

Accommodations for Writing Tasks of Students who are Gifted and ADHD

- Provide access in all classes to appropriate assistive technology such as a computer or word processor, printer and software programs that help with writing and focusing on the topic.
- Allow the student to dictate thoughts or stories to the teacher or into a tape recorder, take notes, then build sentences and paragraphs from the notes.
- Display clearly written guidelines for each writing assignment.
- Provide a permanent visual display, such as a poster, of the sequential steps in the writing process.
- Allow the students to move around under controlled conditions as they mentally process the assignment, then sit or stand and complete the writing process.
- Allow additional time for writing assignments on standardized testing. Allow use of familiar assistive technology.
- Assist with and even provide supplies for organizing thoughts and materials, such as pens, pencils and paper.
- Immediately reward all appropriate and focused behaviors that produce written responses.
- Encourage all behaviors, such as self-correction on written assignments, that indicate self-regulation.
- When possible, provide in-classroom assistance of case managers for both exceptionalities - the learning disability and the high IQ.
- Provide and allow time for individual advisement by case managers at both exceptionality levels.

Written Resources

Baum, Susan, and Owen, Stephen, 2004. *To Be Gifted and Learning Disabled*. Creative Learning Press. Mansfield Center, CT.

Davis, Gary, and Rimm, Sylvia, 2004. *Education of the Gifted and Talented*. Pearson Education, Inc., Boston.

Reiff, Michael, M.D., 2004. *ADHD - A Complete and Authoritative Guide*. American Academy of Pediatrics. New York.

Online Resources

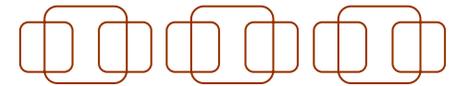
<http://www.inspiration.com> to help get and keep students' attention and keep them focused on writing tasks.

<http://www.familyeducation.com/> offers questions and answers on learning disabled, gifted and ADD/ADHD issues.

<http://www.sengifted.org> offers insights and advice on teaching and parenting techniques as well as diagnosis and misdiagnosis. See Baum and Olenchack, *Gifted Students with Attention Deficits: Fact and/or Fiction?* Also see Webb, *Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnosis of Gifted Children*.

<http://help4teachers.com/hottopics.htm> offers information from psychology and neuroscience on ADD, ADHD, sample unit sheets and layered curriculum ideas.

http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/teacher_introduction.cfm offers learning strategies instruction for students who are gifted and learning disabled.



Teaching Writing to Students Who Are Gifted and ADHD

Brochure developed by:
Niki Mott, M.Ed.

Advanced Education Services,
Las Cruces (New Mexico) Public Schools





Characteristics of Students Who Are Gifted and Diagnosed with ADHD

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the most commonly diagnosed behavioral condition in children (estimated to affect 6-9% of school-aged population).
- Chronic condition with behavior problems that interfere with ability to function.
- Inability to sustain attention and control impulses, act impulsively.
- Inability to delay gratification.
- Increased movement/motor activity even when corrected or redirected or are engaging in tasks of interest.
- Distractible even under ordinary or relaxed conditions.
- Awkward, have problems with fine motor control needed for writing tasks.
- May have high IQ, anxiety, depression and behavior disorders, medical conditions or learning and language processing difficulties, creating a great amount of asynchronicity.
- Low tolerance for frustration, especially in tasks that are difficult or require a great amount of concentration and sequencing, such as writing.
- Inability to follow through and stay on task, even with adult assistance.
- Poor organization skills, scattered thoughts, materials, supplies and papers.
- Tend to avoid and not complete tasks such as writing that require sustained concentration and sequential steps.
- Take longer than other students to complete writing tasks. May be self-conscious of and frustrated with lack of speed.

Program/Service Written Language Needs of Students Who Are Gifted and ADHD

- Appropriate diagnosis by a pediatrician and availability of medical findings.
- Professional identification and shared interpretation of IQ level and achievement potential.
- Nurture their creativity and encourage their strength areas, including general IQ, critical thinking, creativity or achievement potential in an academic area.
- Avoid repetitive, routine, drill tasks. Their giftedness may allow them to retain material easily, even if they are not able to express their knowledge on writing assignments.
- Offer an appropriate level of academic challenge to maintain engagement in physical tasks, such as writing, that require sustained attention.
- When possible, enroll the student in programs that offer stimulating, interest-area curriculum, such as a magnet or charter schools.
- Offer opportunities for interaction with intellectual peers in small-group, pullout settings with the assistance of a trained educator of the gifted.
- Encourage peer learning and clustering with classmates who are on the same intellectual level.
- Continue professional monitoring by a physician, counselor, trained educators, as appropriate.
- Offer real-world opportunities for writing assignments such as a persuasive note or letter, expanding on and including details in the steps.

Strategies for Differentiating Written Language Instruction for Students Who Are Gifted and ADHD

- Pretest for previous mastery of concepts and eliminate instruction for those already known.
- Allow verbal responses to closed or knowledge-level questions so the student can adequately express the level of knowledge.
- Encourage nonjudgmental (no wrong answers) brainstorming and webbing as the first stages in the writing process.
- Do not judge or grade spelling, grammar or mechanics during the early stages in the writing process. Encourage proofreading for only one type of error at a time.
- Teach the steps in the writing process in a linear fashion and reward completion of even small, sequential steps.
- Allow choice in topics for written work. Let them explore topics that are inherently engaging to them.
- Provide outlines and samples of good writing. Allow them to draft written pieces modeled after the samples.
- Reward and acknowledge effort as well as product.
- Provide a checklist for each assignment and encourage them to check off each step when completed. Provide stickers or something visually appealing as motivators.
- Allow portfolio assessment with artwork in addition to written responses.