

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Learning differences is a more preferable term than “learning disabilities” as it highlights the fact that some students simply learn differently than others do rather than focusing on an individual’s cognitive weaknesses-which isolates them from other learners.

Adolescents with learning differences tend to find it harder to understand, learn and remember new things, meaning that they may end up having problems with a range of things such as communication, being aware of risks or even managing everyday tasks. Having a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information or to learn new skills may mean a reduced ability to cope independently, with a lasting effect on development.

There are what is termed “Specific learning differences” which are a group of conditions that seem to be caused by variations in the way the brain develops, leading to some adolescents exhibiting a relatively unusual or “different” way of perceiving the world and processing information. The most common are dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD and Asperger’s Syndrome, although the term can also be extended to include other conditions such as Tourette’s Syndrome, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Here are some possible characteristics for students with learning differences:

- They have good and bad days
- They have difficulty processing sensory input (visual, auditory or physical)
- They have poor short term and/or working memory
- They lack time awareness and management skills
- They have hypersensitivity to environmental factors
- They show difficulties with sequencing

- They have difficulty in maintaining focus and especially in changing focus (from board to book, or TV to magazine)
- They have difficulty with regulating pitch/volume/pace when speaking
- They exhibit a lack of rhythm and /or balance
- They have difficulties with listening, especially in groups
- Frequently get upset with/difficulties with turn-taking
- They avoid new or unpredictable situations
- They have difficulty with metaphoric language
- They often have difficulty sleeping
- They show low self-esteem

HOW PACIFIC QUEST CAN HELP

At Pacific Quest we integrate an Individualized Education Plan (IEPs) with accommodations for students with learning differences such as: Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia, Dysphasia and Aphasia, Nonverbal Learning Disorders, ADHD, Autism Spectrum, Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder and others. Pacific Quest also integrates learning styles and multiple intelligences into daily activities and assessments.

We believe that this integration curriculum emphasizes strengths and fosters success. Our team members strive to help students discover their unique learner profiles, and build upon their success. Academic credit is available for all Pacific Quest students that have not yet completed high school. Upon completion, Pacific Quest students have the opportunity to take seven academic courses for a total of four (4) credits.

The courses include:

- Career and Technical Education – Horticulture Pathway (0.5 credits)
- Health Education – Health Education (0.5 credits)
- Language Arts – English and Language Arts (0.5 credits)
- Physical Education – Lifetime Fitness (1.0 credit)
- Science – Environmental Literacy (0.5 credits)
- Social Sciences – Hawaiian Culture (0.5 credits)

- Electives – Psychology (0.5 credits)

We may also be able to tailor a specific class to a student's individual journey and provide specialized accommodations for learning differences.

The courses are aligned with Pacific Quest's therapeutic curriculum, the Common Core Curriculum and National standards, providing a rounded educational experience that incorporates both academic learning and therapeutic growth.