

Specific Learning Difficulties: What Teachers Need To Know

What are Specific Learning Difficulties?

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) are a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to learn. They can affect reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic skills. SpLDs are not caused by a lack of intelligence, but by differences in how the brain processes information.



Specific Learning Difficulties - What Teachers Need to

Know by Sara Ackerman

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SpLDs are often diagnosed in childhood, but they can continue to affect people throughout their lives. They can make it difficult to learn new skills, complete schoolwork, and succeed in a variety of settings.

Types of Specific Learning Difficulties

There are many different types of SpLDs, but the most common include:

- **Dyslexia:** Dyslexia is a difficulty with reading. People with dyslexia may have trouble recognizing words, understanding what they read, or spelling words correctly.
- **Dysgraphia:** Dysgraphia is a difficulty with writing. People with dysgraphia may have trouble forming letters, writing legibly, or organizing their thoughts on paper.
- **Dyscalculia:** Dyscalculia is a difficulty with mathematics. People with dyscalculia may have trouble understanding numbers, solving math problems, or remembering math facts.
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that can affect attention, behavior, and learning. People with ADHD may have difficulty paying attention, staying organized, and controlling their impulses.

Causes of Specific Learning Difficulties

The exact cause of SpLDs is unknown, but they are thought to be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Some research suggests that SpLDs may be caused by differences in the way the brain processes information. Other research suggests that SpLDs may be caused by environmental factors, such as exposure to toxins or trauma.

Symptoms of Specific Learning Difficulties

The symptoms of SpLDs can vary depending on the type of difficulty. However, some common symptoms include:

- Difficulty with reading, writing, or mathematics
- Poor attention or concentration

- Poor memory
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty organizing thoughts or ideas
- Poor social skills
- Low self-esteem

Diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties

SpLDs are diagnosed by a team of professionals, including a doctor, psychologist, and educational specialist. The diagnosis is based on a variety of factors, including the child's academic history, cognitive skills, and social and emotional development.

Treatment of Specific Learning Difficulties

There is no cure for SpLDs, but there are a variety of treatments that can help to improve symptoms. These treatments may include:

- **Special education:** Special education is a type of education that is designed for students with disabilities. Special education programs can provide students with the support and accommodations they need to succeed in school.
- **Therapy:** Therapy can help students with SpLDs to develop coping mechanisms, improve their academic skills, and build their self-esteem.
- **Medication:** Medication can be used to treat some of the symptoms of SpLDs, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

How Teachers Can Help Students with Specific Learning Difficulties

Teachers can play a vital role in helping students with SpLDs to succeed in school. Here are some tips for teachers:

- **Be aware of the different types of SpLDs** and the symptoms that they can cause.
- **Create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment.** This means providing students with the accommodations they need to succeed, such as extra time on tests, preferential seating, and assistive technology.
- **Use a variety of teaching methods** to meet the needs of all learners. This may include using visual aids, hands-on activities, and small group instruction.
- **Provide students with regular feedback** on their progress. This will help them to stay on track and build their self-confidence.
- **Collaborate with parents and other professionals** to provide students with the support they need to succeed.

Specific Learning Difficulties can make it difficult for students to succeed in school. However, with the right support, students with SpLDs can learn to manage their difficulties and reach their full potential.



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