

CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Typical characteristics of students with Learning Disabilities are listed below. Each student has a variety of characteristics depending on the nature of their disability. No one student has all of these problems.

Reading Skills

- ◆ Slow reading rate.
- ◆ Uneven comprehension and retention.
- ◆ Difficulty identifying important points and themes.
- ◆ Incomplete mastery of phonics and confusion of similar words.
- ◆ Skips words or lines of printed material.
- ◆ Difficulty reading for long periods of time.

Written Language Skills

- ◆ Difficulty planning a topic and organizing thoughts on paper.
- ◆ Difficulty with sentence structure or grammar.
- ◆ Frequent spelling errors.
- ◆ Difficulty proofreading written work.
- ◆ Compositions are often limited in length.
- ◆ Slow written production.
- ◆ Poor penmanship (e.g., poorly formed letters, incorrect use of capitalization, trouble with spacing, overly large handwriting).
- ◆ Difficulty copying correctly from a book or the blackboard.

Oral Language Skill

- ◆ Difficulty concentrating on or comprehending complex language.
- ◆ Difficulty expressing understood concepts.
- ◆ Trouble telling a story in the proper sequence
- ◆ Difficulty following oral or written directions.

Mathematical Skills

- ◆ Incomplete mastery of basic facts (e.g., multiplication tables).
- ◆ Reverses numbers (e.g., 123 to 321 or 231).
- ◆ Confuses operational symbols, (e.g. + and x)
- ◆ Copies problems incorrectly from one line to another.
- ◆ Difficulty recalling the sequence of operations.
- ◆ Difficulty comprehending word problems.
- ◆ Difficulty understanding key concepts.

Organizational and Study Skills

- ◆ Difficulty with organizational skills.
- ◆ Time management difficulties.
- ◆ Difficulty starting and completing tasks.
- ◆ Repeated difficulties, on a day-to-day basis, recalling what has been taught.
- ◆ Lack of overall organization in taking notes.
- ◆ Difficulty interpreting charts and graphs.
- ◆ Difficulty integrating several sources of information.
- ◆ Difficulty preparing for and taking test.

Attention and Concentration

- ◆ Trouble focusing and sustaining attention on academic tasks.
- ◆ Fluctuating attention span during lectures.
- ◆ Easily distracted by outside stimuli.
- ◆ Difficulty juggling multiple tasks demands and overloads quickly.
- ◆ Hyperactivity and excessive movement.

Social Skills

Some adults with Learning Disabilities have social skills problems due to their inconsistent perceptual abilities. These individuals may:

- ◆ Have difficulty detecting the difference between sincere and sarcastic comments.
- ◆ Have difficulty recognizing subtle changes in tone of voice.
- ◆ Have difficulty interpreting nonverbal messages or nonverbal cues.
- ◆ Make inappropriate comments or social blunders, which seem "off".
- ◆ Ask questions that seem to be implicitly clear to others.
- ◆ Have trouble meeting people or working cooperatively with others.