Characteristics of students with learning problems	Accommodations, Modifications, Suggestions
Common Problems of Learners with Dyscalculia -- **Math** **Definition** Math is the study of numbers, quantities, shapes, and space using mathematical processes, rules, and symbols. There are various branches of math such as geometry and algebra. An individual who has math difficulties has trouble performing basic math skills such as addition or number relationships (being able to count objects and identify the correct number). Math difficulties are very common among school age children. Math related learning disabilities are often referred to as dyscalculia. An individual has dyscalculia if they have a life-long difficulty learning and doings various types of math problems. No research has currently been done to categorize math difficulties and they vary widely between people depending on his or her specific abilities. Two major contributors to math difficulties are visual and auditory processing difficulties *(*National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2007) **Common Characteristics of Students with Math Difficulties** *The student may have difficulty:* • Difficulty with abstract concepts of time and direction • Inability to recall schedules and sequences of past or future events • May be chronically early or late • Inconsistent results in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division • Inability to visualize, appear absent-minded, or lost in thought • Difficulty remembering math facts, concepts, rules, formulas, sequences, and procedures • Inconsistent mastery of math facts • Difficulty with left and right orientation • Difficulty following sequential procedures and directions in math steps • Slow in understanding math concepts in word problems • Confuse operations signs or perform them in the wrong order • Confuse part to whole relationships • Difficulty keeping score during games • Limited strategic planning ability	• Allow use of fingers and scratch paper • Use diagrams and draw math concepts • Provide peer assistance (e.g., pairing, peer tutors) • Work with manipulatives • Draw pictures of word problems • Use mnemonic devices to learn steps of a math concept • Use rhythm and music to teach math facts and to set steps to a beat • Schedule computer time for the student for drill and practice • Use chunking (e.g., go slowly and apply or use only one part at a time) • Use multisensory strategies (e.g., audio, visual) • Use graph paper for students who have difficulty organizing ideas on paper • Work on finding different ways to approach math facts (i.e., instead of just memorizing the multiplication tables, explain that 8 x 2 = 16, so if 16 is doubled, 8 x 4 must = 32) • Practice estimating as a way to begin solving math problems • Introduce new skills beginning with concrete examples and later moving to more abstract applications • For language difficulties, explain ideas and problems clearly and encourage students to ask questions as they work • Provide a place to work with few distractions and have pencils, erasers and other tools on hand as needed (Council for Exceptional Children, 2011; Garnett, 1998)

- Using a calculator (e.g., typing in functions)
- Keeping score (e.g., playing a game)
- Recalling numbers
- Copying numbers from one place to another
- Deriving meaning and understanding of number lines
- Carrying and borrowing (e.g., subtraction, addition)
- Completing and understanding word problems (e.g., relevant information, descriptions)
- Sequencing information or events
- Recognizing patterns (e.g., multiplication patterns)
- Explaining math processes or problems with language
- Many individuals with math difficulties do very well with writing and language that is not related to mathematic calculations.
- Frequent difficulties with arithmetic (e.g., confusing the signs +, -, x) Managing money (e.g., checking change, estimating costs, managing a check book)
- Telling time (e.g., reading a clock and judging how much time has passed)
- Discriminating which number is larger or smaller
- Using math tables (e.g., multiplication table Estimating the measurement of an object or distance (e.g., estimating that the table is 10ft away from the wall)
- Memorizing math facts (e.g., multiplication facts)
- Reading a sequence of numbers correctly (e.g., reading 635 and 536)

(Council for Exceptional Children, 2011; Geary, 2009)

Reading	
Definition	● Audio-taped textbooks and any other media that conveys content to be learned
There are five main skills that encompass the reading process: ability to match the correct sounds to the letters on the page (phonics), ability to segment and blend the sounds within a word (phonological awareness), ability to read smoothly and at an appropriate pace (fluency), vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension of text (ability to understand the meaning behind the words). Combined, all five elements construct the process of reading. A child who is having difficulty reading "my" have a deficit in one or more of these areas.	● Extended time to take tests ● Peer tutoring and pairing (e.g., buddy-reading) ● Use a note taker, for students who have trouble listening in class and taking notes ● Use of a scribe during test taking, for students who have trouble writing but who can express their answers verbally to the scribe, who writes down the responses ● Use of a reader during test taking (e.g., scribe reads test questions) ● Tape recording of class lectures ● Testing in a quiet place, for students who are easily distracted ● Involve all students during whole-class instruction by asking questions and then asking students to partner to discuss the answer ● Distribute lesson reminder sheets, which all the students complete to determine what students have learned from the lesson.
Common Characteristics of Students with Reading Difficulties	● Providing time each day for direct literacy instruction ● Explicit instruction for decoding new letters, words or sounds
 • Trouble identifying sounds associated with the letters • Skips words in a sentence and does not return to self-correct • Sounds out the same word every time it occurs on the page • Guesses at unknown words rather than sounding them out • Difficulty segmenting words into individual sounds (phonemes) or units of meaning (morphemes) (e.g., *batboy* can be pulled apart into *bat* and *boy*, and, later on, that the word *bat* can be broken down still further into b-a-t) • Expresses negative feelings towards reading • Difficulty using new strategies to read new words • Difficulty reading unknown (new, unfamiliar) words that must be sounded out (e.g., making wild stabs or guesses at reading a word, failure to systematically sound out words) • Difficulty remembering sight words (such as *that*, *an*, *in that*, *does, laugh)* • Omitting parts of words when reading; the failure to decode parts within a word (e.g., *conible* for *convertible)* • A fear of reading out loud due to a weakness in fluency • Oral reading is choppy • Difficulty using the appropriate expression or intonation when reading orally (i.e., prosody) • A reliance on context to discern the meaning of what is read • Ability to understand words in context rather than to read isolated single words • Difficulty finishing tests on time	● Provide students with immediate and corrective feedback ● Daily application of new knowledge at the phoneme or letter sound level in different types of literature ● Use of graphic organizers to help student organize information ● Provide students with summaries of texts read in content area subjects (e.g., giving the student a summary of chapter three in the social studies text before a test) and advanced organizers prior to lessons ● Focus students attention on specific parts of texts (e.g., give the student questions that can be answered by reading the text to help the student improve comprehension) ● Model different reading techniques (e.g., teacher uses his/her finger to read at first or thinks out loud when he/she comes to a tricky word) (Bender & Larkin, 2009; "Reading and Learning," 2001)

- Reading that is very slow and appears tiring
- Difficulty understanding or comprehending material read

(Shaywitz, 2003)

Visual-Spatial Processing
Definition

A visual processing disorder is the reduced ability to make sense of the information that one sees. This is different from difficulties with sight or sharpness of vision in that visual process deals with how the brain interprets information that is seen through one's eyes. An individual can have 20/20 vision yet still struggle with how the brain processes the information that is seen. The term visual processing is often interchangeable with the term visual interpretation. Visual processing deals with the sequence of steps that images take as they are processed and interpreted by the brain. There are several types of visual processing disorders and each type affects different aspects of visual information processing (*Visual Processing Disorders*, 2011).

Common Characteristics of Students with Visual-Spatial Processing Difficulties

The student may have difficulty:

- Using a keyboard or calculator.
- Recognizing pictures of a familiar object from a partial image (e.g., a car without wheels, a face without a nose)
- Noticing and comparing the characteristics of different items to distinguish them from each other (e.g., determining the differences between a square and a rectangle)
- Distinguishing shapes or objects from different backgrounds (e.g., finding a specific math problem on a page of problems)
- With reading comprehension (e.g., limited word recognition that hinders understanding)
- Recalling the spelling of familiar words with irregular spelling (e.g., their or there)

- Provide handouts that are clear (e.g. directions are simple and questions are uncluttered)
- Provide oral instruction as well as written directions.
- When providing a student with an activity or worksheet, provide concrete examples of appropriate response.
- Space items out on worksheets or notes.
- Use index cards when reading to block out other words or to help with line-to-line transitions.
- Provide highlighters for students to use to highlight important information while reading.
- Allow students to tape instruction.
- Ask peers to periodically check one another's note to make sure they are on task.
- Break assignments and activities into specific steps. Organize complex activities into smaller steps.
- Provide the students with one or two steps at a time. Avoid complex instructions with multi-step activities.
- Provide information about specific tasks before starting the activities.
- Allow students to write answers on the same sheet of paper that the questions are on.
- Color code information.
- Limit visual distractions while student is completing assignments.
- Have the student write "pig" and "bed" at the top of their worksheets or writing assignments.
- Allow student's to have proof reading buddies for written assignments.
- When the student is writing, provide paper with raised or darker lines
- Practice with puzzles to help individuals see specific parts as the big picture.
- Practice estimating space with games and a tape measure.

(National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2011)

- Recognizing the order of words, images and symbols (e.g., finding a pattern when given pictures of shapes)
- Coordinate body movement based on what one sees (e.g., catching a ball that is in the air) (*Visual Processing Disorders*, 2009)
- Identifying a word with a letter missing (e.g., c_t is cat)
- Getting from one place to another (e.g., classroom to the bathroom)
- Spacing letters and words on paper (e.g., words are not linear on a line but spread across the page)
- Reading maps, charts, and graphs
- Seeing the difference between two similar letters, shapes or objects (e.g., determining a square and a rectangle, discriminating between a "b" and a "d")
- Recognizing patterns (e.g., 2, 4, 6,_,_)
- Finding a specific bit of information in a textbook. (e.g., locating a sentence on page full of words)
- Isolating a specific image within a competing background (e.g., finding Waldo)
- Using an answer sheet that is separate from the test or activity (e.g., when students are asked to put answers on a scantron)
- Reading words in the correct order (e.g., skipping lines)
- Understanding math equations when there are many different numbers and letters (e.g., $5x + (3-x) = 30$)
- Copying information from the board to a piece of paper or from a book to a separate sheet
- Moving around without bumping into things
- With sports that need well-timed and specific movements (e.g., baseball)
- Attending (e.g., trouble focusing in a busy classroom)
- Tendency to reverse or misread letters, numbers and words (e.g. "p" and "q", "b and "d", writing numbers backwards, 6 and 9, 2 and 5)

(*Visual Processing Disorders*, 2011)

Auditory Processing	*Setting*
Definition Auditory processing is used to describe how the brain recognizes and interprets sound. The energy humans hear, which we associate with sound, travels through the ear and is then translated into electrical information that the brain is able to interpret. An auditory processing disorder happens when the translation or interpretation of sound is adversely affected. Children with APD often do not recognize subtle differences between sounds in words, even though the sounds themselves are loud and clear. For example, the request "Tell me how a chair and a couch are alike" may sound to a child with APD like "Tell me how a couch and a chair are alike." It can even be understood by the child as "Tell me how a cow and a hair are alike." These types of problems are more likely to occur when a person with APD is in a noisy environment or when he or she is listening to complex information. (National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2004) **Common Characteristics of Students with Auditory Processing Difficulties** • Frequent requests for repetition (e.g., "What?" "Huh?") • Difficulty listening or paying attention in noisy environments • Often misunderstands what is said (e.g., inconsistently responding to a task) • Carrying our oral, multi-step directions provides challenges • Poor memory for information presented verbally • Difficulty discerning direction from which sound is coming • Poor expressive and receptive language abilities (e.g. confusion in peer conversations) • Poor reading, writing, and spelling (e.g. comprehending stories read aloud, spelling a word that is stated aloud on a spelling test) • Poor phonics and speech sound discrimination (e.g. difficulty matching letters with sounds) • Difficulty taking notes • Difficulty learning foreign languages	• Seat the student away from auditory distractions. This may include seating the student near the teacher and the blackboard, away from windows, doors, or other possible transitioning areas. • Provide the student with a study carrel • Ear plugs to avoid noise distractions such as the heater or pencil sharpener • Structured classroom setting (e.g., establish clear routines for group discussions, procedures for responding, providing choices) *Speaking* • Gain the student's attention before giving directions. • Speak slowly and clearly, emphasizing key words • Use simple, brief directions • Give directions in a logical, time-ordered sequence. Use words that make the sequence clear, such first, next, finally • Use visual aids and write instructions to supplement spoken information • Pre-instruction (e.g. give an overview of main ideas before presenting new information) • Use prosody when presenting and reading (e.g. use gestures, vary the sound of your voice, pay attention to grammar) • Check for understanding/comprehension by asking students questions or asking for a brief summary after key ideas have been presented • Paraphrase instructions and information in shorter and simpler sentences rather than by only repeating. • Encourage students to ask questions for clarification • Make instructional transitions clear • Review previously learned material

• Weak short-term memory • Behavioral, psychological, and/or social problems resulting from poor language and academic skills • Gives slowed or delayed response to verbal stimuli; needs more time to process information (e.g., takes a long period of time to answer oral questions) • Exhibits behavior problems (e.g., increased out of seat behavior during oral instruction) • Perceived as inattentive or unmotivated Often interrupts oral instruction with questions (Ciocci, 2002)	• Recognize periods of fatigue and give breaks as necessary
Organization and Time Management **<u>Definition</u>** According to Learning Disabilities Worldwide (2011), organization skills include the ability to manage time and schedules, school materials and supplies, class and homework papers, daily and long-term assignments, and study space. Time management is having awareness of the amount of time required to complete a specific task or activity. This involves analyzing how time is spent, and the ability to prioritize different tasks based on the time that they require. Time management is an important tool in avoiding information overload. Organization and time management help students maintain and achieve academic, social, and behavioral goals. **<u>Common Characteristics of Students with Organization and Time Management Difficulties</u>** • ***Organizational Difficulties*** Failure to bring home, complete, and return homework assignments • Consistently unprepared (e.g. comes to class without supplies, does not take home school supplies to complete homework) • Confusion (e.g., does not know classroom procedures for homework, does not know when tests are) • In-consistent (e.g. notebooks and agendas are not chronological or complete)	• Provide emphasis on classroom structure (e.g., establish routines) • Help students to self-regulate by organizing their materials and manage their time (e.g., checklists) • Provide hands-on checklists, templates, calendars, assignment books and "how to" lists. • Communicate with parents about how they can support the use of organization skills at home (Bulloch, K., 2004). • Help student develop a homework planning routines (e.g., hourly after-school planner) • Develop a system with student for managing their materials (e.g., naming folders, using planner) • Explicitly model how to write assignments in an assignment planner • Assist student in prioritizing assignments and how to allocate appropriate amount of time for long-term projects • Check his/her notebook often to make sure due date information is marked • Keep extra supplies on hand • Give an assignment sheet to the student, other teachers, and/or parents • Write the assignment on board for the student to copy • Check and reinforce the student for recording the assignment • Require folders for big projects that have many separate parts • Give a reward (e.g., grade, points) for bringing a book, paper, and a pencil to class everyday

• Clutter (e.g. cannot find things in desk, items are not glued into notebook) *Time Management Difficulties* • Consistent rushing (e.g., between classes, from the bus into the school) • Frequent lateness (e.g., tardy to class, sport events, submission of assignments) • Low productivity, energy, and motivation (e.g., 'I just can't get up to do this homework") • Frustration (e.g., "I am always behind everyone else") • Setting and achieving goals (e.g., difficulty estimating time needed to start and finish an assignment) • Procrastination (e.g., putting off tasks till the last moment) • Perfectionism (e.g., going slowly to prevent making any mistakes	• Set organizational goals with the student with reinforcers as needed (e.g. homework pass for keeping up with all in-class and homework assignments) • Return corrected work promptly • Have a daily planner so the student can mark down playtime, homework and any extracurricular activities that fill up their day • Demonstrate organization in the classroom by having a visible class schedule • Have students "check" unneeded books and notebooks at the door. They can pick up their items as they exit class. • Attach things that often get misplaced (pencils) to students' desks with Velcro. • Create backwards timelines for larger projects. Help students estimate how long it will take them to complete each portion of a project. • Assign a peer buddy to assist with organization.
Memory <u>Definition</u> The two main types of memory are long- term and short term memory. As their names imply, short-term memory holds information for a brief period of time - less than a minute. Short-term memory is involved in the selection, initiation, and termination of information-processing functions such as encoding, storing, and retrieving data. The average memory span for normal adults is approximately 7 items. Long -term memory is what allows you to recognize visual or auditory information or recall previous information you have learned. It could be information you learned an hour ago or a year ago. <u>Characteristics of Students with Memory Difficulties</u> *The student may have difficulty:* ● Following discussions in class (e.g., a teacher asks a question that causes a discussion, the student forgets the initial question while retrieving the answer) ● Remembering multi-step directions in the correct order ● Recalling multiplication facts quickly and accurately	• ● Pre-plan information before introducing to students (This allows for the teacher to identify patterns and relevant information). ● Use visual organizers to display and introduce new information (e.g., Venn diagrams, flow charts). By pulling out the main ideas students will be able to identify patterns. ● Provide student with teacher-made handouts prior to the lecture or activity ● Teach students how to be active readers (e.g. taking notes while reading or asking oneself frequent questions about the content) ● Provide students with cues when going over important information (e.g. pointing out items that will be on the assessment or telling the class what is important) ● Frequent review (e.g., student reviews the material the same day that it is learned, flash cards with key information) ● Use different senses, teach information in multiple ways so the student can associate information with different types of activities ● Color code information so that what it important stands out ● Rehearse out loud

● Weak organization skills (e.g., forgets to bring materials to class or to write assignments down in agenda) ● Remembering to bring appropriate materials to class ● Listing and using spelling words or sight words ● Remembering sequences in the correct order ● With receptive and expressive language (e.g., forgets the question that was asked when responding) ● Converting short-term memory into long-term memory ● Completing activities (e.g., forgets a step in the process so therefore think he/she does not finish) ● Answering a questions in class (e.g., will put his/her hand up and forget the answer when called on) ● Remembering basic personal information (e.g., phone number, friends' names) (Thorne, 2011)	● Provide multiple opportunities for practice in different formats. ● Use flashcards for individual or group review. ● Use songs, rhymes, or rhythms to help remember information. ● Chunk pieces of information together (e.g., have students learn the number facts in sets of three). ● Use acronyms to remember words or phrases ● Use mnemonics (e.g., "Please excuse my dear Aunt Sally" (order of operations) to remember sequenced steps) ● Help students remember items of a list by visualizing that each is "located" at a different place in a familiar room (e.g., to remember 3 shapes that are quadrilaterals, a student might visualize a square on the bed, a rectangle on the dresser, and a parallelogram on the desk) ● Use semantic maps and diagrams to help students remember the connections between concepts. ● Re-teach item of information as often as possible, varying the approach a little each time. ● Maximize the student's potential for success by providing a balance of visual and auditory stimuli in your teaching. ● Provide the student with a written out schedule of classroom routines and timelines. ● Allow the student to trace over geometric shapes and other important visual patterns during visually presented lessons.
Language **Definition** Language disorders manifest themselves in many ways. The two main areas affected by language difficulties include receptive and expressive language. Receptive language involves the individual's abilities to listen and read, while expressive language includes speaking and writing. Language disorders are broad and encompass the entire spectrum of communication, including delayed speech (Better Health Channel, 2011). **Common Characteristics of Students with Language Difficulties**	• Audio tape lectures and lessons for playback at home during study and homework sessions • Simplify words in text by eliminating non-essential words and phrases, and double negatives • Help child summarize what he has read and write it down in simple terms • Provide explicit instruction to student to ensure they understand characteristics that distinguish good work from poor work • Break large reading assignments into smaller sections • Use highlighter to draw visual attention to important parts of text and instructions.

Receptive Language:	- Create a study guide that includes key vocabulary with definitions, guiding questions, and a clear statement of learning goals for the reading or task
- Phoneme confusion: same sounds with different spellings (e.g., Long –e sounds including leave/freeze/elite)	- Make use of visuals (e.g., models, pictures, videos, computer generated models, etc.)
- Limited vocabulary comprehension (e.g., understanding and placing meaning with words)	- Allow students to use visual models and projects as alternatives to written assignments or spoken presentations when possible
- Difficulty following verbal directions (e.g., requires extra clarification once given instructions, instructions/ directions have to be repeated)	- Allow students to use multi-sensory materials and strategies (i.e., appealing to multiple senses)
- Appears not to listen when spoken to	- Let the student know in advance that they will be responsible for repeating directions and answering questions
- Lack of interest when books are read (e.g., sleeping through read alouds, out of seat while reading)	- Provide opportunities for him/her to predict outcomes during reading
- Trouble understanding and bringing meaning to complicated sentences	- Chunk information into small pieces at a time and use headings
- Overwhelmed when given multi-step directions	- Give student preferential seating
- Confusion in response to limited understanding of directions and/or complex sentences	- Clarify and demonstrate information organizational strategies (e.g., graphic organizers)
- Struggles with figurative versus literal language and will usually need explanations (e.g., if told "the cat is as big as a house," the student may believe the cat really is the size of a house)	- Ask the student to re-tell stories and re-state directions and instructions
	- Present information both orally and in writing
Expressive Language:	- Provide a variety of listening opportunities for students that have follow up activities.
	- Provide ample opportunities that require verbal expression in practical situations
- Problems articulating initial sounds of words (e.g., wabbit instead of rabbit)	- Gestures may be helpful to a child to encourage comprehension of words or commands (Pataki, 2001)
- Frequently grasping for the right word (e.g., "That is *(pause-)* ummm a cat, I mean dog")	
- Using the wrong words in speech	
- Making grammatical mistakes (e.g., placement of commas, capitalizations)	
- Relying on short, simple sentence construction (e.g., subject-verb-predicate)	
- Relying on stock standard phrases (e.g., uses "memorized" phrases and sentences for expression such as using "that was totally wicked" from a movie)	
- Parroting words or phrases (e.g., echolalia)	
- Trouble retelling a story or relaying information	

- Inability to start or hold a conversation (e.g., initiation and maintenance) - Improper use of words and their meanings - Difficulty expressing ideas (Better Health Channel, 2011)	
Handwriting and Fine Motor **Definition** Handwriting is the process of transcribing letters to form words and words to form sentences. Being a learned motor task, handwriting is the relationship between the writer, the task, and the environment that is developed through instruction and practice. Research has shown that the development of fine motor skills (e.g., visual, hand-eye, in-hand manipulation) has a direct correlation with handwriting growth over time. Researchers in the field have attributed the synthesis of cognition, visual perception, integration of memory, problem solving, organization, reading and language ability, and graphomotor functions, along with fine motor skills, to the overall production of handwriting. Because handwriting remains to be a key element in communication of ideas and knowledge, especially within the primary grades, handwriting and fine motor difficulties have arisen as an area of need in schools. Dysgraphia, another term for handwriting difficulty, has been identified as a condition where instruction is essential for handwriting development and growth (Henderson & Pehoski, 2006). **Common Characteristics of Students with Handwriting/ Fine Motor Difficulties** - Illegible writing despite appropriate time and attention given the task (e.g., hard for the reader to understand formations of letters, words, and sentences) - Inconsistencies in writing (e.g., mixtures of print and cursive, upper and lower case, or irregular sizes, shapes, or slant of letters) - Unfinished words or letters (e.g., incomplete connections of letters) - Omission of words in sentences and paragraphs	- Give extended time to finish written assignments or reduce the amount of written output (e.g., If the task is to have the student correctly punctuate sentences, give him/her the passage to correct rather than write it out then correct). - Provide opportunities to give oral answers to quizzes, tests, and exercises - Complete writing assignments in stages (e.g., brainstorming, rough draft, editing, revision, final draft) - Provide students with copies of written work (e.g., notes, outlines) - A lot parents the opportunity to purchase textbooks for home use (e.g., allows for highlighting and note taking prior to class) - Modify the format of the written product (e.g., short-answer instead of a complete paragraph) - Build handwriting instruction into the student's schedule (dependent on the students age, grade, and instructional need) - Teach students abbreviations to use for note-taking and rough draft situations (e.g., b/c for because or w/ for with) - Keyboarding for designated assignments to increase speed and legibility - Incorporating small manipulatives (e.g., dice, rice, beans) into games or tasks - Allow student to start assignments early - Have the student prepare assignment papers in advance with required headings (Name, Date, etc.) - Allow the student to dictate some assignments or tests (or parts of tests) to a 'scribe' - Give students tasks to build hand-eye coordination (e.g., separating items, picking up beans with hands) - Provide students with a writing folder (e.g., laminated paper for practice, the writing process, grammar rules) - Provide students different instruments/ grips to write with (e.g., pencil grips, wide pens)

- Inconsistent position on page with respect to lines and margins - Inconsistent spaces between words and letters - Cramped or unusual grip of writing tools (e.g., holding the writing instrument very close to the paper, holding thumb over two fingers and writing from the wrist) - Strange wrist, body, or paper position - Talking to self while writing, or carefully watching the hand that is writing (e.g., intense concentration on process of handwriting rather than composition of writing) - Slow or labored copying or writing, even if it is neat and legible - Content which does not reflect the student's other language skills (e.g., disconnect between what the student may verbally say and what is written) - Focus is writing rather than content (e.g., writing is labored while taking notes and the student does not get all the information presented) - Trouble manipulating objects with hands (e.g., picking up marbles, using math manipulatives, cutting, gluing, etc.) (Thorne, 2004)	
Composition **Definition** Writing is the process of putting words and sentences together in conventional patterns to convey a message. Composition, as it relates to students, is the ability to follow standardized patterns of writing within sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Composition ability is measured in terms of the appropriate usage of grammar, vocabulary, word choice, and content sequence. This complex process draws on the writer's knowledge of the topic, ability to anticipate what readers will need and logically organize information, find the right words to convey meaning, and persevere to keep working. A disconnect in this process may cause problems in concern to composition of writing. (Nordquist R, 2011; MacArthur, 2009) **Common Characteristics of Students with Composition Difficulties**	- Daily writings that work on a wide range of writing tasks for multiple audiences, including writing at home - Extensive efforts to make writing motivating by setting an exciting mood, creating a risk-free environment, allowing students to select their own writing topics or modify teacher assignments, developing assigned topics compatible with students' interests, reinforcing children's accomplishments, specifying the goal for each lesson, and promoting an "I can" attitude. - A predictable writing routine where students are encouraged to think, reflect, and revise - Cooperative arrangements where students help each other plan, draft, revise, edit, or publish their written work

● Understanding of the writing process is limited (e.g., knowing that brainstorming ideas is done before producing a rough draft) ● Limited skill with language (e.g., manipulation of words, such as telling jokes) ● Difficulties with spelling and handwriting (e.g., focus on handwriting may distract attention from content) ● Less effective strategies for writing (e.g., "wing-it") ● Compositions are short (e.g., requirements for assignments are not met and ideas are not expanded upon) ● Writing lacks organization and clarity (e.g., no clear introduction) ● Marked by errors in spelling and grammar (e.g., capitalization, comma usage) compared to peers ● Difficulty generating text (e.g., trouble finding the right words to use) ● Lack of planning before writing (e.g., brainstorming is not used) ● Convert writing tasks to questions and answer formats (e.g., writing 'yes' and 'no' statements for a writing topic instead of using details and complete sentences) (MacArthur, 2009; Graham & Harris, 1989)	• Instruction covering a broad range of skills, knowledge, and strategies (e.g., phonological awareness, handwriting and spelling, writing conventions, sentence-level skills, text structure, the functions of writing, and planning and revising) • Frequent opportunities for students' to self-regulate their behavior during writing (e.g., working independently, arranging space, and seeking others for help) • Teacher and student assessment of writing progress, strengths, and needs • Periodic conferences with parents and frequent communications with home about the writing program and students' progress as writers. • Provide alternative assignments to show language use (e.g., using a graphic organizer, making a presentation to the class) • Simplify language of writing prompts • Highlight (e.g., color code) key words and phrases • Transition from simple to more elaborate graphic organizers and procedural checklists • Post strategies, graphic organizers, and checklists in classroom and give students personal copies • Have students keep a personal dictionary of words they find difficult and frequently used spelling vocabulary • Increase amount of time allotted for completing written assignments • Decrease the length and/or complexity of written assignments • Have students complete text frames (i.e., partially finished texts) • Selectively weight grading for content, organization, style, and conventions • Grade assignments based on the amount of improvement rather than absolute performance (e.g., portfolio assessment) • Provide feedback on content, organization, style, and conventions for some rather than all assignments (may reduce student's anxiety about writing) • Provide feedback on targeted aspects of writing rather than all aspects to avoid overwhelming students
Social and Emotional Issues <u>Definition</u> Social and emotional development involves the	Establish a quite place for students to go (e.g., a place for students to 'step away' to recollect thoughts)

achievement of a set of skills. Among them include a student's ability to: understand and talk about his/her own feelings, understand the perspectives of others and realizes that their feelings may be different from his/her's, establish relationships with adults, and maintain an ongoing friendship with at least one other child. In the classroom, the student is able to enter a group successfully and engage in and stay with an activity with minimal prompting (Bright Tots, 2011).

Common Characteristics of Students with Social/Emotional Issues

- Development of physical illness (e.g., headaches, nausea) in situations of perceived as fearful or with anxiety (e.g., being called on, initiating a conversation with a peer)
- Inconsistency with grades or a persistence to do exceptionally well on all assignments (e.g., "perfectionist")

Agitated behaviors including:

- Speaking out in class without waiting to be recognized
- Interrupting other students or the instructor
- Walking around the classroom (e.g., comes in and out of class often)
- Appearing emotionally volatile (e.g., loses his/her temper, cries easily, or uses profane language)
- Comes in late and becomes disruptive when taking a seat (e.g., pushing a seat)

Withdrawn behavior including:

- Excessive absences or tardies
- Limited participation (e.g., sits in the back of the class, does not contribute ideas to discussion)
- Frequent display of drowsiness (e.g., sleeping in class)
- Frequent daydreams (e.g., inappropriate responses when asked a question)

Social skill deficits including difficulties:

- Making and maintaining friendships with peers

- Development of personal awareness and self-advocacy (e.g., work with the student on eliciting help, talking about feelings, asking to be excused to take a break)
- Peer tutoring (e.g., select a peer to eat lunch with the student, teach a peer focusing strategies to help the student in group activities)
- Structure activities for opportunities of social interaction (e.g., paired readings, group activities at recess, think-pair-share)
- Focus on social process rather than activity
- Structure shared experiences in school (e.g., students introducing themselves on the first day to see who has things in common with them)
- Cooperative learning groups (e.g., everyone has an established role in a group)
- Use multiple/rotating peers (e.g., providing students opportunities to interact with multiple peers)
- Direct instruction on social skills (e.g., teaching students proper ways to give and receive compliments and structuring opportunities in the classroom for them to use these skills)
- Praise specific behaviors (e.g., praise a students for coming to class alert and awake)
- Develop a safe classroom for students (e.g., prevention of bullying and teasing)
- Keep in contact with families and provide support (e.g., collaboration with families on student involvement, provide parents with positive feedback on what the student is doing well)
- Establish clear expectation and classroom procedures
- Consult with the school counselor (e.g., understand regulations and procedures when dealing with a crisis, including signs of depression)*Identify with the counselor signs of depression*

(Bright Tots, 2011; CASEL, 2011)

- Resolving conflicts (e.g., compromising with peers to reach a common understanding)
- Initiating or joining a conversation or participating in activities
- Working in groups (e.g., contributing ideas in a cooperative learning activity with peers)
- Demonstrating empathy (e.g., "putting yourself in someone else's shoes")
- Reading social cues (e.g., body language, tone of voice)
- Interpreting the feelings of others (e.g., responding to social cues exhibited by others)

(Bright Tots, 2011; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2006)

Behavioral Issues

Definition
Classroom behavior is stimulus-driven responses that occur specifically within the classroom or how students act in the classroom in response to what is going on or present around them. Classroom behavior may fall into two categories—appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Individual teachers may characterize appropriate and inappropriate behaviors differently, however, common examples of appropriate behavior include following directions, completing assignments, and remaining attentive while the teacher speaks. Examples of inappropriate behavior include being physically aggressive or threatening others and talking out of turn (Thibodeaux, 2010)

Common Characteristics of Student with Behavior Problems

- Fidgeting consistently in class (e.g., tapping fingers, twirling hands, squirming in chair)
- Walking around the classroom during instructional activities
- Talking excessively (e.g., speaking with a peer while instruction is being given)
- Blurts out answers before a question has been asked

- Using consistent, predictable schedule with clear transition cues
- Allowing adequate time to complete tasks
- Clearly and positively stating and reminding students of classroom expectations (e.g., what does respectful 'look' and 'sound' like?)
- Establish contingencies for rule compliance and refusal (e.g., 5 minutes of peer interaction for completing and assignment on time)
- Teach, model, and practice appropriate behaviors daily
- Teach students to self-monitor behavior (e.g., charts, graphs)
- Monitor behavior and use data for decisions
- Reducing frustration by breaking new or difficult tasks into small steps
- Identifying triggers to the student's bad behavior (e.g., the student forgets to eat breakfast before coming to school)
- Identify the function of the student's behavior (e.g., attention, avoidance, stimulation)
- Use specific praise (e.g., "Great job on completing your math homework")
- Give clear and concise instructions; repeat
- Provide wait-time after (e.g., wait 10-15 seconds after asking a student a question)
- Praise students for exhibiting appropriate behavior and following directions
- Consistently reward child for meeting expectations

• Difficulty waiting and taking turns (e.g., waiting in line to use the restroom or get lunch from the cafeteria) • Interrupts or intrudes upon others • Trouble establishing and/or maintaining peer relationships • Observable mood changes (e.g., becomes easily irritable) • Displays high anxiety (e.g., panic attacks, pulling hair) • Trouble self-advocating (e.g., asking for help, taking initiative to complete assignments) • Exhibits aggressive behaviors(e.g., starts fights, initiates confrontation, teases peers, over reacts) • Consistently absent or late to class • Refuses to do in-class assignments • Lacks motivation to start and/or complete school work • Initiates disruptive behavior with peers(e.g., throwing spit balls, teasing others) • Difficulty with academics due to gaps in learning (e.g., student gets kicked out of class and misses material on test)	• Use transitions as a teaching time for learning appropriate behavior • Allow students to take a break when irritated (e.g., going to a quiet area to collect thoughts) • Seat students to minimize disruptions (e.g., seated near the teacher, away from the pencil sharpener) • Find the student interests and incorporate and encourage them into instruction • Provide immediate and consistent feedback on appropriate behavior and in-class work • Provide choices on in-class assignments when possible • Increase active student engagement/interaction required during instructional time (Klein, Cook, & Richardson-Gibbs, 2001)
Attention **Definition** Attention is the ability a person possesses that allows him/her to effectively listen and maintain a flow of mental energy to watch and process information being presented. Paying attention requires an individual to filter out irrelevant noise, sounds, surrounding activities, and information that are not associated with the presenter or information the presenter is providing. Attention is what allows a child to successfully start, work on, and complete a task (PBS, 2011). **Common Characteristics of Students with Attention Difficulties** *The student may have difficulty:* • Concentrating (e.g., may complain of feeling tired or bored)	• Teach students to use sticky notes and highlighters to follow along with teach-led instruction or independent work • Provide preferential seating for the student (e.g., near the teacher, away from the pencil sharpener, close to the front, near a "study buddy") • Increase distance between the desks • Allow extra time to complete assigned work • Help student develop a time line for longer assignments (e.g., set deadlines for parts of the project to be handed in) • Shorten assignments or work periods to coincide with span of attention • Give assignments one at a time to avoid work overload • Provide students with a syllabus (e.g., expectations, assignments, due dates) • Instruct student in self-monitoring (e.g., cueing student, recording behavior) • Pair written instructions with oral instructions (see auditory processing section)

- Distinguishing between what is important and what isn't (e.g., finishing a test or a worksheet)
- Paying attention to information or activities that are not particularly stimulating (e.g., student may pay attention to an exciting science experiment but struggle to listen to and understand a history lecture)
- Focusing on a single task for an extended period
- Shifting focus from one subject or activity to another when instructed to do so
- Predicting the outcomes of tasks or activities
- Coming up with the right strategy or technique to accomplish a task
- Monitoring the quality of work or the effectiveness of strategies
- Using past successes and failures to guide current behavior, actions, or strategies
- Judging time past
- Waiting in lines (e.g., waiting to use the restroom)
- Starting and completing a task without frequent prompts
- Checking for errors and paying attention to detail across subjects
- Expressing ideas through writing in a concise and organized manner
- Staying organized in and outside of school (e.g., placing math notes in math folder)
- Planning or problem-solving (e.g., setting deadlines for a long-term project)
- Staying alert or awake in class (e.g., students lay their heads down on their desks)
- Inconsistency in work patterns that impact quality and quantity of work
- Over activity and fidgets which is especially pronounced when sitting and listening (e.g., clicking a pen while sitting through a lecture, taping foot on desk).
- Better scores in testing than performance in the classroom or on homework
- Distracted by irrelevant sights and sounds
- Difficulty following instructions carefully and completely

- Provide peer assistance in note taking (e.g., students compare notes after instruction to help with possibly missed information)
- Give clear, concise instructions (e.g., brief and descriptive)
- Seek to involve student in lesson presentation
- Cue student to stay on task (e.g., private signal, timer)
- Allow student to stand at times while working
- Provide short break between assignments
- Remind the student to check over work product
- Repeat directions or instructions to the child. Have the child repeat them back to you
- Provide the child with written directions whenever possible. (See auditory processing section)
- Maintain eye-contact with the student (e.g., when giving directions or instruction)
- Develop a work organizer/daily schedule with the student
- Assign the student a "classroom buddy" to assist him/her with transitioning from one activity to another (e.g., going to the bathroom, walking to lunch)
- Increase teacher proximity to the student (e.g., providing instruction near the student

• Losing or forgetting materials (e.g., pencils, books, or tools needed for a task) (Miller, 2005)	
Traumatic Brain Injury **Definition** Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a form of acquired injury that occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. There are two different types of TBI: penetrating injuries and closed head injuries. Penetrating injuries occur when a foreign object (e.g., a bullet) enters the brain and causes damage to specific brain parts. Closed head injuries occur when there is a blow to the head (e.g., when ones head hits the windshield in a car accident) or when one is shaken violently (e.g., shaken baby syndrome). This injury can change how the person acts, moves, and thinks depending on the area of the brain affected. The characteristics of TBI vary greatly based on the severity of the injury and the area of the brain that is affected. (Traumatic Brain Injury, 2010; Welch, 2009) **Characteristics of a Student with Traumatic Brain Injury** *Sudden change in...* • Understanding receptive and expressive language • Retrieving information from long term and short term memory • Using logic, thinking and reasoning to solve problems • Lag in response time to instructions • Completing a task in a specific amount of time • Interacting appropriately with peers • Storing new information • Paying attention to a specific task for an extended period of time (e.g., sticking with an activity) • Controlling their impulses, feelings, and thoughts • Sequencing events or steps • Seeing the whole picture when only given part of an image • Transitioning from one idea to another • Naming an object (i.e., Anomia)	• Give student more time to finish school work and tests • Give directions one step at a time (e.g., provide visual for multi-step tasks) • Show the student how to perform new tasks. Give concrete examples to go with new ideas and concepts. • Provide consistent routines and advance warning if the routine is going to change • Check to make sure that the student has actually learned the new skill • Give the student lots of opportunities to practice the new skills • Show the student how to use an assignment book and a daily schedule • Minimize extraneous auditory and visual stimulation (e.g., use study carrels or room dividers) • Provide preferential seating (e.g., let student sit in the front of the room) • Arrange seating to allow for more space between students • Provide small group instruction • Structure student's activities and schedule to limit number of changes and reduce unstructured time • Provide the student with a written schedule • Provide area to keep supplies, books, etc., away from student's work area • Select a classroom buddy • Gain the student's attention before speaking • Break complex tasks down into component parts and complete each part before trying to combine the components • Provide frequent repetition of important tasks • Question student to be sure the information was received and interpreted clearly and provide feedback as necessary • Provide cueing systems in the form of assignment books, placing task cues on student's desk, etc. • Structure thinking processes graphically through outlines, graphs, flow charts and models

• Decoding words when reading • Distinguishing left from right. • Solving math problems • Focusing visual attention • Completing tasks that require eye and hand coordination • Locating objects in environment (e.g., determining where the pencil sharpener is in the classroom • Identifying colors (i.e., Color Agnosia) • Recognizing faces (i.e., Prosopagnosia) • Categorizing objects (e.g., red apples and yellow bananas)	• Facilitate note taking by providing outlines with major headings • Accompany homework with written instructions