

DISABILITY: LD & ADHD SIMULATION**ESTIMATED TIME: 15–30 MINUTES****LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- 1) To experience characteristics often associated with a learning disability or ADHD.

OVERVIEW

Students with learning disabilities and ADHD are often misunderstood by their parents and teachers, in part due to the contradictions inherent in these conditions. For many adults, the term *learning disability* fails to explain how an intelligent, articulate child is unable to read or struggles with the most basic academic tasks. Similarly, the term *attention deficit hyperactivity disorder* implies a lack of attention, yet students with this disorder often do poorly in school because their attention is focused on too many things at once (e.g., the buzzing of a fly in the window, the pencil-tapping of a child at the next desk, the patterns of reflected light through a window onto the floor).

A companion Web site to the PBS documentary *Misunderstood Minds* contains nine simulations that allow users to experience challenges associated with:

Attention

- Reading with distractions
- Listening to distractions

Writing

- Tracing letters
- Putting ideas in sequence

Reading

- Recognizing phonemes
- Recalling and understanding

Mathematics

- Using basic facts
- Making 3-D inferences
- Working Multistep problems

Additional information on the site explains the basic skills associated with each of the tasks, areas where students may experience difficulties, and offers suggestions to address each area of difficulty.

ACTIVITY

1. Go to the *Misunderstood Minds* Web site: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/>. Select an area (attention, reading, writing, or mathematics) and work through the simulations.
2. Did the simulations help you to better understand a disability in that area? If so, how?
3. As you were going through the simulation, were there things that you wished you had (e.g., more time) or that you could do (e.g., refer to your notes) that would help you? If so, what were they?
4. Given the information above, what supports or accommodations could you provide to the students in your classes who have ADHD or learning disabilities?



The contents of this case study were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H325F060003. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Shede Hajghasemali.