



# Disability Services Newsletter

A publication for students, faculty and staff  
at North Shore Community College

FALL 2016

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## IMPORTANT DATES

Winter/Spring Registration Opens October 31

Veteran's Day November 11

Thanksgiving recess November 24-27

Last day to drop credit course with "W" grade November 28

Day and evening classes and December 16

## Director's Corner

I am pleased to share some very important news: The name of our office will be changing at the end of the current academic semester from Disability Services to Accessibility Services. We are very excited and proud about being part of an important paradigm shift that is taking place in many colleges and universities across our nation. Our new name will place emphasis on access and equal educational opportunity which better aligns with the values and mission of our college and community.

As always, we are here to provide support to faculty, students and staff so as to provide the best possible services for our student population.

Best wishes for the remainder of your semester!

*Susan*



## Disability Services Staff

- Rita LoGrasso Agnello**, Assistive Technology Learning Specialist
- Michele Almeida**, Counselor
- Lucy Bayard**, Counselor
- Susan Graham**, Director of Disability Services
- Kendalle Jones**, Counselor
- Irene Lynch**, Disability Services Assistant
- Aillie McKeever**, Counselor
- Estelle Rand**, Disability Services Assistant
- Alena Vitvitskaya**, Assistive Technology Learning Specialist





## ***DAPI Dives into the Semester***

*By: Joseph Ruggiero*

I am the President of Delta Alpha Pi (DAPI) and a member of the Nurse Education class of 2017. DAPI is an honor society with a membership that has been growing each year since 2011 as more high-achieving students step out of the shadows of their disability and into their bright futures at NSCC.

This is a big year for DAPI. While we celebrate the literary magazine awards bestowed on two members published in last year's *Chrysalis* publication, we begin this year's project with great momentum. We are setting out to make a difference in the lives of students younger than ourselves who may need some support and encouragement through the psychological and social challenges of growing up with a disability. DAPI members will be producing a publication that targets both middle school kids and their parents to offer a guiding hand through a traditionally difficult time for kids.



By collaborating with Media Services, Instructional Technology, professors from the English and Graphic Arts departments, local middle school professionals, NSCC graphic design students, members from other chapters

of DAPI across the country, and the founder of Delta Alpha Pi, our chapter of DAPI is working hard to produce a multi-faceted project that will have a positive impact on the lives of young students in our community in a big way. We have also worked with the Grants Department at NSCC to request funding that can support this project and allow it to reach even more people.

This is the biggest and most collaborative project we've ever attempted, and we're so excited to share the results with you this spring! If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact me at [jruggiero01@northshore.edu](mailto:jruggiero01@northshore.edu). Here's to another great year of growth with Delta Alpha Pi!

## *How does closed captioning in videos benefit all learners?*

*By: Lucy Bayard*

All students benefit from closed captioning in videos, including English Language Learners, Veterans, non-traditional students, and students with disabilities. Closed captioning allows the viewer to read along with the text in the video, as well as identify key vocabulary terms, and make connections between information being heard and seen. Closed captioning was initially developed to assist individuals who are deaf or with hearing loss but is now utilized on public TV's in gyms, restaurants, and airports, as well as personal TV's, and videos online. Using closed captioning for educational videos can make a significant difference in student comprehension and retention for all learners as evidenced by a study conducted by San Francisco State University in October 2013. This study focused on the impact of closed captioning on all students' learning which differed from previous studies which focused on the impact of closed captioning for students with learning disabilities. The findings of the study are included below.

At San Francisco State University, an assistant professor of American Indian studies Robert Keith Collins, conducted a study to determine if students' test scores and comprehension would improve if captions were used while watching educational videos. The results were significant. Collins stated " This tool is often utilized for students with learning disabilities but the results show captions can be beneficial to all students." Closed captioning enables information to be processed in a way that engages and supports diverse learners to provide the best learning outcome.

He conducted his study over the course of two years. During the first year, he provided videos online without captions to establish a baseline of comprehension and engagement. Once he had an established baseline, he turned the video captions on and began to see improvements almost immediately which continued into the second year of the study. "Not only were students talking about how much having the captions helped them as they took notes, their test scores went up," Collins said. "During the baseline year, there were a lot of Cs. In the second years, they went from Cs, Ds and Fs to As, Bs and Cs. It was a really significant improvement. Class discussions also became livelier and more detailed, with students recalling specific information shown in the videos such as names of people and places. Turning on captions seems to enable students to focus and retain specific information."

How are the findings of this study relevant to your course design and teaching? Please feel free to share your thoughts and best practices with Disability Services to include in future publications.

For additional information, please visit:

[http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/latest\\_news/captions/captions-improve-learning-study](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/latest_news/captions/captions-improve-learning-study)

## ***Assistive Technology Labs at NSCC***

*By: Alena Vitvitskaya*

Assistive technology is defined as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities" (U.S. Congress, 1998).

### ***Examples of assistive technology used in Assistive Technology Labs in Lynn and Danvers:***

- Students with reduced hand dexterity can use a keyboard with large keys, a track ball mouse with programmable buttons for easier input of information and interaction with a computer, and Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software to operate a computer hands-free via voice commands.
- Eligible students with visual impairments can use ZoomText screen magnifier, Optelec ClearView large screen CCTV, JAWS screen reader, Perkins braille, OpenBook scanning and reading software, and also get free access to Learning Ally collection of human-narrated audio textbooks and literature.
- Approved students with dyslexia and learning disabilities can use Kurzweil 3000/Firefly text-to-speech support while reading, writing and test taking and also take the program home to be installed on their personal PC or Mac.
- Students in wheel chairs can adjust the desk to a desired height with a single button push on an accessible table.
- Students who are hard of hearing may borrow FM systems from the Assistive Technology Labs for the full length of a semester and for as many semesters as they need.

### ***The Assistive Technology Labs locations:***

Lynn: LW-116

Danvers: DH-161

### ***Hours of operation:***

Fall and Winter/Spring semesters

Monday through Friday

9 am to 2 pm

Adaptive Lab is closed during summer semesters.

### ***Services:***

In the Labs, Learning Specialists provide the following services to eligible students including:

- Assessment of assistive technology needs
- Demonstration of assistive technology
- Training, support and troubleshooting in the use of assistive software and equipment
- Reservation of lab time for tests and walk-in for homework assignments
- Free black-and-white and color printing.



## *The Five W's of E-Text*

*By: Michele Almeida*

### **Who** is approved for E-Text?

To be eligible for the e-text accommodation, also known as alternative format textbooks, the student must be registered with Disability Services and present current documentation that verifies a visual, learning or physical disability which significantly impacts the student's ability to use standard textbooks. This may include, but is not limited to, students who are blind or have low vision; students with dyslexia, or students with mobility disorders such as cerebral palsy.

### **What** is E-Text?

An e-text or, electronic text, is a document that is read in digital form. An e-book is a digital version of a published and printed book. E-text and e-books can be read on computer screens, laptops, e-book readers, and smartphones. E-text files are available as PDFs, Word documents, or plain text files, as well as epub formats for use on readers, tablets and smartphones. Students receiving this accommodation may also request audio versions of their texts, most often in MP3 format.

### **When** do students activate the alternative format accommodation?

Students are strongly encouraged to request alternative format files for their required textbooks as soon as they have finalized their schedule. Because e-text files can take up to four weeks or more to arrive, it is vital that the student activate this accommodation as soon as possible. Additionally, it is important that textbook information be available to students as early as possible, to ensure the most timely delivery of this accommodation.

### **Where** can students obtain e-text files?

Here at NSCC, e-text requests are made primarily through the [AccessText Network](#), [Learning Ally](#), and [Bookshare](#). Many publications which are out of copyright are available via [Project Gutenberg](#). Students then utilize assistive technology, such as text-to-speech programs, to access the printed material. As of October, **106** individual alternative format textbook requests have been submitted by students for the fall semester. An exciting new chapter in accessible text formats, one which is becoming more popular for students as well as faculty, is open educational resources, or OER's. OER's are educational materials available in the public domain or through an open license. Materials ranging from textbooks to lecture notes and videos can be: used, copied, adapted and re-shared. OER's provide free access to textbooks for students and are an important alternative to expensive textbooks. For faculty, OER's offer free and legal access to materials and the opportunity to adapt them to individual class structures and varied learning styles. Please contact [Andrea Milligan](#), Director of Distance Learning and Institutional Technology, if you would like more information about utilizing OER's in your courses!

### **Why** is e-text important?

The use of e-text and assistive technologies allows students with disabilities to fully access course materials. This will not only ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act but will also allow the student to have a full and inclusive academic experience as well as provide the student with a format which allows them to process

## *Relaxing with Water*

*By: Estelle Rand*

Demanding schedules and cooler weather are great motivation to find things that aid in relaxation and health. I find that water, in many of its forms offers simple ways to de-stress and feel good; hot water being my personal favorite.

In addition to just keeping hydrated here are some suggestions for how water can help you feel good about yourself, relieve stress, and be that treat that you look forward to when you need it the most. Also, check out this list of [101 ways to chill out and reduce stress](#); water related activities made the list eight times!

**Hot Tea** – What I love about tea: you can drink it all day and night without concern for caffeine (try herbal teas for no caffeine); Hot water can be found just about anywhere – bring your own mug and a bag of tea and just use the hot water from the cafeteria; Tea is a quick way of doing something special for myself; The hot water and holding the hot mug is physically comforting inside and out.

**Hot Water** - Soaking in the tub or even just making time for a shower before you leave the house gives you the opportunity to relax *and* take care of yourself at the same time. Also, try just drinking plain hot water for instant relaxation during the day, you will be surprised at how comforting the warmth can be on a stressful day.

**Swimming** – A coworker recently inspired me to try swimming for exercise and I love it! As exercise swimming is a low impact, cardio and strength training activity. There are also studies that show that just being in the water reduces stress levels by promoting blood flow to the brain and entire body. Give yourself a treat by getting a day pass to one of the YMCAs and get in the pool.

[YMCAs of the North Shore: Pool Schedules](#)  
[Lynn Pool Schedule](#)

**Water sounds** - Take in the natural, meditative atmosphere of the ocean or a river. Just being near natural bodies of water can help us experience the vastness of life, putting our minds and emotions in



## *Time Management for College Students*

*By: Kendalle Jones*

Time management is a significant struggle place for many individuals in all walks of life. College students are definitely no exception. At this time of year as midterms, finals, work, and family obligations are looming, students can wonder how survival is possible and consider the implications of just one more cup of coffee and one less hour of precious sleep. Read these sentences over several times: I WILL SURVIVE! THERE IS HOPE!

In the face of life's challenges, the key to success is time management. Below is a list of strategies to employ to make life seem more doable:

1. Breathe
2. Get a calendar or planner that has enough room to write down several daily activities. Smart phones with calendars, apps, or PDA are also great options.
3. Set aside time to read through syllabi, class calendars, and work schedules. Write down times for classes, due dates for assignments and work schedules in the calendar. Know exactly what is expected and when it is due. These should be all the activities that have set times and cannot be changed.
4. Next, fill in flexible activities that can be completed between classes and work schedules like studying time, naps (don't laugh), meals, laundry, etc... The point is that EVERYTHING is written down in the calendar.
5. Schedule time to RELAX. It is important to take care of oneself. A calendar may go from 7:30am – 10pm but that does not mean a person can't! 30 minute breaks can be surprisingly rejuvenating or take several 10 minute breaks throughout the course of the day.
6. Allow for some flexibility. Unexpected activities occur often. Make sure schedules allow for some flexibility.
7. Plan ahead. Assignments or projects that require more than one sitting to accomplish will need extra planning. Work backwards from the due date and schedule specific, intentional times in the calendar to work on the assignment or project.
8. DON'T PROCRASTINATE! Accomplish tasks in a timely manner so as to not get bogged down and overwhelmed later.
8. This is a tough one. Learn to say NO. Practice saying it now. "NOOOOO!!!" It is okay to not attend every social function or to simply take some "me time."
9. Schedule time for rewards. Midterms are over. A huge project was completed. Take time to celebrate.

***"The bad news is that time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."***  
*-Michael Altahuler*

Is there a topic you would like to see covered in a future newsletter?  
Kindly send your ideas to [disability@northshore.edu](mailto:disability@northshore.edu)  
We look forward to hearing from you!