

# **Suggestions for Improving The Learning of All Students**

Clarify course objectives at the start of the semester – Many students have difficulty organizing their time and prioritizing their tasks. It is especially important for students with learning disabilities to utilize their time in the most effective manner because they often spend significantly more time on studying and completing assignments than do other students.

Provide outlines or notes for each lecture - While taking notes in class helps students to learn and retain information, students with learning disabilities may have difficulty keeping up with the lecture or identifying key points. Providing an outline or skeleton notes for the class, which students can add to and fill in during the lecture, will help students follow the material presented and make sure that key points are identified.

Present information in both visual and verbal formats - Regardless of whether they have a learning disability, most students have a preferred style of learning, which may be either verbal or auditory. Students with leaning disabilities may have great difficulty absorbing information presented in only one of these formats. Presenting material in both formats (e.g. utilizing overheads or outlines on the board while discussing a topic) will assist students by providing the information in two formats at once. This will also reinforce learning for all students.

Provide study guides and review sessions for exams – Let students know in advance what material will be covered on each test and the format of the test (i.e. multiple choice, essay, fill in the blank) to encourage more effective studying. Offer review sessions during the week before the exam to help students review the material that will be covered.

Provide students with alternative ways to demonstrate their knowledge - Some students perform better on tests and some perform better on papers, projects or written assignments. Build some flexibility into your grading system to give students the option of choosing how they can best demonstrate what they have learned. For example, give students the choice of either completing a final exam or turning in a final paper or project.

Encourage group work and the formation of study groups – Students with learning difficulties often benefit from exposure to different perspectives and presentations of material that occur in group study formats. Encourage students to work in groups by assigning group tasks and/or encouraging the formation of study groups.

Encourage students to meet with you when they experience difficulties in the class – Many students are embarrassed or afraid to ask for assistance when they are having difficulties in a class. Encourage students to make appointments or meet with you during office hours as soon as they begin to experience difficulties. This will prevent the difficulties from becoming overwhelming or insurmountable before the student reaches out for assistance.