

Information about Student Teachers with Specific Learning Disabilities

- Students with specific learning disabilities have average to above average intelligence.
- A learning disability is due to an underlying problem with information processing and working memory rather than lack of effort or motivation. It is not due to poor schooling, family tensions, emotional or behavioural problems, and social or cultural factors.
- A learning disability can impair cognitive functions such as reading (dyslexia), writing (dyslexia and dysgraphia) and mathematical calculation (dyscalculia).
- Common symptoms of a spelling disability include erratic spelling, particularly with inverted syllables, abbreviated-looking words, omission of vowels and inverted letters.

Impact of impairment:

- Students with specific learning disabilities tend to work harder than other students to complete coursework.
- Academic achievement, as revealed by written work, frequently fails to reflect the student's ability and understanding of the topic.
- Legibility, writing speed, and spelling may be hampered when under time constraints.

Student teachers with specific learning disabilities are able to develop specific strategies to organise, plan, and carry out lessons the same as any other student teacher.

They can also:

- Apply strong creative and imaginative skills to the classroom environment.
- Employ sound problem solving abilities to resolve issues.
- Pay close attention to detail, thus improving learning outcomes.
- Identify and relate to dyslexic pupils.
- Provide valuable role models for students with disabilities.
- Provide heightened awareness of the need to teach inclusively.
- Contribute solutions to problems facing students with learning disabilities, based on their own experiences.

Information has been sourced from:

The Dyslexic Teachers Association <http://thedta.tripod.com/index.html>

Riddick, B. (2003). Experiences of teachers and trainee teachers who are dyslexic. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 7(4), 389-402.

Anderson, R.J., Karp, J.M., & Keller, C.E. (Eds.). (1998). *Enhancing diversity. Educators with disabilities*. Gallaudet University Press, Washington, D.C

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The University of Auckland encourages partnerships between Faculties, student services and students, to support students to achieve their academic potential.