



Moorpark College ACCESS

Learning Disabilities



Overview

A **learning disability** is a neurological disorder that affects how individuals with average or above average intelligence take in, retain, and express information. A learning disability is not a disorder that a person outgrows. Learning disabilities should not be equated with intellectual or emotional disabilities, although learning disabilities can coexist with other conditions.

Possible challenges:

- **Reading Skills** – slow reading rate, difficulty understanding material, skipping words or lines
- **Writing Skills** – difficulty with sentence structure, spelling and proofreading, poor handwriting, slow written production
- **Oral Language Skills** – difficulties may include concentrating on and comprehending spoken language, oral expression, speaking grammatically correct English, and following oral directions
- **Mathematical Skills** – incomplete mastery of basic facts, reversing numbers (e.g. 123 to 321 or 231), confusing operational symbols, copying problems incorrectly, difficulty understanding concepts
- **Organization and Study Skills** – time management/organization difficulties, inability to recall what has been taught, difficulty preparing for and taking tests
- **Attention and Concentration** – trouble focusing, fluctuating attention span, easily distracted, hyperactivity
- **Social Skills** – inability to detect social cues, lowered self-esteem
- **Visual-Motor Skills** – difficulty copying from the board, poor memory for visual material, poor spatial judgment/awareness.
- **Time Management** – difficulty planning and prioritizing, switching tasks
- **Memory** – difficulty retaining information, poor retrieval skills, poor visual or auditory memory

For more information:

Learning Disabilities Association of America

<https://bit.ly/2cVrVSq>

Suggestions for instructors:

- Keep instructions as brief and uncomplicated as possible.
- Clearly define course requirements, grading criteria, exam dates and assignment due dates. Provide reminders and advance notice of any changes.
- Present material using multiple modalities (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic).
- Start each lecture with a brief outline of material to be covered that period, and at the conclusion of class, briefly summarize key points.
- Present new or technical vocabulary on the board, using PowerPoint, or on handouts. Use terms in context to convey meaning.
- Give assignments both orally and in written form to avoid confusion.
- Announce reading assignments well in advance for students who are using recorded materials.
- Allow time for clarification of directions and essential information.
- Provide study guides or review sheets for exams.
- Facilitate student use of approved accommodations.
- Stress organization and ideas rather than mechanics when grading in-class writing assignments.
- Encourage use of campus support services (tutoring, writing center, health center, etc.)
- Refer students who are struggling to ACCESS for Learning Disability assessment (if not already registered with ACCESS).

Common accommodations include: alternative text formats (e-text), recording of lectures, peer note-takers, additional time for test-taking in distraction-reduced environment, use of computer, spelling and grammar check, assistive software, and calculator on exams.