

Ways that Faculty Can Help Student with Disabilities: Possible Teaching Accommodations

The provision of accommodations to students with disabilities does not carry with it an obligation to reduce the level of the course content or to lower the standards of mastery. PLU is legally obligated to provide access to all elements of each class, but the university does not guarantee success.

Syllabus

- Putting a note on the syllabus inviting students to inform Disability Support Services if there are any accommodations students need in order to have full access to the course.
- Making the syllabus available when students are registering for classes and, when possible, being available to discuss the syllabus with students considering the course.

Universal Design

In terms of learning, universal design means the design of instructional materials and activities that makes the learning goals achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage, and remember. Universal design for learning is achieved by means of flexible curricular materials and activities that provide alternatives for students with differing abilities. These alternatives are built into the instructional design and operating systems of educational materials--they are not added on after-the-fact.

Instructional Activities

- Using a multisensory instructional approach and providing information through the use of a variety of visual and auditory materials (such as overhead transparencies, charts, diagrams, graphs, flash cards, films, slides, computer graphics, illustrations, demonstrations, textbooks, black/white boards, audio tapes, recordings, etc.)
- Beginning lectures with a review of the previous lecture and an overview of topics to be covered that day
- Using the black or whiteboard or overhead projector to outline and summarize lecture material, being mindful of the legibility and the necessity to read aloud what is written
- Emphasizing important points, main ideas, and key concepts orally in lectures and/or highlighting them with colored pens on the overhead
- Using everyday life analogies to make abstract concepts easier to understand and retain
- Providing periodic summaries during the lecture, emphasizing key concepts or clarifying the relationship between new information and previously presented information
- Speaking distinctly and at a relaxed pace, pausing occasionally to respond to questions or for students to catch up in their note-taking
- Leaving time for a question-answer period or discussion periodically and at the end of each lecture
- Explaining technical language, specific terminology, or foreign words
- Noticing and responding to non-verbal signals of confusion or frustration
- Trying to determine if students understand the material by asking volunteers to give an example, summary, or response to a question
- Calling only on volunteers to read aloud in class since students with learning disabilities may have difficulty reading aloud despite good silent reading

comprehension.

- Using non-traditional teaching techniques, such as role-playing, that provide students with the opportunity to learn concepts through concrete experience

Classroom Conditions

- Trying to diminish, if not eliminate, auditory and visual classroom distractions such as noise in the hallways or a flickering fluorescent light

Support Outside of Class

- Being available during office hours for clarification of lecture material, assignments and readings
- Helping students find study partners or organize study groups
- Asking the student who self-discloses a disability how you as an instructor can facilitate his/her learning
- Discussing in private with a student who you suspect may have a learning disability, describing what you have observed and, if appropriate, referring the student to available support services, keeping in mind that PLU does not test students for learning disabilities

Materials

- Selecting a textbook that has a study guide or that has practice questions, review sections, or quiz sections
- **Choosing a textbook far enough in advance to allow time** for students with reading disorders to obtain CD's from *Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic* or to have them custom made
- Re-using texts that have been previously made onto CD's
- Providing study questions for exams that demonstrate the format that will be used as well as the content; providing a model exemplary answer and delineating what comprises a good response

Assignments

- Giving assignments in writing as well as orally and being available for clarification
- Providing a suggested time-line when making long-range assignments and suggesting appropriate checkpoints
- Showing students a model finished product