

Learning Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Writing

How do learning disabilities (LD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) impact writing?

Writers with learning disabilities (LD)

Writers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Students with LD tend to adopt the knowledge-telling approach in writing

Students with ASD commonly have transcription difficulties

Their writing also tends to be less organized, contain fewer details, and may digress from the topic more often

Students with ASD may face challenges overcoming perfectionism writing tendencies

Students with LD spend less time on each stage of writing.

Difficulties with text generation are also common among these students

When they revise, they mostly focus on surface level details instead of making substantive changes to the content.

Performance on their writing is still lower than their typically developing peers.

LD has been one of the largest disability categories among students receiving special education.

- Students with LD are persistently challenged by writing.
- In elementary grades, students with LD also demonstrate difficulties with transcription skill.
- At the secondary level, challenges brought by transcription skills may still exist. On top of that, students with LD may also have difficulties with idea development, clarity, and structure of their essays.

Seven characteristics of individuals with ASD: (ASAN)

- Different sensory experiences
- Atypical approaches to learning and problem solving
- Deeply focused thinking about specific subjects/ topics
- Atypical and repetitive movements
- Desire for consistency; disruptions can result in anxiety/ frustration
- Difficulties with understanding and expressing language
- Difficulties with social interactions

Reference:

[Zajic, M. C., & Graham, S. Apryl L. Poch \(2020\). Informing inquiry into writing across the lifespan from perspectives on students with learning disabilities or autism spectrum disorder. *Approaches to lifespan writing research*, 195-210.](#)