

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES
STRATEGIES PAGE

PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS

Students with physical impairments can complete academic requirements the same as any other student, however some **strategies** may be required. The following are a few of those strategies that you, as an instructor, might consider when presenting subject matter.

Accept the fact that a disability exists. Not acknowledging this fact is not acknowledging the person.

Students who use wheelchairs are occasionally late due to circumstances beyond their control, mainly special transportation arrangements. Keep the door open for late arrival (an agreement should be worked out early in the semester).

Encourage students who use crutches or canes to keep them within easy reach and make such a space available.

Allow students with seizure disorders to sit on an outside aisle

Don't be afraid to offer assistance, but wait until it has been accepted before you help. (Only push a wheelchair when asked.)

Ask the student how you can be the most helpful.

When talking privately to a student who uses a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, sit down or kneel to place yourself at that student's eye level.

When a student has a speech impairment, resist the temptation to interrupt and finish the sentence for him or her. Be patient.

Include the student in open discussions.

Accept and respond to all appropriate communication attempts.

Don't pretend to understand when you don't. Ask for clarification.

Speak distinctly and pace instruction carefully.

Write out instructions on the board or overhead projection.

Use laboratory sinks that are accessible from 3 sides for those who are paralyzed on one side.

Use electric hot plates instead of Bunsen burners as heat sources.

Increase size of wheels, dials, handles, and buttons on lab equipment.

Use modified lids on the tops of containers (wider and bigger).

Assign a lab partner who can help to reach or manipulate objects as needed.

Provide an accessible means for the recording of data, charts, or graphs.

Lower chalkboard and/or corkboard.

When information gathering involves a physical action that the student cannot perform, try using a different type of experience that will yield the same information.

Make sure field activity sites are accessible. (Call your campus Disability Services Office for assistance.)