INTRODUCTION

Suzy previously attended Ace Academy from kindergarten through her freshman year and is currently repeating the ninth grade at Proctor Academy. In the fifth grade, Suzy was referred for a neuropsychological evaluation due to difficulties with attention and memory. There were no significant weaknesses that emerged in the evaluation; however, there were relative weaknesses in some aspects of executive functioning. Intermittent coaching to handle the demands of middle school were suggested as well as cognitive-behavioral techniques to manage her anxiety. Suzy was re-evaluated in 2009, because she was considering a transfer to a new high school and concerns were raised about her ability to process and learn information because of her difficulties keeping up with the rigors of high school. Findings of this most recent evaluation reveal “Suzy does have a disability characterized by weak executive functions, including organization and processing speed” (Johnson, 2009). Her level of anxiety has impacted her learning because she is very prone to perfectionist characteristics and will second-guess herself even when she is right. Suzy has significant strengths with her working memory and verbal skills. She enjoys dance, theater, music, her friends, and fashion.

CURRENT STUDY SKILLS

Suzy has a working knowledge of study skills and has had exposure to some learning strategies. She will benefit from continued direct instruction of skills, strategies, and approaches that best suit her kinesthetic learning style. Much of the focus of Suzy’s Learning Skills classes has been to enhance her current skill set and, based on her learning strengths and affinities, the application of new skills. Suzy learns best in an interactive classroom setting with a parts-to-whole teaching approach. Because she has difficulty grasping new concepts, she will benefit if concepts are taught in relation to what she already knows. She will also benefit by applying new conceptual ideas to real-life situations. Suzy needs significant repetition and learns best when she devises a song or mnemonic device to aid her memory. In class, Suzy’s slow processing speed and weak organizational skills make taking class notes challenging. She should always check her notes with a peer to add information she may have missed. In addition, she should use audio whenever possible for longer and more complex literature assignments. Listening to the text will help her to increase her reading rate and learn new vocabulary words. She should continue to combine these strategies whenever possible during Learning Skills classes such as when she reviews information for Biology, French, and literature classes.

Suzy has been encouraged to use a daily prioritizing system in her planner in addition to the Podium listing of daily assignments. Because Suzy has such a demanding course load, she has struggled at times to complete all of her work in the two-hour time provided. After midterms, Suzy
reported that she has been more successful arriving early for study hall. As she learns to use her time more wisely, Suzy will internalize planning strategies and understand their importance. Suzy reports that she prefers to study in her room on her bed. She enjoys working alone and has no specific order for the homework that she does except sometimes she orders subjects according to which class comes first the next day. She reports that she can get distracted, so she studies material in small portions and takes frequent breaks. Suzy is working to avoid distractions by closing her computer and turning off her phone during study time.

Learning Skills time has been spent working on the following strategies: planning, organizing, prioritizing, studying, making flash cards and taking notes, brainstorming for papers, bulleting main ideas, learning active reading strategies and discussing character traits in literature. The goal is to help Suzy understand how to implement these strategies without prompting so she can work independently. Suzy’s challenge is to respond to questions in depth. She tends to only scratch the literal surface of questions and needs to spend more time thinking about how she can evaluate and synthesize information that she learns during class discussions to broaden and deepen her comprehension.

Suzy currently prefers to work independently in Learning Skills classes. In order for Suzy to reap the full benefits of the program, she will need to open up and divulge her weaker areas and show her work. Until she recognizes that this will help her to attain her goals, she will continue to pretend that all is well and will end up being frustrated when she gets her grades. It is advised that Suzy come to Learning Skills each day with specific questions about her academics so she can practice the skill of self-advocating and participate fully in her learning.

TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Suzy understands the word processor and its features, can use e-mail, Instant Messaging, the Digital Campus, and can save her work to the Student Server. She types at an average speed and uses the editing programs appropriately. She understands how to access the library resources and the Podium database. Suzy knows how to use her mailbox and understands how to access and use her IDs and passwords.

WRITING SAMPLE

The writing sample used for this informal assessment was a piece that Suzy wrote during a Learning Skills tutorial on October 16, 2009. She received no assistance on the development of the paper and completed the task in fifteen minutes. Suzy was given three options for her writing sample and chose to write a letter to a friend describing her experiences at Proctor so far.

Suzy’s letter was informal, and she used slang in her sentences, such as “I wanna hear about it.” Although she included a salutation, she wrote in one continuous paragraph with no indentations and used short, concise sentences. Although her letter contained no spelling errors, she overused the exclamation mark in six of eight sentences. In addition, she used the words “cool” and “nice” to describe her teachers and friends and gave no detailed information concerning her experiences at school so far. Instead, she tells her friend she misses her and looks forward to seeing her during Thanksgiving break, and she closes the letter with her signature.

In summary, the results of this informal writing sample indicate that Suzy would benefit from assistance understanding the question of the assignment and receiving help with regard to the organization and development of her ideas. When thinking about applying these skills in the classroom, she needs help with editing and proofreading and needs to make certain that all of her
papers are turned in to her specialist prior to deadlines in order to get feedback and help with the process.

**CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**  
Administered: 10/09  
By: Sally Smith, M.Ed., Learning Specialist

Suzy was observed in her French 2 class during the third block of the day on Friday (10:55-11:50 am). The classroom was set up in a “U” shape, and Suzy sat facing the board near the center of the “U.” Class began in French with a discussion of how the class period would be spent. Students would count off and give their oral presentations in order. Students prepared Power Point presentations of a French restaurant of their choice. They had requirements that it be from six to nine pages and needed to include maps, entrees or à la carte menus, location, chef’s name and founder, and any other information that the audience might be interested in. Suzy was prepared for the presentation and, although not confident, spoke in French about her restaurant. She had the minimum of six pages and offered menu and prices in English and dollars rather than in French and Euros. She made no effort to speak the French names in the menu, although she probably could have. She listed three items from the menu in French, but they were all basic French words and were not optimal examples of vocabulary for a French 2 class. Overall, Suzy contributed at an average level. She did pay attention throughout all of the presentations and was conscientious about taking notes toward the end of class when her teacher reviewed irregular verbs. In summary, this class is a good placement for Suzy. She was engaged in the class, participated, and seemed to feel comfortable with the teaching style.

**TESTING**

Achievement:

WECHSLER INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT TEST – 2ND EDITION (WIAT II)  
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By:  

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GRAY ORAL READING TEST – 4TH EDITION (GORT-4)  
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Cognitive:  

WECHSLER INTELLIGENCE SCALE FOR CHILDREN – 4TH EDITION (WISC-IV)
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<td>Full Scale IQ</td>
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WIDE RANGE ASSESSMENT OF MEMORY AND LEARNING – 2 (WRAML-2)
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SUMMARY

As a result of current and previous testing, observation, and Suzy’s own comments, we can draw the following conclusions:

**Strengths:** Suzy’s cognitive strengths include her exceptionally strong working memory and strong verbal abilities. In addition, she enjoys above average non-verbal reasoning abilities and good basic reading skills. Suzy is kind, compassionate, and humble. As a student, she works hard to be successful and is conscientious. Her creative energies emerge when she engages in dance and theater. She also enjoys fashion design and volunteering.
**Weaknesses:** Suzy’s learning differences include weaknesses with executive functioning skills and slow processing speed. Her difficulties managing visual details, learning abstract concepts, and her ability to infer information all undermine efforts when she attempts to learn new information. Suzy can become overwhelmed and anxious when confronted with too much information and has a difficult time sorting out essential from non-essential details, prioritizing, and organizing information. Although Suzy does not have an ADHD diagnosis, she does have difficulties maintaining sustained attention and concentration.

**GOALS FOR YEAR**

**SUZY WILL IMPROVE HER TIME MANAGEMENT AND STUDY SKILLS BY:**
1. Using a plan book in which all academic and extra-curricular assignments and commitments are kept in order to plan study time and time outside of class.
2. Applying active learning strategies.
3. Learning strategies to increase focus and concentration in class as well as on class work.
4. Having homework monitored by her learning specialist and checked for review.

**SUZY WILL IMPROVE HER READING SKILLS BY:**
1. Discussing content after reading to clarify understanding.
2. Using audio books/CDs for especially lengthy or challenging readings.
3. Using study guides and Spark Notes or Cliff’s Notes to aid in understanding of literature.

**SUZY WILL IMPROVE HER WRITING SKILLS BY:**
1. Planning essays by using prewriting techniques such as brainstorming and discussion.
2. Allowing enough time to develop, revise, and proofread papers.
3. Finding a classmate or teacher to comment on the rough drafts prior to completing the final draft.

**SUZY WILL IMPROVE HER TEST-TAKING SKILLS BY:**
1. Creating her own study guides using the information her teachers provide so she can review for tests several days ahead. This step will significantly reduce anxiety.
2. Looking through test questions and responding to those she knows first. She should work on the essay questions first and outline her main points. Prior to passing in her test, she should review all written work for errors such as spelling, mechanics, and grammar.
3. Advocating for testing accommodations.

**SUZY WILL IMPROVE HER EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS BY:**
1. Setting meaningful short- and long-term goals during class, by the term, and by the year. Suzy will be a part of the assessment of these goals on a regular basis.
2. Being able to verbalize what went well as a strategy for learning and what did not; assessing a plan for the future.
3. Learning effective self-monitoring skills and strategies.
STUDENT PROFILE INFORMATION

LD DOCUMENTATION: 2/09, A. Johnson, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist. Executive Functioning Disorder - “…characterized by weak executive functions, including organization and processing speed.”

ADD/ADHD DOCUMENTATION: 2/09, A. Johnson, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist. “Suzy appears to have difficulty with sustained attention and concentration. It is not entirely clear whether Suzy’s difficulties are due, in part, to an Attention Hyperactivity Disorder, Inattentive Type.”

LEARNs BEST WHEN:
1. All assignments are prioritized so extra time can be allowed for organizing reading and written work which will take longer to complete.
2. Assistance is given in breaking down larger chunks of information into smaller units to assist with organization.
3. Clear expectations for homework and class policies are discussed and implemented.
4. She has good visual contact with all of her teachers, away from potential distractions.
5. She attends all extra-help sessions in all academic classes.
6. She uses a computer for editing and revising.
7. Individual instruction and structure is provided.
8. She verbally processes concepts and what she has read as often as possible to ensure comprehension.
9. Active reading strategies are used for all assignments involving reading.
10. Class begins with a preview of material and an outline is provided for topic of instruction.
11. She uses simple relaxation techniques to relieve anxiety.
12. She arranges for a note taker, taped notes, or asks for teacher-generated notes to be given in advance.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS SUPPORTED BY DOCUMENTATION:
1. 100% extended testing time.
2. Use of computer for written work and note taking in class.
3. Access to audio texts.
4. Alternative testing environment to minimize anxiety and distractions.

LEARNING STYLE: Suzy is an enthusiastic, creative, caring, hard-working young woman with conscientious work habits. Her learning challenges include executive functioning skills: planning, prioritizing, time management, and organization. She can get lost in the details and has trouble seeing the big picture. She can experience anxiety in testing situations and, in particular, when put on the spot in the classroom. Suzy has superior verbal and strong nonverbal abilities that have helped her keep up with academic demands. Suzy learns best by doing. She will excel if encouraged to participate in small study groups and if she is an active and regular participant at extra-help sessions. Suzy learns by hearing others discuss ideas and concepts; she needs to be encouraged to risk offering her voice in the classroom.
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:
1. Prioritize assignments so extra time is allowed for organizing the tasks that take longer to complete.
2. Communicate with your teachers prior to testing day in order to seek other arrangements, if necessary.
3. Attend all extra-help sessions.
4. Keep an organized and up-to-date planner.
5. Communicate difficulties in classes early on in order to receive help.
6. Practice active reading strategies.
7. Work with specialist and teachers to organize and pre-write ideas for writing assignments.
8. Utilize the computer to write, edit, and revise all papers.
9. Find ways to relax that are enjoyable to you so you can alleviate some of the academic/social pressure.