The Transition Program @ Middlesex Community College
The Transition Program

An alternative program for students with significant learning disabilities

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Overview of Program Model

- Non-credit, “Hands-on” 2 year certificate
- Designed for students who would find college work too difficult – NOT a “stepping stone” to college
- Full time selective program 2 years, 5 days/week = to 15 credits per semester
- Vocational … not academic (no tests)
  - yes → homework for reinforcement
  - yes → grades
- Focus = Job Readiness & Independence
- Compensatory strategies:
  - Smart devices, calculators, spell check, checklists, organizational tools
Courses/Curriculum

What we teach... What you learn...

➢ **Vocational Skills Development:**
  Keyboarding, filing, data entry, Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and Basic Math with calculator!

➢ **Independent Living/Consumer Ed**
  Includes personal budgeting, apartment living, consumer law & using community resources.

➢ **Job Success and Job Seeking:**
  How to be successful on a job and how to get a job.
Courses/Curriculum

- **Personal/Social Development and Communication Skills:**
  
  Stress management, handling criticism, expressing opinions, developing and sustaining healthy relationships and life styles, public speaking, dealing with conflict, becoming independent, effective communication and problem solving.
Approach

• Part of the college – our own Faculty – trained in Special Ed, Counseling and/or Business

• Teacher: Student Ratio – 1:10

• Located in all college classroom buildings

• Students have access to all college facilities – Fitness Center, Bookstore, Library, Student Center, Clubs, Student Government, etc...
Approach

• Respond to what the work world wants and needs

• Develop attributes: reliability and dependability, work ethic, positive attitude

• Training for entry level careers in office/business Support – data entry, receptionists, office clerks, hospital transport, mailroom, shipping/receiving, retail support, and culinary support
Who is right for this program?

- Selective - accept 20 students each year
- Only admit for the Fall - no mid-year admissions
- Looking for students who will be successful!
  - Independent - on campus and at internship
  - NO JOB COACHES, no supervision between and after classes
  - High Motivation – the student needs to WANT it!
  - Willing to follow policies and rules
Who is right for the program?

- Screening Process determines who is accepted; application, documentation recommendations AND interview.

- Students who may not be a good match:
  - Academic Skills too high – could handle college courses with accommodations & support
  - Academic Skills too low – would struggle with our work (generally geared to 5th-8th level)
  - Need a more supportive/structured model – needs a 1:1 aide or job coach to be successful
  - Student doesn’t really WANT it!
What we are about...

➢ Demanding Program: Lots of Rules!
  o Attendance and punctuality
  o Positive attitude
  o Good Work Ethic
  o Professional Behavior

😊 GOOD NEWS... Change in Parent’s role – we deal directly with the student – grades, notices, communication, etc........

😊 KEY TO SUCCESS... Student “buys into” it, commitment, takes responsibility, meets expectations........
Internship

❖ Cornerstone of the Program

❖ On the Job Experience

❖ Two full days (7-71/2 hrs.) on Tuesday and Thursday

❖ Office and Business Support:
  Clerical, Mailroom, Shipping/Receiving, Facilities, Retail Support,
  Culinary/Food Prep, Central Distribution, and Transport.

❖ Unpaid.....why?
  Part of education – gaining valuable skills
Internship

- **Corporate Partners** – Major corporations, small companies, medical centers, government agencies, educational institutions

- **Matching Process** – How do we decide where you will be placed?
  - Area of interest
  - Location and mode of transportation
  - Previous experience

- **Locations** – Boston/Cambridge, communities around college, and Nashua/Lowell

- **Internship Interview** - in the summer to be sure it’s a good “fit”, meet the supervisor, develop job tasks, department tour, work out details...
Internship

Start date – 1st year – a few weeks after school starts:
– Practice traveling
– Review detailed information
– Most students intern at the same location for 2 semesters….then switch 2nd year to a new site
– Student visited by Program staff once every 2-3 weeks – approx. ½ hour-45 minute visit
– No job coach…..2 supervisors: on site & Transition Program staff…..staff available on campus as well
Internship – Our Expectations & WHY?

What we hear from employers...

- Dependable & Reliable
- Motivated & Positive Attitude

Our policies and why?
- Attendance & Punctuality
- Follow Dress Code
- Professional Behavior

Do students get hired by their internships?
Some of our Internship partners are:

- J’Adore Boutique
- Bedford Gym
- Bright View Assisted Living
- Bedford VA Hospital
- CAPS (Pharmacy Company)
- Division of Workforce Development
- Duraflow Corporation
- The Durkin Company
- Hanscom Air Force Base
- Lahey Clinic
- Lowell General Hospital
- LTB Insurance
- Middlesex Comm. College
- Mount Auburn Hospital
- New England Journal of Medicine
- North East Independent Living Program
- Social Security Administration
- Southern NH Medical Center
- Summer Place, Retirement Community
- True North Café
Nitty Gritty Details

✓ On Campus days – M, W, F Classes start at 8:30 PROMPTLY...in your chair!

✓ Morning classes -- 50 minutes – 10 minutes between classes. Classes end at 12:20

✓ Monday afternoons – Homework Help 12:30-1:30

✓ Monthly meeting – last Friday of the month - 12:30-1:00 - Professional of the Month, News and Student and campus activities updates
Transition Students Travel From:

- Acton, Allston, Andover, Arlington,
- Bedford, Belmont, Billerica, Bolton, Boxborough, Boxford, Burlington,
- Cambridge, Charlestown, Chelmsford, Concord,
- Dracut, Dunstable,
- Everett,
- Framingham,
- Gloucester,
- Harvard, Haverhill, Holden, Hudson,
- Ipswich,
- Lawrence, Lexington, Lowell,
- Malden, Marlborough, Medfield, Medford, Melrose, Methuen,
- Needham, North Andover, North Chelmsford, Northborough,
- Pepperell,
- Quincy,
- Randolph, Reading, Roxbury,
- Salem, Shirley, Shrewsbury, Somerville, Southboro, Sterling, Stoneham, Swampscott,
- Tewksbury, Topsfield, Townsend, Tyngsboro,
- Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Wayland, Wellesley, Wenham, West Concord, West Roxbury, Westborough, Westford, Weston, Wilmington and Winchester, MA.
- Hudson, Nashua, Pelham and Windham, NH.
More details...

**How to get here?**

- Some students drive....get here early or parking is difficult
- Car pooling – be creative
- Public Transportation:
  - From Cambridge/Arlington area - #62 bus from Alewife to VA Hospital, then MCC shuttle to campus (every 10 minutes)
  - From Lowell area – LRTA Route 13 from Kennedy Ctr to Billerica Mall; Free MCC Shuttle to campus (morning and afternoon), then MCC shuttle (one trip each way) **or** MCC inter-campus shuttle – Lowell Campus to Bedford Campus and return, every hour - free shuttle
- The Ride
Cost

**Good News** – Equivalent to 15 credit course load, currently @ $192.00/credit - MA resident (slightly higher out-of-state $212./credit) = approximately $5760./year for tuition & fees

**Not so good news** – Most financial aid doesn’t apply – non-credit program; Mass Rehab Commission may provide some support - contingent on eligibility and need status – FAFSA required for MRC consideration

**Books** – approx. $150.00 1\(^{st}\) year and $50.00 2\(^{nd}\) year
Follow-up Services...

- What happens at the end?
- 2nd year – focus on Job seeking:
  - Resume, job search, interview skills, etc...
  - Coordinate job search and support with MRC
  - Support/referral and assistance available as long as student requests help
  - Job Placement – averages 90% employed within 1 year of graduation! Students get jobs in entry level office and business support – student needs to work at job seeking!
Admissions/Application Process

- Application Process/Requirements:
  - Program and MCC application
  - Cognitive (IQ) and reading & math achievement
  - Diagnostic Interview from Psychologist
  - Transcript – diploma, or Cert. of Achievement (passing MCAS not required)
  - IEP, 3 recommendations on our forms
  - INTERVIEW - who gets an interview; who comes…..
- Looking to accept 20 candidates who will be successful in the model
Closing Comments

✓ Questions and Answers...

✓ What else would you like to know?

✓ Check out our web page:
  https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transitionprogram/