ACCOMMODATING ADULT STUDENTS

WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

OACES

Office of Adult & Career Education Services
Rochester City School District

Let's get to work.

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WHAT IS ADULT EDUCATION?

Adult Education is instruction, often at no cost, for adult students who want to improve their employability, education, or English language skills. Adult Education programs offer basic reading, writing, math, and problem-solving classes, English language lessons, employment preparation and training, Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) preparation, and other basic educational services for adult students. Adult Education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) as well as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL / ESL).

Adult Education programs are for adults 16 years of age and older who are not in school, who have academic skills below the 12th grade level, and/or who need help learning English. The goal of Adult Education is to help adults reach their full potential as workers, family members, and citizens.

Adult Education is funded in part by the federal and state governments, with local and community support. Many programs receive grant funding from private and corporate sources. The New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) unit oversees Adult Education programs in New York. ACCES works with public schools, community-based organizations, colleges, correctional facilities, and other agencies to provide Adult Education services.

In Rochester, the Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES) is a workforce preparation organization that helps adult students learn the skills they need for success in the workplace and outside the classroom.

With unique focus on the education and employment needs of New York State's adult citizens, several vital interests and goals can be best served through:

• Ensuring that the needs of adults and out-of-school youth are met through efficient and effective access to relevant services, programs, and opportunities offered by the NYSED.

• Encouraging full participation of adults with disabilities.

• Enhancing post-secondary transitions by developing the capacity of individuals to engage in post-secondary education leading to high-quality employment opportunities.

• Promoting workforce investment through unified collaboration with the New York State Department of Labor and State and local Workforce Investment Boards to assure that individuals have access to a "one-stop" source for a full range of services leading to high-quality employment opportunities.

• Supporting individuals experiencing poverty and relying on public services to develop their capacity to earn income and develop assets toward greater economic independence.

• Utilizing a more comprehensive and effective representation for adults in coordinating services and program initiatives with New York State agencies such as the Departments of Labor and Health, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the Office of Children and Family Services, and the State University of New York (SUNY).

There are multiple literacies addressed by Adult Education.

• Survival Literacy

• Oral/Speaking and Written Literacy

• Cultural/Social and Civic Literacy

• Workplace and Employment Literacy

• Health Literacy

• Financial Literacy

• Technological and Digital/Electronic Literacy

• Geographic Literacy

• Media Literacy

• Environmental Literacy

• Scientific Literacy

The importance of each of these literacies in an individual's life varies based on specific circumstances. They all, however, have the potential to greatly affect the life of every adult and his/her family. Literacy begins within the family and is reinforced,

whether positively or negatively, in subsequent generations. Adult Education seeks to reinforce, promote, and support literacy to help adults reach their full potential as workers, family members, and citizens and in turn continue the cycle of literacy into the future.

Adult Education provides for the Community in numerous ways:

• Adult Education programs benefit businesses, workers, and job seekers. Businesses encourage Adult Education in order to provide and sustain a highly skilled and specialized workforce   a workforce with the skills to perform a variety of tasks or workers with "cross-functional" skills. Workers may receive promotions, gain more power in the job market, or become more valuable employees by enrolling in Adult Education programs.

• Adult Education training facilities often house state-of-the-art equipment such as computers and computer-based training equipment.

• Adult Education programs benefit families. Increased literacy and skills translate to a higher earnings potential for the household. Parents' literacy levels directly correlate to their children's educational success (according to the National Center for Families Learning).

ACCOMMODATING ADULT STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Defining Accommodations

Accommodations is a long word to describe a different way of doing something.

The term can be defined as "any change to a classroom environment or task that permits a qualified individual with a disability to participate in the classroom process, to perform the essential tasks of the class, or to enjoy benefits and privileges of classroom participation equal to those enjoyed by adult students without disabilities. An accommodation is a legally mandated change that creates an equitable opportunity for task completion or environmental access. Further, an accommodation is an individually determined adjustment to a functional need".

They can be strategies and modifications that are used by the classroom teacher; there are also accommodations such as specialized equipment, assistive technology, and variations in the methods and materials of testing for adults with learning disabilities.

Accommodations are required by law. They help persons with disabilities to have a fair and equal chance to work, learn, and have access to physical facilities such as buildings and parks. They are based on individualized, documented needs and may include any or all of the following: (1) using special equipment, (2) changing how others think and feel about disabilities, (3) learning and working in a different place or in a different way, and (4) changing procedures.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA make it unlawful for post-secondary institutions to discriminate against students on the basis of disability. In order to be entitled to this protection, a student or prospective student must establish that he or she is a "qualified individual with a disability." To meet this requirement, an individual must show both that a disability exists and that he or she can meet the requirements of the program, with or without "reasonable accommodation." An individual has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits

one or more of the major life activities of the individual, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Students with learning disabilities may also have difficulty with organization, time management, and attention.

Depending on the individual documentation profile of the student, the deficit in cognitive processing may be evident in only one academic area, such as math or foreign language, or it may impact an area such as reading or written language that will have an impact on classroom performance across many areas of study. When working with students with learning disabilities, the accommodations will often involve academic adjustments in faculty teaching and/or how they evaluate the learning in the course.

Development of Adults with Learning Disabilities

Adult students with learning disabilities cannot be cured or fixed; it's a lifelong issue. Many students started their life as a child with a learning disability. If the teacher is able to recognize the special needs of each student and understand what modifications and correct teaching procedures to implement, students can succeed in school and life.

Although research estimates that the number of American adults with learning disabilities ranges from 3 to 15 percent of the general population, even more startling is that a greater incidence of learning disabilities is found among the population of adults with low-level literacy skills - many of our basic skills students.

While the research is not definitive, estimates indicate that between 30 to 80 percent of adults with low level literacy skills may also have a learning disability.

As an teacher, you need to be aware of adults with special needs, including learning disabilities, attention disorders, physical and psychological disabilities, and mental impairments.

Learning Disabilities and Other Special Needs

Adult educators need to be aware of students with special needs. In adult education, many times the teacher is not given notification of a learning disability prior to beginning instruction with the student. Documentation such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) guides what special needs have to be taken into consideration when

delivering instruction.

Understanding the implications of learning disabilities, preparing to teach students with diverse characteristics, and learning to accommodate students with learning disabilities are essential for faculty and staff to provide academic and career opportunities for these students that are equivalent to those provided to their non-disabled peers.

While it is difficult to estimate the number of adult students you may have in your class with some type of special learning need, chances are that you will have one or more in need of some type of instructional accommodation to reach his/her full potential.

You need to understand the nature of disabilities, screening instruments, and referral systems along with teaching strategies and accommodations that can assist these students.

Screening Adults for Learning Disabilities

Screening is the first step in the process of gathering relevant information about an individual with a suspected learning disability. Screening does not determine whether or not the person has a learning disability. It may include observations, informal interviews, the use of a written tool, and/or a review of medical, school, or work histories.

Unlike a learning disabilities diagnosis which is a formal assessment that determines the actual presence of a learning disability, LD screening is an informal process that shows whether there is a probability that the person might have an undiagnosed learning disability. Informal screening can be done by an advocate for the person with a suspected learning disability, but formal diagnosis must be done by a qualified professional who can evaluate learning disabilities.

Adults who have struggled with school and work may have undiagnosed learning disabilities. Screening is a way for an advocate to better determine the probability of the suspected learning disability and to help the person decide if he or she needs to continue with an LD diagnosis. Also, LD screening can identify areas of strengths and challenges that will help the person better understand why he or she has struggled in certain areas of life. Knowing one's strengths and challenges can help determine the best strategies and/or technology to use to succeed in school and work.

Learning Disabilities and Functional Limitations

Generally speaking, students may be diagnosed with learning disabilities if they are of average or above-average intelligence and there is a significant discrepancy between their academic achievement and their intellectual ability. The diagnosis of a learning disability is often made by a psychologist trained in administering and interpreting psycho-educational assessments. Psychologists use the results of their assessments to understand how individuals receive, process, integrate, retain, and communicate information. Since these functions cannot always be directly observed, it is often difficult to diagnose specific learning disabilities, determine their impact, and recommend appropriate accommodations.

There are many types of learning disabilities; they often impact student abilities in one or more of the following categories:

• Spoken language—listening and speaking

• Written language—reading, writing, and spelling

• Arithmetic—calculation and mathematical concepts

• Reasoning—organization and integration of ideas and thoughts

Learning disabilities may also be present along with other disabilities such as mobility and sensory impairments, brain injuries, Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD), and psychiatric disabilities.

Instructional Accommodations

Reading

• Books-on-tape or someone to make a recording or read the text aloud

• A card or frame to focus on the words and to block out parts of the text

• Assistive devices that translate text to speech—reading pens, Kurzweil reader, scanner with character recognition software

• Videotapes or movies that present the same information

• Interactive CDs or computer-assisted training with auditory and visual cues rather than written descriptions

- Sticky notes or highlighter to mark key points in the textbook or manual

- List of important vocabulary with definitions

- Demonstration of tools and procedures

- Study guide to follow for independent reading

- Complex information divided into chunks or sections

- Hands-on activities, visual aids, pictures, or diagrams to provide alternate ways of learning abstract or complex information

- Large print versions of texts

- Screen reading software

- Books and instructional materials in Braille

- Class handouts and materials in an embossed format

- Special tilt-top desk or book stand to hold materials for easier reading

- Specialized equipment: optical enhancer, magnifier, tape recorder

Listening
- New vocabulary introduced prior to lesson, a glossary of terms

- Overviews of lesson

- Material presented in a logical manner and with explicit cues to shift from one aspect to the next

- Information broken down into steps or key components

- Important ideas written on the board or overhead transparencies with different colors for emphasis or coding

- Active involvement with the content through discussion, small group interaction, or problem solving activities

- Repetition and summarization of important points, particularly at the conclusion of lectures or discussions

- Structured organizers for note taking, such as a copy of overheads, outlines of lecture, or graphic organizers

- Copies of notes taken by other students in the class

- Permission to tape record class lectures and discussions

- Time to meet with teacher after class for clarification

- Description of demonstrations

- Real-life examples and concrete materials

- Visual information (words, charts, graphics) and repetition

- Sign language interpreter or note taker

Writing

- Adaptive devices such as pencil grips, special pen or pencil holders, erasable pens, or special paper with raised or color-coded line indicators

- Worksheets and tests with ample space for writing answers

- Two copies of worksheet or test - one to work on as a draft and one to use as a final copy

- Graph paper for writing to help align the numbers in computation problems or organize information

- A thesaurus to find words to write or say

- Special word processing software that anticipates what the student is trying to write

- Structured outlines or graphic organizers to plan written assignments/presentations

- Permission to use demonstrations or video-recorded responses to classroom assignments

- A spelling dictionary or electronic spelling aid with speech capabilities

- Peer editing or teacher assistance in the revision process

- Content mechanics graded separately in assignments requiring written expression

- A chance to correct identified spelling and grammar errors

Mathematics

- Concrete materials and manipulatives or computer-based models to understand abstract math concepts

- Calculator for computation tasks

- Talking calculators or on-screen computer calculators

- Flowcharts to plan strategies for problem solving

- Assistance with specialized vocabulary and mathematical symbols

- Additional examples and explanations

- Use of graph paper or color coding to organize answers to math problems

- Review within a day or two of the initial learning of difficult skills and supervised practice to prevent misconceptions

- Special media, assistive technology, and materials

Completing Assignments

- An agenda or outline of the assignments for each day

- Oral directions combined with pictures, words, or diagrams

- A description of critical features when watching a demonstration

- Directions that are repeated or simplified

- Step-by-step instructions with the steps outlined in writing or shown in picture sequences

- A description of expected behaviors or criteria (rubric) to be used for evaluation

- Assignments divided into parts with corresponding due dates

- An individual responsibility checklist with checkpoints along the way

- A reward system to motivate assignment completion

- Access to learning resources and instructional materials outside of class

- Flexible scheduling practices

- Assignments given ahead of time so that students can get started early

Classroom Testing

The following accommodations may be provided for students with

learning disabilities during classroom testing.

- Test items read aloud or on audiotape, except for tests of reading skills

- Repetition or paraphrasing of the directions during the test

- Important words in the directions are underlined or highlighted

- Increased space allowed for test answers

- Permission to dictate or tape record answers on a test

- A typewriter or word processor to record answers to the test items

- Permission to write on the test itself instead of an answer sheet

- Webs, diagrams, or charts and outlines to plan and respond to open-ended or essay questions

- Alternate evaluations of knowledge and skill using products or demonstrations

- Additional time to complete tests

- Tests separated into small sections and taken over a period of days

- Breaks during the test period

- Administration of the test individually or in small group

- An enclosed study carrel to take the test

- Extra examples for practice

- Elimination of one of the choices in multiple-choice items

- Fewer questions that measure all required content and skills

- Grading of the student's responses separately for content and mechanics

- Open book test unless memorization of content is required

- Permission to use references such as a spelling dictionary

- A calculator to recheck or complete computations

- Partial credit for answers that are partly correct

- Copies of the test on audiotape, in Braille, or in large print format

- Assistive technology for magnification

- Use of a Braille writer

- Assistive technology for amplification

- A sign language interpreter for oral directions or test items

Specific Learning Disabilities

Auditory Processing Disorder
Adversely affects how sound that travels unimpeded through the ear is processed and interpreted by the brain.

Also known as Central Auditory Processing Disorder, individuals with Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) do not recognize subtle differences between sounds in words, even when the sounds are loud and clear enough to be heard. They can also find it difficult to tell where sounds are coming from, to make sense of the order of sounds, or to block out competing background noises.

Signs and Symptoms

- Has difficulty processing and remembering language-related tasks but may have no trouble interpreting or recalling non-verbal environmental sounds, music, etc.

- May process thoughts and ideas slowly and have difficulty explaining them

- Misspells and mispronounces similar-sounding words or omits syllables; confuses similar-sounding words (celery/salary; belt/built; three/free; jab/job; bash/batch)

- May be confused by figurative language (metaphor, similes) or misunderstand puns and jokes; interprets words too literally

- Often distracted by background sounds/noises

- Finds it difficult to stay focused on or remember a verbal presentation or lecture

- May misinterpret or have difficulty remembering oral directions; difficulty following directions in a series

- Has difficulty comprehending complex sentence structure or rapid speech

- "Ignores" people, especially if engrossed

- Says "What?" a lot, even when much of what was said has been heard

Strategies

• Show rather than explain

• Supplement with more intact senses (use visual cues, signals, handouts, manipulatives)

• Reduce or space directions; give cues such as "Ready?"

• Reword or help decipher confusing oral and/or written directions

• Teach abstract vocabulary, word roots, synonyms/antonyms

• Vary pitch and tone of voice; alter pace; stress key words

• Ask specific questions as you teach to confirm understanding

• Allow 5-6 seconds for responses ("think time")

• Have the student verbalize concepts, vocabulary words, rules, etc. on a consistent basis

Dysgraphia
Affects a person's handwriting ability and fine motor skills.

A person with this specific learning disability may have problems including illegible handwriting, inconsistent spacing, poor spatial planning on paper, poor spelling, and difficulty composing writing as well as thinking and writing at the same time.

Signs and Symptoms

• May have illegible printing and cursive writing (despite appropriate time and attention given to the task)

• Shows inconsistencies: mixtures of print and cursive, upper and lower case, or irregular sizes, shapes or slant of letters

• Has unfinished words/letters or omitted words

• Has inconsistent spacing between words and letters

• Exhibits strange wrist, body or paper position

• Has difficulty pre-visualizing letter formation

• Copies or writes slowly or laboriously

• Shows poor spatial planning on paper

- Has cramped or unusual grip/may complain of sore hand

- Has great difficulty thinking and writing at the same time (taking notes, creative writing.)

Strategies

- Suggest use of word processor

- Avoid chastising student for sloppy, seemingly careless work

- Use oral exams

- Allow use of tape recorder for lectures

- Allow the use of a note taker

- Provide notes or outlines to reduce the amount of writing required

- Reduce copying aspects of work (pre-printed math problems)

- Allow use of wide rule paper and graph paper

- Suggest use of pencil grips and/or specially designed writing aids

- Provide alternatives to written assignments (video-taped reports, audio-taped reports)

Language Processing Disorder
Affects attaching meaning to sound groups that form words, sentences, and stories.

A specific type of Auditory Processing Disorder (APD). While an APD affects the interpretation of all sounds coming into the brain (e.g., processing sound in noisy backgrounds or the sequence of sounds or where they come from), a Language Processing Disorder (LPD) relates only to the processing of language. LPD can affect expressive language (what you say) and/or receptive language (how you understand what others say).

Signs and Symptoms

- Has difficulty gaining meaning from spoken language

- Demonstrates poor written output

- Exhibits poor reading comprehension

- Shows difficulty expressing thoughts in verbal form

- Has difficulty labeling objects or recognizing labels

- Is often frustrated by having a lot to say and no way to say it

- Feels that words are "right on the tip of my tongue"

- Able to describe an object and draw it, but can't think of the word for it

- May be depressed or have feelings of sadness

- Has difficulty getting jokes

Strategies

- Speak slowly and clearly and use simple sentences to convey information

- Refer to a speech pathologist

- Allow tape recorder for note taking

- Write main concepts on board

- Provide support person or peer tutor

- Use visualization techniques to enhance listening and comprehension

- Use graphic organizers for note taking from lectures or books

- Use story starters for creative writing assignments

- Practice story mapping

- Draw out details with questions and visualization strategies

Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Deficit

Affects the understanding of information that a person sees, or the ability to draw or copy.

A characteristic seen in people with learning disabilities such as Dysgraphia or Non-Verbal LD, it can result in missing subtle differences in shapes or printed letters, losing place frequently, struggles with cutting, holding pencil too tightly, or poor eye/hand coordination.

Signs and Symptoms

- May have reversals: b for d, p for q or inversions: u for n, w for m

- Has difficulty negotiating around campus

- Complains that eyes hurt and itch; rubs eyes; complains that print blurs while reading

- Turns head when reading across page or holds paper at odd angles

- Closes one eye while working; may yawn while reading

- Unable to copy accurately

- Loses place frequently

- Does not recognize an object/word if only part of it is shown

- Holds pencil too tightly; often breaks pencil point/crayons

- Struggles to cut or paste

- Misaligns letters; may have messy papers, which can include letters colliding, irregular spacing, and letters not on line

Strategies

- Avoid grading handwriting

- Allow students to dictate creative stories

- Provide alternative for written assignments

- Suggest use of pencil grips and specially designed pencils and pens

- Allow use of computer or word processor

- Restrict copying tasks

- Provide tracking tools: ruler, text windows

- Use large print books

- Plan to order or check out books on tape

- Experiment with different paper types: pastels, graph, embossed raised line paper

Dyscalculia
Affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts.

Individuals with this type of learning disability may also have poor comprehension of math symbols, may struggle with memorizing and organizing numbers, have difficulty telling time, or have trouble with counting.

Signs and Symptoms

• Shows difficulty understanding concepts of place value and quantity, number lines, positive and negative values, carrying and borrowing

• Has difficulty understanding and doing word problems

• Has difficulty sequencing information or events

• Exhibits difficulty using steps involved in math operations

• Shows difficulty understanding fractions

• Is challenged making change and handling money

• Displays difficulty recognizing patterns when adding, subtracting, multiplying, or dividing

• Has difficulty putting language to math processes

• Has difficulty understanding concepts related to time such as days, weeks, months, seasons, quarters, etc.

• Exhibits difficulty organizing problems on the page, keeping numbers lined up, following through on long division problems

Strategies

• Allow use of fingers and scratch paper

• Use diagrams and draw math concepts

• Provide peer assistance

• Suggest use of graph paper

• Suggest use of colored pencils to differentiate problems

• Work with manipulatives

• Draw pictures of word problems

• Use mnemonic devices to learn steps of a math concept

• Use rhythm and music to teach math facts and to set steps to a beat

• Schedule computer time for the student for drill and practice

Dyslexia
Affects reading and related language-based processing skills.

The severity of this specific learning disability can differ in each

individual but can affect reading fluency, decoding, reading comprehension, recall, writing, spelling, and sometimes speech. It can exist along with other related disorders and is sometimes referred to as a Language-Based Learning Disability.

Signs and Symptoms

• Reads slowly and painfully

• Experiences decoding errors, especially with the order of letters

• Shows wide disparity between listening comprehension and reading comprehension of some text

• Has trouble with spelling

• May have difficulty with handwriting

• Exhibits difficulty recalling known words

• Has difficulty with written language

• May experience difficulty with math computations

• Decodes real words better than nonsense words

• Substitutes one small sight word for another: a, I, he, the, there, was

Strategies

• Provide a quiet area for activities like reading or answering comprehension questions

• Use books on tape

• Use books with large print and big spaces between lines

• Provide a copy of lecture notes

• Don't count spelling on history, science or other similar tests

• Allow alternative forms for book reports

• Allow the use of a laptop or other computer for in-class essays

• Use multi-sensory teaching methods

• Teach students to use logic rather than rote memory

• Present material in small units

Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities

Has trouble interpreting non-verbal cues like facial expressions or body language and may have poor coordination.

Non-Verbal Learning Disability (NVD or NVLD) is a disorder which is usually characterized by a significant discrepancy between higher verbal skills and weaker motor, visual-spatial, and social skills.

Signs and Symptoms

• Has trouble recognizing non-verbal cues such as facial expression or body language

• Shows poor psycho-motor coordination; clumsy; seems to be constantly "getting in the way,"; bumping into people and objects

• Use of fine motor skills is a challenge: tying shoes, writing, using scissors

• Needs to verbally label everything that happens to comprehend circumstances, spatial orientation, directional concepts, and coordination; often lost or tardy

• Has difficulty coping with changes in routing and transitions

• Has difficulty generalizing previously learned information

• Has difficulty following multi-step instructions

• Makes very literal translations

• Asks too many questions; may be repetitive; inappropriately interrupts the flow of a lesson

• Imparts the "illusion of competence" because of the student's strong verbal skills

Strategies

• Rehearse getting from place to place

• Minimize transitions and give several verbal cues before transition

• Avoid assuming the student will automatically generalize instructions or concepts

• Point out similarities, differences, and connections verbally; number and present instructions in sequence; simplify and break down abstract concepts; explain metaphors, nuances, and multiple meanings in reading material

- Answer the student's questions when possible, but let them know that only a specific number (three vs. a few) is acceptable and that you can answer additional questions at recess or after school

- Allow the student to abstain from participating in activities at signs of overload

- Prepare the student thoroughly in advance for field trips, or other changes, regardless of how minimal

- Implement a modified schedule or creative programming

- Do not assume the student understands something because he or she can "parrot back" what you've just said

- Offer added verbal explanations when the student seems lost or registers confusion

Related Disorders

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
Affects focus, attention, and behavior and can make learning challenging.

This disorder includes difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behavior, and hyperactivity. ADHD is not considered to be a learning disability. It can be determined to be a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), making a student eligible to receive special education services. However, ADHD falls under the category "Other Health Impaired" and not under "Specific Learning Disabilities".

The principle characteristics of ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. There are three subtypes of ADHD recognized by professionals.

- predominantly hyperactive/impulsive type (does not show significant inattention)

- predominantly inattentive type, sometimes called ADD (does not show significant hyperactive-impulsive behavior)

- combined type (displays both inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive symptoms)

Executive Functioning

Affects planning, organization, strategizing, attention to details, and managing time and space.

Weakness in executive functioning causes inefficiency in the cognitive management systems of the brain which affects a variety of neuropsychological processes such as planning, organization, strategizing, paying attention to and remembering details, and managing time and space. Although not a learning disability, different patterns of weakness in executive functioning are almost always seen in the learning profiles of individuals who have specific learning disabilities or ADHD.

Dyspraxia
Problems with movement and coordination, language and speech.

This is a disorder that is characterized by difficulty in muscle control which causes problems with movement and coordination, language and speech, and can affect learning. Although not a learning disability, Dyspraxia often exists along with Dyslexia, Dyscalculia or ADHD.

Memory
Affects storing and later retrieving information or getting information out.

Three types of memory are important to learning: "working memory", "short term memory", and "long term memory." All three types of memory are used in the processing of both verbal and non-verbal information.

- "Working memory" refers to the ability to hold on to pieces of information until the pieces blend into a full thought or concept. For example, reading each word until the end of a sentence or paragraph and then understanding the full content.

- "**Short-term memory**" is the active process of storing and retaining information for a limited period of time. The information is temporarily available but not yet stored for long-term retention.

- "**Long-term memory**" refers to information that has been stored and that is available over a long period of time. Individuals might have difficulty with auditory memory or visual memory.

Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

Teachers are not professional diagnosticians. Many times we can recognize symptoms that may indicate disabilities, but it is not our role to label students. Some adults have documentation which identifies their disability and are thus legally entitled to instructional and testing accommodations. Other students who are undiagnosed can benefit from good teaching strategies.

If you are working with a student that you believe may have a learning disability, it is important to access as much information about the individual as possible while maintaining strict confidentiality.

In addition, it is important that teachers who work with the student provide information about the types of classroom accommodations that have been used successfully with the individual in the past (extra time, frequent breaks, a quiet area for study, successful use of audiovisual materials, dramatic differences when using a calculator versus none, etc.).

Some students with physical disabilities (vision, hearing, physical, or emotional impairments) may also be able to request certain accommodations.

To provide effective instruction to students with special needs, the teacher needs to understand the nature of disabilities, screening instruments, and referral systems, as well as teaching strategies and accommodations that can assist students with their special needs.

Additional Resources

Center for Parent Information and Resources
www.parentcenterhub.org

Literacy Information and Communication System
www.lincs.ed.gov

Sources

Adult and Community Educators of Florida, Inc.
www.aceofflorida.org

Learning Disabilities Association of America
www.ldaamerica.org

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy
www.ncsall.net

New York State Education Department
www.nysed.gov

New Foundations
www.newfoundations.com

University of Washington Do It
www.washington.edu/doit

West Virginia Department of Education
http://wvde.state.wv.us/

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