

Adapt Your Teaching ...

for Persons Who Have Learning Disabilities



1. *Use a multisensory approach to teaching-learning.*

2. *Guard fragile self-esteem.*

- Emphasize abilities, not disabilities.
- Avoid competitive activities.
- Allow more time to complete activities.
- Encourage the use of 3-D models, drama, music, crafts, and films in place of written activities.
- Give positive reinforcement for effort.
- Never ask the student to read orally unless he volunteers to do so. Always preenlist members to read aloud during class time.
- Provide opportunities to work on small-group projects where the learning disabled person can experience success by contributing to a team effort.

3. *Simplify directions.*

- Check for understanding by having the student repeat directions back to you in her own words.
- Give one-step directions whenever possible.
- Encourage the student to ask questions.
- Outline multistep directions on a large sheet of paper.
- Tape record directions so the student can replay them.

4. *Use alternate teaching strategies.*

- Seat the student near a buddy who will help.
- Seat the student near the teacher and/or the front of the room.
- Use visual cues whenever possible to aid attention and memory.
- Use manipulatives in learning activities.

- When teaching an abstract concept, start with the concrete and move to the abstract.
- Shorten the activity by instructing the student to do only the ones circled or every other one.
- Break the assignment into small, manageable steps.
- Relate new learning to prior knowledge.

5. *Modify activities that require reading.*

- Simplify reading materials by rewriting them.
- Assign a reading buddy to read material orally with the learning disabled student.
- Allow the student to read quietly to himself instead of silently.
- Highlight key concepts, words, dates, places, and instruct the student to focus only on highlighted material.
- Outline reading material, stating the main ideas in simpler terms.
- Encourage the use of a bookmark as a line marker.

6. *Modify activities that require writing.*

- Accept short answer responses instead of complete sentences.
- Allow the student to respond verbally rather than in writing.
- Allow the student to tape record responses.
- Limit the amount of copying required.
- Allow the student to dictate verbal responses to a teacher or another student.
- Provide a center for alternate learning activities that use learning modalities such as visual, auditory, motor, and

kinesthetic instead of paper/pencil tasks.

7. *Provide a highly structured and organized setting.*

- Tell students in advance what is expected of them.
- Give clear, brief directions and have the student repeat them back to you.
- Break a task into small parts and emphasize success as each part is completed.
- Limit choices.
- Keep a consistent schedule of activities.
- Have clear and consistent expectations for behavior and for participation in activities.

8. *Provide an area free from distractions.*—Keep the room uncluttered. Keep most study aids out of sight when they aren't needed.

9. *Repeat and drill frequently.*

10. *Paraphrase or set memorization to music.*—Persons with memory problems may find it extremely difficult or frustrating to memorize.

11. *Before telling a story, tell learning disabled persons what to listen for.*—Give them questions in advance of discussions. Ask the group to listen for certain key events or relationships.