

Teaching Students With Learning Disabilities

Definition

A learning disability is a neurological disorder that interferes with the brain's ability to receive, process, store, produce and/or respond to information. Learning disabilities can affect an individual's ability to read, write, listen, speak, reason, recall and/or organize information, compute math and can also affect an individual's attention, motor skills, social skills, behavior and emotional maturity. Individuals with learning disabilities often have average to above average intelligence. These individuals may have one, isolated learning problem or several overlapping learning disabilities that impair their ability to learn in conventional ways.

Characteristics and Educational Implications

- Letters and words may be written or pronounced backwards
- Deficits in word recognition and vocabulary
- Difficulty organizing ideas and information
- Difficulty storing ideas in memory
- Difficulty following a sequence of steps and applying reason
- Slow reading speed
- Illegible handwriting

Suggestions and Instructional Strategies for Faculty

- Capitalize on the student's strengths.
- Provide structure.
- Provide clear guidelines and expectations about the course.
- Provide reading lists ahead of time.

- Introduce key concepts and vocabulary at the beginning of new units of study.
- Make sure directions are given step by step. Give directions both verbally and in writing.
- Introduce a variety of study strategies that will reinforce significant concepts.
- Summarize information as it is being taught.
- Allow time to review and clarify concepts presented in class.
- Combine lectures with classroom demonstration, visuals and videos.
- Provide feedback, such as error analysis of tests.
- Work together with the student and the Disability Resource Center to ensure a successful learning experience for the student.

Possible Academic Accommodations

- Reduced course load
- Extended exam time
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Access to class notes/note taker
- Use of tape recorder for lectures
- Access to a computer with spell and grammar check
- Alternative testing arrangements/test space
- Clarification of questions on tests/exams

This document is a compilation of resources from CCDI, NCLD, NICHY, NJCLD and UCI



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