

Making the Classroom Friendly for the Learning Disabled Student

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Accommodating students with learning disabilities (LD) in the regular classroom setting can be challenging. It is important that the accommodations fit the individual child's needs, but also be reasonable in relation to the regular educator's time and effort. Types of accommodations involve student materials, instruction, and performance.



Accommodations for Student Materials

- Present work in chunks (smaller amounts). Give three to four pieces of new information at a time. Be sure that the child understands these concepts before presenting more new information.
- Cover parts of the whole (e.g., cover all the rows of math problems on a page allowing the student to complete one row at a time.) This will lessen the student's level of anxiety concerning the task.
- State directions in a variety of ways (orally and written). Ask student to rephrase directions in his/her own words to ensure that they understand the task.

Accommodations During Instruction

- Maintain daily routines. Students with LD perform better when they know what's coming next in their daily routine. If you anticipate a change in schedule, give plenty of advance notice! For example, "In about ten minutes, we are going to an assembly."
- For students with a written expression learning disability, provide a copy of class notes and study guides.
- Present material visually, verbally, and with as much hands-on experience as possible.
- Teach using small, sequential steps. Many students with LD require part-to-whole instruction. For example, when teaching a student long division, focus on each step in the process (for example, first decide how many times four goes into twelve).
- Use mnemonic instruction. Mnemonics are strategies that help us remember information. For example, when proofreading written work, teachers may encourage students to remember the "COPS" strategy (**C**apitalization, **O**rganization, **P**unctuation, **S**pelling).
- Prior to a lesson, write key words and new vocabulary on the chalkboard/overhead. Go over these words and what they mean before presenting them in reading text.

- Review, review, review! Daily review is essential to remembering and understanding information.
- Repeat directions often. It is important to give a nonverbal (clap hands) or verbal (“Listen, everyone. This is something you need to know.”) cues before you give directions.

Accommodations for Student Performance

- For older students, provide an outline of the lecture prior to the lesson.
- Change the required response mode. Allow the student to tape record answers. Students with handwriting difficulty may require extra space between lines or a word processor.
- Preferential seating – This means that the student is seated in the best position in the classroom for him/her to learn. Generally, this is the seat closest to the teacher.
- Use assignment books; enlist a helpful peer to check assignments for accuracy.
- Reduce copying requirements or use carbon copy paper when taking notes.
- Allow students with writing difficulties to type responses.
- Reduce assignments (e.g., modify a 20 vocabulary word list per week to a 10 vocabulary word list).
- Allow students to complete oral projects instead of written projects or vice-versa, depending on his/her need.

References: Mercer, Cecil & Mercer, Ann. Teaching Students with Learning Problems-5th Edition. 1998.



Name

Date