# LEARNING DISABILITIES

**(LD)**

Learning Disabilities refer to a variety of disorders that affect the acquisition, retention, understanding, organization, or use of verbal and/or non-verbal information. Learning disabilities deficits can range from mild to severe and invariably interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following skills:

* Oral language (i.e. listening, speaking, understanding)
* Reading (i.e. decoding, comprehension)
* Written language (i.e. spelling, written expression)
* Mathematics (i.e. computation, problem-solving)

#### Facts about Learning Disabilities

* + A Learning Disability (LD) is a permanent disorder which affects the manner in which information is processed, stored, or retrieved. It is not a form of retardation, an emotional disorder, or caused by environmental deficits.
  + Every student with a learning disability has a unique combination of abilities and deficiencies.
* Students with learning disabilities have normal to above average intelligence and can learn successfully when individualized self-management skills and strategies are implemented and accommodation is provided.
* Learning disabilities are often inconsistent in their manifestation. For example, a student with a learning disability may have perfect verbal understanding and articulation and yet not be able to successfully grasp written instructions. In addition, LD students may be able to effectively perform a skill one day, but not the next.
* Students with learning disabilities can easily become frustrated because their “invisible handicap” is often not understood or accepted by others. Often, students with learning disabilities have low self-esteem and impaired socialization skills which impacts their daily life activities.

#### Common Characteristics of LD College Students

***Reading Skills:***

* + Reading rate is slow
  + Comprehension and retention are poor
  + Difficulty in identifying key points
  + Incomplete mastery of phonics and confusion of similar words
  + Difficulty in learning new vocabulary and technical terms

***Written Language Skills:***

* + Faulty sentence structure
  + Frequent spelling errors
  + Miscopying of information from book or blackboard
  + Writing speed is slowed
  + Penmanship is poor (especially cursive)
  + Writing and thinking in unison are difficulty

### Oral Language Skills:

* + Poor concentration affect comprehension of oral language
  + Expressing ideas and finding correct word is difficult
  + Mispronunciation of multi- syllable words
  + Inability to sequence events
  + Tendency to “tune out” when spoken word is not understood

### Mathematical Skills:

* + - Incomplete mastery of basic arithmetic facts
    - Reversal of numbers
    - Incorrect copying of math problems
    - Sequence of operation out of order
    - Difficulty in comprehending concepts and reasoning

### Organizational/Study Skills:

* Poor time management;
* Difficulty in starting and completing tasks
* Unrealistic goals; strives for overachievement to compensate
* Limited recall and retention of information; difficulty in organizing information
* Difficulty when understanding oral and/or written information; especially new concepts
* Poor organization of class notes and compositions

### Social Skills:

* Inaccurate use of body language and facial expression per situation; poor self-monitoring
* Misunderstanding of subtle messages and behavior (i.e. sarcasm and teasing)
* Difficulty and frustration when working in groups
* Failure to accurately assess environment; results in inappropriate conclusions/poor judgment
* Unable to receive constructive criticism; viewed as attack of self-worth

#### Suggestions to help LD students succeed in the classroom

* Provide a detailed course outline. Thoroughly present class expectations and requirements
* Begin class lectures with a brief summary of materials to be covered for that day
* Speak directly to students; use gestures and provide examples
* Highlight key points of lecture
* Write new or technical vocabulary on the blackboard; use terms in context to aid student’s understanding
* Provide regular progress reports throughout the semester
* Provide opportunity for questions during each class session if possible

### For further information contact:

***Disability Services (located in the Campbell***

***Learning Resource Center C- 21 8)***

***(734) 384- 41 67***

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