Breaking down the barriers: An examination of the factors and underpinning strategies that contribute to the unit of competency completion of apprentices with a learning disability.

Presenter
Sandra Cotton
Manager, Disability Services
Polytechnic West
Western Australia

Research Purpose
To investigate teaching and learning strategies that contribute to unit of competency completion rates of apprentices with a learning disability.
Consideration of the wider application to apprentices in general and offer lecturers strategies that comply with current equity legislation.

Session Overview
• Research question
• Relevance within the broader context
• Methodology
• Findings

Methodology
• Qualitative approach using mixed methods
  ➢ Questionnaire
  ➢ Focus groups
  ➢ Interviews
  Research sample

Review of Literature
• Broader studies into completion and non completion of apprentices
Learning Disability

- A learning disability is identified under the Disability Discrimination Act, (1992) and Disability Standards for Education (2005) as a disorder or malfunction, which results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction, and, therefore, places an obligation on education and training providers to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to accommodate these students (Shaw, 2004).

Findings of Reis and Colbert (2004) confirm that students with a learning disability often have coexisting conditions such as anxiety, depression, and low self-concept and self-efficacy.

Findings of Barriers

Participants identified difficulties with:
- reading, spelling and writing

Coexisting behaviours:
- Anxiety
- Distractibility
- Withdrawal
- Disruptiveness
- Poor organisational skills
- Retention of information

Barriers as a result of LD

These barriers may include poor reading, comprehension and writing, anxiety and or depression and negative self-image.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties experienced</th>
<th>Students Responses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding texts</td>
<td>Response Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors for success

Lecturers and apprentices acknowledged:
- Work satisfaction
- Pay and job availability
- Completion of VET in schools
- Holistic instructional approaches
- Supportive learning environment
- Family and peer support
Strategies

Apprentices found mentoring and tutoring as being most important by:

• simplifying terms and clarifying concepts
• mind mapping
• task analysis
• use of equipment and visual representations to present abstract concepts
• Use of technologies

Factors and Strategies that Address the Barriers Experienced by Students with a Learning Disability

Summary

• In spite of barriers, these apprentices have the hands on aptitude and conceptual ability to be successful
• Apprentices who have been disenfranchised by the education system, with the implementation of strategies, can overcome the barriers to achieve competency