

Resources for Students with Learning Disabilities

Types of Learning Disabilities that Affect Writing

Dysgraphia – an umbrella term for “a learning disability that affects writing, which requires a complex set of motor and information processing skills. Dysgraphia makes the act of writing difficult. It can lead to problems with spelling, poor handwriting and putting thoughts on paper. People with dysgraphia can have trouble organizing letters, numbers and words on a line or page” (National Center for Learning Disabilities).

Dyslexia is “a language processing disorder” that “can hinder reading, writing, spelling and sometimes even speaking” (National Center for Learning Disabilities).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)* is a disorder that can be divided into three sections: 1) hyperactive-impulsive type, where the individual is often restless, impulsive, and has difficulty waiting or sitting still for too long, 2) inattentive type, where it is often difficult for the individual to focus on finishing the task at hand, or 3) a combination of the two. (National Center for Learning Disabilities)

*While ADHD is not technically a learning disability, it is a disorder that affects writing, and is often seen in conjunction with other learning disorders.

How Disabilities Can Affect Writing

Individuals with dysgraphia have trouble organizing their thoughts on a page, as a result of either:

- 1) Visual Spatial Difficulties
 - Trouble processing what the eye sees
- 2) Language Processing Difficulties
 - Trouble processing and making sense of what the ear hears

Individuals with dysgraphia often struggle with:

- Organizing thoughts on paper
- Keeping track of ideas already written down
- Syntax structure and grammar
- Transcribing spoken ideas to paper

Individuals with dyslexia often struggle with tasks such as:

- Reading aloud
- Distinguishing between words that look or sound alike
- Proofreading and self-correcting work
- Expressing written ideas in a logical manner

ADHD will affect students’ writing differently according to the category in which it manifests itself

- Hyperactive-impulsive students may:

- Start answering questions before they fully understand them
- Have difficulty remaining seated
- Be impatient about finishing a task
- Inattentive types may:
 - Be slow to process information
 - Have poor organizational skills
 - Not be able to pay attention long enough to learn new information
 - Struggle with attention to detail

How the Writing Center Can Help

- Come prepared for your writing center appointment with the prompt for your assignment, any reading materials needed to complete the assignment, and what you have done so far (it is completely fine if you come in with nothing completed; the Writing Center is a resource for all steps of the writing process, including brainstorming ideas).
- Schedule an appointment at the Writing Center early in the writing process – a Writing Associate can help you to explore any ideas you have, and also help to outline the steps needed to complete the assignment. Coming early on also benefits you in that you have the flexibility to bring in multiple drafts to the Writing Center throughout the process.
- Time management is a crucial part of the writing process – bring in your calendar to your appointment, and a Writing Associate can help you outline a timeline of personal due dates for each step of the assignment, setting short-term goals to complete the task most efficiently.

Additional Resources

The Disability Services Office is a helpful resource for any students looking for more information about learning disabilities and the support available for students with learning disabilities on Trinity's campus. As the website for Disability Services explains:

“Trinity College strives to ensure that students with disabilities will have the same opportunities to thrive academically and personally in their Trinity experience. Trinity is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students who are substantially limited by a diagnosed disability. Students with physical and/or learning disabilities have met the same requirements for admission as all other Trinity students. Once admitted, students may request support services in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992”

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Useful Links:

<http://www.ncld.org/students-disabilities/ld-education-teachers/teaching-expressive-writing-students-with-ld>
<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/support-writing-research-and-composing-technology/students/support-students-disabilities>

Works Cited

National Center for Disabilities Editorial Team. "How ADHD Affects Learning." *National Center for Learning Disabilities*. National Center for Learning Disabilities, Web. 30 Nov. 2014. <<http://nclld.org/types-learning-disabilities/adhd-related-issues/adhd/how-adhd-affects-learning>>.

National Center for Disabilities Editorial Team. "What Is Dysgraphia?" *National Center for Learning Disabilities*. National Center for Learning Disabilities, Web. 27 Oct. 2014. <<http://www.nclld.org/types-learning-disabilities/dysgraphia/what-is-dysgraphia>>.

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