

**Southwestern College
Disability Support Services
Learning Disabilities Program**

COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES

What is a learning disability? A learning disability is a permanent (cognitive) disorder that affects the way individuals with average to above average intelligence take in, remember, and/or express information.

A learning disability is often inconsistent. It may cause problems on Mondays, but not on Tuesdays. It may cause problems throughout grade school, seem to disappear during high school, and then resurface again in college. It may only cause problems in a specific academic area, such as math or foreign language. Or it may cause problems in more than one class during school.

Key points to understand about a learning disability is that the person must have:

1. Average to above average intelligence (ability) when processing information.
2. A severe processing problem in at least one area of information processing that affects ability to understand or express oral or written information.
3. Learning difficulties in at least one of the following: reading, writing, or math.
4. A large gap between average ability to learn and achievement in at least one area: reading, writing, math.

A learning disability can be extremely **FRUSTRATING**. Students are frequently: **FRUSTRATED** with struggling and failing and being told they're lazy. **FRUSTRATED** with people saying they should just try harder when in fact they are working twice the hours studying as most students in the class with less results. **FRUSTRATED** at rushing through tests and still not finishing in time. **FRUSTRATED** at not only having to deal with the learning disability, but also with the frustration of having to "prove" that their invisible disabilities exist and may be as disabling as a physical disability. **FRUSTRATED** by problems with organizational skills, time management, or social skills

A Learning Disability is NOT a form of intellectual disability, an emotional disorder, or an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

A student with a learning disability may have:

- Great difficulty in reading, writing and/or math concepts even though they have average to superior skills in other areas.
- Trouble reading for an extended time period, often fatiguing after ten to twenty minutes.
- Trouble with eyes when reading, with difficulty tracking to the next line.
- Difficulty organizing writing, getting started, with sentence structure or grammar, yet is a student whose spoken language is strong.
- Trouble finding main ideas or summarizing when reading.
- Difficulty expressing ideas orally and organizing thoughts.
- Have trouble listening to a lecture and taking notes at the same time.
- Be easily distracted by background noise or things happening.
- Confusion reading similar letters such as b and d, or p and q; confuse the order of letters in words repeating **was** for **saw**, **hte** for **the**; may misspell the same word several different ways in the same composition.
- Omit or add words, particularly when reading aloud.

A learning disability does not prohibit success; several famous people have (or had) a learning disability. A partial list includes: Albert Einstein, Robin Williams, Bruce Jenner, Tom Cruise, Michelangelo, Leonardo de Vinci, President Woodrow Wilson, Thomas Edison, George Patton, James Joyce, and Cher.

LEARNING DISABILITIES TESTING ORIENTATION

Learning Disabilities Testing Procedure: The testing is provided as a service through Disability Support Services located in the Student Services Center.

Previous history of service for a Learning Disability: If you were previously tested for a disability and/or in special education, you may be immediately eligible for service. DSS will need recent written documentation of the disability. Our office needs a copy of your latest psychological evaluation and IEP. You may request this yourself from your last school, or you can complete a "Release of Information" form in our office and we will send for your records.

Students new to testing follow these steps:

Every student begins with a LD Orientation/Screening Meeting.

Visit the Disability Support Services (DSS) office and complete a DSS Application to schedule this meeting.

1. **LD Screen/Orientation Meeting:** This is a one (1) hour meeting for any student interested in an LD assessment. **Attendance at a LD Screen/Orientation Meeting is mandatory in order to begin LD testing.** During this hour, an LD Specialist will explain what a learning disability is and is not, explain reasons why you might want to be tested, and answer any questions you have regarding the testing process and our services. In addition, the LD Specialist will review learning strategies for immediate improvement in your classes.
2. **The Learning Disabilities (LD) testing** is run as a .5 (half unit) credit class. It is called Personal Development 9 (PD 9). It is run as a class because our goal is for our students to participate and learn more about “learning” and themselves as an adult learner. During the 5-7 hour testing process we gather information that is extremely helpful when used to plan strategies to improve learning. Outcomes after testing include:
 - a) Understand personal learning strengths and weaknesses.
 - b) Use strengths to plan how to make learning more efficient and effective.
 - c) Identify learning strategies to use.

Testing is done in one-on-one appointments in a private office. We enroll you in the PD 9 class when we schedule your first LD testing appointment. Total costs for this will be:

- 1) The cost of a .5 (half) unit of credit (check the class schedule).
- 2) In addition, if you have not paid the Student Health Services Fee for the semester, this cost is \$16 for .5 credits (\$19 for 6 or more credits).
- 3) There is a Student Center Fee of \$1 per unit. So the Student Center charge for PD 9 would be \$0.50.
- 4) Finally, the Student Activities Fee is \$8. This fee is optional. If you don't want to pay it, then go to the Student Activities Office Room 601 C in the Student Center (between the Student Services Center and the Student Union) to notify them and the fee will be dropped from your account.

3. PD 9 testing lasts approximately 5-7 hours. This is completed alone with a Learning Disabilities Specialist during **four** (4) different individual appointments. The testing will be done on different days and includes:

- a) **1 hour Intake Interview:** In this appointment you will review the Intake you received for homework at the LD Screen/Orientation Meeting.
- b) **2 hour Achievement Testing:** This testing includes basic skills areas of reading, writing and math. We will examine in detail speed, comprehension, and skills.
- c) **2 hour Ability Testing:** This test examines information processing abilities. It looks at how you think, problem solve, recall, etc. All the areas examined relate to learning either in the classroom, while doing homework, or taking tests.
- d) **1 hour Results:** In this appointment the results are reviewed. If there is a learning disability, then support services are offered and strategies to improve learning are given. If there is not a learning disability, then learning strengths and weaknesses from testing are explained and strategies to improve learning are given.

4. ATTENDANCE: Due to problems with students missing appointments for testing, the following procedures have been established:

- If a student needs to cancel or reschedule an appointment, 24 hours notice must be given, and a testing appointment will be scheduled.
- If a student needs to cancel or reschedule an appointment and does not give 24 hours notice to the DSS office, the student's name goes to the bottom of the list of PD 9~01 students.
- If a student misses two (2) one-hour appointments or one (1) two-hour appointment and does NOT notify the DSS office IN ADVANCE, this is considered a “no show” and the file goes to incomplete. The student must meet with the DSS Director before another appointment can be scheduled.

<p>To request this material in alternate media, please call voice (619) 482-6512 or VP (619) 207-4480.</p>



Disability Support Services (DSS)

Learning Disabilities (LD) Testing Attendance Policy and Fees

Initial Here

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I understand the DSS appointment attendance and cancellation policy.

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I understand I will be enrolled in PD 9 Diagnostic Assessment. This is a .5 (half) unit non-degree/nontransferable course.

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I understand the costs I will need to pay for enrolling in PD 9 if I do not qualify for the Board of Governor Fee Waiver.

☐

I understand the LD testing lasts about 6-7 hours minimum and is done over

- Two (one-hour appointments)

and

- Two (two-hour appointments)

Print Name: _____

SWC ID # _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____