MORE!!**

Please become familiar with the resources available to students so that you can lead them in the right direction and use these resources in your sessions when applicable and appropriate. These resources can and should be used during sessions when you need to consult another source, get additional examples, or refer to grammar guidelines.

Learning Center (LSS) Website -

<http://www.manchester.edu/OAA/Programs/learningsupport/index2.htm>

The website includes extensive information on LSS and programs and access to numerous resources in a variety of subjects. There are links to study skills self-assessments and online tutorials for certain subjects. You might refer a student to the website for further study and practice, work with it in a mentoring session, or refer to it in your preparation for a session.

Other Faculty and Staff

Make sure to encourage students to visit their faculty's office hours. If students have questions about specific assignment requirements, refer them to the instructor. A mentor can read and interpret instructions, but the instructor truly knows what he/she is looking for. If the student needs to be referred to a service (Counseling Services, Financial Aid, etc.), make the referral. See page 15 of handbook for more details on making referrals.

Mentoring Objectives

To be completed before initial mentoring session

In the space provided, record your objectives as a mentor this semester at the Learning Center. Think not only in terms of your academic goals but also in terms of your personal and professional goals.

Final Self Evaluation

Name _____

As a mentor at Learning Support Services of Manchester College, you have encountered and assisted a variety of students, professors, and staff members with a wide array of needs and expectations—a tough job! You have also outlined your own expectations of your mentoring experience in your initial objective. Take time to consider all these factors before evaluating yourself. *Please answer the following questions concerning your work at the LC.*

Did you fulfill the general expectations of an ADAPT mentor as listed in the manual? Please explain.

Did you fulfill your academic, personal, and professional objectives as outlined at the beginning of the semester?

What is most rewarding about your mentoring experience?

What ideas or standards would you like to implement the next time you mentor?