Learning Challenges – Definitions and Markers

Visual Processing Challenges

Visual Processing Challenges hinder a learner's ability to make sense of information taken in through the eyes (that are beyond visual disorders such as myopia, astigmatism, etc.). Difficulties can be seen in the learner's ability to discriminate between different letters or words, follow text while reading, and with difficulty remembering the "look" of letters or words (visual memory). In some cases, letters or words seem to move on the page. Visual processing challenges can affect a learner's reading, writing, and mathematic abilities.

Major Markers

a. has a physical reaction to print (for example, headaches, tired or red eyes)

b. has a lot of difficulty tracking text (text may move or shake on the page)

c. over relies on sounding out words – poor sight word memory

d. reading substitutions are visually similar (for example, "horse" for "house")

e. spellings are usually a phonetic alternative to the correct spelling

f. mixes upper and lower letters inappropriately

g. may spell the same word differently in the same document

h. confuses similar numbers or transposes numbers (wrong order)

i. has difficulty copying

j. has difficulty with left/right and working in columns

Auditory Processing Challenges

Auditory Processing Challenges effect how aural information is interpreted by the brain. This can interfere with speech and language acquisition and can affect all areas of learning, especially reading and spelling. An auditory processing challenge is not a hearing problem, but rather a difficulty in perceiving aural information. A learner may be unable to recognize or isolate individual parts of speech, or remember spoken language. The learner may have difficulty with auditory sequencing and blending or reading and spelling phonetically.

Major Markers

a. has difficulty retaining and recalling oral information

b. has difficulty explaining themselves to others

c. dislikes or avoids reading, especially out loud

d. has a lot of difficulty or is unable to use phonics to sound out words

e. may reverse or transpose letters

f. has difficulty understanding text on the first reading

g. spellings are bizarre – not good phonetic alternatives

h. letters are added or missing or in the wrong order (reverses or transposed)

i. has difficulty processing numbers correctly

j. says a number backwards or may transpose number when doing oral drills

Organizational Processing Challenges

Organizational Processing Challenges exist when an individual has difficulty managing time and space, and organizing their daily activities. The learner may show difficulties when receiving, integrating, remembering, and expressing information. As well, the learner may have gross and/or fine motor difficulties.

Major Markers

    a. has difficulty remembering things

    b. has difficulty performing under stress

    c. has difficulty following a schedule

    d. has difficulty prioritizing and organizing

    e. has difficulty adjusting to change

    f. writing shows poor organization

    g. has difficulty with directions

    h. has an awkward pencil grip

    i. letters are poorly formed

    j. appears clumsy or poorly coordinated

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