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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on three critical programming issues in providing support services to higher education students with learning disabilities. The first issue concerns the garnering of administrative support for students with learning disabilities. Administrative support cannot be effectively achieved until college administrators determine where the support services should be located and who is ultimately in charge of these services. The second critical issue involves the functional interpretation of diagnostic reports by consumers and the development of an Individual Student Plan. Students cannot take full responsibility for their learning disability until they have a complete understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses. The final issue to be highlighted concerns program accountability and procedures for measuring and determining program effectiveness. The paper contains copies of: the sections of a college admissions form that deal with learning disabilities, student assessment forms, an Individual Student Plan form, a model for evaluating student services, a timeline for collecting data for program evaluation, and a student services log form. Includes 12 references. (JDD)

Critical Issues in Learning Disability College Programming

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ABSTRACT

The increasing numbers of students with learning disabilities atending institutions of higher education are raising a myriad of issues for Disabled Student Service personnel. This paper is intended to provide some direction to help concerned professionals meet the needs of this population. Approaches for garnering administrative support and funding, using diagnostic data to enhance student programming, and measuring program success are described.

Jane Jarrow (1987) noted that 90% of the progress made in providing support services to students with learning disabilities has taken place in the last 10 years. In testimony to the National Council on Higher Education and Students with Disabilities, AHSSPPE's then President-Elect Warren King (1988) stated that students with learning disabilities may become the largest single consumer group receiving support services. Information from American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1987 reported that 18% of the handicapped college freshmen and 1.2% of the total freshman population was learning disabled (Hirschorn, 1988). More than ever, support staff are faced with increasing numbers of learning disabled students and accompanying demands for services. Given that few colleges and universities have the personnel and financial resources to develop comprehensive model programs, it is imperative that service providers have access to program development information that is practical, cost effective, and replicable.

This paper will focus on three critical programming issues that support service personnel need to address. The first issue concerns the garnering of administrative support for students with learning disabilities. Administrative support cannot be effectively achieved until college administrators determine where the support services should be located and who is ultimately in charge of these services. The second critical issue involves the functional interpretation of diagnostic reports by consumers and the development of an Individual Student Plan (ISP). Students cannot take full responsibil-

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ity for their learning disability until they have a complete understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses. The final issue to be highlighted concerns program accountability and procedures for measuring and determining program effectiveness. In this time of limited budgets and public scrutiny of education, it is critical that service providers be accountable for their actions. Each of these key issues will be discussed and augmented with practical examples that can be used by learning disability personnel.

Garnering Administrative Support

Many learning disability support programs initially have difficulty becoming established because deans and other higher education personnel are concerned about the image of the institution, the scope of services to be offered, the location of these services, and program expenses. Regardless of whether the institution is in the Ivy League or a local community college, administrators are often concerned about associating the name of their institution with any particular disability group. Many administrators still fear that the institution will be "devalued" by the public if services are offered to students with learning disabilities. The designated Learning Disability Specialist should be prepared to address these concerns early in the program planning stage. A task force composed of influential deans, department heads, faculty, staff, and disabled students, should be appointed to study public relations concerns and to determine the need for this type of service. Higher education personnel who are resistant to establishing learning disability support services may benefit from contacting peer institutions that already have an established program. A campus visit would give task force members an opportunity to ask questions of students, faculty, and staff and to anticipate future programming needs on their own campus.

A related concern to administrators may involve the manner in which the services for students with learning disabilities are publicized. If the information regarding support services to students with learning disabilities is included in college publications in conjunction with other information regarding student support services, this information should not reflect negatively upon the institution. Unfortunately, it is not unusual for administrators to want to keep support services for students with learning disabilities under wrap for fear that the institution will become deluged with additional application requests. However, this desire by administrators to keep learning disabilities services secret should not supplant the need for informing the public of the services available on campus. All college admission forms, catalogs, and student handbooks should contain information regarding services available to students with learning disabilities. An example of how this can be addressed on an admissions form is exemplified by the disability questions found in the Northeastern University (Boston, Massachusetts) admissions form (See Figure 1.). An example of a college brochure entry from the University of Wisconsin-Madison that clearly describes the range of services available to students with learning disabilities is provided in Figure 2. In both examples, the information regarding students with learning disabilities is positively worded and easy to read.

Scope of Services Offered

Each year, the number of postsecondary support services available to students with learning disabilities increases. These services range from tightly coordinated formal "Learning Disability programs" with a full range of support services (including in-house diagnostic testing and tutorial services) to very loosely coordinated, decentra[illegible] services. It is essential that the Learning Specialist, in conjunction with administrators, ag[illegible]bout the scope of services that are to be provided to students with learning disabilities. This decision may be achieved by conducting a "market analysis" of competing services already offered on campus and at other nearby institutions. It

23. Services for Students with Disabilities

In an effort to take voluntary action to overcome the possibility of limited participation by handicapped individuals in our programs, we are asking handicapped persons to identify themselves. This information is being requested on a purely voluntary basis. If you do not wish to share this information with us, you will in no way be penalized. The information you do share will be kept confidential, and will serve to help us prepare services and auxiliary aides to accommodate your needs with a minimum of delay.

I have a: ☐ Vision Impairment ☐ Hearing Impairment ☐ Mobility Impairment ☐ Learning Disability

☐ Other (please explain) _____

_____

24. Testing Requirements

Northeastern University uses the College Board (CB) tests for guidance purposes. Freshman students are required to have the results of their Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and three Achievement Tests (AT) forwarded to the Department of Undergraduate Admissions. If your native language is not English, freshman and transfer students may take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). It would assist the Committee on Admissions in the processing of your records if you would have the official results of your CB tests forwarded directly from the College Board. In lieu of CB tests, Northeastern will accept the scores of the American College Testing (ACT) battery.

Date that you have taken or plan to take the SAT _____

Date that you have taken or plan to take the AT _____

Date that you have taken or plan to take the ACT (if applicable) _____

Date that you have taken or plan to take the TOEFL _____

25. Signature of Applicant ►

_____ _____

Signature Date

Figure 1. Northeastern University Admissions Form.

Campus Resources

All UW-Madison students with documented learning disabilities have met the same basic University admission requirements as other students. Once admitted, the McBurney Resource Center (905 University Avenue) staff works directly with LD students on an individual basis, and also assists faculty and staff members in dealing with their concerns regarding specific students.

All students using McBurney's services are encouraged to assume responsibility for making known, early in the semester, any special needs they may have. At that point, students are also encouraged to explain the support services McBurney offers which might be applicable to a specific situation. For example, if an LD student needs to take an exam in a non-standard form, the McBurney Center staff is available to proctor the exam in a private room, to read the exam aloud, to tape-record the test, or to loan a tape recorder to the instructor if he/she prefers to tape the material.

Other support services offered to students with learning disabilities include proxy registration, assistance in ordering taped textbooks and other instructional material, counseling, advocacy training, and emergency loan of tape recorders. The McBurney staff also provides students with access to campus study areas containing variable-speed tape recorders, and refers students to a variety of campus and community services for individual diagnostic consultation, study skills development training, and academic tutorial assistance.

Figure 2. University of Wisconsin-Madison Brochure

is very likely that the proposed services will fill a niche in the postsecondary market and further bolster enrollment. For institutions where increasing enrollment is not an issue, support services for students with learning disabilities may be viewed as a logical extension of the institution's commitment to Section 504 by meeting the needs of all students, regardless of disability.

Location of Services

Basic administrative differences may negatively impact the development of learning disability support programs. College administrators frequently are not sure whether these programs belong under the jurisdiction of academic affairs or student services. If the learning disability services are housed under student services, they often fall under the auspices of disabled student services, counseling, multicultural programs, or some other related office. The majority of learning disability support services are housed under the direction of the Dean of Student's office. This is often a logical choice because many of the related services that students with learning disabilities may need are readily available through student services. Some students with learning disabilities may feel that it is more "normalized" to seek information from a counselor housed in the Counseling Center, Writing Lab, or Learning Center than to seek out staff in a separate program within a department.

An alternative is to locate the learning disability support services within a particular academic department, such as educational psychological or special education. Typically, model learning disability programs that offer the broadest range of support services are housed within a department. For the service provider, the opportunities for professional growth in research, teaching, and faculty contact are greatest within a departmental setting. Ultimately, the location through which learning disability services are offered may have profound implications that can effect future funding efforts, hiring of personnel, and faculty relations. Whatever the final decision, careful planning and weighing of future implications is essential.

Program Expenses

Many college and university presidents and deans are faced with ever tightening budgetary considerations. One technique for getting these services established initially is to demonstrate that providing minimal support services to students with learning disabilities does not have to be an expensive process. Programs can be started up for less than $25,000 a year. Funding for personnel may be garnered through local corporations that are interested in publicity for donating funds to establish support services for students with learning disabilities. State Departments of Higher Education may be helpful in supporting pilot programs for college students with learning disabilities. Private donations may be solicited through alumni gifts or bequests. Informal networks within the community should not be overlooked (i.e., tapping into local learning disability parent groups). By writing up a brief program proposal, the learning specialist may be able to garner outside funding and educate both the general public and higher education personnel about the legitimate need for these services.

Depending on the size of the student populations and the projected demand for services, it is possible for one full-time learning disabilities coordinator to effectively manage a learning disabilities support program. However, the scope of services to be offered will depend upon the learning specialist's level of training, the availability of additional ancillary services on campus and in the community, and direct access to a computer for record keeping and data mangement. One example of a one-person record keeping system was developed by Richard Sommers, Ph.D., at Cape Cod Community College (West Barnstable, Massachusetts). Each student who contacts the learning specialist is logged on the computer. The date of the first contact is noted, and the services recommended and/or being received are entered. (See Figure 3.) This system is easy to use and the data can be incorporated directly into an annual progress report.

Routine services such as assisting learning disabled students with the ordering of taped textbooks, proctoring examinations, and tape recording or reading tests do not require a learning specialist. These services can be handled by part-time support staff. The services of the learning

SUMMARY REPORT

Learning Disability Students Seeen by Richard H. Sommers, Ph.D.

First Contact	Student's Name	Services Recommended and/or Receiving
10/26/87	Carol	Intake Eval, C
11/16/87	Thomas	SR, C, ADC-T
10/05/87	Jane	Rprt, FM, ADC-WP
12/14/87	Brian	Intake - NoA, SR, C
12/07/87	Cynthia	Intake, C, Test, Rprt
03/07/88	Emily	Intake, Test
09/09/87	Krista	SR, Rprt, C, FM, ADC, Test, SSG
10/20/87	Kathleen	CM, Intake Eval - NoA
09/10/87	Doug	SR, Rprt, ADC-T-WP, R-MC, SSG
09/23/87	Paul	C, SR, SSG
11/16/87	Lisa	Test, C, ADC-T-WP, SSG
02/22/88	Stephine	C, Test, Rrpt

Services Recommended and/or Receiving

ADC -	referral to (or is working with) ALC for (T) tutoring (WP) word processing
C -	counseling, ongoing discussion of learning strategies and frustrations with learning
CM -	working with Coaches and Mentors tutors
FM -	conference with student's faculty instructor and/or tutor.
Intake Eval-NoA -	Intake evaluation with no action taken or needed
R-CM -	referred to Coaches and Mentors for tutoring
R-MC -	referred for mini-course work at the ADC
R-MR -	referred to Mass Rehabilitation
Rprt -	formal report or letter sent to faculty and/or ADC
R-Th -	referred for individual psychotherapy or counseling
R-Tst -	referred for testing outside the college
SR -	school/testing reports and diagnosis sent for
SSG -	involved in the L.D. Student Support Group
Test -	LD evaluation conducted (formal testing)

Figure 3. Cape Cod Community College Summary Report.

specialist should be reserved for counseling and advising students, discussing referrals with faculty, verifying disability information, ensuring that students with documented learning disabilities receive "reasonable accommodations" and screening new students for diagnostic evaluations. Learning disability service providers are cautioned against trying to offer a full range of diagnostic services to students. This is a very labor-intensive process and should only be offered when adequate resources are available. It may be more cost-effective to have initial student intake interviews and screenings conducted by the learning specialist and to reserve comprehensive evaluations for cooperating agencies such as the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). Universities may be able to reduce the costs of outside evaluations by having an agreement with a local psychologist who is willing to work on a sliding scale. Some student health insurance plans are now covering the cost of psycho-educational evaluations.

Outreach efforts to campus departments, high schools, or community groups can often be effectively handled by college students who are receiving services. These outreach presentations may be augmented by using a number of commercially available videotapes. Two recent videotapes that may be useful are "Learning Disabilities: Coping in College" (Handicapped Student Services, Dayton, Ohio) available from Wright State University and "Equality in Education: Section 504 in Postsecondary Programs" available from the United States Office for Civil Rights at no cost.

Using Diagnostic Data to Enhance Student Programming

Individual and group diagnostic data are key sources of information presently available to students entering postsecondary settings from high school. For previously unidentified students, gathering this information becomes the responsibility of the young adult and the learning specialist. A variety of student intake forms have been developed for this purpose. One such form, "The McBurney Resource Center Student Inventory" (Brinckerhoff, 1985) can be filled out by the student prior to meeting with the learning specialist. The inventory is divided into four brief sections. In the first section, the student rates a number of academically oriented skill areas as either easy or difficult. The areas surveyed include the student's techniques for gathering information, his/her preferred studying and learning environment, and the types of assignments and test formats he/she prefers. The second section asks the student to check a variety of characteristics that typify themselves. The third section lists a variety of services that are available on campus ranging from hearing evaluations to specific tutorial instruction in an academic area. The fourth section requests the student to describe his/her greatest academic or vocational strength. (See Figure 4.) This initial intake data may be helpful in framing further questioning. Figure 5 outlines a series of general questions that could be asked by service providers who are interviewing unidentified or previously identified students. Figure 6 includes a listing of possible arease and methods for evaluation.

The Psychoeducational Test Profile

After the evaluation has been completed and the student is determined to have a specific learning disability, the most difficult aspect for many service providers is to relay this information to the student in a clear and straight-forward manner. Learning specialists must assist students in understanding and explaining their own learning strengths and weaknesses. A goal set forth by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (1985) indicated that appropriate programming "for adults with learning disabilities is predicated on a clear understanding of how the condition influences their learning and performance" (p. 2). By employing a clear profile analysis technique, students can learn to plot their own diagnostic and evaluation data. This profile also affords the students with a visual representation of their strengths and weaknesses (Figure 7).

The "Psycho-Educational Test Profile" includes four assessment domains that are filled in by or with the student. These include: aptitude, information processing, academic skills, and other. The mean score for the population or for an individual student is indicated by a horizontal

UNIDENTIFIED STUDENTS	PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED STUDENTS
QUESTIONS TO ASK OF THE EVALUATION DATA:	QUESTIONS TO ASK OF THE EVALUATION DATA:
1. Does the adult have a learning disability? What are characteristics to look for?	1. What is the most appropriate course of study and educationa/vocational setting?
2. How can specific areas of both strength and weakness which effect academic and vocational success be identified?	2. What support services are needed?
3. How can the newly identified adult acquire appropriate information relative to his/her learning disability?	3. What specific instructional strategies and/or academic skills does the student need to acquire?
4. How can the adult determine needed services following the evaluation?	4. Does the student fully understand his/her learning/academic strengths and weaknesses?

Figure 5. Establishing Evaluation Procedures for Postsecondary Students with Learning Disabilities: Questions to Ask of the Evaluation Data.

POSSIBLE AREAS FOR EVALAUTION

Aptitude
Information Processing
Academic Achievement
Career Goals
Social Emotional Development

POSSIBLE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Formal Tests
Informal Observations
Intervest Inventories
Interviews (student, parents, teachers)
Diagnostic/Prescriptive Teaching
Curriculum Reviews

EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATION OF RESULTS

1. Student does well on a spelling test but cannot apply skill in written work.

2. Student receives a high score on reading comprehension but because of organizational and memory deficits cannot "handle" college prep texts.

3. Scores poorly on reading comprehension but listening comprehension is a strength.

ETC.

Figure 6. Evaluation of Learner Characteristics.

DIRECTIONS: CHECK THE AREAS IN WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

___ General information on the McBurney Resource Center
___ General information on learning disabilities
___ An assessment of basic skills
___ Arranging for a hearing test
___ Arranging for a vision test
___ Counseling services
___ Tutorial instruction
  a) ___ Notetaking in lectures
  b) ___ Outlining a textbook
  c) ___ Writing a term paper
  d) ___ Spelling
  e) ___ Basic grammar skills (e.g., punctuation, sentence construction, etc.)
  f) ___ Basic math skills
  g) ___ Basic reading skills
  h) ___ Test taking skills
  i) ___ Locating information in the library
  j) ___ Special tutorial help in:_____
  k) ___ Other:_____
_____
_____
_____

DIRECTIONS: DESCRIBE YOUR GREATEST ACADEMIC/VOCATIONAL STRENGTHS:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

MCBURNEY RESOURCE CENTER

STUDENT INVENTORY

NAME: _____ CURRENT GRADE: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS: PLACE A + NEXT TO ITEMS THAT ARE EASIEST FOR YOU TO DO.
PLACE A — NEXT TO ITEMS THAT ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO DO.

A. GATHERING INFORMATION:

___ COLLEGE LEVEL TEXTBOOKS
___ COURSE LECTURES
___ GROUP DISCUSSION
___ AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS
___ AUDIO TAPES
___ CONCRETE EXPERIENCE (e.g., by doing something)
___ OBSERVATION OF OTHERS
___ ASKING QUESTIONS
___ ROLE PLAYING
___ OTHER: _____

B. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

___ WORKING INDEPENDENTLY
___ WORKING WITH A PEER TUTOR
___ PARTICIPATING IN A SMALL GROUP/CLASSROOM
___ PARTICIPATING IN A LARGE GROUP/CLASSROOM
___ LISTENING TO AUDIO TAPES
___ OTHER: _____
___ OTHER: _____

C. ASSIGNMENTS:

___ WORKSHEETS
___ SHORT PAPERS (2-3 pgs.)
___ TERM PAPERS (10-20 pgs.)
___ DEMO/LAB PROJECTS
___ ART/MEDIA PROJECTS
___ ORAL REPORTS
___ GROUP DISCUSSIONS
___ WORD PROBLEMS/MATH
___ MAP/CHARTS/GRAPHS
___ INTERNSHIPS/PRACTICUMS
___ OTHER: _____

D. TEST FORMATS:

___ SHORT ANSWER
___ ESSAY
___ MULTIPLE-CHOICE
___ TRUE-FALSE
___ MATCHING
___ COMPUTATION/MATH
___ ORAL EXAMINATIONS
___ OTHER: _____

DIRECTIONS: CHECK THE AREAS THAT GIVE YOU THE MOST TROUBLE.

___ Going to class on time
___ Going to class prepared (e.g., taking pens, paper, etc.)
___ Becoming motivated to start work
___ Budgeting time
___ Sticking with an assignment until completion
___ Following oral directions
___ Following written directions
___ Organizing ideas and information
___ Drawing conclusions, making inferences
___ Understanding abstract concepts
___ Finding the "right word" to describe something orally
___ Expressing ideas precisely in writing
___ Writing legibly
___ Reading comprehension
___ Reading rate
___ Sounding out unfamiliar words
___ Mathematical reasoning and word problems
___ Mathematical computation
___ Remembering specific course vocabulary
___ Test-taking anxiety
___ Lack of self-confidence
___ Making new friends
___ Understanding humor and sarcasm
___ Making "small talk"

Figure 4. McBurney Resource Center Student Inventory.

line that bisects the four domains. If the student is functioning well in a particular domain, then the score and accompanying comments would be recorded in the bottom half of the chart under weaknesses.

By analyzing psychoeducational data on a visual profile, both the professional and the student can more clearly identify the nature of the problem. Similar scores can pinpoint areas requiring a specific strategy or accommodation, and discrepant results can uncover areas needing further exploration. For example, the data shown is Figure 7 indicates that reading comprehension is a strength, yet the student had been using taped textbooks. This might warrant a closer examination into the area of reading to determine if the difficulty is with decoding, comprehension, poor memory, or perhaps the testing format.

Many students with learning disabilities entering postsecondary settings continue to grapple with the effects of their learning disabilities on school performance. Educators must assist these students in the selection of the most productive instructional alternatives necessary to overcome these disabilities and to determine which instructional approaches or alternatives will be useful in solving both short-term and long-term problems. Analyzing psychoeducational data is frequently the most expedient method for determining what approach would be most effective for an individual student.

The dicotomy of instructional approaches might best be categorized as "To Remediate or To Compensate". For instance, a student with spelling difficulties must make the choice: learn to identify spelling errors and become a "better" speller or learn to use a spell-check system on a word processor; or a student with reading difficulties must make the choice: spend instructional time becoming a more efficient reader or learn to productively use texts on tape. Although these choices are not always this clear cut, students must begin to make decisions for themselves. Of course, the decision to remediate or compensate is often based on factors such as long-term career goals, aptitute, and information processing abilities. These factors must also be examined and added to the overall formula for effective instructional planning.

The systematic use of diagnostic or evaluation data (both formal and informal) will assist the student in better understanding his/her specific learning disability as well as proving the student and learning specialist with valuable information to help decide: Is remediation or compensation the way to tackle this problem? Following the analysis of the data, specific program goals and instructional objectives should be set, allowing the student to see the relationship between data and needed services. Figures 8 and 9 provide formats for logging program recommendations and tracking instructional goals and objectives in the Individual Student Plan (ISP).

Establishing Critical Variables for Measuring Program Effectiveness

As momentum for improving the quality of education quickens on a nationwide basis, issues of accountability have extended to the field of special education as well (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Will, 1986). There has been a call to move beyond the phase of monitoring program implementation and address questions of effective interventions (Borich & Nance, 1987). Service providers for students with learning disabilities at the postsecondary level are in the position to assume a proactive approach in planning systematic evaluation of both process and outcome variables. This paper will focus on issues relating to designing and conducting program evaluations to identify critical variables in service delivery for this population.

Designing an Evaluation

Whether the primary purpose of evaluation activities is formative (aimed at program improvement) or summative (aimed at determining program efectiveness as it relates to continuation), it is important to consider the role an evaluation will play within the context of the institution where it is conducted. Stufflebeam et al., (1972) suggest that the purpose of evaluation is not to

CA:
Verbal:
Performance:
Full Scale IQ:

	APTITUDE	INFORMATION PROCESSING	ACADEMIC SKILLS	STUDY SKILLS	OTHER
$\bar{x}$ for population	WAIS - Similarities - abstract reasoning Vocabulary Picture Completion Part-to-whole integration	BLT - Concept Recognition Association Activity Rate W-J PEB - Picture Vocab. Concept Formation Analysis - Synthesis	TASK - Reading Comp. Mathematics	- knows test-taking strategies - good note-taking abilities	Motivated
$\bar{x}$ for individual student	WAIS - Digit Span Arithmetic short-term memory	BLT - ASTM VSTM Serial Learning Stimulus Complexity W-J PEB - - memory for sentences - Numbers reversed	TASK - Spelling TOWL - Spelling Word Usage	- slow processing due to STM - may need extended time - has used taped textbooks	

Figure 7. Psychoeducational Test Profile

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLAN

PART I: PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR _____ _____

Course of Study:

Modifications in Materials, Testing Procedures, or Program:

Direct Instructional Techniques Used:

Ancilliary Campus Support Services Required:

Outside Support Services Required:

Figure 8. Program Recommendation.

AREA: _____ DATE IMPLEMENTED: _____

PRESENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE: _____

_____

_____

LONG RANGE GOALS: _____

_____

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES	INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: STRATEGIES/MATERIALS	EVALUATION OF SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES CRITERIA/EVALUATION DATE

Note. Educational goals and specific instructional objectives may change on a semester and/or annual basis and will be reviewed each semester by the student and the Learning Specialist.

Figure 9. Part II: Instructional Goals and Objectives.

prove, but to improve, while Scriven (1973) states that evaluation is a process for determining the worth or merit of whatever is being evaluated. As Cronback et al., (1980) note, evaluation is not just a technical activity; it is also a political activity.

In designing an evaluation plan, program coordinators should be guided by several factors. There are a number of program evaluation models that may conceptually fit the purpose for which such activities are being undertaken. Borich and Nance (1987) suggest four evaluation models that have application in special education environments and may be relevant to service delivery for students with learning disabilities at the college level. The "process-outcome" method, the peer review approach, the applied research method, and the qualitative or naturalistic method offer components of interest. Program administrators should also consider an eclectic approach that draws upon more than one model to generate useful information.

Audience plays a key role in the focus of evaluation activities. Administrators, faculty, program staff, funding agencies, and consumers such as students and parents all have different perspectives. Depending upon the audience served by the evaluation, different questions will be generated. For example, an Admissions Director may be interested in variables predicting successful degree completion among learning disabled students, whereas students may be concerned about the availability of staff for tutoring or the possibility of taking a reduced courseload. It is critical that procedures for collecting and analyzing data be established, with a timeline for gathering information.

Audience plays a key role in the focus of evaluation activities. Administrators, faculty, program staff, funding agencies, and consumers such as students and parents all have different perspectives. Depending upon the audience served by the evaulation, different questions will be generated. For example, an admissions director may be interested in variables predicting successful degree completion among learning disabled students, whereas students may be concerned about the availability of staff for tutoring or the possibility of taking a reduced courseload. It is critical that procedures for collecting and analyzing data be established, with a timeline for gathering information.

Conducting an Evaluation

Figure 10 provides a model of evaluation activities pertinent to a comprehensive approach to service delivery for students with learning disabilities. In addition to addressing process-oriented objectives that relate to the manner in which activities such as diagnostic assessment and direct instruction have been implemented, program outcomes are included to consider behavioral and attitudinal changes in students, program staff, and faculty. A timeline for data collection is illustrated in Figure 11 so that actual analyses and report preparation can be conducted during summer months when more time can be allocated to this activity. It is important, however, to established when delivery of such an evaluation report will be most useful in impacting future services (e.g., prior to institutional budget review).

Development of data collection forms should be guided by efficiency and accuracy. Determining the evaluation questions well in advance of data gathering will facilitate construction of forms that staff can complete within realistic timelines to yield valuable longitudinal information. Examples of data collection forms used in the University of Connecticut Program for Learning Disabled College Students (UPLD) are included in Figure 12. The Student Services Log is completed after each tutorial session. A numeric coding system has been developed for objectives that are frequently addressed so that learning specialists need only to enter the number(s) corresponding to objectives covered. This system has cut down on the time required to complete these forms, which systematically document program components. This type of record keeping is critical in order to examine good practice and identify effective interventions.

FOCUS OF EVALUATION		METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION
PROGRAM SERVICES		
- Diagnostic Evaluation	- - - - - - - ->	Project Records (e.g., referral sources; intake interviews; psychoeducational evaluations)
- Direct Instruction	- - - - - - - ->	Project Records (e.g., staff logs; summary reports)
- Related Services - Testing Accommodations - Texts on Tape - Faculty Liaison	- - - - - - - ->	Project Records
- Personnel Development	- - - - - - - ->	Schedule and Topics for Staff Development Seminars; Project Records; Consultation Logs of Program Administrator
PROGRAM OUTCOMES		
- Academic Performance - Retention and Graduation	- - - - - - - ->	Transcripts; Comparative Institutional Data
- Attitudes of Students and/ or Faculty	- - - - - - - ->	Questionnaires/Surveys
- Staff Competencies	- - - - - - - ->	Pre-Post Competency Survey: Analyses of Case Studies; Workshop Evaluation Form

Figure 10. A Model for Evaluating Services for Students with Learning Disabilities.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY
Referral Log					X				X
Learning Specialist Logs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Monthly Summary Sheet	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Semester Summaries					X				X
Faculty Contact Sheet				X					X
Testing Accommodation Requests				X					X
Student Transcripts					X				X
Student/Faculty Questionnaires	X							X	

Figure 11. Timeline for Data Collection

UPLD STUDENT SERVICES LOG

STUDENT: _____

DATE OF SESSION: _____

LEARNING SPECIALIST: _____

OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE SESSION: _____

_____

_____

APPROXIMATE AMOUNT OF STUDENT TIME ON TASK FOR EACH OBJECTIVE: _____

_____

MATERIALS USED: (check all which apply)

_____ course text
_____ outside readings
_____ class notes
_____ tapes from class lectures
_____ class assignments
_____ individually prepared materials
_____ computer software

METHODS USED: (check all which apply)

_____ oral discussion
_____ modeling by Learning Specialist using materials
_____ practice by student during the session
_____ review of student's independent application of strategy
_____ corrective feedback

INFORMAL EVALUATION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE:

_____

_____

STUDENT PROGRESS IN MASTERING OBJECTIVE(S):

_____

_____

Figure 12. Data Collection Form.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES DELIVERED

1988-89

PROGRAM SERVICES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS UTILIZING SERVICE	
	FALL	SPRING
REFERRAL		
INTAKE INTERVIEW		
PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL EVALUATION		
DIRECT INSTRUCTION (> 15 HOURS/SEMESTER)		
MONITORING (< 15 HOURS/SEMESTER)		
CONSULTATION (STUDENT INITIATED)		
TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS		
TEXTS ON TAPE		
FACULTY LIAISON VIA DIRECT CONTACT AND/OR PROGRAM MATERIALS		

Figure 12 (continued). Data Collection Summary Form.

Discussion

Evaluation activities imply not only data collection and analyses but also judgments about the long-term implications of results. It is one thing to gather data; it is even more critical for service providers who often evaluate their own programs to maintain objectivity in making recommendations based upon figures. As service providers document services and outcomes in meeting the needs of college students with learning disabilities, they are challenged to think beyond program evaluation to research questions that explore relationships among variables (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). By formulating hypotheses and systematically gathering data, they will be in position to identify those critical variables that generalize findings and promote consideration of future programmatic issues.

Summary

This paper explored several critical issues that typically impact postsecondary learning disability service providers. Issues discussed included techniques for garnering administrative support for learning disabilities services and common pitfalls that service providers need to avoid in establishing credible services. Additional suggestions were offered on how to effectively involve the student in understanding his/her diagnostic report and how to apply the information in an individual Student Plan (ISP). The final section concluded with a number of practical ways of setting up data collection systems for measuring program effectiveness.

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