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ABSTRACT

A survey of special educators who taught elementary learning disabled (LD) Navajo students in 15 public and 28 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools sampled practices and procedures in current use including the role responsibility for teaching reading, reading assessment instruments, commonly used reading approaches, reading skills stressed, and commonly used reading materials. Teachers also responded to questions regarding their educational and teaching experiences. Results of the study indicated: (1) there were no significant differences between public and BIA-affiliated schools; (2) at least half of the teachers surveyed had a major reading responsibility for their LD students; and (3) a majority of the respondents believed more reading coursework should be required for special education credentialling. The data reflected the "state of the art" on the Navajo Nation; revealed currently used reading assessment instruments, approaches, skills, materials, and teacher and educational experiences; and indicated teacher dissatisfaction with existing formal devices. The collected data could be used for reference purposes by teachers desiring additional information regarding reading approaches, skills and materials for Navajo students. An appendix contains a sample questionnaire and frequency responses. (CM)

NAVAJO LEARNING DISABLED READING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

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June 15, 1981

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NAVAJO LEARNING DISABLED READING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

With the passage of Public Law 94-142 (P.L. 94-142), most states have mandated compatible legislation which has spurred the rapid development of special education programs. Though the Navajo nation has no one document governing special education, the schools on the nation generally follow Bureau of Indian Affairs or their home state rules and regulations.

Reading instruction has always been a major emphasis area of a learning disability (LD) program. As such, it was and is expected that LD teachers would provide the primary instruction in reading for their special students. This demands a great degree of reading expertise on the part of LD teachers. Further, teaching on the Navajo nation often finds the teacher instructing many youngsters whose primary language is other than English. This factor requires an LD teacher to also have competence in instructing English-as-asecond language (ESL) special students who require reading in their program.

In an effort to determine the "state of the Art," a survey of special educators who teach elementary LD Navajo students was conducted. The survey sampled five practices and procedures including (1) the role responsibility for teaching reading, (2) reading assessment instruments, (3) commonly used reading approaches, (4) reading skills stressed, and (5) commonly used reading materials. Teachers also

responded to questions regarding their educational and teaching experiences.

METHOD

A questionnaire assessing reading practices and procedures was developed and field tested through personal interviews with ten elementary LD teachers from throughout the Navajo nation. A stratified random selection process, utilizing the <u>Directory of Services for the Navajo Handicapped</u> (1980), served as the basis for identification of subjects. Their responses indicated a clear understanding of the questions so no item modifications were made.

Upon confirmation of the questionnaire clarity, questionnaires were mailed to seventy-six schools located on the Navajo Nation. The mailings occured during March and April of 1981.

RESULTS

Forty-three elementary schools out of a total of fiftythree schools participated in this study for a return of 81
percent. Out of these forty-three schools, five elementary
schools indicated that they did not have a special program
for LD students; therefore, the tabulations of the data are
based upon thirty-eight responses. In all, fifteen elementary
schools were public, and twenty-eight Bureau of Indian Affairs
(BIA) run or contracted.

Table 1. Student populations of Navajo Nation elementary schools as indicated by their responding special educators.

tudent Populations f Elementary Schools	Frequency of Respondents	Percent	
elow 50	1	13.2	
i-150	5	10.5	
51-200	4	13.2	
01-250	5	21.1	
1-300	3	5.3	
1-400	2	18.4	
1-500	6	2.6	
	galantaga daga - Amara		
tal	38	100.0	

Role Responsibility for Teaching Reading.

Demographic data regarding elementary school size and the student population per L.D. program were collected and analyzed. This data is presented in Table 1 and Table 2. School and program size did not affect reading practices and procedures. This also held true whether the elementary school was public

Table 2. Population of Navajo Nation learning disabled students per elementary school program.

L.D. Program Student Populations	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
5 or less	3	7.9
6 - 10	5	13.2
11 - 15	9	23.7
16 - 20	11	28.9
21 - 25	7	18.4
over 26	3	7.9
TOTAL	38	100.0

or BIA contracted. Essentially, 50 percent of the responding special educators indicated that they were mainly responsible for instructing their L.D. students in reading.

Table 3. Special Educator's role in the reading instruction of the Navajo LD elementary student.

Mainly Responsible for Reading Instruction	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Yes	19	50.0
No	19	50.0
TOTAL	38	100.0

In conjunction with this responsibility approximately

48 percent of the respondents indicated that they provided

formal remedial reading programs for their Navajo LD students.

Almost 40 percent of the remaining respondents provided

specific tutoring of reading skill needs for their students.

Table 4. Function of special educators in relationship to

Table 4. Function of special educators in relationship to reading and their Navajo LD elementary students.

Function	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Provide Formal Remedial Reading	18	47.4
Provide Specific Tutoring for Reading Skills Needs	15	39.5
Consultant to Remedial Reading Specialist	3	7.9
Direct Peer Tutoring	0	0.0
No response	2	5.3
TOTAL	38	100.0

Reading Assessment Instruments. The assessment instruments were grouped into three categories: (1) general survey tests, (2) diagnostic reading batteries, and (3) diagnostic reading tests of specific skills. None of the general survey tests or diagnostic tests of specific skills proved to be overwhelmingly popular. The most commonly used tests were

diagnostic reading batteries including the Wide Range
Achievement test; the Peabody Individual Achievement Test:
Reading Subtests; the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, and the
Brigance Diagnostic Test of Basic Skills. Please refer to
Table 5 or a summary of the various tests and responses. A
majority of respondents administered both formal and informal
reading tests. Table 6 illustrates these responses.

Table 5. Use of reading assessment instruments by teachers of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Test Frequency	y of Responden
General Survey Tests:	
Gates-McGinitie Reading Test	4
Metropolitan Achievement Test	1
Nelson Silent Reading Test	0 · 1
SRA Achievement Series: Reading Other	0
Other	•
Diagnostic Reading Test Batteries:	
Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty	1
Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Test Peabody Individual Achievement Test:	0
Reading subsections	18
Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales	. 0
Wide Range Achievement Test: Reading Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational	22
Battery: Reading Subsection	2
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test	13 _b
Other	11
Diagnostic Reading Tests of Specific Skills:	:
Botel Reading Inventory	3
Doren Diagnostic Test of Word	•
Recognition	0
Fry's Phonic Criterion Test	. 3
Gray Oral Reading Test Other	0

a-based upon thirty-eight respondents. b- Eleven respondents indicated they use the Brigance Diagnostic Test of Basic Skills

Table 6. Reading Assessments administered by the special educator of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Assessments Administered	Formal F Tests	Reading	Informal Test	
•	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	78.9	32	. 84.2
No	8	21.1	6	15.8
TOTAL	38	100.0	38	100.0

Reading Approaches. Teachers indicated the basic reading approach they used with their Navajo LD students. The most used approaches were Individualized Reading and Multi-sensory program. These two approaches accounted for nearly 50 percent of all the reading programs currently being used. Please see Table 7 for summary of the approaches.

Table 7. Reading approaches of Special Educators who instruct Navajo LD elementary school students.

Rank Order of Reading Approaches	Frequency	Percentage
Individualized	11	28.9
Multi-sensory	8	21:0
Language Experience	6	15.7
Phonics	5	13.2
Programmed Instruction	2	5.3
Linguistics	2	5.3
Basals	2	5,3
Sight Word Method	2	5.3
		
TOTAL	38	100.0
		· ·



Skills Stressed. The question of reading skills stressed in the LD program was addressed by asking respondents to select the three highest priority skills the teach. Two reading skills, Comprehension and Word Recognition, were selected with a much greater frequency than any other skill. Table 8 gives the specific data on the selections.

Table 8. Three highest priority reading skills taught by teachers of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Related Skill ^a	Frequency of Resp	ondents ^b Percent
Comprehension	31	81.6
Word Recognition	29	76.3
Listening Skills	17	44.7
Word Meaning	11	28.9
Survival Reading	9	23.7
Concept Development	8	21.1
Study Skills	4	10.5
Reading Rate	2 .	5.3

a - Each teacher was allowed to select their three top priority reading skills.

reading machines; (8) magazines and newspapers; and

Reading Materials. Teachers were asked to identify the reading materials they used with elementary L.D. students.

Respondents could respond to all or none of the following nine categories of materials: (1) basal reading series;

(2) series books; (3) reading kits; (4) reading workbook;

(5) reading games; (6) audiovisual products and aids (7)

b- A total of thirty-eight special educators responded.

(9) reference materials. The two most frequently used reading materials were Reading Games and Series Books.

Table 9. Reading Materials used by special educators of Navajo LD elementary students.

Reading Material	Frequency of Respondents a	Percent
		<u> </u>
Reading Games	30	78.9
Series Books	27	71.1
Audio-Visual Aids/Product	ts 24	63.2
Basal Reader Series	21	55.3
Reading Kits	19	50.0
Magazines/Newspapers	18	47.4
Reading Workbooks	16	42.1
	3	7.9
Reading Machines Dictionaries, Encycloped	_	50.0

a - Based upon thirty-eight respondents.

Educational and Teaching Experiences. The questionnaire asked the respondents to identify their classroom experiences, their educational backgrounds, their endorsements, and two related opinions: who was best able to teach the Navajo L.D. student to read and if their schools were meeting the needs of their L.D. students.

As shown by Table 10, most respondents have taught special education for more than three years and have some experience as general educators. The majority (81 percent) have also achieved a B.S. or higher college degree. Please see Table 11 for this data.



Table 10. Teaching experience of Special Educators who instruct Navajo LD elementary school students.

Verna torohina	Frequency of Respondents		Percent	
Years teaching Experience	In Special Education	In General	In Special Education	In General
Less than one	9	12	23.7	31.6
1 - 3	9	16	23.7	42.1
3.1 - 5	5	· 5	13.2	13.2
5.1 - 7	8	3	21.1	7.9
7.1 - 9	4	0	10.5	0.0
More than nine	3	2	7.9	5.3
,				-
TOTAL	38	38	100.0	100.0

Table 11. Highest College degree held by special educators of Navajo L.D. student.

College Degree	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
A.A.	0	0.0
3.A.	7	18.4
B.S.	21	55. 3
M.A.	9	23.7
Ed.S.	1	2.6
Doctorate	0	0.0

a- based upon thirty-eight respondents

Out of thirty-eight respondents, one special educator has obtained a reading endorsement. When asked whether they believed all special educators should hold a reading endorsement in addition to their special education credential, only about one-third (37) percent) believed this should be required. However, 71 percent responded by stating more reading coursework should be required for special education certification. Table 12 demonstrates these results.

Table 12. Opinions of special educators regarding reading endorsement and coursework.

No	Yes		Status and
nt Frequency Perc	Percen	Frequency	Opinion _a
37 97	2.6	1	Reading Endorsement Currently Held?
24 63	36.8	14	Should Teachers of L.D. Hold a Reading Endorsement?
			Should More Reading Coursework be Requir for Special Education
1	71.		Coursework be Require for Special Education Certification

a - Based upon thirty-eight responses.

When asked whom they regarded as the best reading instructor for their Navajo LD students, the respondents indicated two preferences: 40 percent favored a reading specialist and 37 percent opted for a team approach. Only 21 percent felt that a special teacher was best able to teach reading to L.D. students (Table 13).

Table 13. Special Educator response regarding best instructor(s) to teach reading to Navajo LD elementary students.

nstructor(s)	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
eading Specialist	15	39.5
eam Approach	14	36.8
pecial Educator	8	21.1
ilingual/ESL Educator	1	2.6
eer-Tutor	0	0.0
ult-Tutor	0	0.0
arents	. 0	0.0
		
TAL	38	100.0

However, as previously shown, 50 percent of the responding special educators were responsible for teaching reading to their students. Table 14 confirms this by statistically demonstrating less than 12 percent of Navajo L.D. students are in a remedial reading program.

Lastly, the responding special educators were asked if they believed their elementary schools were meeting the needs of their Navajo L.D. students. Table 15 reveals that about one-half of the respondents felt their schools were successfully teaching their L.D. students.

Table 14. Navajo LD students currently enrolled in a remedial reading program instructed by a reading specialist.

LD Navajo Students F	requency of Responder	nts Percent
Number of L.D. Students in Remedial Reading progra	61 am	11.6
Number of L.D. Students no in Remedial Reading Progra		88.4
TOTAL	524	100.0

Table 15. Opinion of special educators regarding their elementary school meeting the needs of Navajo LD students.

School Meeting Needs	Frequency of Respondents	Percent
Yes	20	52.6
No .	18	47.4
-	···	
TOTAL	38	100.0

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate several factors. Firstly, that in the realm of reading instruction for Navajo L.D. elementary students, there is no significant differences between public or BIA-affiliated schools. This is true at the .05 significance level as measured using chi-square statistics. Secondly, at least half of the teachers surveyed have a major reading responsibility for their L.D. students. Thirdly, a majority of the respondents believe more reading coursework should be required for special education credentialling.

The data collected reflects the "State of the Art" on
the Navajo nation. In addition to the teaching responsibilities
discussed above, the data reveals currently used reading
assessment instruments, approaches, skills, materials, teacher
and educational expereinces. The data on assessment instruments indicates dissatisfication with existing formal devices.

If this reflects a Navajo nation concensus, a crucial need
exists in this area and research efforts should be directed
toward it. The majority of the data can be used for reference
purposes; it mirrors accrued knowledge which may be beneficial
to L.D. teachers desiring additional information regarding
reading approaches, skills and materials for Navajo students.

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Federal Register. Education of Handicapped Children, Pt. II Washington, D.C.: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, August 23, 1977.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

AND FREQUENCY RESPONSES

READING AND THE NAVAJO

NATION'S LEARNING DISABLED

1.	School Name	
2.	School Level	
	1. 38 Elementary 2. Jr. High. 3. High School	
	4Other (Please describe)	
3.	Type of School	
·	1Private. 2Private. 2Church 423BIA	A
	5Other (Please describe)	
4.	School Population	
	1. 5 Below 50 students	
	2. <u>4</u> 51 - 150 students	
	3. <u>5</u> 151 - 200 students	
	4. <u>8</u> 201 - 250 students	
	5. 2 251 - 300 students	
1	6. <u>7</u> 301-400 students	
	7. 6 401 - 500 students	
	8. 1 over 501 students	
5.	How many Learning Disabled (LD) students are in your class?	
	1. <u>3</u> 1 - 5 students	
	2. <u>5 6 - 10 students</u>	
•	3. <u>9</u> 11 - 15 students	
	4. 11 16 - 20 students	
	5. <u>7</u> 21 - 25 students	
	6. <u>3</u> 26 - 30 students	
	7. 0 over 31 students	

How many years have you taught special education?

- 9 First year teaching 2. 9 1 3 years 5 3.1 5 years 4. 8 5.1 7 years 5. 4 7.1 -9 years 6. 3 Over 9 years
- How many years have you taught regular/general education?
 - 1. 16 1 3 years 2. 5 3.1 5 years 3. 37 years 4. 0 7.1 - 9 years 5. 0 9.1 - 11 years 6. 2 Over 11 years 7. 12 Zero
- What is the highest college degree you hold?
 - 1. 0 AA 2. 7 BA 3. 21 BS 4. 9 MA 5. 1 Ed.S 0 Doctorate
- How many graduate-level reading credits do you hold (semester credits)?
 - 15 Zero 2. 5 1 3 credits 3. 6 4 6 credits

 7 9 credits 5. 0 10 12 credits

 6 13 15 credits 7. 1 Over 17 credits
- 10. Do you hold a Reading Specialist Endorsement?
 - 1. 1 Yes 2. 37 No
- 11. Should special educators who work with LD students also be required to have a Reading Specialist Endorsement?
 - 14 Yes 2. 24 No 1.
- 12. Should more reading courses be required to obtain a Special Education Credentials? 1. 27 Yes 2.
- 13. The LD student can best learn to read through instruction by the (please check only one response):
 - 8 Special Educator
 - 16 Reading Specialist 2.
 - 0 Regular/General Educator 3.
 - 0 English Teacher 4.
 - 0 Bilingual Teacher 5.
 - 14 Team Approach 6.
 - 7. 0 Parents
 - 0 Adult tutor 8.
 - 9. 0 Peer Tutor

14.	Please check the one statement which best describes your philosophical basis for educating LD students:
	1. 5 The LD student should meet all standard school requirements in order to advance;
	2. 25 modified requirements for school advancement should be allowed the LD;
	3. 4 vocational/technical training schools are best for the LD;
	4. 3 private/alternative schools can best develop programs for the LD
	5. 1 other (please describe)
15.	Please check the <u>one</u> statement below which best describes your top teaching priority for your LD students:
	1. 17 remediate deficit learning processes
	2. 4 teach basic academic skills using regular/general class materials;
	3. 10 teach academic skill using special education materials;
	4. 1 teach pre-vocational/vocational skills;
	5. 4 teach real-life/functional survival skills;
	6. 2 other (please describe)
•	
16.	What are your reading program priorities for your LD students (please check only your top three choices)?
	1. 29 word recognition 5. 2 reading rate
	2. 8 concept development 6. 4 study skills
	3. 9 survival reading skills 7. 31 comprehension
,	4. 17 listening skills 8. 11 word meaning
	9

17.	What is the basic approach you to your LD students (please che	use to teaching ck only <u>one</u> resp	reading onse)?
	15_language experience	5. <u>5</u> phonics	
	2. 2 programmed instruction	6. <u>2</u> linguisti	cs
	3. 8 multi-sensory approaches	7. 2basals	
	4. <u>11 individualized reading</u>	3. 2 sight wor	d methods
•	9. <u>0 other (please describe</u>		
18.	What is your basic grouping me to your LD student (please che	hod when teachin k only <u>one</u> respo	g reading nse)?
	1. 4 total class instruction	5. <u>0</u> interest	groups
	2. 5 ability groups	6. <u>l</u> skills gr	oups
	3. <u>0</u> research groups	7. <u>14 combinati</u> above met	on of the hods
	4. 14 individual instruction	8. <u>0</u> other (pl describe	ease
19.	Is the teaching of reading for your responsibility?	your LD students	mainly
	1. <u>19 Yes</u> 2. <u>19 No</u>		
20.	Which of the below statements in relation in reading and you only <u>one</u> response)?	est describes yo LD students (pl	ur functior ease check
•	1. 18 provide a formal remedi	l reading progra	m •
	2. 3 consultant to the remed	al reading teach	er.
	3. 15 provide direct tutoring	for reading skil	l needs
	40_direct peer-tutoring		
	50 other (please describe)		

22.	If your	school has a remedial reading program, how many	,
		LD students participate in that program?	
	(please	indicate the number of students)	

- 1. 11 no remedial reading program available (please check of appropriate)
- 2. 61 number of students in remedial reading program
- 3. 463 number of students not in program
- 23. Do you give reading-interest inventories for your LD students?
 - 1. <u>16 Yes</u> 2. <u>22 No</u>
- 24. Do you maintain individual checklists of your LD students' strengths and weaknesses in reading?
 - 1. 23 Yes 2. 15 No
- 25. Do you give informal reading tests when assessing your LD students?
 - 1. 32 Yes 2. 6 No
- 26. Do you give <u>formal</u> reading tests when assessing your LD students?
 - 1. <u>30 Yes</u> 2. <u>8 No</u>
- 27. If you responded to question #26 with a <u>Yes</u> answer, please check the below reading tests which you use to formally assess your LD students:
 - A. General Survey Reading Test
 - 1. <u>4</u> Gates-McGinitie Reading Test
 - 2. <u>1</u> Metropolitan Achievement Test
 - 3. <u>O</u> Nelson Silent Reading Test
 - 4. 1 SRA Achievement Series: Reading
 - 5. 22 Wide Range Achievement Test: Reading
 - 6. <u>O</u> Other (Please describe)

	В.	Diagnostic Reading Test Batteries
		1. 1 Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty
		2. 0 Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Test
		3. 18 Peabody Individual Achievement Test: Reading subsections
		4. 0 Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales
		5. 2 Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery: Reading Subsections
		6. 13 Woodcock Reading Mastery Test
		7. 11 Other (please describe)
	C.	Diagnostic Reading Tests of Specific Skills
		1. 3 Botel Reading Inventory
		2. 2 Doren Diagnostic Test of Word Recognition
		3. 0 Fry's Phonic Criterion Test
		4. 3 Gray Oral Reading Test
		5. <u>O Other (please describe)</u>
28.	In nee	your opinion, is your school meeting the reading ds of your LD students?
	1.	19 Yes 2. 19 NO
29.	Ple mat	ase check any of the below categories of reading erials you use to teach reading to your LD students:
	1.	21 Basal Reader Series 6. 30 Reading Games Commercial and
	2.	27 Series Books (High self-made) Interests/Low Vocabulary
•		texts) 7. 24 Audio-visual Aids/ Products
	3.	19 Reading Kits (i.e.: "NFL Action," "SRA Reading Lab) 8. 3 Reading Machines (i.e.: "EDL Con-
•	4.	16 Reading Workbooks (i.e.: trolled Reader," "Boning Mult. Skills") "Tachistocope.")
	.5 •	19 Dictionaries, Encyclopedias 9. 18 Magazines/News Thesaurus papers