

Accommodations at University/TAFE

Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) such as Dyslexia should be afforded certain accommodations at University/TAFE. Such accommodations will allow the student with SLD to demonstrate his/her abilities more accurately, and will allow more equal opportunities in comparison to other students. Accommodations need not compromise academic standards.

- Dyslexia is an enduring condition and one that results in the significant under-representation of students at a tertiary studies level.
- Dyslexic students typically spend three to five times longer than non-dyslexic students when completing set tasks. As such, extra time will be needed to ensure that a task has been processed and completed, especially if it involves a writing activity. The student may also require extra time to read and to process the information read in lectures and assignments.
- Use a variety of teaching styles and methods, incorporating as many mediums as possible.
- Allow the use of aids and equipment such as dictionaries, word processors (with spell check programmes), hand-held spell checker (available at the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation), and scribes.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- New information should be presented in a multi-sensory way to maximise learning. A multi-sensory approach to teaching involves input from all the senses and requires cognitive input to process the varied information. It has been shown to be effective in teaching students with learning difficulties. The aim is to pair visual and auditory stimulus with meaningful student activity, in a way that promotes understanding and builds on previous knowledge. It also allows students to use their strengths while developing weaker areas. Experiential learning, such as hands-on activities or computer-assisted learning, will assist the student to assimilate the information in a meaningful way.



- Distribute comprehensive unit/subject outlines with details about content covered and assessments
- Create an environment where students feel comfortable to discuss their LD with you
- Select texts (if possible) that are available electronically (or may need to be audio-taped or transcribed)
- Build on prior learning in a systematic and sequential way

- Experiential learning helps assimilate information
- Hands-on activities
- Computer assisted learning
- Ensure tasks have been made clear
- Plenty of encouragement and ample time to complete work, explain answers and feelings (may involve reducing volume of work)
- The repetition and revision of skills until they are over-learned
- Break up learning tasks into smaller steps and provide clear instructions for each step
- Provide definitions of words specific to the discipline prior to teaching
- Provide copies of notes and other instructive material that may be missed due to processing and writing difficulties
- Use diagrams or charts to display information
- Encourage student who show indicators of having an LD to consult with University/TAFE's Disability Services team.

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

- Allow alternative assignment formats e.g. oral reports, demonstrations, recorded on video or audio tape
- Allow assignments written in 'dot point' rather than essay format for students who have difficulties with the sequencing and structure of written expression
- Time extensions for written assignments should be permitted
- Encourage students to use a proofreader before submitting written assignments
- Give separate marks for content and structure
- Keep students informed about their level of achievement and refer to support services if necessary
- Structured frameworks can help a student understand what is required in tasks such as essay writing. This involves breaking the assignment down into achievable parts. If possible, it is useful to set out a timeline for a project with deadlines for each part. This means that the teacher can regularly check on progress, and the project does not seem overwhelming to the student because it is broken down into manageable chunks.
- Provide practice exam questions that demonstrate the format of questions



- Allow extra time. This will depend on the severity of the LD. An extra 10 to 30 minutes reading or writing time per hour is common.
- Allow for alternative presentation of exams
- Large print
- Electronic format (on computer)
- Coloured paper or use of coloured transparent overlays
- Students with working memory difficulties may require the test to be changed from multiple choice to essay question format.
- Students with a reading, processing and/or working memory problem should be allowed a reader and a scribe.
- Students with Dyslexia or other language deficits, allow the student to:
 - Take lists of commonly used words into the exam
 - Use a computer to access Spell Check, Dictionary and Thesaurus, and other assistive technologies
- Don't penalise for handwriting, grammar and spelling when a word processor is not available
- Also allow alternative test/exam formats e.g. oral question and answers tests, slide presentations, photographic essays, handmade models.
- Consider timetable changes
- Split exam papers (due to extra time, fatigue)
- Rest days between exams



Opening All Options II

A number of these strategies were accessed through the Opening All Options website:
http://services.admin.utas.edu.au/options/teaching_strategies.htm