



LEARNING CENTER NEWSLETTER

BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE FOR UNDERCLASSMEN
VOL. 4, ISSUE 1 • AUGUST 2017

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Parents and Students alike, welcome to the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

I find that the beginning of the year arrives full of contradiction Summer freedom replaced by a standardized school day, the Class of 2017 replaced by the fresh faces of the Class of 2021, and the summer fog of SF will soon be replaced by the extended summer of the Bay Area and temperatures above 60*.

Despite our physical updates to space, we remain somewhat status quo in the Learning Center: providing an adult presence to help all students, a testing room for students who need a quiet space, and a safe space for students to access supplies during the day. On the following pages you will be guided through a few of our standard day to day procedures and essentials to help you maximize your use of the LC. As you will also see we are committed to helping create strong self-advocates while at SI.

Finally, please take some time to read or listen to the research surrounding audio books as well as thoughts on creating resilience through failure.

We wish you luck as you begin your next great adventure!

- Amy Harms

NEED HOMEWORK HELP? OUR NEW AVs ARE HERE FOR YOU!

This year we are welcoming Audrey Gomez and Dylan Agelson to the Learning Center. Audrey will be available every Monday and Tuesday to tutor math, while Dylan will lead Pop Up Workshops on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Come say hi!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IMPORTANT DATES

AUG. 25. First Day of School. [Link to the bell schedule is here.](#)

SEPT. 4. Labor Day (No School)

SEPT. 8. Mass of the Holy Spirit.
Report to your 7th Period classes.

REMINDERS

ALL. Remember to introduce yourself to your teacher and let them know that you will be using the LC.

2021. Discuss your learning profile with your teachers and ask for their signature by next Friday, September 2nd. You must also check-in with a LC member each week to complete your "Freshman 40," which is 40 minutes of dedicated study time in the Learning Center. Bring a friend!

2020. Copies of your Learning Profile are available upon request. See Ms. Harms or Ms. Marconi for more information.

2019 & 2018. SAT & ACT registration deadlines are fast approaching! Check in with Ms. Marconi if you have any questions about standardized testing with accommodations. Start early!

CONTENTS

2 How to request a test in the Learning Center

4 How to Ask for Help & A Lesson in Self-Advocacy

5 Books on Tape & A Note to the Parents: Allowing Kids to Fail



HOW TO REQUEST A TEST IN THE LEARNING CENTER

PROCESS:

1. Introduce yourself to your teachers. All of your teachers have a copy of your Learning Profile and will expect you to meet with them during the first week of school.
2. Use this conversation to tell your teacher that you will be taking your tests in the Learning Center this year.
3. If you feel comfortable, you can also explain how you “operate” in the classroom. Use your learning profile as a guide!
4. Teachers may not always remember that you will be testing in the Learning Center. Help them out by sending a quick reminder email the day before your test. Your teacher will appreciate you being proactive.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE TEST DAY:

Have your “game plan” ready before testing day. Ask yourself:

1. Will you go check in with your teacher before taking your test or will you come straight to the LC and start your exam immediately? Are there any special instructions we need to know for your exam?
2. How does your teacher want to administer your exam? Will they email it to the Learning Center or hand it to you in class? Different teachers will have different testing policies and procedures.

THE LEARNING CENTER PROCESS:

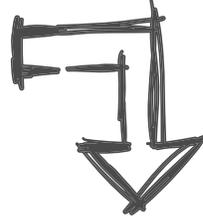
1. When you are in the Learning Center for a test, please make sure to tell us 1) your name, 2) your teacher’s name, 3) the subject of the test (History, English, Physics, etc.).
2. You **MUST** let us know if you do **NOT** have time to complete your test directly after your testing period.
3. We will proctor your exam per your teachers’ instructions.
4. We will hold you to your allotted extended time. For example, if your teacher is running a 30 minute quiz and you have 100% Extended Time, you will have 60 minutes to finish your quiz.
5. Just to reiterate... You **MUST** let us know if you do **NOT** have time to complete your test directly after your testing period (i.e. resource period, recess, lunch, after school).
6. If you do **NOT** have a resource period or a break directly after your test, we will break your test apart into sections. We do **NOT** want you returning to a portion of the test that you have already seen; it’s not fair to other students in your class.
7. You are expected to complete your exam at your next available resource or lunch period. Athletic events are **NOT** a suitable excuse to not complete a test unless you have a game. We are happy to email your coach if you are late to practice (remember you are a **student-athlete** and not the other way around).
8. All tests will be returned to your teachers’ mailboxes after testing.
9. We keep an online database confirming when you arrived for your test, how long you tested for, and when we returned your exam. Your teacher will be familiar with our process.

THE TESTING PROCESS

A four step guide for taking exams in the LC

1

TALK TO YOUR TEACHER. Tell your teacher ahead of time that you will be taking your exams in the LC. You may need to remind them on test day.



2

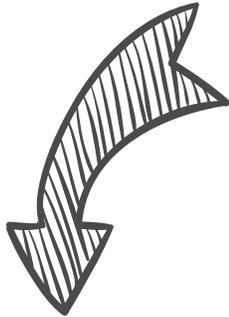
YOUR SCRIPT. When you get to the LC, check in with Ms. Marconi (or any LC staff member). Follow this “script” every time you take a test in the LC:

“HI MY NAME IS _____ AND I’M
(your name)

TAKING A _____ TEST FOR _____
(subject title) (teacher’s name)

FOR THIS TEST I WILL NEED: _____”

(needs/accommodations: i.e. a computer for typing, bubbles completed for me, extra time during my resource period, take the test in two parts, just to name a few)



3

YOUR TICKET TO TEST. After your check-in, an LC staff member will give you a blue “ticket” (see below). Fill in your name, teacher’s name, and start time if a staff member hasn’t completed it for you already. Don’t worry about your end time or proctor name - we’ll fill that out for you!

LEARNING CENTER

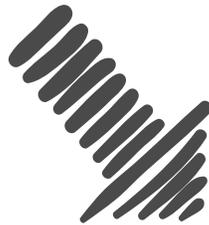
STUDENT _____

TEACHER _____

TIME IN _____

TIME OUT _____

PROCTOR _____



4

YOU’RE DONE. Congratulations! You are now ready to test. Make your way to the back testing room and find a location that will best suit your needs. If you are having a hard time focusing, let us know how we can help! Self Advocacy is key! *And finally, help us to make this space a safe one. Don’t cheat and don’t encourage others to cheat. It’s not worth it.*



HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEACHER: SEEKING HELP & BUILDING CONNECTIONS

PROCESS:

1. Resource rooms are staffed with teachers who teach that particular subject. Need help with math? Talk to a math teacher in the library. Need help with an essay? Go to the English Resource Room.
2. Follow the appropriate check-in procedures for each resource room.
3. Hours: 8:20 until school ends.
4. Don't be afraid to seek help from a teacher you may not recognize.
5. Are you too busy during the school day? Try making an appointment directly with your teacher. Don't wait until after a test or quiz to seek help! Get a head start on tough concepts – it will save you time and test points later!

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU CHECK IN:

Have your “game plan” ready before testing day. Ask yourself:

1. Do you share a resource period with your teacher?
2. Do you have specific questions in mind? Teachers will be more willing to help you if you can identify exactly what you need. A general “I need help” will not yield the same results as “can you explain the role of the mitochondria in the cell?”
3. Do you need to make up a test? Oftentimes teachers will leave your test in the Testing Room instead of the LC. If your teacher has left your test in the wrong testing space, just let one of us know and we will grab it for you.



A LESSON IN SELF-ADVOCACY: COMMUNICATION IS KEY

FIND COMFORT IN THE TOUGH TALKS. Talking to an adult on campus about your diagnosis can be tough, especially if you are having this conversation for the first time. If you are feeling particularly anxious about articulating what you will need in the classroom, try coming up with a “script” ahead of time. You can practice this “script” with a parent, friend, or other trusted adult to build your comfort level. If you feel yourself getting nervous before meeting with your teacher, you can even share your discomfort so they know where you stand.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS. Articulating what you need, especially in the classroom, takes practice. Don't be afraid to explain 1) how you learn, 2) what you look forward to in the classroom, and 3) why certain

activities gauge your interest more than others. Be ready for some of these specifications to change as you become a better student, and update your teacher if you notice any changes. Communication is key. Your teachers don't want you to fail – speak up when you need them!

BE KIND TO YOURSELF. Your parent/guardian/teacher can't read your mind. It's up to you to speak up for what you need. In doing this, it's important to acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses can become sources of strength, if you understand and ultimately work with them. No one is perfect; strive to be the best of yourself, however you define that.



BOOKS ON TAPE: BENEFITS FOR ANY DIAGNOSIS

Why should I explore audiobooks?

1. **ENGAGEMENT.** The more you can incorporate your senses into your learning, the more likely you are to retain the information. This is referred to as “active” vs. “passive” studying, meaning you are interacting with the information in more ways than one. Listening to a book on tape while reading forces you to engage in the material and provides you with both visual and auditory memory cues.
2. **OPTIONS.** Don't want to pay for a subscription for a site like Audible.com? Try searching for readers on sites like YouTube. Find a reader you can listen to for an extended period of time. If you don't like the reader's voice, find someone else whose voice is more interesting to you.
3. **SIGHT WORDS.** Looking at your text while reading will help you improve not only your pronunciation, but also the number of sight words you can commit to memory. Sight words can also help you break down and decipher more difficult words in the future. This is especially helpful come SAT/ACT time!
4. **PROCESSING.** Audiobooks can help you improve your reading speed and overall processing of new information.
5. **MINIMIZES DISTRACTION.** Do you find that your mind wanders while you read? Do you remember everything that you need to do for your other classes? Listening to a book while also actively reading it can help minimize these “wandering thoughts.” Taking breaks as you go is easy too – just press *pause*!
6. **COMPUTER VOICE vs. READER.** YouTube videos or Audible.com readings can often have more easy listening voices than the “computer voice” generated by your iPad. Both “voices” can be beneficial to your overall learning; however, audiobooks give you more ways to explore what works best for you.



A NOTE TO THE PARENTS: ALLOWING YOUR KIDS TO FAIL

The following videos serve as resources for parents to learn how to teach children to fail, while instilling an understanding of the importance of overall effort and gradually accumulated self confidence.

Ramy Mahmoud, TedxPlano

<https://youtu.be/IJs-RiPOKVY>

Topics: high fear quotients, “failing forward,” valuing effort over final result

Jim Harshaw, TedxCharlottesville

<https://youtu.be/J9zjMTtf4o0>

Topics: overcoming personal failure, using failure for success, teaching failure to children

Amy McCreedy, USA Today on NBC

https://youtu.be/uQFxfd_g95c

Topics: intrinsic motivation in kids, dangers of helicopter parenting

Dr. Ivan Joseph, TedxRyersonU

<https://youtu.be/w-HYZv6HzAs>

Topics: the skill of self-confidence, how to train self confidence

All 2017 – 2018 newsletters are written and/or compiled by Katie Marconi, Learning Center Coordinator