

## ***Assistive Technology***

### **Useful assistive technology includes:**

- computers with spelling and grammar check programs
- a talking calculator, dictionary and thesaurus
- screen readers which enable computer screen text to be "spoken" by a synthetic voice
- voice or speech recognition computer programs which allow the user to dictate information into the computer through a microphone and, to varying degrees, control the computer by voice.

### **Learning Disability Specific Software**

- textHELP! is a vocabulary support package which talks, types, checks spellings, corrects mistakes, predicts and magnifies  
<http://www.pulsedata.com>
- WYNN is software that helps the user read/study and comprehend text more easily and effectively  
<http://www.synapseadaptive.com>
- Optical Character Recognition (OCR) uses a scanner and relevant software to recognise printed text and convert it to text in a computer. This can then be accessed by other assistive technology such as a screen reader, screen enlarger or other programs such as textHELP!
- OCR software and a screen reader can read printed material, which can then be recorded on audio equipment. This technology can benefit people who learn more effectively through listening rather than visually.
- Audio equipment with variable speed control can play back recorded material at a more suitable rate to allow for individual needs.

**Adjustments** may need to be provided to enable a person with a disability to gain equitable access to education. Reasonable adjustments may include:

- modifying or providing equipment
- modifying assessment procedures
- changing course delivery
- modifying educational premises.

Adjustments must be determined in consultation with the student concerned.

For further advice contact your

***TAFE NSW Teacher/Consultant***

### ***Other sources of support***

**Australian Learning Disability Association (ALDA)**

<http://services.admin.utas.edu.au/alda/>

**Disclosure: It's a Personal Decision**

<http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/rdlo/disclosure/>

**Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission**

[www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)

**Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

**Disability Standards for Education 2005**



*A neurological disability*

# **Learning Disability Awareness**

***Some advice and strategies for teachers***

TAFE NSW

TAFE NSW

## What is a Learning Disability?

The incidence of people with a learning disability in Australia, as in other Western countries, is approximately 10 to 12% of the population, with 4% being severely affected. (Source: Australian Learning Disability Association).

A learning disability is intrinsic to the individual and not the result of intellectual, physical, sensory, or emotional difficulties. Neither do they appear to be the result of limited environmental or educational experiences.

### Characteristics of a learning disability

People with a learning disability generally have average or above average intelligence and the ability to learn, despite having difficulties in processing information.

Learning disability is specific to the individual and can affect the way a person takes in, remembers, understands and expresses information.

People with learning disabilities can achieve more when individualised self-management skills and strategies are developed and relevant adjustments are provided.

*Learning Disability* is identified under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) as:

*'A disorder or malfunction which results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction'.*

## Positive interactions in the learning environment

Interacting with a person with a disability, including a person with a learning disability, should be characterised by respect for their rights to dignity, confidentiality and equity.

When communicating with people with a learning disability, it is important to acknowledge that they are people, students and colleagues first and foremost. People with a learning disability have the ability to learn despite difficulties in processing information.

People with a learning disability can learn at the same pace as other people if the appropriate adjustments are in place. The implementation of adjustments can enable the person to effectively demonstrate their skills and abilities.



If the person is required to present information, allow them to use an appropriate mode of communication. This may include the use of colour, mind mapping, audio equipment and oral presentations.

When explaining concepts, attempt to use demonstrations and concrete examples. Relate new or abstract concepts to everyday life.

Sequence information in a clear and concise manner.

Attempt to explain complex ideas as clearly and simply as possible, repeating and rephrasing explanations and information if necessary. Some work areas are steeped in specialised terminology, which cannot be reduced. In such cases, a glossary of relevant and technical words and acronyms would be very useful.

Include short breaks between intensive periods of reading and writing.