

# The Top 15 Things Consultants Working with Students with LD Should Know



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Members of the LD Committee have been gathering information about the 10 most important things consultants should consider when working with students with LD. There were so many pertinent ideas that we had trouble narrowing the list to 10 and decided to change the article to the 15 most important things.

1. Learning disabilities is a lifelong, 24 / 7 diagnosis, however with appropriate education and encouragement, love, and sheer determination, people with learning disabilities are able to compensate for their LD and are successful in life.
2. Learning disabilities don't affect any two people the same way.
3. Understand the differences between a non-verbal learning disability and a language-based learning disability.
4. Very bright students with learning disabilities are often able to hide their LD, especially in elementary school. This is particularly true for students with strong verbal skills.
5. Older students need to understand their learning styles, strengths and needs, and be willing to seek support and advocate for themselves. It does no good for consultants, teachers, parents, the personnel of disability offices or learning centers to offer help if the student is resistant.
6. A thorough review of the student's records is necessary to understand that student's learning difference. If records are not current or seem incomplete, consider a referral to a neuropsychologist for a neuropsychological evaluation or a school psychologist for a psycho-educational evaluation. The consultant needs to know which specialist is appropriate to administer the testing and what new or updated tests the psychologist should administer.
7. Listen to the parents and students about what strategies worked and what strategies did not work in previous learning environments.
8. Know how to work with parents who don't accept their child's diagnosis.
9. Students with learning disabilities often have co-morbid psychological issues (depression, anxiety etc).
10. Families should visit the Office of Disability (for colleges) and the Learning Center (for schools) to get a sense of the director, personnel, and services available when touring campuses. Consultants should understand the difference between a comprehensive program and services.
11. Parents need to understand that their child's IEP does not follow the child from high school to college.
12. The documentation requirements for learning disabilities at schools and colleges and for testing change; keep updated information in your files.
13. Consultants need to know and understand state and federal laws regarding learning disabilities.
14. College students and older high school students need to make sure that their accommodations are in place at the beginning of classes. At the start of each school year parents of younger students should work with their child's teacher to ensure he/she understands and gives the child the proper accommodations.
15. Consultants need to be familiar with all of the new technology (Universal Design) that is available to make learning new concepts accessible to all students. For more information, refer to the LDA Web site ([www.ldaamerica.org](http://www.ldaamerica.org)) which has a wealth of information including pamphlets to download in their resource section; The Association on Higher Education and Disability Web site ([www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)) which has a good pamphlet about college options for LD students; and the book *Learning Disabilities: The Ultimate Teen Guide* by Penny Hutchins Paquette and Cheryl Gerson Tuttle.