access

Job Corps Accommodation Support Newsletter

Accommodating and Supporting Reading Disabilities

Reading Disabilities Defined

Depending on cognitive abilities and/or disabilities, students may not be able to access written information in the school and work environments. Cognitive and processing limitations may make it difficult to understand, recognize, and visually discern letters, numbers, signs, and symbols. Entire words or strings of letters may be unrecognizable. Cognitive and processing limitations refer to limitations in recognizing and taking in information through the senses (i.e., auditory and visual). Students with severe cognitive and processing limitations impacting their ability to read are often identified as having a learning disability.

Other conditions that may impact reading can go beyond learning disabilities such as large gaps in instruction, speech and language disorders, anxiety disorders, attention disorders, and even misuse of technology. Often, students mask their inability to read and write by avoiding any activities or assignments that involve printed materials. In part, the challenge is to help students overcome the fear of reading by providing safe reading experiences coupled with research-based instructional strategies and accommodations.

Functional Limitations and Accommodations

Functional limitations as a result of reading deficiencies and/or disabilities can often range from mild impact to severe impact. Mild impact can include students who have difficulty reading, comprehending, and summarizing longer passages or text. More severe impact may include students who have great difficulty decoding and comprehending or students who cannot read at all. These students often have severe processing deficits, as well as difficulties with written and verbal expression.

Goals When Considering Reading Accommodations/Strategies

➢ **Building Independence**: What accommodations promote independence/lessen dependency on others?

➢ **Accessibility**: How can we best provide access to all areas of the Job Corps program?

➢ **Employability**: What accommodations translate well into the workplace if needed?

Therefore, it is critical to consider accommodations and strategies that are flexible and able to address all levels of functioning. A webinar, *Accommodating and Supporting Reading Disabilities*, was recently offered and is

Accommodating Reading Disabilities (cont'd)

available on the Job Corps Disability Website. In the webinar, the center-wide impacts of reading disabilities are identified and addressed with a focus on independence and employability.

The following table outlines some common functional limitations and possible accommodations or strategies to support students with reading deficiencies, including specific learning disabilities in reading.

Functional Limitation	**Functional Limitation**
Comprehension Difficulties	Decoding Difficulties
Accommodations	**Accommodations**
➢ Peer tutor or mentors ➢ Graphic organizer ➢ Check for understanding (who, what, where, when, why, how) ➢ Videos or other visual representations ➢ Connect printed materials to life experiences or prior knowledge	➢ Assistive technology ➢ Screen readers ➢ Decoding programs ➢ Reading pens ➢ Model "good reader" strategies (look at pictures, table of contents, chapter headings, maps, diagrams, and bold print words)
Functional Limitation	**Functional Limitation**
Fluency Issues	Visual Processing Deficits
Accommodations	**Accommodations**
➢ Provide guided, repeated oral reading ➢ Provide opportunities for independent silent reading ➢ Use highlighers, colored overlays, large print, and tracking tools	➢ Use audio input (players and recorders) while reading the same information ➢ Use reading guides (tools to help track and stay focused on the page) ➢ Provide quiet space to minimize distractions
Functional Limitation	**Functional Limitation**
Memory Difficulties	Writing Difficulties
Accommodations	**Accommodations**
➢ Provide memory devices (mnemonics, visualization) ➢ Allow the use of graphic organizers	➢ Allow verbal responses ➢ Use of reference materials (dictionary, word prediction software)
Functional Limitation	**Functional Limitation**
Difficulty Tracking	Auditory Processing
Accommodations	**Accommodations**
➢ Provide reading rulers and/or colored overlay guides ➢ Allow the use of finger to guide	➢ Provide visual cues ➢ Allow extended time ➢ Provide a quiet reading environment
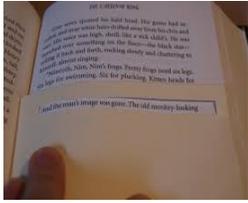
Spotlight on AT: Reading Disabilities

Utilizing assistive technology (AT) can help meet accommodation goals of building independence, accessibility, and employability.

Technology can help students work around their reading challenges. AT tools can be used on computers, smartphones, and other devices. A few of those tools include:

➢ **Text-to Speech (TTS)** allows the user to see text and hear it read aloud at the same time.
➢ **Audiobooks and digital TTS books** allows the user to hear books read aloud. Some people like to read along with the book so they can see the words at the same time.
➢ **Applications (apps)** allow the user to download specific tools to a mobile device increasing independence and accessibility.

Text Grabber and Translator: Text Grabber quickly scans, translates, and saves chosen text from virtually any printed material. The app includes text recognition in more than 60 languages. Text can be spoken aloud and translated via Voice Over feature.

Voice Dream Reader: Voice Dream Reader has a highly configurable screen layout that suits every reading style from completely auditory to completely visual, plus a synchronized combination of both. Text is easy to rewind and fast forward by sentence, paragraph, page and chapter. The app has a built-in dictionary and keeps track of where the user stopped in each book or article. It includes the ability to read internet pages without reading the ads.

Go Read: Go Read is an accessible e-book reader for people with print disabilities. Go Read is directly linked to the Bookshare library, letting you find, download, and read Bookshare books within seconds. You can use Go Read with or without talk back and enjoy reading Bookshare books with useful features that make reading accessible to people with visual, physical and learning disabilities.

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Disability Resources

Understood

Understood is a free online resource that provides practical tools and support for students' academic, social and emotional needs associated with learning and attention issues. New fact sheets are available on topics such as Dyslexia, Understanding Learning and Attention Issues, Slow Processing Speed and more.

ReadingResource.Net

ReadingResource.Net provides free resources and strategies for supporting students with reading disabilities. Brief demonstration videos along with transcripts are available to support instructors and service providers with a way to experience reading strategies and instruction in action.

Adult Literacy League

Adult Literacy League is a resource containing free websites that can help supplement or even plan lessons on a variety of topics such as grammar, language literacy, test prep, vocabulary and more.

Bookshare

Bookshare is the world's largest online library of copyrighted content for people with qualified print disabilities. Bookshare provides: access to a large and diverse collection of titles for school or pleasure reading, the ability to listen to books with high quality text-to-speech voices, learning multi-modally (see and hear words as they are being read and highlighted), tools to take notes, add bookmarks, look up word definitions, and a dedicated Job Corps library with the most commonly used textbooks.

Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and the 2020 theme is Tools 2 Thrive. Mental health promotion and education activities provide an excellent opportunity to engage the Job Corps center community in raising awareness of mental health. Practical tools that everyone can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency regardless of the situations they are dealing with will be available on Mental Health America.

Upcoming Webinars

➢ Disability Coordinator Orientation Part 3: Other Disability Program Requirements

➢ Documentation of Disability: IEPs and Beyond

➢ **To register:** Go to WebEx