Strategies to Address Specific Learning Disabilities in Writing Resource Bundle

I. Strategies to Address Specific Learning Disabilities in Writing Resource

II. References
# Support Students with a Learning Disability in Writing Resource

## High Quality Writing Instruction for Students with a Specific Learning Disability

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<th>How the strategy supports the action</th>
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<td><strong>Create a Supportive and Collaborative Environment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exemplar Text</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Select a piece of text that aligns to the genre students will be writing in and is just above students' current writing level².&lt;br&gt;2. Read the text with students.&lt;br&gt;3. Work with students to note and record specific text structure, ideas, and parts of the text that align to what they will be working on (Gallagher, 2011).&lt;br&gt;4. Ask students to refer to what they noticed from step 3 as they draft, revise, and edit their own text (Strickland, Ganske, &amp; Monroe, 2002).</td>
<td>Writing instruction should be an interactive and collaborative process between teachers and students (Harris et al., 2014). Working with students to highlight text structure, ideas, and mechanics from exemplar texts helps to create a space where students can (eventually) review each other’s work, share ideas, and ask questions without fear of being judged (Gallagher, 2011; Harris, Graham, Chambers, &amp; Houston, 2014).</td>
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<td><strong>Design Specific Product Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Peer-Editing³</strong> (Graham &amp; Harris, 2005):&lt;br&gt;1. Develop a rubric or checklist to help students evaluate their writing against specific product goals.&lt;br&gt;2. Practice using the rubric by applying it to a sample text.&lt;br&gt;3. Model how to use the rubric to make corrections and give feedback.&lt;br&gt;4. Break students into pre-determined peer-edit partners or small groups.&lt;br&gt;5. Have students use editing symbols aligned to goals to provide feedback⁴.</td>
<td>Specific goals provide students with reachable tasks to focus on while they go through the writing process (Graham &amp; Harris, 2016; Graham &amp; Perin, 2007). Goals should be reachable and identify the purpose for writing and characteristics of the final product (Graham &amp; Perin, 2007). Peer-editing allows for students to collaborate and edit each other’s work while focusing on specific goals. Specific goals keep students from getting overwhelmed by allowing them to focus on a few specific aspects of their writing (Graham, Collins, &amp; Rigby-Wills, 2013; Graham &amp; Harris, 2003).</td>
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¹ General actions are not listed in any particular order. Each action should be part of writing instruction.

² Conversely, consider identifying a non-example where students work to notice errors that they should not include (Harris, Graham, Chambers, & Houston, 2014).

³ For more information and sample checklists on peer-editing visit: www.readwritethink.org.

⁴ The ideal way to perform step 5 is for each student to have a copy of the paper being revised. The author then reads the paper aloud to his or her partner. Asking students to read their writing aloud helps them to develop an awareness of the relationship between the reader and the authors (Fitzgerald, 2013).
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<td>Create Writing Tasks that are Meaningful for Students</td>
<td>This general action includes several, smaller strategies to help ensure that students are writing for a meaningful purpose. Opportunities to write are authentic when:  - They serve a local (i.e. classroom, school, or community) purpose.  - They address and/or serve a larger, societal purpose (e.g. an upcoming election or civil rights).  - Topics are selected by students.  - While this can’t always be the case, students should be able to select the topic as often as possible.  - Final products are shared with real audiences (e.g. a school administrator, the local newspaper, a business).</td>
<td>Students with learning disabilities often experience low self-efficacy and motivation for writing (Graham, Harris, &amp; Larsen, 2001). When students write about topics that are meaningful and important to them, their motivation increases (Fitzgerald, 2013). When students have the opportunity to write about topics that are meaningful, they are able to connect with the purpose and audience (Fitzgerald, 2013; Graham &amp; Harris, 2003).</td>
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<td>Provide Direct and Explicit Instruction</td>
<td><strong>Graphic Organizer</strong>&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;:  1. <strong>Introduce and Establish Purpose:</strong>  a. Identify a graphic organizer that aligns with the genre of text students will be writing about.  b. It should highlight text structure and elements that align to the genre of text (e.g. For persuasive writing, there should be a topic sentence, reasons to support the topic sentence, an explanation of each reason, and a coherent ending).  c. Explain to students how and why this particular graphic organizer aligns to the genre and will help them to meet objective(s) and goal(s) for this particular piece of writing.  2. <strong>Model How to Use the Graphic Organizer to Draft:</strong>  a. Pick ideas and decide what to write about.  b. Organize notes by brainstorming and putting ideas into the planner or graphic organizer.  c. Write and elaborate by continuing to modify the graphic organizer throughout the draft and writing process (Adapted from Graham &amp; Harris, 2005).</td>
<td>Students with learning disabilities often struggle with working memory and cognitive overload (Graham, Collins, &amp; Rigby-Wills, 2013). Explicit and systematic instruction provides structure to the complex process of writing (Graham, Collins, &amp; Rigby-Wills, 2013; Graham, Harris, &amp; Larsen, 2001; Olinghouse et al., 2010). Graphic organizers help teachers to make the internal thought processes of writing visible for students (Englert &amp; Dunsmore, 2004). Graphic organizers also provide structure and serve as a space for students to “anchor” their thoughts and ideas throughout the writing process (Tovani, 2004).</td>
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<sup>5</sup> Numerous grade-specific examples for graphic organizers can be found at [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)


