



DISABILITY TRAINING NETWORK

TIP SHEET

Working with College Students who have Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities are often referred to as “invisible disabilities.” Learning disabilities do not manifest themselves as readily as a physical disability. Nonetheless, they are very real disabilities to a struggling college student. There is no “typical” student with learning disabilities. Each student is unique and may experience difficulty in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, oral language, math, organizational and study skills, interpersonal skills. No one student will exhibit all of these problems and all will possess many positive qualities. While addressing the student’s particular areas of difficulty, it is important to emphasize their abilities.

Problem areas for college students with LD:

- Describing simple objects and defining them
- Sequencing thoughts in logical order
- Recall of information; deficient memory skills
- Inadequate reading skills
- Writing skills are often inconsistent with verbal abilities
- Sloppy handwriting
- Poor spelling
- Skipping steps in a given process
- Reversing numbers or misaligning numbers in a column
- Confusing left/right
- Missing portions of stated directions
- Organizing notes; sorting major points
- Maintaining attention

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Tips for working with college students with learning disabilities:

- Use a multi-media/multi-sensory approach whenever possible
- Review material from last lecture
- Start the day's lecture with a summary of what will be covered
- Clarify major concepts/terminology, both orally and visually
- Avoid using lots of jargon
- Provide a detailed syllabus
- Provide repetition of information
- Personalize information
- Give frequent quizzes
- Test in a variety of formats, when possible
- Provide lecture outlines
- Use concrete presentations
- Teach definitions and terms carefully
- **Remember, good teaching benefits ALL students!**

Things to remember about students with learning disabilities:

- They have average or above-average intelligence.
- They have a pattern of uneven abilities.
- Learning disabilities are processing problems presumed to be due to a central nervous system dysfunction.
- A learning disability is permanent.

For more information on the topic of teaching and working with students who have learning disabilities, please contact your campus' disability services office or the DTN.



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