



Helping Students with Learning Disabilities



Definition

Students with learning disabilities may have difficulty listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, problem solving, and performing mathematical calculations. Learning disabilities affect the student's ability to understand, retain, and express spoken or written information. Problems with time management, organization, and social skills may also occur. Learning disabilities include conditions such as brain injury, dyslexia, minimal brain dysfunction, developmental aphasia, and perceptual difficulties.

Learning

To learn effectively, students must be able to:

- 1) Receive information accurately
- 2) Organize information by selecting what is important
- 3) Assimilate information by relating it to past experience and knowledge
- 4) Demonstrate and apply acquired knowledge

Modifying teaching strategies and using assistive technology devices and services can compensate for learning difficulties.



Potential Difficulties for Students with Learning Disabilities



- Understanding and processing information
- Staying on task
- Organizing assignments
- Completing assigned work on time
- Reading, comprehending, and retaining information
- Spelling words correctly
- Using grammar accurately
- Organizing thoughts and developing ideas
- Assimilating and reproducing information
- Communicating meaning



Possible Teacher Modifications

- Develop a detailed syllabus with specific timelines
- Clearly explain course expectations
- Present class materials in multisensory formats (written and oral)
- Summarize key points at the conclusion of each class
- Allow students to audiotape lectures
- Provide accurate and systematic feedback
- Monitor progress and check for understanding regularly
- Provide study questions and example answers for exams
- Allow extra time to take exams and complete assignments
- Allow student to use a calculator, spelling dictionary, or other aids
- Set up a peer tutoring or support group
- Provide opportunities for success
- Positive reinforcement



Possible Modifications by the Learner

- Seek help immediately if problems occur
- Sit at the front of class to see and hear better, and reduce distractions
- Use tape recordings in addition to note taking
- Use a scheduling system (i.e. day timer) to organize time
- Check frequently with the teacher to assess understanding
- Ask or make note of questions and obtain answers before exams
- Apply spell and grammar check software to assignments
- Use tutoring and/or reading services



Assistive Technology

Assistive technology devices are pieces of equipment or product systems that are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Children and adults can accomplish tasks with assistive technology that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. Assistive devices and services improve a student's ability to learn, study, compete, work, communicate, and interact with family and friends.



Federal rules and regulations state that each public agency/school district shall ensure that assistive technology devices and/or services are considered and made available to a student with a disability if required as part of that student's special education program. This may be provided as part of the IEP annual goals and short term objectives, supplementary aids and services, or related services. The following assistive technology devices can help students with learning disabilities:

- Word prediction program
- Spell check
- Grammar check
- Talking dictionary
- Speech synthesizer
- Multisensory reading program
- Scanner with optical character recognition
- Personal data manager
- Noise blocking headset
- Tape recorder
- Talking calculator
- Voice recognition system
- Large print software
- Alphasmart mini-computer

For more information on assistive technology, contact:

Utah Center for Assistive Technology
1595 West 500 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104
888/866-5550
E-mail: tjackson@usor.state.ut.us
Web: www.usor.state.ut.us/ucat/index.htm

Access Utah Network
155 East 300 West #100
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102
801/533-4636 (V/TTY)
E-mail: accessut@state.ut.us
Web: www.accessut.state.ut.us

Active ReEntry Independent Living Center
451 South Carbon Avenue
Price, Utah 84501
435/637-4950 (V/TTY)
E-mail: active@arecil.org
Web: www.arecil.org

Options for Independence
1095 North Main
Logan, Utah 84321
435/753-5353 (V/TTY)
E-mail: jbiggs@optionsind.org
Web: www.optionsind.org

Utah Community Center for the Deaf
5709 South 1500 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84123
800/860-4860 (V/TTY)
E-mail: wwales@usor.state.ut.us
Web: www.usor.state.ut.us./dsdhh/dsdhh.html

Utah State Library for the Blind
250 North 1950 West, Suite A
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116-7901
800/662-5540
E-mail: blind@utah.gov
Web: www.state.lib.ut.us/blind.htm

Red Rock Center for Independence
515 West 300 North, Suite A
St. George, UT 84770
435/673-7501 (V/TTY), 800/649-2340
E-mail: rrci@rrci.org
Web: www.rrci.org

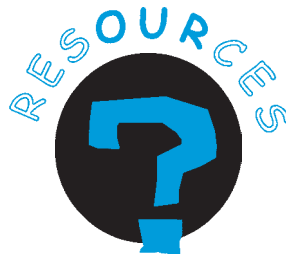
Utah Independent Living Center
3445 South Main St.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115
801/466-5565 (V/TTY), 800/355-2195
E-mail: uilc@xmission.com
Web: www.xmission.com/~uilc



For more information on your rights and assistive technology, contact:

Utah Parent Center
2290 East 4500 South, Suite 110
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117
800/468-1160 (V/TTY)
E-mail: katie@utahparentcenter.org
Web: www.utahparentcenter.org

Disability Law Center
205 North 400 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103
800/662-9080 (V/TTY)
E-mail: info@disabilitylawcenter.org
Web: www.disabilitylawcenter.org



Also available in Braille, large print, audiotape, and disk formats.

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Utah State
UNIVERSITY & The Utah Assistive
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Making a Difference

