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ABSTRACT

This training packet on learner-centered approaches for learning disabled students is 1 of 10 developed by the Study of Adult Basic Education(ABE)/English as a Second Language (ESL) Training Approaches Project to assist ABE instructors, both professionals and volunteers. The packet is intended to stand alone and encompasses a three-session workshop series with activities scheduled for participants to accomplish between sessions. Ideally, the sessions should take place about 1 month apart. Introductory materials include information about the series and the training packet, a workshop overview (objectives, time, materials checklist, preparations checklist), and workshop outline for each session. Trainer notes for each session include a checklist of tasks to be completed before the session and an outline of activities with necessary materials and times. Topics covered in the sessions are as follows: what a learning disability is; attitudes, barriers, and accommodation; plan for learning; teacher research and collaboration; developing a monitoring plan and strategy; and accessing and using resources. Time is allowed for preparation for the home task and feedback on the home task. Trainer's supplements, including alternative activities, follow. Masters for all handouts and transparencies needed in the sessions are provided. One of the seven supplementary readings for the sessions is a list of 63 references. (YLB)

ED 368 943

STUDY OF ABE/ESL INSTRUCTOR
TRAINING APPROACHES

Training Packet for a Three-Session Workshop on

LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

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Introduction to
THE ABE/ESL INSTRUCTOR TRAINING SERIES

Scope and Content

The Study of ABE/ESL Training Approaches Project has developed ten training packets to assist ABE and ESL instructors, both professionals and volunteers. Packet topics were selected based on a national review of training content and practices and on recommendations from selected experts representing ABE, ESL, and volunteer programs across the United States.

Packet topics include:

1. The Adult Learner
2. Planning for Instruction
3. Team Learning
4. Monitoring Student Progress
5. Volunteers and Teachers in the Classroom
6. Communicative ESL Teaching
7. Mathematics: Strategic Problem Solving
8. Whole Language Approach
9. Improving Thinking Skills for Adult Learners
10. Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches

There is no suggested sequence implied in the above listing. Each packet is intended to stand alone. Each encompasses a two- or three-session workshop series with activities scheduled for participants to accomplish between sessions. Ideally, the sessions should take place about one month apart. Packets include detailed instructions for workshop leaders and masters for all handouts and transparencies needed in the workshops.

Key Assumptions about Adult Learning

All packets have been designed to guide workshop leaders to model the adult learning principles upon which the packets are based. These principles apply to the training of instructors as well as to educating adult students. Based on the literature about adult learners and the experience of skilled adult educators, *it is assumed that adults learn best when:*

- they feel *comfortable* with the learning environment and they attempt tasks that allow them to succeed within the contexts of their limited time and demanding lives.
- they provide *input* into the planning of their own learning goals and processes.
- they have opportunities to engage in *social learning*, i.e., they learn from peers as well as from an instructor.

- they have a *variety* of options appropriate to their learning styles (including sensory modalities, ways of thinking,and both individual and group learning) and have opportunities to analyze and expand their modes of learning

- they are able to associate new learning with previous *experiences* and to use those experiences while learning.

- they have an opportunity to apply *theory/information* to practical situations in their own lives.

In accord with these assumptions, each packet employs research-based components of effective training and staff development: *theory, demonstrations, practice, structured feedback,* and *application with follow-up.* Key research findings on these components are:

1. The *theory* that underlies any new practice is a necessary but insufficient component of training.

2. *Demonstrations* that illustrate new practices and reinforce their use are essential to full comprehension and implementation.

3. Instructors need to *practice* new approaches in a safe environment and to receive *structured feedback* on their attempts.

4. New approaches need to be *applied* over time in a real situation — preferably ones where continuing feedback and analysis are possible (e.g., peer coaching or mentoring).

Research indicates that long-term change is likely to occur only when all of the above conditions are met.

We hope you will find that these training packets produce effective, long-term results.

About the
LEARNING DISABILITIES TRAINING PACKET

This training packet employs selected research-based components of effective training and staff development in the following manner:

THEORY: Inductive and deductive formats are used in presenting theory. This approach requires participants to extract theory from experiential activities rather than memorize theory from a lecture (a deductive format). Through scenarios, role playing, and exercises that involve the use and analysis of tools and approaches used in working with adults with learning problems and disabilities, participants learn about and internalize theory by discussing it with others.

DEMONSTRATION: Scenarios, along with a video interview of two adults with learning disabilities, are combined with focused questions to enable participants to identify and understand: (1) learning styles and differences, (2) learning strengths, (3) ways to build on learning strengths, (4) barriers to learning, and (5) instructional strategies for accommodating learner differences.

PRACTICE: Between workshop sessions, participants will have an opportunity to practice identifying student learning styles and strengths as a basis for developing and/or modifying instruction.

STRUCTURED FEEDBACK: During Sessions Two and Three, participants will have an opportunity to develop and/or modify instruction for accommodating learning differences by building on learning strengths.

APPLICATION: Finally, participants will be able to reflectively develop new strategies and modify approaches in working with all adult learners.

REFLECTION ON WORKSHOP PROCESSES: At several points during the workshop, participants are required to analyze workshop activities after completing them. During these analyses, participants think about the types of thinking and learning that the activities stimulate. As a result, participants become conscious of the theories and assumptions that underlie and guide this training packet.

During these training sessions, "learning by doing" will be the focus. Participants will experience new instructional approaches, and then will reflect upon, analyze, and generalize from their experiences. Such learning is more likely to be remembered and used than is rote learning.

About the Participants...

This training packet is designed for ABE, ESL, and volunteer instructors. Because the content of this packet builds upon theories of complex thinking, it is important for all participants to be involved in all three workshop sessions.

In this training packet, participants work in "like groups" only during selected activities. At these times, small groups of ABE instructors and ESL instructors will be formed. Volunteer instructors will join whichever group most closely approximates their major teaching assignment.

REGARDING THE SUGGESTED TIMES: All suggested times are the result of field testing within a three- to four-hour timeframe. Feel free to adjust the suggested times to meet the needs and experience levels of the participants. In addition, it is important to become familiar with the materials prior to the workshop in order to select specific activities if sufficient time is not provided or some activities take longer than anticipated. Familiarity with the materials also will enable you to personalize the materials by adding anecdotes where appropriate. If more than three hours are available for the training, the suggested times can be expanded to allow for additional sharing and discussion.

REGARDING THE ROOM SET-UP: Since the workshop includes both large and small group work, arrange the room so that participants can move about fairly easily. Try to make certain that the flip charts, overheads, or videos can be seen by all participants. In less than ideal settings, you may have to consider eliminating the use of overheads or flip charts.

REGARDING TRAINING PREPARATION: Before reading through these notes, the trainer should carefully read the articles included as background information (pages 53-69). If participants would benefit from reading any of these articles, duplicate them and include them in the Interim Task Assignment Packet (Handout 16a-c).

A primary goal for the trainer should be to strive to "do no harm"; that is, the workshop should minimize the following outcomes:

- The tendency of some teachers to identify as learning disabled those students whom they cannot work with.
- The tendency of teachers to over-identify as learning disabled those students who are culturally and/or linguistically different.
- The tendency of teachers, when confronted with what they understand as a disability, to lower expectations rather than to adjust approaches and maintain or even heighten expectations.
- The tendency to employ a deficit as opposed to a strengths model.
- The tendency to believe that there is a simple fix for learning disabilities.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Objectives: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities.
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and learning needs.
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning.
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities.
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

Time: Total time required for the workshop: approximately 10 hours:

- Session One: 3 hours
- Interim Activities at Home Sites: approximately 2-4 hours over a one-month period
- Session Two: 3½ hours
- Interim Activities at Home Sites: approximately 2-6 hours over a one-month period
- Session Three: 3 hours

Materials Checklist: Hardware:

- VHS Player (½-inch) and Monitor
- Overhead Projector
- Flip Chart (optional)

Software:

- Video: "Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities" (VHS Cassette)
- Packet Handouts
- Packet Transparencies
- Blank Transparencies and Transparency Pens

Preparations Checklist:

- Tally results of the Participant Questionnaire.
- Duplicate handouts.
- Check equipment to be sure that it is working properly and that the video is cued up to the beginning.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE
SESSION ONE

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
H-3*, H-4, H-5, T-A*	I. Introduction/Workshop Overview • Icebreaker Activity • Agenda, Objectives	15 min.
H-6, T-B	II. Adults First and Last	25 min.
Blank Transparency, H-5, H-7, H-8, H-9, T-C, T-D, T-E, T-F	III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability • From Difference to Disability • A Working Definition	35 min.
	BREAK	15 min.
H-10, H-11, H-12, H-13, T-G	IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation	35 min.
H-14a-b, H-15, T-H (multiple copies)	V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person	30 min.
H-16a-c, T-I	VI. Interim Task Assignment	15 min.
H-17a-d	VII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation	10 min.

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* "H" = "Handout," "T" = "Transparency"

WORKSHOP OUTLINE
SESSION TWO

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
H-19*, T-J*, H-20	I. Introductions/Workshop Overview • Agenda, Objectives • Opening Exercise	30 min.
H-21, T-K	II. Review of Session One	15 min.
H-16a-c, H-22, T-L (multiple copies), Transparency Pens	III. Review of Interim Task Assignment	40 min.
	BREAK	15 min.
H-23a-d, H-24, H-25a-c, T-Ma-d, T-N	IV. Planning for Learning • Instructional Process • Video Demonstration • Conducting a Needs Assessment	85 min.
H-26a-c, H-27a-g	V. Interim Task Assignment 2	10 min.
H-28a-d	VI. Evaluation and Wrap-Up	5 min.

* "H" = "Handout," "T" = "Transparency"

WORKSHOP OUTLINE
SESSION THREE

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
H-29, H-30, H-31, T-O	I. Introductions/Workshop Overview	15 min.
H-32, H-33, H-34	II. The Reflective Practitioner: Teacher Research and Collaboration	20 min.
H-26a-b, H-35, T-P	III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task	35 min.
	BREAK	15 min.
H-36a-b, H-37, H-38, T-Q, T-R, T-S, T-T	IV. Planning for Learning • Targeting Areas of Need • Developing a Learning Plan	40 min.
H-39, T-U	V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy	25 min.
H-40	VI. Accessing and Using Resources • Potential Resources • Accommodations	15 min.
	VII. How Do You Make It Happen?	10 min.
T-V	VIII. Reflection on Workshop Processes	10 min.
H-41a-d	IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up	5 min.

* "H" = "Handout," "T" = "Transparency"

TRAINER NOTES

SESSION ONE

ERIC

BEFORE SESSION ONE

The following tasks should be completed *before* Session One of the workshop:

- ☐ **Send out flyers** announcing the workshop series. (See handout H-1 for a sample.)
- ☐ **Send the Participant Questionnaire** (H-2a-b) to all persons responding to the flyer. The suggested maximum of participants for each workshop series is 30 persons. The Questionnaire asks participants to have in mind an example of one student they are working with and with whom they would like their teaching to be more effective. They will revisit this student at various points during the workshops, and ideally, work with that individual for interim task assignments.
- ☐ **Duplicate all handouts for Session One** (H-3 through H-17) and arrange them into packets. Staple together those handouts that have more than one page. By providing one packet of materials to each individual, constant handling of materials during the session can be avoided.
- ☐ **Make transparencies** from the Transparency Masters provided for Session One (T-A through T-I). Make enough copies of T-H for one per group of participants.
- ☐ **Tally the results of the Participant Questionnaire.** (This can be done easily on a blank copy of the Participant Questionnaire.) You may also want to make a transparency of those results to share with participants.
- ☐ **Order all equipment** (VHS player, monitor, and overhead projector) and make sure it is operating correctly. Also check the size of the screen and clarity of print from the back of the room.
- ☐ **Obtain name tags** for participants.
- ☐ **Arrange for a place** to hold Session One and make sure it has sufficient space and movable chairs for break-out activities. Consider which room arrangement will best facilitate your activities. Ideally, the room should be set up with tables seating four to six participants each.
- ☐ **Prepare a sign-in sheet** to verify attendance at both workshops. Include space for names, addresses and phone numbers for future contact with participants.
- ☐ **Arrange for any refreshments** that will be available.
- ☐ **Read the Trainer Notes for Session One,** pages 10 through 27. **Review** handouts H-3 through H-16 and transparencies T-A through T-I. Read background articles provided in Supplementary Readings and Trainer Supplement materials.

TRAINER NOTES: SESSION ONE

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	I. **Introduction/Workshop Overview**	15 min.

A. Icebreaker Activity

H-3*

As an opening activity, have participants refer to H-3, "Person Search," a scavenger hunt-type exercise. Explain that participants must walk around the room to question one another to fill signatures on the appropriate line. They may not use the same person twice. The person who collects the most signatures wins some small prize that the trainer designates.

The objective of the activity is for participants to get to know more about one another. The larger purpose of this activity is to highlight the importance of finding out more about the whole person, as participants will be doing with their students in different ways.

NOTE: An understanding of the whole person is central to an adult-centered, strength-based approach to learning disabilities. Because of this, the trainer will invoke the participants' experience in this exercise when they begin to work on Interim Task Assignment 1, H-16a-c.

When participants have finished the activity, ask them to take one minute to introduce themselves to one person next to them and ask that person what his or her preferred learning style is (e.g., visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, working in groups, working alone).

Ask participants what kinds of things they learned about one another as they went through the scavenger hunt and when they introduced themselves. What were some of the different learning styles of their neighbors? The trainer should synthesize these learning styles and note that the workshop takes into account several types of learners. For

* "H" = "Handout"

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

example, some people are auditory learners, hence the verbal presentations. Others tend to learn in a more visual way, so there will be visual aids used. Still others are tactile-kinesthetic learners, so we will have some "hands-on" activities. Activities will vary so that participants will do some things alone, in pairs, in small groups, or as part of the whole group. Reiterate that we all learn differently.

NOTE: The wealth of information in this packet requires that the trainer assess the needs of the participants and determine the depth of the presentation relative to their needs and experience.

H-4, T-A*

B. Agenda, Objectives

Direct participants' attention to H-4 and display T-A. Go over the agenda and session objectives. Explain that this workshop is not intended to provide comprehensive training on diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities. It focuses on what teachers and tutors can do to work more effectively with students who are experiencing learning difficulties.

Inform participants that the workshop will provide:

- An awareness of the needs of adult students who learn differently, face learning difficulties, or have learning disabilities.
- A working definition of learning differences and learning disabilities.
- Strategies for identifying both students' learning strengths and the learning difficulties that they face.
- Learner-centered approaches to matching instructional strategies to student strengths.
- An opportunity to apply concepts to their own teaching situations.
- An overview of resources that teachers and programs may want to draw upon.

* "T" = "Transparency"

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
H-5a-b	**NOTE: Stress that due to the many factors that affect the learning process, "diagnosis" of a learning disability or identification of someone as having a learning disability should be done ONLY by trained professionals using validated methods in a culturally competent and linguistically appropriate manner. Remind participants of this at appropriate points during the workshop presentation. (See H-5a-b, Glossary, for definitions of these terms.)**	
	II. Adults First and Last	25 min.
	Once a disability is identified or suspected, teachers often focus on the disability to the exclusion of the students' goals, strengths, and social context. The purpose of this activity is to enable participants to recognize and internalize the concept that all adult learners, whether or not they have a learning disability, have similar motivations, goals, attitudes, and abilities.	
H-6	Direct participants' attention to H-6, "Adults First and Last." Divide the participants into small groups of four to six people. Review each section of H-6, clarifying the questions. Announce that there will be 10 minutes for group discussion.	
T-B	Display T-B. Select one group to give their responses to the first category, motivation. Then, open the discussion to all groups and record responses on T-B. Discuss implications for instructions.	
	NOTE: See Trainer's Supplement page 54 for suggestions of possible student responses and implications for instruction.	
	Continue this process, selecting another group to respond to the goals, and then have all the other groups respond to: (1) attitudes, (2) ability to learn, (3) social and cultural factors, and (4) learning environment in an open fashion. Summarize the discussion by reminding participants that this exercise reflects the characteristics of *all* adult learners — independent of whether they have a disability.	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

NOTE: The one category in which participants may see an area of difference between adults who experience learning difficulties and those who don't is in the attitudes toward learning.

III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability? 35 min.

A. From Difference to Disability

H-7, T-C

After observing that we all learn differently, ask the group for one or two examples. If none are forthcoming, or if the responses are inappropriate, refer to their examples at the beginning of this workshop when they identified themselves and their preferred learning styles. Were participants taught to their strengths and preferred learning styles when they were in school? Ask participants to think about students they are working with. Do the different ways some students learn ever pose a challenge for them?

Indicate that in addition to people who just differ in learning style, we can distinguish two other groups: (1) Some learners have learning problems; (2) Among these, a smaller group has learning problems that may actually be learning disabilities. Refer participants to the circle diagram in H-7 (point to transparency T-C).

H-5a-b

After distinguishing between a learning difference, a learning difficulty, and a learning disability, note that experts may disagree regarding when a difference becomes a learning difficulty and when a learning difficulty becomes a learning disability (i.e., what are the boundaries — the cut points — between what constitutes a difference, difficulty, or disability).

NOTE: Refer to the Glossary, H-5, for basic definitions of these terms.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
H-8	Since the categories are judgmental and subject to disagreement, it is important to provide participants with an opportunity to visualize the differences between a learning difference, a learning problem (or difficulty), and a learning disability. As an alternative to the circle illustration (H-7), the trainer can illustrate these differences graphically by conceptualizing a continuum. (We have adapted a model used by Richard Cooper, of the Center for Alternative Learning in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania (see H-8).	
Blank Transparency or Flip Chart	Using a flip chart or blank transparency, draw a line, explaining that it represents the universe of individuals who just learn differently from other students and who could profit from some modification of the curriculum or learning environment. Ask for an example. If none is provided or if the example given is inappropriate, provide one (e.g., if you were teaching math with a predominantly oral approach to a student who learns best in a tactile-kinesthetic way, you could adapt your teaching approach to provide manipulatives to enable the student to grasp concepts more easily). Draw a second line beneath learning differences starting further to the right and observe that this part of the continuum includes students who have learning problems or difficulties that make it harder for them to learn.	

> Learning difficulties may involve how individuals take in information — what some call *input;* how they *process* or integrate the information that they take in; or how they get information out — what some call *output.*

H-8, T-D	Ask again for an example of students who learn differently and then observe that, depending on the severity of their learning problems, such students may or may not have a learning disability. Inform the participants that while some experts might define all the learners with learning problems as having learning disabilities, others, like Cooper, suggest that learning disabilities are found in the third line, placed at the right end — the "severe"	

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MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

portion — of the continuum. Refer participants to H-8 for a completed illustration of the continuum. Display T-D on the overhead.

To enable the teachers to start internalizing these distinctions (beyond their initial impressions from the circle diagram, H-7), ask them to think about the student they "brought" as an example or to think about another student they have. Where would they place that student on the continuum (H-8, T-D)? To provide the trainer and the participants with some context, point to different positions on the continuum and ask for a show of hands regarding how many participants would locate their students at each position. Did the introduction of this alternative illustration change their perception of where their students might fit?

B. A Working Definition

The importance of definitions. To better undertand the distinctions between learning *differences,* learning *difficulties,* and learning *disabilities,* we need to understand what a learning disability is and what it is not.

Begin by explaining that (in addition to disagreeing about the cut points) experts do not agree on exactly what a learning disability is. At least 15 different definitions have been proposed by various researchers and learning disability experts. Some people even argue that learning disability does not exist. The disagreements are for both scientific and philosophical reasons.

NOTE: The trainer may wish to see Hammill, 1990, in the Trainer's Supplement, Session One, for more information (see pages 55-65).

Explain that for our purposes, the exact definition and prevalence of learning disabilities does not matter. How we define a disability is important, however, because it determines the strategies and tools we will employ in working with these individuals.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	Ask the participants for an example of how the definition of a problem determines an outcome. (If there are none, or if the response is not useful, you may want to pose the following: If an individual's problem is money, what would be the strategy for solving that problem? This is a very broad problem. Now cite more narrow problems: not being able to save money, not earning enough money. The strategies for solving these problems would be different.)	
	NOTE: Remind participants again that students should not be defined in terms of their disability. Students must be viewed as a whole person.	
H-9, T-E	**A working definition.** Direct participants' attention to H-9. This handout provides a working definition of learning disabilities that comes closest to representing a consensus. It illustrates the five components of a learning disability that can be found in most definitions. Give participants a few minutes to read and reflect upon the definition on the top half of the page. Project T-E on overhead projector. Guide participants through the definition by underlining key words and phrases with a transparency pen.	
	NOTE: Page 66 of the Trainer Supplement contains an example of which portions of the definition to highlight.	
	Direct participants' attention to the bottom half of the handout. Explain that while experts may not agree on what a learning disability is, there are areas of consensus that can be useful in planning instruction for students who may have a learning disability. Briefly discuss each component and its implications for instruction.	

MATERIALS **ACTIVITIES** **TIMES**

C. Components of the Definition and Instructional Implications

NOTE: This section provides a good deal of background information for the trainer. Since it is important for the training to be as participatory as possible, the trainer should make the presentation as interactive as possible and should use discretion in determining whether to go over the components in detail.

- *Component 1* focuses on the wide variety of problems that are encompassed by the term learning disability. Thus, no one instructional method will meet the needs of *all* students with learning disabilities. Teachers need to employ a range of tools and strategies that can be matched to students' needs. Ask the participants for examples. If none are given, or if they are inappropriate, cite the phonetic approach to reading as an example. While this works for many students with learning disabilities, it does not work for all students (Bingman, 1989).

- *Component 2* focuses on neurological implications. It assumes a "glitch" in how the brain inputs, processes and interprets, and communicates information. Some participants may focus on this individual "deficit" to the exclusion of other factors. In order to address this danger, remind the teachers of two things: (1) learner strengths can be used to help students accommodate for learning difficulties; and (2) teachers can modify their approaches to more effectively teach students with learning disabilities. To involve the teachers, ask them for an example of such accommodation. (An example of this might be the student with a visual perception problem who is asked to learn geography by drawing a map instead of learning through reading or viewing videos.)

MATERIALS **ACTIVITIES** **TIMES**

- *Component 3* focuses on the persistence of learning disabilities into adulthood. Learning disabilities are not discrete, isolated characteristics but are patterns of difficulties that persist over time. But while they persist over time they are "expressed differently in different developmental periods and . . . adults with learning problems should not be viewed in the same way as simply grown-up learning disabled children" (Polloway, et al., 1984).

> Adult educators should be aware of family, community, and work-related role-demands and competencies that adults bring with them to the classroom. When planning for instruction, educators should incorporate an understanding of how literacy and learning disabilities relate to the students' goals and strengths as well as to the demands that they face at home, at work, and in the community. (To involve teachers, ask them for examples of a job-related strength or demand; e.g., ability to handle several tasks at once; ability to communicate effectively with co-workers; ability to learn a new skill quickly.)

- *Components 4 and 5* focus on the severity of learning disabilities and the fact that they can occur in any population. There are often negative stereotypes of adults who are considered to have learning disabilities. These individuals are often seen as needing specialized or "different" instruction from other adults and as having limited ability to learn. This perception prevents teachers from looking beyond the disabilities to student strengths.

- *Component 6* focuses on the impact of learning disabilities on adult life. While teachers focus on cognitive issues, adults with learning difficulties often identify social problems as their major problem. At the same time, many adults have used their strengths to help them accommodate learning difficulties. Give examples of some accommodations (e.g., a person who has trouble with correct syntax when writing, but little trouble when speaking, could speak into

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	a tape recorder and transcribe his or her thoughts; a creative storyteller who has trouble with spelling or handwriting could use a word processor with a spell check feature) and discuss how teachers can support students and help them develop accommodations.	
	D. What Learning Disability Is *Not*	
H-9, T-F	Definitions exclude as well as include people. The trainer should point to what is excluded from the definition in H-9. Display T-F.	
	1. *It is not retardation.* People with learning disabilities are sometimes inappropriately called, "dumb," "slow learners," or "retarded." Ask the group if there are any other terms they have heard (e.g., "good with their hands," "daydreamer," "discipline problem").	
	2. *It is not due to other disabilities.* Ask for examples. If none are given, or if those given are inappropriate, cite the examples of severe visual impairment or mental illness. Glasses may correct a visual impairment; emotional problems may compound — or be created or compounded by — learning disabilities that frustrate individuals or interfere with the way in which they process information.	
	3. *It is not due to cultural or linguistic differences.* Ask for examples. If none are given, or if they are inappropriate, note that differences in communication styles and the responses to culturally appropriate approaches may be confused with learning disabilities.	

NOTE: You should now be approximately one hour and 15 minutes into the workshop.

BREAK — 15 min.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation — 35 min.

Although it is important to recognize and understand learning difficulties and disabilities that can be linked to individual needs, we cannot stop there. Differences and disabilities do not have to be debilitating. They only become so when one of the following elements is present: (1) the environment (e.g., a program or school) only addresses the needs of some individuals (e.g., visual learners), or (2) these individuals are unable to use their strengths to overcome the obstacles that they face (say in a program that is not built around the needs of adult learners). This part of the session will provide a base for understanding the problems created when individuals and programs (or schools) are unable to respond to the challenge posed by learning differences and learning disabilities. We will use everyday examples to help teachers explore the implications of what some call "disabling help" and others call the "social construction of disability."

A. Moving from Differences to Disabilities

The purpose of this section is to illustrate how a simple difference can lead to dire consequences. (If the example of how teachers saw left-handedness as a disability was used earlier, remind participants of that discussion.) Ask how many participants are left-handed. Point out that mortality statistics show that on average, left-handed individuals die younger than those who are right-handed. The trainer can ask the group why, and, after one or two responses, suggest that most theorists attribute it to the fact that left-handed individuals have to use tools and equipment that are designed, often unconsciously, for right-handed individuals.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

B. Moving from Disability to Accommodation

The purpose of this section is to provide a useful illustration of how an environmental adaptation — an accommodation — can minimize the impact of a significant disability. Ask participants to scan the handout on "Barriers" (H-10). After one minute, ask the group for examples of how environments can be modified to provide access.

NOTE: If it is necessary, the trainer can use the example of ramps and curb-cuts to show how these enable people who use wheel chairs (and others) to utilize the environment.

C. The Paradoxical Implications of Identification

Identification of a disability has ambiguous implications. On the one hand identification of disabilities may enable learners and teachers to accommodate individual differences. On the other hand, identification (particularly, if inappropriate) can reinforce barriers to learning and label individuals. The trainer should distinguish between:

(1) *The appropriate identification of a disability that can be accommodated and that enables learners and teachers to raise expectations is preferable to pejorative labels such as retarded, slow learner, lazy, and "only good with their hands."*

To illustrate an aspect of this, ask the group for an example of how *negative labels* hurt people. If none come out, or the responses are insufficient, inform participants how, when interviewed, adults with learning disabilities talk about spending their life "managing humiliation." (For example, see monograph, Osher & Webb, 1993.)

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	(2) *An inaccurately applied label that does not improve results and leads teachers and tutors to see the learner (and not their approach) as the sole source of the problem or to reduce expectations.* To illustrate an aspect of this, ask the participants for an example of how ignoring teaching-related problems can prevent teachers from adjusting their teaching to accommodate learning *differences*. For example, a teacher who mistakenly perceives a particularly nonverbal ESL student as not being fluent in any language may not provide that student with the experience and instruction that might focus on areas of strengths and help the student progress.	
	D. Self-Fulfilling Prophecies	
H-11, H-12	To enable the teachers to explore one of the implications of labels, the trainer should introduce the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy — how teacher and student expectations affect learner outcomes. As an illustration of this, direct participants' attention to H-11 and H-12, which are samples of two letters summarizing the results of diagnostic tests on two adults with learning disabilities. Ask participants to take a few moments to read both letters and, while they are reading, to think about what message each letter gives them (if they were the learner *and* if they were the teacher). Explain that the letter in H-12 is not a worse-case scenario, but can be problematic in terms of its tone. H-11 seems to focus more on the learner's strengths and is easier to understand. Generate discussion on the implications of these two different approaches.	

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MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

NOTE: These two letters are provided to suggest two contrasting approaches. Some participants may be unfamiliar with such reports. If their unfamiliarity presents a problem, you might ask them for examples from their own experiences (e.g., discussions among teachers).

E. Visualizing Appropriate Identification

Because all students — even some of those who were labeled as learning disabled in public schools — are not learning disabled, and because some students who are learning disabled have not been identified, it is useful to visualize the range of students teachers will encounter in their work. We will end this section by providing a conceptual framework that participants can turn to throughout the workshop sessions for a visual reference.

H-13, T-G

Direct participants to H-13 and display T-G, showing the dilemma of those learners who do and do not have learning disabilities, and of those learners who are and are not identified.

NOTE: This matrix is a simple graphic that the trainer could point to periodically throughout the workshop to help teachers think about the different kinds of learners they are likely to work with, the impact of labels, and the implications of these differences.

Note that after the workshop, teachers can use this graphic as a means for remembering that: (1) all learning differences are not learning disabilities; (2) some learners who were labeled as having learning disabilities may have been inappropriately labeled; and (3) some of their students who have not been identified may have a learning disability.

NOTE: You should now be approximately 2 hours into the workshop.

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MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person	30 min.

> People are more than their disabilities or any other single differentiating characteristic; hence the desire of most people with disabilities to be referred to as a person "with a disability" as opposed to "a disabled person."

H-14a-b

Direct participants' attention to H-14-a, a scenario of an adult learner named Karen W., and H-14-b, Scenario Focus Questions. Remind participants that adult learners have a variety of roles and responsibilities that help define them as individuals; the possible learning difficulty or disability does not define the person.

T-H (multiple copies)

Ask participants to break into their small groups, reading the scenario individually and then working together to respond to the focus questions. Direct each group to select a recorder/reporter to write responses on T-H and report back to the whole group. Inform groups that they have 15 minutes for this activity. Circulate among the groups to monitor their progress and answer questions. When five of the 15 minutes are left, announce the time remaining to the groups.

> **NOTE: The scenario on Karen W. provides a composite of information on one individual. If you would like to use additional scenarios or if you would like a profile of someone more relevant to your needs, you may choose to write your own scenario or you may choose from the alternative ESL scenario on Alicia S. in the Trainer Supplements, page 67. A real-life case study, written by and about an adult education student named Ron White, is also available in the Trainer Supplements, pages 68-69. Scenario Focus Questions may be used for these examples, as well.**

Have each group spokesperson project T-H on the overhead projector while explaining the group's findings.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

NOTE: The amount of time allowed for these presentations will depend on the total number of groups.

H-15

To prepare participants to start thinking about their students as whole people, ask them to take a minute and write down on H-15, Adult Roles, the set of roles that they and their students, as adults, play outside of the classroom and the types of competencies that their learners bring with them (e.g., parent, family member, worker, learner, citizen). After a minute, ask for examples. If none are provided (or if they are insufficient or inappropriate) provide examples from the world of work, family, and community (e.g., mother of two children, foreman, little league coach, church volunteer). Then observe that teachers usually see only one role — learner. End this point by adding that even as learners, adults may not show their best face in a school-like environment. Their culture may be different from the school's and/or teacher's culture. Also, a school may resurrect past frustrations that most of our students — particularly those with learning difficulties — faced before. Ask the participants for examples of this, noting that uncomfortable settings may make it hard for learners to display their learning strengths.

End this discussion by suggesting that if teachers are going to be able to work with adults in an effective manner, they must understand what motivates the learners, what strengths the learners have, how they have compensated for their learning difficulties (or their inability to perform certain academic tasks), their support system, and the places where they will test out, refine, and apply the skills they develop.

VI. Interim Task Assignment 15 min.

The emphasis of the interim assignment is upon the student and teacher as partners. The goal is for teachers to learn about the student's different strengths and roles outside the classroom. Conversations with the student should, in addition to teacher observations, serve as the

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	basis for determining student learning strengths, interests, and accommodation strategies. These learning strengths will form the basis for developing the instructional strategies that will be explored in Sessions Two and Three of the training packet.	
H-16a-c, T-I	Direct participants' attention to the interim task assignment packet (H-16a-c) and display T-I. Review the instructions on the first page and make sure all participants know what is expected of them. Answer any questions.	

NOTE: Remind participants that these are suggested questions. If a question is inappropriate, they should adjust in a manner that fits the learner's cultural and social context. Ask participants to read all parts of the interim task assignment packet carefully and thoroughly. To make sure that participants are equipped to proceed with the assignment, it is important that the trainer provide sufficient examples. Refer briefly to the scenario of Karen W. and model how you would interview her (H-14-a). To make this participatory, you might ask two volunteers to role play the interview.

In addition, ask participants to read R-2, a chapter from Sally Smith's (of the Lab School in Washington, D.C.) book, *Succeeding Against the Odds*. This will provide some useful background reading to prepare them for work they will be doing later in Session Two and Session Three.

NOTE: We have chosen the Smith book because it is practical and readable. Since it focuses on working both with children and adults with learning disabilities, participants should be asked to focus on the information that pertains to adult learners.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	VII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation	10 min.
H-17a-d	A. Session Evaluation Ask participants to complete the Evaluation Form for Session One (H-17a-d). Be sure to allow sufficient time for participants to complete it. Then collect the form, analyze the results, and use them as a basis for planning Session Two. B. Thank participants for their time and effort. Remind them of Session Two and give time and place, if known.	

TRAINER NOTES

SESSION TWO

ERIC

BEFORE SESSION TWO

The following tasks should be completed *before* Session Two of the workshop:

- ☐ **Send Notice of Session Two** (H-18) to Session One participants only. This notice should include a reminder that participants should bring their entire handout packets from Session One with them to Session Two, especially the Home Task. Remind them to complete the home task.

- ☐ **Review sign-in sheet from Session One** to verify attendance.

- ☐ **Duplicate all handouts for Session Two** (H-19 through H-28) and arrange them into packets. Also duplicate a few extra sets of handouts for Session One (H-3 through H-17) for those participants who forget to bring theirs to Session Two.

- ☐ **Make extra copies of handout H-20.**

- ☐ **Prepare transparencies** from all of the Transparency Masters provided for Session Two (T-J through T-N). Make enough copies of T-L for one per group of participants.

- ☐ **Check equipment** (VHS players and monitors, and overhead projector) to make sure it is working properly. Check screen size and readability of print on screen.

- ☐ **Arrange for a place to hold Session Two;** make sure it has sufficient space and movable chairs for break-out session.

- ☐ **Arrange for any refreshments** that will be available.

- ☐ **Obtain name tags** for participants.

- ☐ **Read the Trainer's Notes for Session Two,** pages 29-40. **Review** handouts H-19 through H-28 and transparencies T-J through T-N.

TRAINER NOTES: SESSION TWO

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	I. Introduction/Workshop Overview	30 min.
	A. Welcome Participants	5 min.
H-19*, T-J*	Welcome participants. They should be the same as those who attended Session One. However, if there are any newcomers to the group, have all participants (old and new) introduce themselves quickly one by one to the large group by stating their name, program, and the type of class they are currently teaching. Present the agenda for Session Two (H-19 and T-J).	

NOTE: Participants should form the same small groups of four to six people that they organized during Session One. They will continue to stay in these groups throughout Session Two. If there are new participants, include them in existing groups so that they can benefit from the experience of the returning participants.

	B. Opening Exercise	25 min.
H-20	To open Session Two, distribute loose copies of H-20, "Person Search, Part 2". The process for conducting this activity is similar to the scavenger hunt they participated in at the beginning of Session One, but the items are more in-depth and tied more closely to issues that will be covered in the workshop. Give participants five to 10 minutes to complete the activity, again explaining that they must move around the room (if they can) to collect names on the appropriate line. To continue the theme (and give someone else a chance to win), you may also designate a prize to the person who collects the most signatures.	

MATERIALS **ACTIVITIES** **TIMES**

The objective of this scavenger hunt is different from the one in Session One. Both activities are designed to help participants find out more about the whole person; however, the focus in Session Two is to rethink the activity to make it more learner-centered.

After a winner has been declared, ask participants to get into their small groups and brainstorm for 10 minutes to answer the following question:

This kind of activity works well for some people and not for others. What are some ways they would structure the activity differently to better incorporate their learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory) and personal context (e.g., don't like games, don't like having to mingle with people, aren't mobile enough to move around)?

NOTE: In doing this exercise, participants have three options: to keep the activity as it is, revise it, or choose an alternative activity. If the participants want to revise the activity but are unable to think of revisions, provide some examples. For example, they could flip a coin or draw numbers to decide what order to follow; they could conduct cooperative interviews in small groups; they could share in-depth with one or two individuals. Experience has shown that people generally like participating in a scavenger-hunt activity, but if the groups do not like this exercise, they may suggest an alternative.

After 10 minutes have elapsed, ask the groups to select a representative to report the group's findings. Each group should take no more than two minutes. Explain to participants that, unless the consensus is to do away with the scavenger hunt, there will be a similar activity in Session Three, but it will be reframed based on their recommendations during this exercise. If they elect not to conduct a scavenger hunt, an alternative activity will be conducted that reflects their input during the brainstorm activity.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	II. Review of Session One	15 min.

NOTE: The purpose of this portion of the workshop is to review major points covered in Session One and to provide a warm-up activity leading into the discussion of Interim Task Assignment 1, H-16a-c.

H-21, T-K

Direct participants' attention to H-21. Have participants discuss the four questions with a partner. Tell the participants that they should feel free to refer to the workshop material from Session One as they answer the questions. Allow 10 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

Project T-K on the overhead projector. Facilitate a brief large-group discussion of H-21; using a transparency marker, briefly record responses under appropriate headings.

III. Review of Interim Task Assignment — 35 min.

H-16a-c

A. Small Group Discussion of Interim Task — 20 min.

Direct participants' attention to H-16a-c, their Interim Task Assignment packets. Participants should have completed this packet and brought it with them to Session Two. Have additional packets on hand for participants who have forgotten their packets.

H-22, T-L (multiple copies), Transparency Pens

Participants will now work in their small groups to share and discuss the results of their interim task assignments. Direct participants to H-22. Explain each step of the small group task and answer any questions. Clearly state that each group should develop a student profile. Distribute one copy of T-L and transparency pens to each group.

Inform the groups that you will be available to provide assistance while they are working. Circulate among the groups, listening to participants, sharing and offering assistance, as necessary. Monitor the progress of the groups, moving them along and encouraging them to fill out their transparencies for

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	the presentation to the large group. When 10 minutes remains in the time allotted, make an announcement to the group. This will keep participants on task.	
	B. Small Group Presentations	15 min.
	Have one or two volunteers from each group present the "student profile" their group has selected to share. After each presentation, ask for comments and questions from the large group.	

The small group presentations should provide the participants with examples of a variety of learning needs, strengths, and social-cultural contexts that are found among their students. Explain that these student profiles will be used during the remaining portion of the workshop to develop learner-centered plans of instruction.

NOTE: The amount of time you allot to each group's presentation will depend upon the total number of small groups.

NOTE: You should now be approximately one hour and 20 minutes into the workshop.

	BREAK	15 min.
	IV. Planning for Learning	85 min.
	A. Instructional Process	15 min.
H-23a-d, T-Ma-d	Direct participants' attention to H-23a. The purpose of this handout is to provide participants with a blueprint for instructional planning and to highlight the importance of involving students in *all* phases of planning and monitoring instruction. Project T-M-a on overhead projector. This graph serves two functions: (1) it provides a simple dynamic model of the stages of planning, implementation, and monitoring; and (2) it will orient	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	participants to work they will be doing in Sessions Two and Three. Focus participants' attention to the top of the page. Explain that the whole process of learning begins and ends with the learner. Next point to the first box at the top of the page, "getting to know the student," and explain that the instructor first needs to have an understanding of the student's social-cultural context and to begin to establish rapport with the student before conducting a "needs assessment." Briefly examine bulleted items. Explain that the interim task assignment for Session One reflects a key component in any learner-centered needs assessment: learning about the student as a whole person and understanding the student's goals *and* resources. Participants will develop a needs assessment later in Session Two. Direct participants to the remaining three boxes: objectives, learning activities and student support, and monitoring. Briefly discuss each, moving clockwise around the transparency.	
	NOTE: Explain that the first box was covered in Session One and in the Interim Task Assignment. The items in the remaining four boxes will be highlighted in Sessions Two and Three. Session Two will concentrate on two boxes — needs assessment and objectives — whereas Session Three will focus on the learning activities and monitoring phases. In Session Three, participants will look at some methods, tools, and resources for working with students with learning difficulties.	
H-23a-d	The next three handouts (H-23-b, H-23-c, H-23-d) present variations on the process described in H-23-a (T-M-a) that account for adults who may have learning difficulties or disabilities. In order to engage participants in visualizing these illustrations as you explain them, have them break into their small groups again. Each group will represent one box on the diagram; if needed, one group can represent the "student" at the top of the page. Illustrate the flow around the diagram by tossing a beach ball (or other lightweight ball) to each point in the circle. Literally and symbolically, in this case, the student starts the ball rolling in this process.	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	Wherever the ball lands, it's still his or her ball. Have each group toss the ball clockwise around to the corresponding group as you describe each element in this cycle.	
	An alternative approach is to have each group stand and/or wave their arms (like a "wave" at a football game) as you describe each part of the process. Whichever method you choose, point out to participants that it represents use of multi-sensory (e.g., visual, tactile-kinesthetic) modalities.	
T-M-b	Direct participants to each variation on the diagram as you project them on the overhead projector. Project T-M-b (H-23-b) and point to the addition of a stage called "targeting difficulties." Explain that during any one of the stages represented, either initially through a needs assessment or through monitoring of the instructional process, a teacher may determine that targeting strengths and needs is necessary. With transparency pen, trace the arrow from the "monitoring" box back to the "targeting" phase in the right hand corner of the transparency (H-23-b, T-M-b). Have groups toss the ball around (or form a wave) again as you show the new circuit, with the trainer standing in as the "targeting" phase.	
	NOTE: Explain that targeting difficulties will be covered during Session Three.	
H-23-c, T-M-c	For the third handout and transparency (H-23-c and T-M-c), note the addition of a stage that incorporates the use of external resources (e.g., vocational rehabilitation). Explain that a problematic assessment or persistent difficulties even after you have adapted instruction in a variety of ways (point to the "monitoring" box), a teacher may seek an outside agency for a formal evaluation or diagnosis.	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
H-23-d, T-M-d	The final transparency of this series (H-23-d, T-M-d) shows the complete process, including the addition of four areas of the students' lives that are key to a learner-centered approach: classroom, home, work, and community. Stress the importance of these areas in learner-centered instruction. Note that in addition to learning activities, a student support system is important, one that could include student support groups, counseling, child care, and transportation. Instruction should reflect the strengths that adults demonstrate as well as the needs that they have in the different areas of their lives that fall outside the classroom. Not only do needs in some or all of these areas motivate learning, but these areas will be the place where students test out, use, and refine their learning. Ask the participants to get into their small groups to discuss their students' different social contexts — community, work, and home. If they're having difficulty thinking of examples, ask them to think back to Karen W. from Session One (H-14-a) and to the Adult Roles (H-15) they noted for her. Have participants provide an example or two of how they or their students test out and use their learning.	
	B. Video Demonstration	25 min.

Continuously observing and discussing with students what works and what doesn't are important ways that students and teachers together can discover ways in which students can learn.

NOTE: This portion of the workshop focuses on how teachers can work with students to begin to determine student learning strengths, learning preferences, barriers to learning, and accommodation strategies. This information will form the basis for developing a student-centered plan of instruction.

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MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
H-24	Inform participants that the video they are about to see features interviews with two adults who have learning disabilities. Before showing the video, ask participants to watch for indicators of student learning style preference, goals, strengths, barriers to learning, and instructional and support needs. Discuss H-24, "Video Focus Chart" and answer any questions. H-24 may be used for taking notes on the video. Inform participants that they have 20 minutes for this activity.	
T-N	Show the video through without stopping. In small groups, have participants discuss the video and fill out H-24. Project T-N onto the overhead projector. Have volunteers discuss what their group wrote for H-24 and record responses on T-N. Facilitate a group discussion of the patterns they see emerging and what the implications for instruction might be. Emphasize that participants should look for patterns that indicate learning strength and possible barriers to learning. Encourage participants to be aware of information that is implied or missing. What information would they need to complete the picture, assess the student's needs, and work more effectively with the student? How might this information be obtained?	

NOTE: Again, remind participants that three three-hour sessions are insufficient to prepare them to identify a person as learning disabled. Educators should take care not to label students as learning disabled.

NOTE: The purpose for showing the video is to provide additional information about what it is like to have a learning difficulty or disability, to provide a common base to work from for the upcoming needs assessment exercise, and for the two individuals highlighted in the video to serve as reference points for the trainer and participants.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	C. Needs Assessment	45 min.

Needs assessments can be built around teacher and program needs (what might be called an organization-based needs assessment) or they can be built around the needs of adult learners (what might be called a consumer-based needs assessment). The goal of this section of the workshop is to ready participants to develop and participate in a consumer-oriented, learner-based needs assessment.

Begin this section by observing that, like business, education and social service providers are starting to develop a customer orientation — involving consumers (learners) and producers (teachers) in the planning process. The goal of this process in business is *customization* — tailoring products and services to meet the needs of customers and involving users to avoid unworkable design problems. Ask participants if they have had any experience with such approaches. If not, provide an example of consumer involvement (e.g., focus groups and one-on-one interviews to get ideas for product development; customer satisfaction surveys by credit card companies — referred to in the business world as "customer listening"). Inform participants that the needs assessment they will conduct is learner-centered and aims at customizing approaches to address learner needs and improve learning outcomes.

H-25a-c,
T-M-a

Refer participants back to the transparency (T-M-a), the first flow chart on the instructional process. Inform participants that since their students are not present, the interview that they conducted for the first interim task — as well as the information they compiled in the student profile and their knowledge of their student — will provide the base for the needs assessment. (If any participants are new, they should select a student whom they know a good deal about or they may choose one of the learners from the video.) Direct their attention to H-25a-c. Inform participants that H-25a-b is a format that they can choose to use or modify in their actual work and that H-25-c is an adaptation

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	of H-25a-b for use in the workshop. Ask the participants to take a minute to review H-25a-b. Respond to any questions. Have the participants take 10 minutes to fill out H-25-c, with the trainer making himself or herself available for assistance. After the 10 minutes have elapsed, the trainer should ask the participants to work in their small groups for 15 minutes. Now each participant should present a brief synthesis of his or her needs assessment. After each participant has presented, the group should select one assessment to present to the entire workshop that particularly reflects a student-centered approach. (The trainer should inform participants when 10 minutes are up). The trainer should conclude this exercise by having a representative from each group present his or her group's example, suggesting how this assessment embodies customization to address the particular strengths, needs, and goals of an adult learner. If time permits, the trainer should facilitate a discussion on how to put into practice this approach to needs assessment. Explain to participants that if they have time during the next interim task, they may conduct a needs assessment with their student using the model they worked from today.	

The purposes of this exercise are threefold:

(1) It may improve the needs assessment.

(2) It underscores and helps participants internalize the fact that teachers and students have different perspectives.

(3) It will encourage participants to reflect on needs assessments from a learner-centered perspective.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	V. Interim Task Assignment	10 min.
H-26a-c, H-27a-g	Direct participants' attention to the Interim Task Assignment packet for Session Two, H-26a-c, and H-27a-g, a "Tool Kit" of instructional strategies. Go over the instructions on the first page (H-26-a) and make sure all participants know what is expected of them. Answer any questions. Remind participants that they will need to bring materials from Sessions One and Two with them to Session Three.	

NOTE: Give the following cautions to participants:

- **One month is a short period of time to expect to see visible changes, and the adaptive strategies participants try out with their students may not bear fruit in this brief period.**
- **There are no quick fixes when you are dealing with adults with learning difficulties or learning disabilities. Remember that some learning problems are more difficult to deal with than others and that teachers may need to find out more about the student in order to work with him or her effectively.**

H-27a-g, R-2*, R-3

In addition to the "Tool Kit" (H-27) in their Interim Task Assignment packet, ask participants to read R-3, Mary Beth Bingman's paper, *Learning Differently: Meeting the Needs of Adults with Learning Disabilities.* Remind them that they may also want to reread R-2, the chapter from Sally Smith's book, *Succeeding Against the Odds.* Explain that these readings, along with the Tool Kit, will provide some general background information that may help participants in working with their students and completing their interim task.

By this time in the workshop, participants have had two experiences designed to enhance their understanding of students who learn differently:

* "R" = "Supplementary Reading"

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	(1) Interim Task 1 focused on the student as a whole person. It provided an opportunity to reflect on the strengths that adults demonstrate as well as the different needs they have that fall outside the classroom.	
	(2) The needs assessment focused on learner-centered approaches to prioritizing goals and general needs.	
	By now participants should be ready to start modifying their approach to teaching in a reflective and learner-centered manner. Interim Task 2 will provide an opportunity to practice adaptive instructional strategies. Session Three will provide participants with an opportunity to obtain feedback and to reflect on those strategies.	
	VI. Evaluation and Wrap-Up	5 min.
H-28a-d	A. Session Evaluation	
	Ask participants to complete the Evaluation Form for Session Two (H-28a-d). Be sure to allow sufficient time for participants to complete it. Then collect the form, analyze the results, and use them as a basis for planning Session Three.	
	B. Thank participants for their time and effort. Remind them of Session Three and give time and place, if known.	

TRAINER NOTES

SESSION THREE

ERIC

BEFORE SESSION THREE

The following tasks should be completed *before* Session Three of the workshop:

- ☐ **Send Notice of Session Three** (H-29) to Session One and Two participants only. This notice should include a reminder that participants should bring their entire handout packets from Session Two with them to Session Three, especially the Interim Task Assignment. Remind them to complete the assignment.

- ☐ **Review sign-in sheet from Session Two** to verify attendance.

- ☐ **Duplicate all handouts for Session Three** (H-30 through H-41) and arrange them into packets. Also duplicate a few extra sets of handouts for Session One (H-3 through H-17) and Session Two (H-19 through H-27) for those participants who forget to bring theirs to Session Three.

- ☐ **Make extra copies of handout H-31.**

- ☐ **Prepare transparencies** from all of the Transparency Masters provided for Session Three (T-O through T-V).

- ☐ **Check equipment** (VHS players and monitors, and overhead projector) to make sure it is working properly. Check screen size and readability of print on screen.

- ☐ **Arrange for a place to hold Session Three;** make sure it has sufficient space and movable chairs for break-out sessions.

- ☐ **Arrange for any refreshments** that will be available.

- ☐ **Obtain name tags** for participants.

- ☐ **Read the Trainer's Notes for Session Three,** pages 42-53. **Review** handouts H-30 through H-40, transparencies T-O through T-V, and Trainer Supplement pages 70-71.

TRAINER NOTES: SESSION THREE

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	I. Introduction/Workshop Overview	15 min.
	A. Welcome Participants	
	Welcome participants. There should not be any newcomers (if they missed Sessions One and Two, they will be too far behind to catch up in this workshop).	
H-30*, T-O*	Direct participants' attention to H-30 and display T-O. Go over the agenda and the session objectives. Explain that this is the third and final session in this workshop series. Answer any questions.	

Have participants form small groups of four to six based on their areas of teaching (e.g., ESL, ABE). Explain that participants will collaborate on planning for learning and refining instructional strategies in Session Three. (Do not separate teachers from tutors.) Suggest that the groups they form in Session Three can serve as a model or a base for support groups they may form in their individual programs.

NOTE: Once they have formed their small groups, ask participants to choose a partner (probably the person next to them) whom they will work with. Pairs should switch off roles from one activity to the next (e.g., the person playing a student should play a teacher in the next activity). There may be an uneven number of participants so that one person cannot be paired. When that is the case, participants may form a triad. In a triad, two people should act as students.

B. Activity: Person Search Revisited

H-31

As was the case for Sessions One and Two, a scavenger hunt will be conducted to open up Session Three. The manner in which the scavenger hunt will be conducted will vary depending on the recommendations made by participants when they

* "H" = "Handout," "T" = "Transparency"

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

processed the scavenger hunt activity in Session Two and suggested ways of accommodating their learning differences. Distribute loose copies of the Person Search (H-31). Give participants 10 minutes to complete the activity.

NOTE: The items on this new list have been adapted to tie in with the themes of Session Three.

Once participants have completed the activity, briefly explain the reasoning behind the questions that were included (e.g., they tied in with the themes to be covered in Session Three: reflective practice, accessing resources, collaboration, monitoring and adapting instructional strategies). Did participants conduct this exercise differently from the scavenger hunts in Sessions One and Two? If they chose to modify the format used in Session One and Session Two, how did their modifications affect the way they approached the activity this time? Ask participants for feedback on the processing of the three activities.

II. The Reflective Practitioner: Teacher Research and Collaboration — 20 min.

H-32, H-33, H-34

The purpose of this section is to help participants understand the processes involved in reflectively modifying their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities. The section builds upon three interrelated concepts: (1) the reflective practitioner, (2) the teacher as researcher, and (3) collaborative research. These concepts are briefly described at the top of H-32, H-33, and H-34, and are discussed more extensively in the trainer supplement on page 71.

A. The Reflective Practitioner

H-32, Blank Transparency

Direct participants' attention to H-32, which provides a short description of reflective practice. Ask participants to take five minutes to read the description of reflective practice and to discuss with a partner the question at the bottom of H-32. State that you will be available to answer questions.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	When the five minutes have elapsed, ask participants to suggest characteristics of reflective practice. Write their responses down on a blank transparency. Synthesize their responses by suggesting that reflective practitioners demonstrate the ability to: evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor the use of appropriate tools.	
	B. The Teacher as Researcher	
H-33	Direct participants' attention to H-33, which provides a short description of action research. Ask participants to read the description of the terms and to discuss the question at the bottom of the page. When the five minutes have elapsed, ask participants for examples of how they acted as researchers when as teachers and tutors, they collected, assessed, and acted on data about the outcomes of their teaching.	
	C. Collaborative Research	
H-34	Direct participants' attention to H-34, which provides a short description of collaborative research. Ask participants to read the description and to discuss with their partner the question at the bottom of the page. When the five minutes have elapsed, ask participants to meet in their small groups for five minutes to briefly explore ways that they can work with students to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their teaching.	

NOTE: Indicate to participants that the remainder of Session Three models these three components of reflective practice in three ways: (1) They will be working in teams (one person takes on the learner role and the other acts as the teacher); (2) They will be working with people with similar ideas; and (3) They will continue to explore how to keep trying out, adapting, and monitoring strategies for learners with learning difficulties.

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MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
H-23a-d. T-Ma-d	**NOTE: At various points during the discussion in Session Three, the trainer may find it necessary to refer back to the flow charts (H-23a-d) introduced in Session Two. Have transparencies (T-Ma-d) on hand to reorient participants to the concepts. Another option would be to draw the diagrams on the flip chart and tape the pages to the wall.**	
	III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task Assignment	35 min.
H-26a-b	Direct Participants' attention to H-26a-b, their interim task assignment packets from Session Two. Participants should have completed this packet and brought it with them to Session Three. Have additional packets on hand for participants who have forgotten their packets. Explain that the purpose of Interim Task Assignment 2 was to get participants started in developing strategies for working with students who have learning difficulties. Session Three builds on that work by targeting student needs, adapting teaching, and developing strategies for monitoring the outcomes of their adapted teaching.	
	Reiterate that one month does not provide sufficient time for them to achieve their goals. Participants and their students will need to monitor their efforts on an ongoing basis — beyond the life of this workshop series.	
H-26-b, H-35, T-P, Transparency Pens	Participants will now work in their small groups (ESL or ABE teachers and volunteer instructors) to share and discuss the results of their interim task assignments. Direct participants' attention to H-35. Explain each step of the small group task and answer any questions. Distribute one copy of the Interim Task Assignment Planning Guide (H-26-b in Session Two handouts) and transparency pens to each group. Clearly state that participants should share information they recorded on their planning guide and choose one case to present before the large group. Indicate to participants that this exercise contains elements of collaborative inquiry.	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	Inform the groups that you will be available to provide assistance while they are working. Circulate among the groups, listening to the participants' sharing; offer assistance as necessary. Monitor the progress of the groups, moving them along and encouraging them to fill out their transparencies for the presentation to the large group.	
	NOTE: Allow 25 minutes for this activity. When 10 minutes remain in the time allotted, make an announcement to the groups to keep the participants on task. Each group representative will have approximately two minutes to present findings from the group, depending on the total number of small groups.	
	BREAK	15 min.
	IV. Planning for Learning	40 min.
	A. Targeting Areas of Need	5 min.
	The interim task involved a preliminary effort at adapting instruction. We will now build on work you have done to simulate and model some of the steps necessary to adapt teaching in a reflective, collaborative, and systematic manner. The model involves: (1) establishing a working relationship with the learner as a whole person (as exemplified in Interim Task 1); (2) conducting a learner-centered needs assessment (explored in Session Two); (3) targeting needs and strengths (to be done below); (4) planning (to be done below); (5) implementing the plan (initiated during the second interim task); (6) monitoring and evaluating efforts; and (7) refining approaches if necessary.	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

NOTE FOR ESL INSTRUCTORS: Difficulties that are connected with mastering a new language as an adult can be confused with learning difficulties. Conversely, learning difficulties may be masked by what seems to be the simple problem of learning a new language. Two steps can be taken to avoid confounding a learning problem and an ESL-related problem: (1) evaluate needs in the learner's native language; and (2) ask the learner questions to find out whether or not he or she experiences the same problem in settings where the individual uses his or her native language.

Once teachers and tutors have done a needs assessment, they may find it useful to work with students to target areas of strength and needs. Suggest to participants the sources of information they can use for targeting:

- Student self-reporting
- Teacher observations
- Developing an observational tool
- Adapting a screening tool (e.g., Smith, Bingman)
- Employing a screening tool (but *only* after one has been trained on using that tool)
- An evaluation by a learning disabilities specialist

H-36a-b, T-Q, T-R

Targeting can be broad or specific. Examples of broad-based targeting may be to look at learning styles in the most general areas of strength and difficulty (e.g., visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, organizational, social, and emotional). More specific targeting may break down these broad areas into narrower ones. Draw participants' attention to H-36a-b (T-Q, T-R), which help do this by looking at both: (1) the area of difficulty (H-36-a), and (2) the relationship of the area of difficulty to the input, integration, and output of information (H-36-b). For example, in locating difficulties it may be useful to distinguish between a problem in perceiving visual information (input),

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	retrieving and processing visual information (integration or processing), and communicating visual information (output).	
	B. Developing a Learning Plan	35 min.
	Once teachers and tutors (ideally with students) have targeted needs and strengths, they can develop learning objectives which they can implement in their teaching.	
H-37, T-S	Explain that participants will work in pairs to develop a lesson plan based on the information they collected on their students for the Interim Task Assignments. Direct participants' attention to H-37, Planning for Learning Tool; display T-S. Explain each of the categories and go over the example provided in the first row. Provide additional examples as needed.	
H-38, T-T	Begin by clarifying the distinction between *goals* and *objectives*. An objective is a subgoal, a step towards a goal; the goal is broader; it is the "prize" that the teacher and learner should always keep one eye on. To illustrate this distinction between goals and objectives, display T-T (H-38), which provides a simple graphic to show the process of working toward a goal.	
	Ask participants to take 10 minutes to begin to fill in the chart individually for the student they chose for the interim task. Have them get into their pairs to discuss one student and work on their lesson plan, filling in the chart more completely. They can flip a coin (or choose some other method) to decide whose student they will work on in refining their learning plan. Explain the importance of collaboration and the blending of perspectives in completing this activity.	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES

Direct participants to play out teacher-student roles as they develop the learning plan. In this student-teacher collaborative activity, what input can/should the student provide to make this a workable plan? One person in the pair should keep the student's perspective in mind. How can the teacher incorporate learner needs and strengths in developing this plan? The person playing the teacher should adopt the teacher's perspective.

Participants will have 15 minutes to develop and discuss their learning plan. Explain that they will further discuss and report their findings in small groups during the next activity on monitoring instruction.

You should now be approximatey two hours into the workshop.

V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy 25 min.

Monitoring is critical to making sure that: (a) plans are being implemented appropriately and (b) that implementation is achieving the intended objectives. Monitoring is a form of collaborative research that should be designed during the planning phase. This section of the workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to briefly design, examine, and reflect on monitoring strategies.

H-39, T-U

Participants should work in the same pairs to explore monitoring strategies that can be used to assess the plan they just developed. Direct their attention to H-39, "From Needs Assessment to Monitoring to Goals" which locates the development of a monitoring plan and monitoring within the overall context of moving from needs assessments to goals (refer to H-38). Display T-U and briefly explain each box in the illustration. The trainer should explain that this exercise reflects that part of the planning process (box) that involves this development of a monitoring strategy. (This part is highlighted in the box.) They should take 10 minutes

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	for this part and explore monitoring strategies from both the perspective of the teacher and the perspective of the learner.	
	After the 10 minutes have elapsed, ask the participants to move into their groups, where each pair should report on the plan and monitoring strategy that they developed. After group members make suggestions for improvement, the group should select a plan and monitoring strategy to report back to the entire group.	
	One representative from each small group reports out to the large group. After each presentation, ask for comments and questions from the large group. The amount of time allotted to each group's presentation will depend upon the total number of small groups.	
	You may opt to take an optional short break at this point.	
	VI. Accessing and Using Resources	15 min.
	A. Potential Resources	
Flip Chart, Blank Transparency	Ask participants to take a couple of minutes to read H-40 and to think about resources that are available in their community for adults with learning disabilities. Have participants meet in their groups to brainstorm for 10 minutes regarding what resources are available in their community and how they and their students can access them.	
	NOTE: The purpose of this group work is twofold: (1) to enable participants to examine H-40, and (2) to enable participants to explore ways of accessing resources. The trainer should make her/himself available to assist participants in this exercise.	

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MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	VII. How Do You Make It Happen?	10 min.

NOTE: This section is aimed at synthesizing the three sessions in a manner that enables participants to reflect on how to apply key concepts in the day-to-day realities of their work. Doing this requires:

- **Having participants reflect upon and identify the key lessons from the three sessions;**
- **Enabling participants to reflect on how they can apply these lessons in their own work; and**
- **Summarizing salient themes that will be of use to all participants.**

Synthesis also requires acknowledging the different situations in which participants work. Adult educators work in a variety of settings and situations. Some work in states and organizations that have started to address the needs of students with moderate and serious learning difficulties. Others work in states and organizations that are still in the process of developing an awareness of the issues surrounding adults with moderate and serious learning difficulties. Some work in organizations that make it easy to meet with students or to plan or customize curriculum or bring in an outside expert. Others are less fortunately situated.

Begin this section by acknowledging the different realities that participants face. After briefly responding to these realities, ask each group to take five to 10 minutes to discuss the most important lessons of the three sessions and how they can be adapted to their own teaching environments. Circulate among the groups and listen to their comments. When the 10 minutes are up, convene the entire group and tell them that you want to note some areas that they may or may not have discussed in their group.

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	Remind participants of the following four principles:	
	(1) Learner-centered approaches build upon the learner's knowledge and goals: the larger the group, the more important it is to involve the learner in validating plans and monitoring results. While this is best done interactively, it can also be done in writing, by tape, or in some other format.	
	(2) The student brings resources to the classroom — hence the importance of a strengths model. Working from this model makes it easier in large groups to develop accommodations that will facilitate learning.	
	(3) Students can provide support for one another that: — facilitates learning — sustains motivation — sustains self-advocacy — provides a base for continuing support networks. Building teaching around collaborative learning creates time to meet with individuals or groups of students.	
	(4) You are not alone. As reflective practitioners, you can work with students and colleagues to develop, adapt, and evaluate approaches to teaching.	
	VIII. Reflection on Workshop Processes	10 min.
T-V	Using transparency T-V, ask participants to recall the workshop activities of all three sessions and identify either: • Ways the activities correspond to any of the principles asserted about working with adults with learning difficulties. • Ways the activities could have been changed or improved.	
	Explain to participants that this workshop has attempted to model the processes it teaches, in particular a learner-centered approach to working with adults with learning difficulties and learning disabilities.	

MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	TIMES
	NOTE: The purpose of the "reflection" is not for evaluation of the workshop but rather to bring to a conscious level the processes that are modeled in this workshop series. If time is very short, the trainer may elect to present this information, but it is more effective if participants recall the processes.	
	IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up	5 min.
H-41a-d	Thank participants for their time and effort. Distribute Evaluation Form for Session Three (H-41a-d) and ask them to complete the form. If time permits, recall workshop objectives and determine how workshop activities have met those objectives.	

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TRAINER SUPPLEMENTS

ERIC

TRAINER SUPPLEMENTS

SESSION ONE

ERIC

ADULTS FIRST AND LAST

MOTIVATION

Who or what motivates adults to seek further education?

- self (self-esteem)
- self-empowerment
- social networks
- personal goals
- money
- life events
- children
- teacher/mentor

(Implications for instruction: acknowledge the learner's social context and maximize adult learner involvement in all dimensions of the adult learning process)

GOALS

What are some educational goals adults have?

- get job or better job
- help children learn
- get GED or other certificates
- help others
- career change
- earn more money
- independence
- feel good about self

(Implications for instruction: adults know why they are in school and tend to seek immediate application of things they learn)

ATTITUDE TO LEARN

What attitudes do adults bring toward learning?

- fear of failure
- lack of confidence
- frustration
- depends upon past experience

(Implications for instruction: adults need to be shown that they are progressing and that they can learn despite fear of failure or previous negative experiences)

ABILITY

What strengths do adults bring to learning?

- self-discipline
- depends upon attitude and motivation
- better than child's ability because of experiences
- life experience to draw upon
- more mature
- anxious to learn

(Implications for instruction: adults have an extensive reservoir of experiences and skills that they can draw upon)

SOCIAL CONTEXT

What social and cultural factors strongly affect learning?

- time consideration
- feel education must come quickly, no time to waste
- expect to be treated like adults
- culture
- roles
- very busy lives
- social status

(Implications for instruction: education must embrace and connect with the learner's life outside the classroom)

CULTURAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

What types of teaching approaches work best with adults?

- collaborative learning
- peer support
- teacher as facilitator
- self-directed learning
- need feedback
- expect to be treated like adults

(Implications for instruction: education must provide a variety of approaches and settings for adults to choose from to meet their needs)

Journal of Learning Disabilities, 23(2), pp. 74-84

Editor's Comment:

One of the most important issues in the field today relates to the definition of learning disabilities. Professionals and parents have discussed and debated this subject since 1962. In the following article, Dr. Donald Hammill observes that much progress has been made over the years in defining learning disabilities. He concludes that of the currently available definitions, the one developed by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities is the most precise and acceptable. Readers' comments on this critical issue, as "Letters to the Editor" or "Forum" articles, are encouraged and will be printed as space permits.—JLW

On Defining Learning Disabilities: An Emerging Consensus

Donald D. Hammill

This article reviews the efforts made since 1962 to define learning disabilities, provides readers with a clear picture of the current status of such definitions, and recommends that a consensus form around the definition proposed by the NJCLD.

Few topics in the field of learning disabilities have evoked as much interest or controversy as have those relating to the definition of the condition. Beginning in 1962 with Samuel Kirk's first effort to define the term, and continuing to the present, professionals, parents, and governmental agents have tried to develop a valid and widely acceptable definition. This article reviews these efforts, provides readers with a clear picture of the current status of learning disabilities definitions, and recommends that a consensus form around the definition proposed by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD).

First, the distinction must be made between conceptual and operational definitions of learning disabilities. A conceptual definition is a statement that describes learning disabilities theoretically. As such, it is a first step toward the development of an operational definition that can be used in everyday situations to identify people who have learning disabilities. Conceptual definitions are important because one must have a clear idea of what learning disabilities are before one can identify them in individuals. This paper focuses exclusively on conceptual definitions of learning disabilities.

The article has six parts. The first part explains why definitions are important. The second part describes the procedures used to identify the various definitions that are or have been influential in the learning disabilities field. A set of definitional elements (i.e., characteristics on which definitions might differ) is presented in the fourth section. In the fifth part, the definitions are compared according to these definitional elements. The final section is devoted to conclusions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINITIONS IN LEARNING DISABILITIES

According to the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (Stern, 1967), the word *define* means to state the meaning of, to explain the nature or essential qualities of, to determine the boundaries of, or to make clear the form of something. From that perspective, proper definitions become essential if one is ever to know anything fully and completely. Socrates taught that real knowledge can be obtained only through absolute definition; if one cannot define something absolutely, then one does not really *know* what that something is (Stone, 1968). But Socrates also believed that people are inherently incapable of formulating ultimate definitions and therefore can never attain true and complete knowledge of anything. Yet, most of the Socratic dialogues recorded by Plato and Xenophon dealt with his efforts to define diverse terms. Obviously, even though they may be out of our reach, ultimate definitions are vital to pursue because they lead to better, if not total, knowledge of a particular subject.

Precise definitions of handicapping conditions, for example, provide solid rationales for generating theories, formulating hypotheses, classifying disorders, selecting subjects, and communicating with others. Accordingly, study of a field cannot begin in earnest until interested individuals have agreed on the definition of the essential concepts that relate to that field. For example, everyone would immediately agree with the assertion by Socrates that a person could not possibly make a pair of shoes unless he or she first had a definite idea about the nature of shoes. By the same token, it is hard to understand how a professional could successfully identify, diagnose, prescribe treatment for, teach or remediate, motivate, or generally improve the life of a person who has a learning disability without first having a clear and accurate idea of the nature of a learning disability. At the very least, knowledge about the nature and characteristics of learning disabilities is certainly no liability for a professional working in this field.

A widely accepted definition of learning disabilities is essential to the future well-being of our field. Currently, without such a definition, professionals, parents, and legislators are confused, first about who does and does not have a learning disability, and then about whether such a thing as a learning disability ever exists. Because of this confusion, many professionals working in the learning disabilities field recognize the need for reaching a consensus on a definition. In fact, as noted previously, the field has been wrestling with definitional issues since 1962, when Kirk first defined the

term. Since then, we have made steady and considerable progress toward agreement on a definition; evidence of this progress is presented in this article.

IDENTIFYING PROMINENT DEFINITIONS

To establish which definitions have had the greatest influence on our field, 28 recent editions of textbooks that deal with learning disabilities were consulted. These books were generally representative of introductory or methods texts used in teacher training programs. All of the books were published between 1982 and 1989. Nineteen discussed how learning disabilities are or should be defined. The authors whose work includes discussions of definitions and definitional issues are Adelman and Taylor (1983, 1986); Bryan and Bryan (1986); DeRuiter and Wansart (1982); Gearheart and Gearheart (1989); Hallahan, Kauffman, and Lloyd (1985); C. Johnson (1981); D. Johnson and Blalock (1987); S. Johnson and Morasky (1980); Kavale, Forness, and Bender (1987); Kirk and Chalfant (1984); Lerner (1989); Lewis (1986); Lovitt (1989); Mercer (1987); Myers and Hammill (1982); Roswell and Natchez (1989); Siegel and Gold (1982); Sutaria (1985); and Wallace and McLoughlin (1988). These sources refer to a total of 11 different definitions that are prominent today or that experienced some degree of popularity at one time.

THE DEFINITIONS

The 11 definitions are discussed briefly in this section. Each discussion includes a short history of how and why the definition was proposed, the basic ideas incorporated within it, and the degree of influence the definition had on the field.

Kirk's Definition

A learning disability refers to a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school subjects resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional or behavioral disturbances. It is not the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors. (Kirk, 1962, p. 263)

Kirk (1962) offered this definition in the first edition of his popular textbook, *Educating Exceptional Children*. The definition was further sanctioned after the publication of a widely read article by Kirk and Bateman in a 1962 issue of *Exceptional Children*.

According to Kirk's definition, learning disabilities are process problems that affect the language and academic performance of people of all ages. The cause of the problems is centered in either cerebral dysfunction or emotional/behavioral disturbance.

Siegel and Gold (1982) reported that this definition was used at the 1963 meeting wherein the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (now called the Learning Disabilities Association of America) was first organized. According to Sutaria (1985), Kirk no longer considers this definition to be valid. Kirk's current ideas are probably better reflected in the definitions written by the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children (NACHC) (1968) and the United States Office of Education (USOE) (1977). Bateman, also dissatisfied with this definition, advocated a very different version in 1965.

Bateman's Definition

Children who have learning disorders are those who manifest an educationally significant discrepancy between their estimated intellectual potential and actual level of performance related to basic disorders in the learning process, which may or may not be accompanied by demonstrable central nervous dysfunction, and which are not secondary to generalized mental retardation, educational or cultural deprivation, severe emotional disturbance, or sensory loss. (Bateman, 1965, p. 220)

Bateman's definition differed markedly from the one she coauthored with Kirk in 1962: The idea of aptitude-achievement discrepancy was introduced, no statement pertaining to cause was included, the emphasis was on children, and no examples of specific learning disabilities were provided.

According to this definition, learning disabilities are associated with process problems that lead to unspecified difficulties for underachieving children. This definition was worded vaguely and did not gain the level of acceptance obtained by the Kirk definition. Bateman (personal communication, June 20, 1989) soon ceased to advocate this definition and today disagrees with many of its elements.

The National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children Definition

Children with special (specific) learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken and written language. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems that are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or to environmental disadvantage. (NACHC, 1968, p. 34)

The NACHC, a creation of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped within the U.S. Office of Education (USOE), was initially headed by Samuel Kirk. Its first annual report on January 31, 1968, included a definition of learning disabilities (NACHC, 1968). Not surprisingly, this definition was similar conceptually to Kirk's (1962), with three important exceptions: (a) Emotional disturbance was dropped as a stated cause for learning disabilities, (b) the learning disability condition was restricted to children, and (c) thinking disorders were added to language and academic problems as further examples of specific learning disability. Without a doubt, this was the seminal definition of learning disabilities, for it was the basis for the 1977 USOE definition that was incorporated into Public Law 94-142.

The Northwestern University Definition

- Learning disability refers to one or more significant deficits in essential learning processes requiring special education techniques for remediation.
- Children with learning disability generally demonstrate a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement in one or more areas such as spoken, read, or written language, mathematics, and spatial orientation.

primarily the result of sensory, motor, intellectual or emotional handicap, or lack of opportunity to learn.

- Significant deficits are defined in terms of accepted diagnostic procedures in education and psychology.
- Essential learning processes are those currently referred to in behavioral science as involving perception, integration, and expression, either verbal or nonverbal.
- Special education techniques for remediation refers to educational planning based on the diagnostic procedures and results. (Kass & Myklebust, 1969, pp. 378–379)

In an attempt to resolve the problems arising from too many diverse definitions, the USOE funded an Institute for Advanced Study at Northwestern University and charged its 15 participants with preparing a definition of learning disabilities that would be most advantageous for special education. The participants were H.R. Myklebust (Chair), S. Ashcroft, F.X. Blair, J.C. Chalfant, E. Deno, L. Fliegler, P. Hatlen, H. Heller, F. Hewett, C. Kass, S. Kirk, R. Ridgeway, H. Seiznick, J. Taylor, and W. Wolfe. The proceedings of the institute were reported by Kass and Myklebust (1969) in an article in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.

The definition that emerged differed from that of the NACHC in several important ways. First, the idea of aptitude-achievement discrepancy, articulated earlier by Bateman, was inserted into the definition. Second, no cause for learning disabilities was hypothesized. Third, thinking disorders were not listed among the examples of learning disabilities. Fourth, "disorders of spatial orientation" were mentioned for the first and only time in any definition as examples of specific learning disabilities.

This definition may have served as the basis for the development of the 1976 USOE definition. With the exception of the curious inclusion of "spatial orientation" problems, the ideas expressed in the two definitions are identical. The aptitude-achievement discrepancy concept in the institute's definition could have legitimized the inclusion of the IQ-achievement discrepancy formula in the 1976 USOE definition. Also, the conference that developed this definition was called for and funded by the USOE for the express purpose of resolving the definitional issue. At the time, many professionals felt that the reason for the official definition was sought was to help impose a cap on the total number of students being classified as learning disabled. No similar effort was made by the government to define any other conditions specified in P.L. 94-142. It is safe to assume that, when called upon to recommend an official definition years later, someone in the USOE would remember the Northwestern definition.

The CEC/DCLD Definition

A child with learning disabilities is one with adequate mental ability, sensory processes, and emotional stability who has specific deficits in perceptual, integrative, or expressive processes which impair learning efficiency. This includes children who have central nervous system dysfunction which is expressed primarily in impaired efficiency. (Siegel & Gold, 1982, p. 14)

In the late 1960s, a committee of the Division for Children with Learning Disabilities (DCLD), which was a unit within the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), tried its hand at defining learning disabilities. The result of this effort was unique in one important way: The definition did not allow children with learning disabilities to be multihandicapped. That is, regardless of their educational problems, mentally retarded, blind, deaf, and emotionally disturbed children *by definition* could not have learning disabilities. Of the 11 definitions reviewed, only this one specifically rejected the idea that learning disabilities could coexist with other handicapping conditions.

Information on this definition proved to be elusive. It was referred to briefly by Siegel and Gold (1982) and Sutaria (1985), but no details were provided about the authors of the definition or about whether the definition was ever accepted officially by either of the two organizations with which it was associated. Two different dates are used in citations for this definition: Council for Exceptional Children, 1967 and 1971. The 1967 citation refers to an unpublished working definition used by DCLD. The 1971 citation refers to CEC's annual convention papers of that year. A search of the DCLD archives did not locate any information on the definition. Neither could CEC staff find any record of the 1971 information about this definition survives is an indication that it was never widely accepted.

Wepman et al.'s Definition

Specific learning disability, as defined here, refers to those children of any age who demonstrate a substantial deficiency in a particular aspect of academic achievement because of perceptual or perceptual-motor handicaps, regardless of etiology or other contributing factors. The term perceptual as used here relates to those mental (neurological) processes through which the child acquires . . . basic alphabets of sounds and forms. (Wepman, Cruickshank, Deutsch, Morency, & Strother, 1975, p. 306)

The concern that too many diverse types of learning problems were being subsumed under a single label led to the development of at least one highly restrictive definition. In one of the position papers prepared by the National Project on the Classification of Exceptional Children, Wepman et al. (1975) proposed a new definition that limited learning disabilities to perceptual process-based academic problems.

Adelman and Taylor (1983) pointed out that the "elimination of exclusionary clauses and etiological considerations and restriction to perceptual functioning would undoubtedly reduce the types of persons likely to be labeled *learning disabled*" (p. 5). They concluded that to focus exclusively on perceptual correlates might be too limiting. Doubtless they were correct, for this definition also received limited acceptance.

The 1976 U.S. Office of Education Definition

A specific learning disability may be found if a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of several areas: oral expression, written expression, listening comprehension or reading comprehension, basic reading skills, mathematics calculation, mathematics reasoning, or spelling. A "severe discrepancy" is defined to exist when achievement in one or more of the areas falls at or below 50% of the child's expected achievement level, when age and previous educational experiences are taken into consideration. (USOE, 1976, p. 52405)

In the 1976 *Federal Register*, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped within the USOE attempted to improve the

NACHC definition by adding operational diagnostic criteria. The significant component in this definition is the sentence containing the definition of "severe discrepancy" because it led to the development of a formula for calculating a severe discrepancy between intellect and achievement.

Opposition to the formula formed quickly and was heated in tone. Norman and Zigmond (1980) noted that critics attacked the formula for being mathematically unsound, claimed that its use selected students who were different from those being served, and asserted that its existence infringed upon states' rights. Mercer (1987) reported that when the USOE requested feedback, it received 982 mostly negative reactions to the proposed formula. Because of the large number of negative responses, the formula was dropped from later regulations. While some people were opposed to the particular formula proposed, others were opposed in principle to any use of so-called IQ-achievement discrepancy formulas to qualify students as having learning disabilities.

The arguments against the use of discrepancy formulas for identification purposes were probably best made in a position paper written by the Board of Trustees of the Council for Learning Disabilities (1986). The board listed eight substantial reasons for its objections and concluded that discrepancy formulas should not be used. Those reasons included questions about the psychometric adequacy of the test scores that were used in the formulas, and concerns that the formulas actually identified many non-learning-disabled persons while disqualifying many individuals who obviously had learning disabilities.

Though the USOE deleted this formula from its subsequent (1977) definition, many states seized on the idea of aptitude-achievement discrepancy and subsequently designed and implemented their own formulas. Today, the value of these discrepancy formulas is one of the most hotly disputed issues in the field of learning disabilities.

The 1977 U.S. Office of Education Definition

The term "specific learning disability" means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning disabilities which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, or mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (USOE, 1977, p. 65083)

Gearheart and Gearheart (1989) pointed out that during a House subcommittee hearing on P.L. 94-142, concern was expressed regarding the vagueness of the recommended definition of learning disabilities. The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped was instructed to find a better definition and to spell out precisely how children might be identified. Even though an extensive effort was made to build a more specific definition, no consensus was achieved. Adelman and Taylor (1986) reported that, in the end, a compromise was worked out by the NACHC. The 1968 NACHC definition (with a few modifications) was adopted and incorporated into federal legislation in 1969; into P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975; and into the Reauthorization of the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1986. The 1977 date that is so often associated with this particular definition is the year it was published in the *Federal Register*.

In addition to the definition, a set of operational criteria was included in the *Federal Register* (1977) to guide efforts to identify students with learning disabilities. These criteria are curious in that they depart from the definition in several important and surprising ways. First, two prominent components in the federal definition were completely disregarded in the operational criteria. No criteria are provided for operationalizing either the process clause or the central nervous system (CNS) dysfunction component. These omissions probably indicate disagreement among those responsible about how to handle these two controversial elements. Second, the definition includes spelling among the specific learning disabilities, but it is missing in the criteria. Third, the definition implies that learning disabilities can exist at all ages, while the use of the word "children" in the operational criteria seems to restrict the condition to young students. The fact that the identification criteria differ so dramatically from the definition confuses the issue of the nature of learning disabilities and lessens the likelihood that the 1977 USOE definition can serve as *the* definition of learning disabilities.

Hallahan et al. (1985) suggested that this official definition is the most widely accepted today because it is the one under which federal programs are administered and because it has been adopted by most state education agencies. Mercer (1987) and Gearheart and Gearheart (1989) provide particularly comprehensive discussions of the 1977 federal definition and the criteria that accompany it.

Readers should keep in mind that the 1977 USOE definition and its operational criteria were developed for the somewhat limited purpose of guiding funding practices associated with federal school legislation. Consequently, the emphasis is on school-aged children and academic subjects. It is likely that no one ever intended for this definition to serve as a comprehensive theoretical statement about the nature of learning disabilities, to account for all learning disabilities, or to indicate all times during life when they might be present.

The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities Definition

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences. (NJCLD, 1988, p. 1)

The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) is composed of representatives of eight national

organizations that have a major interest in learning disabilities. Member organizations include the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), the Division for Children with Communication Disorders (DCCD), the Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD), the International Reading Association (IRA), the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the Orton Dyslexia Society (ODS). Approximately 225,000 individuals constitute the combined membership of these organizations. Readers interested in learning more about the history and mission of the NJCLD are referred to Abrams' (1987) overview.

Basically, the NJCLD representatives approved of the 1977 USOE definition but felt that it could be improved. In particular, some ambiguities resulting from the discrepancies between the definition and its operational criteria needed to be reconciled. It was also thought that the language of the 1977 definition could be clearer and more specific.

The reasons for these changes were spelled out in a position paper (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1981) and summarized by Hammill, Leigh, McNutt, and Larsen (1981). Briefly, the NJCLD thought an improved definition should (a) reinforce the idea that learning disabilities could exist at all ages, (b) delete the controversial phrase *basic psychological processes*, (c) draw a distinction between learning disabilities and learning problems, and (d) make clear that the "exclusion clause" did not rule out the coexistence of learning disabilities and other handicapping conditions.

After several years of study and debate, the representatives of the NJCLD unanimously approved the definition and in 1981 sent it to their respective organizations for consideration. The definition was subsequently accepted by all the organizations except LDA.

In 1988, the NJCLD modified its earlier definition to reflect the current state of knowledge relative to learning disability and to react to the definition developed by the Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD). The ICLD definition is discussed later in this paper. The revised NJCLD definition distinguished between learning disability and nonverbal disabilities such as those relating to social perception and self-regulatory behavior, reinforced the idea that learning disabilities occurred across the life span, and changed the wording of several points to make them more precise.

To date, ASHA, CLD, DCCD, IRA, NASP, and ODS have voted to adopt the definition; LDA has voted no; DLD has voted to abstain from voting on the issue. Under the rules of the NJCLD, the 1988 definition has secured the necessary number of adoptions and is now the official definition of the NJCLD.

The NJCLD definition, because of its broad support by the professional organizations, and the 1977 USOE definition, because of its official legislative status, are the most widely accepted definitions in use today. They share many elements; in fact, the NJCLD definition is in many ways an extension of the federal effort.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America Definition

> Specific Learning Disabilities is a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration, and/or demonstration of verbal and/or nonverbal abilities. Specific Learning Disabilities exist as a distinct handicapping condition and varies in its manifestations and in degree of severity. Throughout life, the condition can affect self esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and/or daily living activities. (ACLD, 1986, p. 15)

After rejecting the 1981 NJCLD definition, the leaders of the LDA (formerly ACLD) chose to write a definition of their own. This definition and an accompanying rationale appeared in a 1986 issue of *ACLD Newsbriefs*.

It is difficult to determine from that article just what the framers of this definition had in mind. Their definition is in basic agreement with the NJCLD definition, but it differs in two important aspects. First, the definition fails to give any specific examples of the kinds of problems that can be classified as learning disabilities (e.g., problems involving reading, listening, writing, etc.). Instead, the definition refers rather obscurely to learning disabilities as problems of "verbal and/or nonverbal abilities." These terms are clarified in the rationale as follows: "VERBAL OR NONVERBAL ABILITIES: were chosen as inclusive terms to emphasize not only receptive and expressive language problems, but also the conceptual and thinking difficulties, the integrating problems and motoric problems" (ACLD, 1986, p. 15). The unusual punctuation, ambiguous vocabulary, and awkward sentence structure used in the rationale combine to make interpretation very difficult. In addition, readers are left completely in the dark about the meaning of "nonverbal abilities." Does *nonverbal* mean "social skills"? Are problems in math included or excluded? What are "integrating problems"? Did the authors intend to include "motoric problems" among the learning disabilities (e.g., the penmanship problems of students with cerebral palsy)?

The second difference between the LDA definition and most other definitions is the omission in the former of an exclusion clause. Without some sort of statement dealing with the relationship of learning disabilities to other handicapping conditions, one cannot tell whether or not the LDA definition recognizes the multihandicapping nature of learning disabilities. Can learning disabilities coexist with mental retardation, environmental disadvantages, emotional disturbance, and so forth; or does the presence of these conditions eliminate any possibility that a person also can be learning disabled? Neither of these questions is answered by the LDA definition as it is presently worded.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that an earlier, widely distributed draft of the LDA definition was printed in an article titled, "Definition of the Condition of Specific Learning Disabilities." This draft included a sentence that read, "Specific Learning Disabilities exists as a distinct handicapping condition in the presence of average to superior intelligence, adequate sensory motor systems, and adequate learning opportunities" (ACLD, 1985, p. 1). This statement clearly indicates that a person with a learning disability cannot be multihandicapped. However, the sentence was deleted from the definition before final approval by the LDA Board and Delegate Assembly in March 1986. Unfortunately, the draft version containing the sentence has been widely reprinted and

is cited in popular textbooks by Adelman and Taylor (1986), Bryan and Bryan (1986), Gearheart and Gearheart (1989), Hallahan and Kauffman (1988), Lerner (1989), Lovitt (1989), Mercer (1987), and Roswell and Natchez (1989). Not a single textbook that was reviewed for this study included a discussion of the correct LDA definition. The fact that the LDA definition receiving the most public exposure right now is *not* LDA's official statement (and actually is markedly different from it) cannot help but confuse professionals and parents.

While the LDA definition has some good qualities, it is not a serious contender to replace either the NJCLD or the 1977 USOE definition. Its wording is vague in critical areas, which prevents readers from formulating a precise conception of learning disabilities. With the exception of LDA members who read the 1986 *ACLD Newsbriefs*, most professionals and students in training probably know only the draft definition and are not even aware that a considerably different final version exists.

The Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities Definition

Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities, or of social skills. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual and presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction. Even though a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance), with socioenvironmental influences (e.g., cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction, psychogenic factors), and especially attention deficit disorder, all of which may cause learning problems, a learning disability is not the direct result of those conditions or influences. (Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1987, p. 222)

This effort to design an improved definition for learning disabilities was made by the Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD) in 1987. This committee included representatives of 12 agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. The definition, which the committee proposed in a report sent to Congress, is "a modification of" the NJCLD definition (ICLD, 1987, p. 222). The only substantive change that was made to the NJCLD definition was the addition of social skills to the list of specific learning disabilities.

The response to this alteration was swift. While agreeing that a person with a learning disability might also experience social problems, Silver (1988) asserted that "someone with significant difficulties with social skills but without deficits in one or more of the other six areas should not be considered learning disabled" (p. 79). (The six areas referred to by Silver are those spelled out in the 1977 USOE criteria.) Gresham and Elliott (1989) also questioned the desirability of considering social skill deficits to be primary learning disabilities. They further claimed that the evidence for viewing social skill deficits as primary learning disabilities was inconclusive and neither supported nor refuted by research.

The reaction from the NJCLD was more pointed. The role of social skills had been debated by them for years and, for a majority of the representatives, the issue had long been settled. Most of the NJCLD committee members did not view the insertion of "social skills" into its definition as an improvement. This was indicated in an official letter by Stan Dublinske, chairperson of the NJCLD, to Duane Alexander, director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Portions of the March 2, 1988, letter are reproduced below.

. . .The NJCLD was pleased that its 1981 definition provided the basis for the Interagency Committee's proposed definition. However, after considerable discussion of the proposed definition, the member organizations of NJCLD voted 7-1 to support the original NJCLD definition. Of particular concern was the addition of the phrase "or social skills" to the definition.

While the NJCLD does not support addition of the phrase "or social skills" to the definition, we do support efforts to clarify the relationship between learning disability and social learning problems. We recognize that learning disabilities may significantly affect the individual's patterns of social development and interaction, self esteem and activities of daily living. However, the NJCLD does not support the argument that these problems of social and personal adaptation constitute a separate and unique learning disability.

We also are concerned that the designation of social skills as a separate manifestation of learning disability invites the inclusion in the category of individuals with significant psychiatric illness. Such an inclusion will only complicate problems relating to identification, diagnosis and intervention of children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities. (S. Dublinske, personal communication, March 2, 1988)

One should not assume that, because it was developed by a governmental committee, this definition had any broad-based official standing. On the contrary, Gresham and Elliott (1989) pointed out that the Department of Education has not endorsed the proposed definition, for three pragmatic reasons. The Department maintains that including social skills in the definition would (a) require a change in P.L. 94-142, (b) increase confusion concerning eligibility, and (c) increase the number of children classified as learning disabled. The position of the Department of Education is found on page 222 of the ICLD (1987) report. For these and other reasons, this definition will probably never obtain either official status or professional acceptance.

ELEMENTS BY WHICH DEFINITIONS MIGHT BE CONTRASTED

Having identified and described the prominent definitions, the next step was to identify important conceptual elements on which the definitions might differ. Studying of the 11 definitions revealed nine elements that might discriminate among them.

1. Underachievement Determination

All the definitions reviewed adhere to the idea that an individual with learning disabilities is an underachiever. They do this in one of two ways. Some definitions imply by their wording that a state of underachievement exists when a person evidences uneven patterns of development (i.e., a person is appreciably better in some skills/abilities than in others). The authors of these definitions refer to problems in "one or more" abilities, to "specific" rather than general deficits, to "deficiency in a particular problem area," and so forth. This idea is consistent with Gallagher's (1966) reference to "develop-

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[illegible] ence to "discrepancies in growth," to Woodcock's (1984) reference to "intracognitive and intraachievement discrepancies," and to Kirk and Chalfant's (1984) reference to "intraindividual differences." Thus, underachievement can be determined by the study of *intraindividual ability differences*. For example, underachievement (and potential learning disabilities) might be verified by observing that a person is good in reading and relatively poor in math.

Other definitions suggest that underachievement is indicated by the presence of *aptitude-achievement discrepancies*. Here a significant difference between intellectual ability (usually represented by an IQ) and performance in one or more of the learning disability areas is indicative of underachievement. For example, a difference between an IQ and a quotient from a reading test demonstrates underachieving performance and thus the possible presence of a learning disability. Obviously, the use of aptitude-achievement discrepancy is a special application of the intraindividual ability approach.

2. CNS Dysfunction Etiology

Some definitions specify that the cause for the learning disability is known or suspected to be the result of a problem in the central nervous system (CNS). Other definitions are silent on the etiological issue.

3. Process Involvement

Some definitions express the idea that, regardless of the learning disability's cause, its effect is to disrupt the psychological processes that make proficient performance possible in some skill or ability area. Other definitions make no mention of process dysfunction.

4. Being Present Throughout the Life Span

Most definitions imply that learning disabilities can be present at any age. The definitions do this by avoiding language that would lead the reader to think otherwise. Generally, the authors of such definitions begin their statements with, "The [illegible] learning disabilities . . . or, Learning disabilities are . . . ." Other definitions limit learning disabilities to children, especially those of school age, and usually begin with, "Children with learning disabilities . . . ."

5. Specification of Spoken Language Problems as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that spoken language problems (e.g., those involving listening and speaking) can be learning disabilities. Others do not single out spoken language problems.

6. Specification of Academic Problems as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that certain types of academic problems (e.g., those involving reading, writing, spelling, or math) can be learning disabilities; others are silent regarding academic problems.

7. Specification of Conceptual Problems as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that certain types of conceptual problems (e.g., those involving thinking and reasoning) can be learning disabilities. Others do not address the subject of conceptual problems.

8. Specification of Other Conditions as Potential Learning Disabilities

Some definitions specify that problems other than academic, language, or conceptual disorders can be learning disabilities. For instance, problems involving social skills, spatial orientation, integration, or motor abilities are mentioned.

9. Allowance for the Multihandicapping Nature of Learning Disabilities

Three scenarios exist within this element. First, the definitions may clearly indicate that learning disabilities can coexist with other kinds of handicaps (e.g., mental retardation, emotional disturbance, sensory and motor impairment). These definitions generally make the distinction between primary and secondary problems. For example, in a blind child, the inability to read print is *primarily* the result of the inability to see. This same child could have a spoken language learning disability that was *secondary* to the blindness (i.e., it coexists with the blindness).

Second, definitions can have exclusionary clauses that are worded to eliminate the coexistence of learning disabilities with other handicapping conditions. According to these definitions, it would be impossible for a mentally retarded person to have a learning disability. Third, some definitions are silent on the issue.

CONTRASTING THE DEFINITIONS

The status of each of the 11 definitions regarding these nine elements was determined by studying the definitions (see Table 1). By comparing entries in the table, one may contrast the conceptual contents of the various definitions.

After documenting the characteristics of the 11 definitions relative to the nine elements, it was a simple matter to, next, compute the percentages of agreement among the definitions and to present these percentages in Table 2. Consider, for example, the definitions of Kirk and Bateman. In Table 1, one can readily see that the two definitions are in agreement on four elements (i.e., they both include a process clause, neither makes mention of thinking disorders, neither offers other examples of learning disabilities, and both adhere to the idea that learning disabilities can coexist with other handicapping conditions). Dividing the number of elements in agreement (four) by the total number of possible elements (nine) results in the percentage of agreement (44%) between the two definitions. The larger the percentage of agreement between two definitions, the greater their conceptual similarity.

Knowing percentages of agreement made it possible to note any clusters among the definitions. By reviewing the percentages reported in Table 2, one will note that only 10 are possible: 0, 11, 22, 33, 44, 56, 67, 78, 89, and 100. Therefore, 67% agreement was arbitrarily ac-

TABLE 1
Status of Definitions Relative to Definitional Elements

Definition	Underachievement determination	CNS dysfunction	Process clause	Life span	Language	Academic	Thinking	Other	Allowance for multihandicapping
	Definitional elements								
Kirk (1962)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Bateman (1965)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
NACHC (1968)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes.
Northwestern (1969)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Spatial Orientation	Yes
CEC/DCLD (1967, 1971)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Wepman et al (1975)	Intraindividual	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	—[a]
USOE (1976)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
USOE (1977)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
NJCLD (1988)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ACLD (1988)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Integration; Motor	—[a]
ICLD (1987)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Social Skills	Yes

[a]Definitions silent on this element.

cepted as the criterion for a strong relationship. This percentage indicates that two definitions agree on six of nine definitional elements. Using this figure as the base, the following definitions were found to be strongly related: 1,3; 1,7; 1.8; 1,9; 1,11; 2,4; 2,5; 2,6; 2,7; 3,7; 3,8; 3,9; 3,11; 4,7; 5,6; 6,7; 7,8; 8,9; 8,11; 9,10; 9,11; 10,11. From these combinations, one can easily gather that definitions 2, 4, 5, and 6 form one cluster and definitions 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 form a second cluster.

The definitions that each cluster comprises are listed in Table 3, along with their status relative to the nine definitional elements. In addition, a composite that shows the status of the cluster relative to the elements is presented. Table 3 also contains the percentages of agreement among the definitions on each element. For example, the first cluster includes four definitions. According to data in Table 3, they all agree on three elements (process clause, life span, thinking); therefore, the percentage of agreement is 100 in those instances. A 75% agreement indicates that three out of the four definitions in Cluster 1 agree on a particular conceptual element. In the two cases where the definitions are split evenly, the percentage of agreement is listed as 50–50. With regard to the "multihandicapping" element in Cluster 1, two definitions held that learning disabilities could coexist with other conditions, one definition presented a view to the contrary, and one was silent on the topic. Since half of the definitions agreed, the agreement recorded was 50%. Agreement of 50% or less was taken to mean that no consensus existed among the definitions in the cluster.

Cluster 1 comprises the definitions proposed by Bateman, Northwestern, CEC/DCLD, and Wepman et al. A composite of the collective ideas expressed in these definitions would read as follows: *Children with learning disabilities suffer from basic disorders in the learning processes that enable a person to achieve.* This definition is painfully obscure and obviously unacceptable. It is easy to see why most professionals moved in the definitional direction indicated by Cluster 2.

The seven definitions that compose Cluster 2 are those of Kirk, NACHC, 1976 USOE, 1977 USOE, NJCLD, LDA, and ICLD. A composite definition based on these ideas would be nearly identical to those of Kirk, the NACHC, the 1977 USOE, and the NJCLD. By comparing the composite in Table 3 with the four definitions, one can note agreement on eight of the nine elements. This represents 89% agreement on critical definitional characteristics.

This cluster can be considered Kirk's legacy to the learning disability definition. His influence, after framing his own definition, on the subsequent NACHC and 1977 USOE definitions was considerable. The NJCLD definition was merely an effort to improve on the 1977 USOE definition; and the more recent ICLD definition is nearly identical in language and thought to the NJCLD definition, with one very important exception—its inclusion of social skills.

TABLE 2
Percentage of Agreement Among the 11 Definitions on the Nine Elements

Definitions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Kirk	—	44	78	56	56	56	67	100	78	56	67
2. Bateman		—	44	67	67	67	78	44	22	0	11
3. NACHC			—	56	56	56	67	78	78	56	67
4. Northwestern				—	33	56	89	56	33	22	33
5. CEC/DCLD					—	67	44	56	33	22	22
6. Wepman et al.						—	67	56	33	22	22
7. 1976 USOE							—	67	44	22	33
8. 1977 USOE								—	78	56	67
9. NJCLD									—	78	89
10. ACLD (LDA)										—	78
11. ICLD											—

TABLE 3
Characteristics of Definitional Clusters

Definitions by number	Underachievement determination	CNS dysfunction	Process clause	Life span	Language	Academic	Thinking	Other	Allows for multidisciplinary
Cluster 1:									
Bateman (1965)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Northwestern (1968)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Spatial Orientation	Yes
CCC/OCLD (1967, 1971)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Waxman et al. (1978)	Intraindividual	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	—[a]
Composite	Aptitude-Achievement Intraindividual	No	Yes	No	No	No/Yes	No	No	Yes
Percentage Agreement	50-50	75	100	100	75	50-50	100	75	50
Cluster 2:									
Kirk (1962)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
NACHC (1968)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
USOE (1976)	Aptitude-Achievement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
USOE (1977)	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
NJCLD (1981)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ACLD (1986)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Integration; Motor	—[a]
ICLD (1987)	Intraindividual	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Social Skills	Yes
Composite	Intraindividual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes/
Percentage Agreement	86	86	57	71	100	100	57	71	86

[a]Definitions silent on this element.

CONCLUSIONS

What can one conclude from this reflection on definitional issues in learning disabilities? Two conclusions seem obvious. First, and contrary to popular opinion, considerable agreement exists today among the definitions and definers. This is both surprising and encouraging. Second, of the current viable definitions, the one by the NJCLD is probably the best descriptive statement about the nature of learning disabilities.

Consensus Is Near

The fact that every important definition of learning disabilities currently enjoying any degree of popularity was found in Cluster 2 suggests that there is consensus in the field. Additional evidence of consensus is found in the relationship among the four definitions that have been developed since 1977 (USOE, NJCLD, LDA, and ICLD). Of these, the most influential definitions are the first two. They were the most frequently mentioned in the 28 texts reviewed for this article. The definitions by LDA and ICLD are recently formulated contenders set forth to correct perceived omissions or to clarify statements in the other two definitions. There can be no question, however, that the four definitions are in fundamental agreement on most issues related to the definition of learning disabilities.

In Table 2, the six percentages of agreement at the lower right (i.e., 78%, 56%, 67%, 78%, 89%, and 78%) represent the relationships among the recent definitions. The mean percentage of agreement is 74. These figures illustrate a strong relationship among the definitions and indicate that consensus is near.

The NJCLD Definition Presently Is the Best

Of the 11 definitions discussed in this paper, only 4 are professionally viable today (i.e., the 1977 USOE, NJCLD, LDA, and ICLD definitions). These definitions were consistently referred to in the 28 textbooks reviewed for this article. The remaining seven definitions have historical value only. Of the four viable ones, the definition written by the NJCLD has the best chance of becoming the consensus definition. This is in part because it has many good attributes, and also because the other definitions have problems that disqualify them as comprehensive statements about learning disabilities.

The main limitation of the 1977 USOE definition is its inclusion of a psychological process clause. Objection to the process clause is based on the term's lack of specificity and the suspicion that it might refer to the once-popular perceptual notions advocated by Frostig, Kephart, Getman, and others during the 1960s. Latter-day process-oriented professionals could make an argument that the current processing theories espoused by Ann Brown, Palincsar, Torgesen, Borkowski, Swanson, and Hallahan are more defensible than earlier versions and thereby deserve some consideration in a learning disability definition. If the new processing theories prove to be valid, useful, and capable of being operationalized, perhaps the NJCLD definition could be amended, or some new definition set forth at a later time. For the time being, however, it seems most

prudent to follow the example of the four currently viable definitions, which play down or delete the psychological process clause. The clause was not operationalized in the identification criteria accompanying the 1977 USOE definition, nor do any of the other three definitions include such a clause.

Another limitation of the 1977 USOE definition is the fact that it is inconsistent with its own operational criteria on several key points (see the earlier discussion of this definition). Because of these inconsistencies, the definition has diminished value as a precise, comprehensive, and descriptive statement about learning disabilities. In addition, the definition makes no mention of thinking disorders, which the other three recent definitions list as an example of a specific learning disability.

The main limitations of the LDA definition are its lack of clarity concerning which disorders constitute learning disabilities and its ambiguity about the multihandicapping nature of learning disabilities. Regrettably, most people's opinions about the LDA definition are based on an early published draft of the definition, which was never approved by LDA. While this unauthorized, and thereby useless, definition has enjoyed a wide distribution, relatively few professionals have encountered LDA's officially endorsed definition in the literature.

The main limitation of the ICLD definition is the inclusion of social skills in the listing of primary learning disabilities. Neither the 1977 USOE definition nor the NJCLD definition specifies social skills as learning disabilities; it is difficult to tell whether the authors of the LDA definition intended social skills to be an example of a specific learning disability. If they considered social skills to be a type of nonverbal ability, they should have stated this clearly instead of listing integration and motor problems as the only examples of nonverbal disabilities. With the USOE and NJCLD definitions omitting social skills, the LDA definition equivocal on the issue, and the Department of Education reluctant to endorse the definition, it is unlikely that the ICLD definition will receive wide acceptance in the years to come.

The NJCLD definition has many advantages, some of which have been referred to in this paper. It is also blessed with few liabilities, which is not the case with the other definitions. The percentages reported in Table 2 show that the NJCLD definition is strongly related to the other three current definitions (i.e., those of the USOE, LDA, and ICLD). It is at once everyone's definition and no one's. It was written by a committee that was the creation of ASHA, CLD, NASP, DLD, IRA, DCCD, LDA, and ODS. The definition is "owned" by the organizations that have officially adopted it and the individuals who have accepted it. This is very different from, and possibly superior to, a definition that is the creation of a particular governmental agency, association, or individual.

The NJCLD never intended to write the perfect definition, only a better one. A study of the definitions discussed in this paper suggests that the committee was successful in its efforts. The NJCLD definition has obtained a high level of acceptance among multiple national associations and individuals and is arguably the best one that is presently available. None of the NJCLD members believe that their definition has settled the issue for all time.

Political realities are such that the NJCLD definition may never replace the 1977 USOE definition in law. But this may not be important. What is important, however, is that professionals and parents unite around one definition so that we can say with assurance, "This is what we mean when we say *learning disabilities*."

For too long, textbook authors, researchers, and teacher educators in the area of learning disabilities have ignored the definitional issue by writing or talking *about* definitions instead of presenting and discussing a definition that they believe can be supported. For example, many textbook authors list, usually without any discussion, two or three definitions of learning disabilities. Often, all of these definitions take conflicting stands on important issues. The authors rarely tell their readers which definition is the most defensible statement about learning disabilities and the one around which they have organized the content of their book.

The evolving consensus on the definition of learning disabilities comes at an opportune time. Many professionals and others who want to cut services for individuals with learning disabilities cite the lack of agreement on the definitional issue as a justification. If professionals, parents, and governmental agents cannot find common ground in defining learning disabilities, then they might not long have a field in which to contest the issue. Without a common frame of reference (which a widely accepted definition provides), we are unable to decide who individuals with learning disabilities are or how they differ from others. Neither can practitioners justify their placement, diagnostic, funding, and treatment practices. The NJCLD definition provides a viable definitional umbrella under which all of us may find shelter. It may serve us well during the rainy days ahead.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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A WORKING DEFINITION
SESSION ONE

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (National Joint Commission on Learning Disabilities definition, 1988).

ALICIA S.

Alicia S. is a 28-year-old migrant farmworker from Mexico. Each year she, her husband Carlos, and their three young children follow the crops from the San Joaquin Valley near Sacramento, California, up to Yakima Valley in Washington, much as she had done with her parents and her five brothers when she was a child. She has been picking sweet potatoes and apples since she was 13, and she is accustomed to spending up to 12 hours in the fields each day, as she only gets paid for what she picks. Alicia loves playing the guitar, making flower arrangements, and playing with her children, but she seldom has time to devote to these activities.

Alicia's school experiences were characterized by a long list of temporary school placements in Mexico and the United States. The frequent moves and short stays made it difficult for Alicia to form friendships or to become proficient in English or to keep up with her schoolwork. Teachers found her to be shy and hesitant in class and seldom called on her. She found it difficult to understand basic conversation in English or more complex concepts in Spanish. While she could recite the Spanish and English alphabets and write a few words in Spanish, she did not learn to write a full sentence in either language.

When she was a young teenager, Alicia's parents allowed her to work in the fields. Relieved to be removed finally from the stress of the school environment, she willingly dropped out of the eighth grade and never returned to school. Now, 15 years later, as she sees her own children in school and picking up English very well, Alicia wants to try to learn again. She and her husband have grown weary of the travel, sleeping in their run-down car, and of having to pull their children from school so often. Alicia wants her children to learn to speak and write English fluently, and she would like to teach them how to play the guitar. Eventually, Alicia would like to settle out and stay in the Sacramento Valley, where she hopes to one day have her own flower shop.

ALTERNATIVE CASE STUDY: RON WHITE

For 25 years I felt like a nobody because I could not read or spell correctly. I felt ashamed when friends of mine who had been in college talked over my head. But when it came to remodeling kitchens and bathrooms, I was a wizard. This seemed so simple for me to do, but a book was the heaviest tool for me to pick up unless someone read it to me.

In public school in Boston I had such a hard time reading that I lost all interest except in cabinet-making and math, which I could do with no problem. Because of poor reading I was placed in a special class beginning in the middle of the fourth grade, but this did nothing for my reading. From the fourth grade on until the ninth grade I got no help in reading but continued to have great attendance and to go to woodworking classes to make furniture for the teachers. In my ninth grade year, I was introduced to a teacher named Emerson Dicke who took a special interest in trying to find out what my problems in reading were. But I only had him for one year and then I quit school at sixteen.

After I quit school, I worked in a hardware store. When I was nineteen, I joined the U.S. Navy. After my discharge two years later I returned to work in the hardware store. In August of 1970 I was hired to operate a bus for the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) in Boston. In the years after I left school, I would listen to the radio news stations and hear how many drop-outs were still coming from the Boston school system and how low the reading, writing and math scores were. Because of this, I thought I had no chance of getting help if I returned to school. Also, I would drive public school students on my local bus run, and all they would talk about was how they could skip classes. I realized from their talk that there was little learning going on in the schools and this discouraged me.

In my job I advanced to starter and then inspector, assistant station master and night/weekend supervisor. The night/weekend supervisor's job involved a lot of paperwork, such as accident reports, discipline reports and service interruption reports. This was my downfall because of my reading and spelling, not my ability to complete the physical and management tasks of the job. I relied on my sister and later my sister-in-law to complete all the paperwork needed. I would dictate the reports to them on the phone. Then I would leave the office to check service and sneak over to their homes to pick up the reports and put them in the next day's mail.

But then I was assigned to fill in as acting assistant station master downtown and I knew I couldn't escape from that office to pick up paperwork at my sister-in-law's. I had sleepless nights thinking about this job, knowing that my secret would be out. I turned this job down and rebid for a trolley driver's job immediately. I took that job, which was a four-step self-demotion, because I felt comfortable there. I then rebid a job as a car cleaner, which was another step down, so I could get

away from people who knew I had turned down the assistant station master's job and were wondering why.

At this low point in my life, I got involved with drugs. My involvement lasted for three and a half years. Then friends of mine took an interest in me and showed me a new way of life through the twelve-step program of Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

The turning point that caused me to return to education occurred when I was attending AA. When I was asked to read from the twelve-step book, my whole body would turn into a puddle of sweat from nerves so I would refuse to read and would pass the book on. Then one Friday night a young man tried to read and two men behind me began to laugh at his reading. This angered me tremendously. Then my sponsor told me that the next Friday night I would have to read. I did not show up that Friday night and I discussed my reading problem with my sponsor that weekend. He suggested that I go to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Mass. Rehab sent me to Suzanne Perlman, a psychologist, to be tested. She found me to be dyslexic and recommended a one-to-one tutor.

I started on one-to-one tutoring with Carolyn Buell Kidder on March 23, 1988. Carolyn's tutoring in phonics dramatically improved my reading. My self-confidence has improved so that now I am able to talk about my problem in an effort to help others with dyslexia. I received a promotion in June 1988 to Operations Foreman: Light Rail Department. As a result of my new abilities, I do not have to involve my sister-in-law anymore in spelling almost every word for me at work. Also, I can now read the special bulletins I receive at work on safety and equipment by myself. I do not have to ask someone else at work to read them for me.

On September 28, 1988 I returned to school on a part-time basis at night to earn a high school diploma. In January of 1989 I switched to full-time nights. I particularily enjoyed the science and history courses due to the fact that we had wonderful teachers. My grades were all 90 or above. This fall I am taking a writing course and I am also still attending reading tutoring in phonics, which is a great help with the writing course.

When the writing course ends in December, I will have completed all the requirements for my high school diploma. I will receive the diploma in June at the graduation ceremonies. In the near future I plan to attend a college that helps people with learning disabilities such as dyslexia. My job prospects are unlimited as long as I continue in higher education. Also, in the near future I will read aloud from the twelve-step book at the AA meeting which I have never returned to since that Friday night when the two men laughed at the poor reader. I am also going to speak at that meeting. I will say: "We are here to help each other, not to laugh at each other." I will speak about dyslexia and how I have hid behind it for years. Now I am not ashamed to talk about it or read aloud, thanks to the fellowship of NA and the teachers who taught me to read.

SCREENING: SOME CAUTIONARY NOTES

Participants may ask about screening. The following will provide you with background to respond to their questions. Increasingly, adult education programs are using screening instruments to identify learning problems. Although they can be useful, they also can be misused.

When appropriate training has been provided, an instructor or program may decide to employ a screening tool as a result of:

- An interview with an adult learner;
- Self-identification by the learner; or
- Problems identified by the teacher.

Screening may be introduced after a needs assessment (e.g., if the student identifies persistent and pervasive problems in the memory area) or when monitoring of student progress suggests that things are not working.

Screening can be seen as one part of a step-by-step referral process. It is a step between the needs assessments and teacher-student targeting that should be done for all students and a step before formal evaluation by a professional. Such evaluation can be expensive, time-consuming, and is unnecessary for many students. When there is awareness of its limits, screening can help students and teachers further target specific learning needs, and according to Jovita Ross-Gordon, "identify alternative instructional strategies for students who may or may not have specific learning disabilities" (Ross-Gordon, 1989, p. 26). In doing so, however, teachers and students should understand "the major risk" that Ross-Gordon identified: **"(T)he use of such screening instruments" for diagnostic purposes is "inappropriate to diagnose learning disabilities."** (See excerpt from the Ross-Gordon paper in the Supplementary Readings section, R-4.)

To make these concepts clear, the trainer should make the following points:

- **Screening is not a formal assessment of diagnosis.** Remind participants that formal assessment is to be conducted by the "outside professional."

- **Screening may suggest a range of learning problems that a professional evaluation could identify as mild, moderate, or extreme.** (In the Supplementary Readings section, R-6, we have included a copy of a screening tool, *Cooper Screening of Information Processing,* that has been employed successfully in a number of adult literacy programs. Explain that the full instrument is included in the packet to show participants what it looks like.

- **Teachers should not use a screening instrument unless trained in the use of the instrument.**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE, ACTION RESEARCH, AND COLLABORATION

Reflective Teaching. Reflective practice is a term developed by Donald Schon (1983). The term describes the competence and artistry embedded in "reflection in action." Reflective practitioners think about what they are doing while they are doing it and adapt their approaches in situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict. Reflective practice contrasts with what are sometimes called technical or technical-rational approaches that view practice as the fixed application of technical approaches or the deductive application of school-learned knowledge to the problems of practice. Reflective teachers are researchers and artists; they demonstrate the ability to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their approaches.

The Teacher as Researcher. Action research is a term used to describe research — the observation, comparison, contrast, and reflection — taking place when researchers engage in social practice. It is based on the premise that researchers can make useful observations and gain useful insights while engaging in action. When done effectively, action researchers reflect both on what they see and on how their own interpretive perspective (their point of view, sources of theory, and values) affect their understanding of what they see. Action research can be applied to the work that teachers do when they observe, compare, contrast, and reflect on what happens in the classroom — not as an outside participant observer but as an "unusually observant participant who deliberates inside the scene of action" (Erickson, 1986, p. 157). Action research is a necessary tool of the reflective practitioner.

Collaborative Research. Collaborative research is a term used to describe research in which participants play a central role from the design of research through its implementation and analysis. Collaborative research has been applied to endeavors in education, where: (1) researchers and school practitioners work together on the design, implementation, and evaluation of research; (2) the research focuses on "real world" as well as theoretical problems; (3) both groups gain in understanding and mutual respect; and (4) their effort concerns the interests of both the researcher (research) and practitioners (development/implementation) (Oakes, Hare, Sirotnik, 1986). Collaborative research can be applied in learner-centered adult education to situations where students and teachers, as well as students (alone) and teachers (alone) meet to design, implement, and reflect on research. Collaborative research expands the knowledge and perspective that teachers can bring to their work as action researchers.

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TRAINER SUPPLEMENTS

SESSION THREE

HANDOUT MASTERS

ERIC

HANDOUTS

SESSION ONE

You Are Invited to Attend
A Free, Three-Session Workshop on

LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

Date of Session 1: _____ Time: _____

Date of Session 2: _____ Time: _____

Date of Session 3: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Trainers: _____

Sponsors: _____

- -

Please complete and return this portion to: _____

_____

_____

☐ Yes, I would like to attend the three-session workshop on *Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches*. I agree to attend all sessions. If I am accepted, please send me a questionnaire. Send to:

Name: _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

Job Title: _____

Address: _____

_____
(City) (State) (Zip)

LEARNING DISABILITIES WORKSHOP: PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

If you plan to attend the workshop on Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches, please complete this form and send it to the address at the right by _____.
(date)

Thank you! We look forward to seeing you at the workshop.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Please check the appropriate boxes below.

1. Are you teaching now? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Are you a volunteer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. If "yes," what subject(s) do you currently teach?

   ☐ Adult Basic Education

   ☐ English as a Second Language

   ☐ Other, please specify: _____

   _____

4. In which of the following settings do you currently teach? Check all that apply.

   ☐ Classroom

   ☐ Learning Laboratory

   ☐ One-on-One Tutoring

   ☐ Computerized Instruction

   ☐ Distance Learning

   ☐ Other, please specify: _____

   _____

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

5. Please indicate the number of years you have taught each of the groups listed below. (If you have taught for less than one year, write "1".)

   ☐ Adults

   ☐ High School/Junior High School

   ☐ Elementary/Preschool Students

6. What kind of instructor training have you received? Check all that apply.

   ☐ Credential program in adult education

   ☐ College courses on adult education

   ☐ Workshops/conferences on adult education

   ☐ Credential program in elementary/secondary education

   ☐ College courses on elementary/secondary education

   ☐ Workshops/conferences on elementary/secondary education

7. How informed are you about the following topics? Circle the number that best rates your knowledge of each topic.

	Completely un-informed			Extremely well-informed
Motivating Students	1	2	3	4
Students' Self-Esteem	1	2	3	4
Learning Styles	1	2	3	4
Metacognition	1	2	3	4
Cooperative Learning	1	2	3	4
Student-Centered Learning	1	2	3	4
Context-Based Learning	1	2	3	4
Education for Social Change	1	2	3	4

Before you come to Session One, have in mind an example of one student you are working with and with whom you would like to be more effective in teaching. You will revisit this student at various points during the workshops, and will work with that individual for interim task assignments.

PERSON SEARCH

1. _____ Someone who has worked in adult education less than 5 years.
2. _____ Someone who has worked in adult education more than 15 years.
3. _____ Recently moved to a new state.
4. _____ Is a teacher of ESL students.
5. _____ Was married within the last year.
6. _____ Changed jobs within the last year.
7. _____ Teaches at a community college.
8. _____ Teaches at the middle/high school level.
9. _____ Teaches at the elementary level.
10. _____ Jogs regularly.
11. _____ Has had a baby within the last year.
12. _____ Is a Chicago Bulls fan.
13. _____ Is a Dallas Cowboys fan.
14. _____ Lives near a beach.
15. _____ Lives near the mountains.
16. _____ Vacationed out of the country in the last year.
17. _____ Is working on an advanced degree.
18. _____ Has been to the White House.
19. _____ Takes public transportation to work.
20. _____ Voted in the last election.
21. _____ Lives in the same town where (s)he grew up.
22. _____ Is a visual learner.
23. _____ Is an auditory learner.
24. _____ Is a tactile/kinesthetic learner.
25. _____ Does not like chocolate ice cream.

LEARNING DISABILITIES
SESSION ONE
AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

AGENDA:

I. Introduction/Workshop Overview
- Icebreaker Activity
- Agenda, Objectives

II. Adults First and Last

III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability
- From Difference to Disability
- A Working Definition

BREAK

IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation

V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person

VI. Interim Task Assignment

VII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation

GLOSSARY

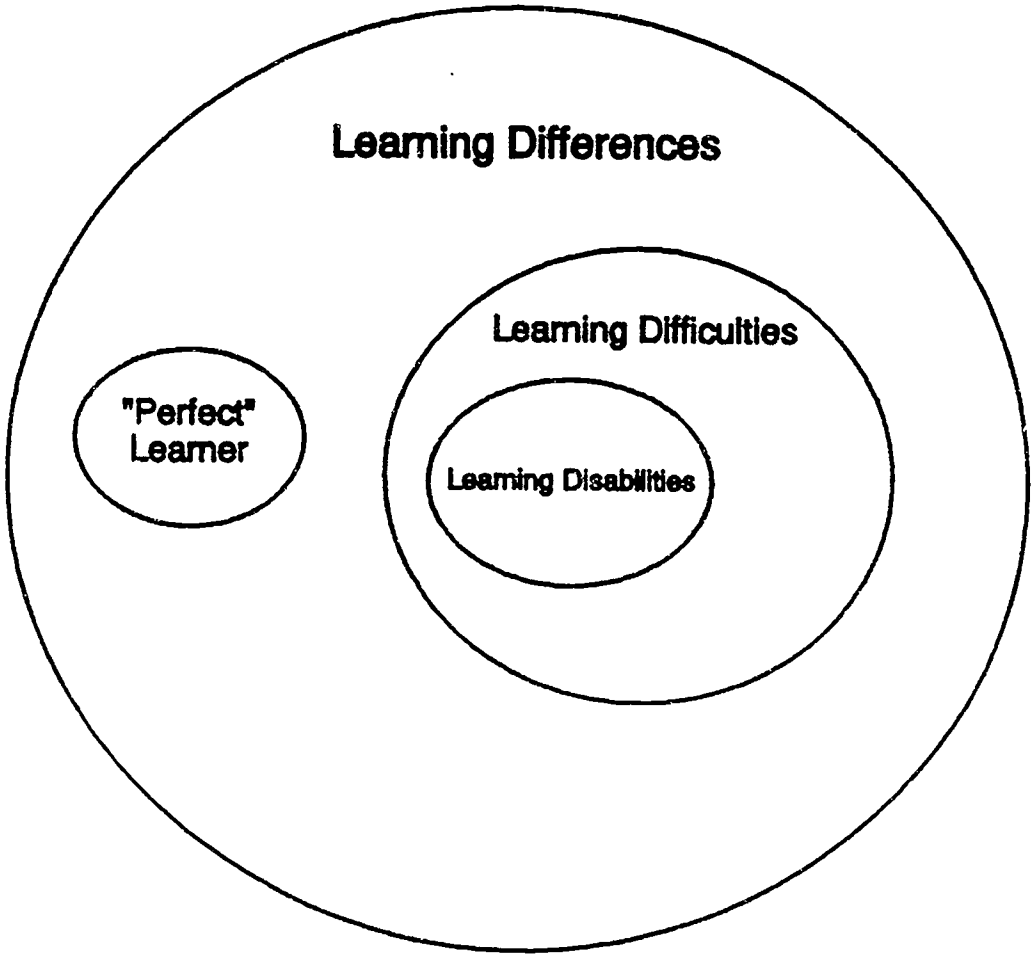
Accommodation	Adjusting approaches and environments to meet particular needs. In the case of learning difficulties and learning disabilities, accommodation refers to the use of learning strengths and adaptive strategies to meet the specific instructional needs of the learner.
Agraphia	Inability to write words or manipulate a writing instrument.
Aphasia	Inability to express oneself through speech, writing, or gestures, or to understand spoken or written language. The impairment can be due to injury or disease of the brain centers.
Assessment	Identifying an individual's level of knowledge, skill, or need through the process of gathering data in order to clarify and verify problems and make decisions.
Auditory Perception	Identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory data received through the ear.
Cultural Competence	Cultural competence refers to the interpersonal skills and attitudes that enable people to appreciate the differences and similarities within and among people and cultures. Culturally competent approaches recognize the cultural grounding of the teacher's views, behavior, and approaches.
Diagnosis	The process of identifying the nature of a situation (e.g., a learning disability).
Dyscalculia	Inability to do simple mathematics.
Dysgraphia	Severe handwriting difficulties often due to poor fine motor coordination.
Dyslexia	Severe reading problem in a person who has adequate vision, hearing, and intelligence. Dyslexia is not attributable to environmental causes or other handicapping conditions but is thought to be related to a dysfunction in the central nervous system.
Input	Taking in information.
Integration	Converting information to meaning.
Learning Difference	Term that represents the fact that people learn differently in ways that include, but can go beyond, learning style.
Learning Difficulty	Term that encompasses problems in learning, some of which may be learning disabilities and some which may not.

Learning Style	People have preferred modes of learning, including auditory, visual, and tactile/kinesthetic.
Linguistically Appropriate	Curriculum, instruction, and interaction which recognize that people use language in different ways based on cultural and personal communication styles, and are also sensitive to the needs of those people for whom English is not a native language.
Memory	Ability to store and retrieve information.
Neuropsychology	Field of study that relates what is known about the functioning of the brain to what is understood about the behavior of people. The field "seeks to define the role of the brain in thought and action by studying empirically the behavioral phenomena associated with the neural changes induced by injury, disease, or dysfunction of the nervous system in children and adults" (Wong, 1991).
Output	Expressing information.
Perception	The act, process, or faculty of receiving stimuli, data, and information. How people perceive things can vary greatly from person to person, and can be influenced by such factors as age, culture, and gender.
Perseveration	Inappropriate, uncontrollable repetition of words, phrases, or gestures.
Reasoning	Intellectual process of working through information by inferring from fact or logic.
Remediation	Instruction designed to help students with learning disabilities develop basic academic and life skills. Remediation is distinct from accommodation.
Sequencing	Ability to order objects, events, and ideas in succession.
Social Context	The learners' lives outside of the classroom. This includes their culture, the social roles that they perform, and their social networks in the home, community, or at work.
Spatial Organization	Ability to organize and interpret nonverbal visual and auditory stimuli.
Tactile/Kinesthetic Perception	Awareness and sense of bodily movement, weight, resistance, and position.
Visual Perception	The processes of taking in and gaining meaning from nonsymbolic (size and color) and symbolic (written words, objects) visual stimuli.

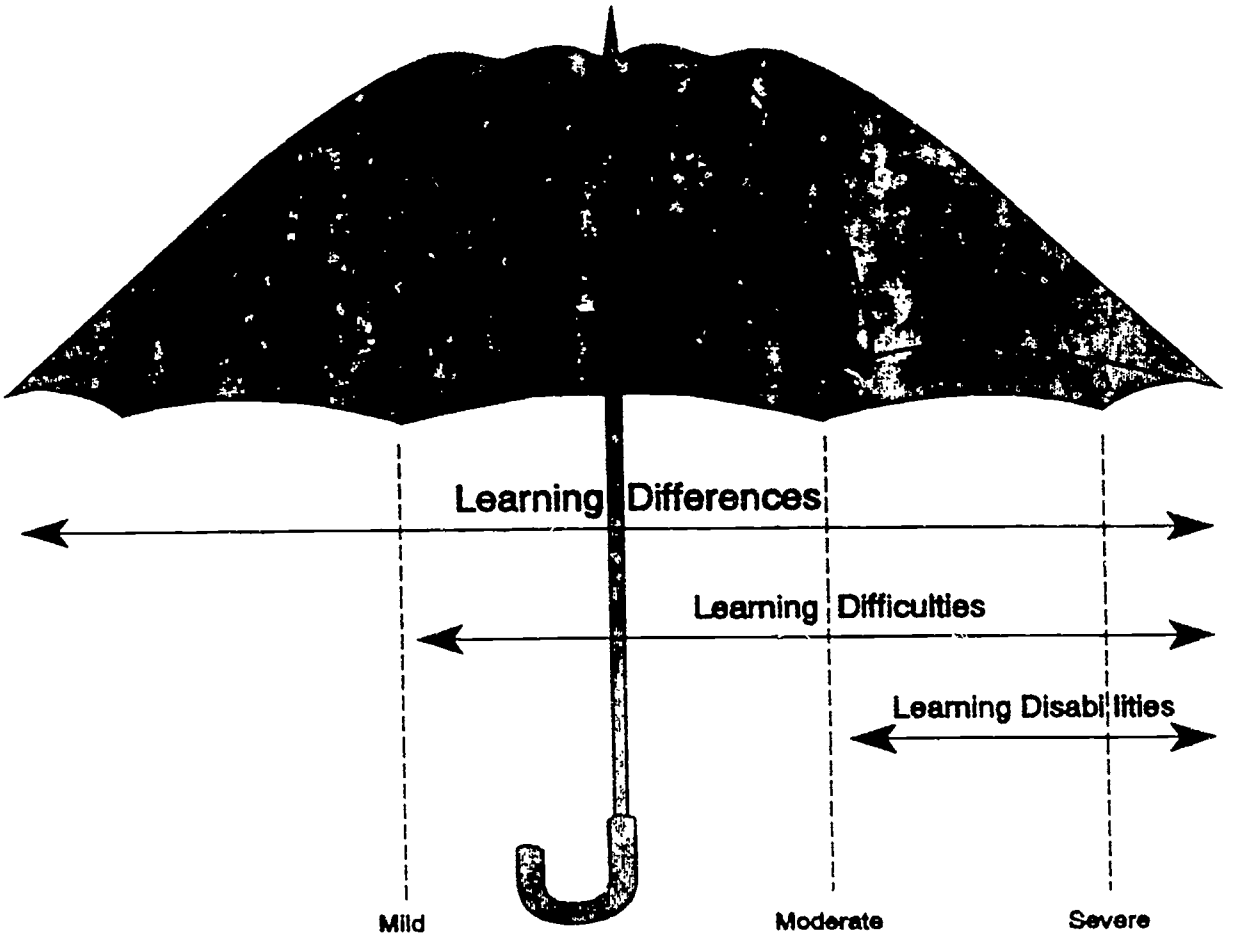
ADULTS FIRST AND LAST

MOTIVATION	Who or what motivates adults to seek further education?
GOALS	What are some educational goals adults have?
ATTITUDE	What attitudes do adults bring toward learning?
ABILITY TO LEARN	What strengths do adults bring to learning?
SOCIAL CULTURAL CONTEXT	What social and cultural factors affect learning?
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	What types of teaching approaches work best with adults?

VISUALIZING LEARNING DIFFERENCES, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, AND LEARNING DISABILITIES



CONTINUUM OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND DIFFICULTIES



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DEFINING LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (National Joint Commission on Learning Disabilities definition, 1988).

COMPONENTS OF DEFINITION

1. Refers to many different (heterogeneous) learning problems.
2. Presumed to be a basic dysfunction in the central nervous system.
3. May persist across the life span.
4. Occurs with varying degrees of severity.
5. Occurs across the intellectual range.
6. May impact several areas of adult life and functions.

BARRIERS

The barriers which restrict or prevent people from performing or participating and which are the focus of advocacy efforts often fall in the following categories:

structural	communication
social/attitudinal	economic
psychological	programmatic

A lot of overlap occurs between the different types of barriers. For example, one kind often causes another to exist.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS restrict or prevent a person from free and independent movement from one place to another.

Example: A flight of stairs can prevent a person in a wheelchair from entering a building.

SOCIAL/ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS represent attitudes or personal beliefs of members of our society that are based on prejudice regarding a particular disability or people with disabilities in general.

Example: A non-disabled person is hired for a job over a person with a disability even though that person's qualifications are equal to or better than the non-disabled person's.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS are barriers maintained by people with disabilities themselves. They exist when individuals have learned to believe that they are not capable.

Example: A person sees no point in going to school to learn a skill, because they do not think they would get hired for a job anyway.

ECONOMIC BARRIERS exist such that people cannot afford basics, cannot gain access to basic opportunities and are victimized by a coalition of unenlightened lawmakers and those with vested interests who are responsible for dependency producing public policies and allocation strategies.

Example: Persons with disabilities who seek to work face economic punishment.

PROGRAMMATIC BARRIERS exist when needs of people with disailities are not taken into consideration in the planning of a new program or activity.

Example: Transportation, both state-wide and nation-wide, is not designed with persons with disabilities in mind.

Notice how one barrier ties with another and notice how most come from outside the person and may have very little or nothing to do with someone's disability.

Every individual would like to live their life as freely and independently as they can. But because of the barriers that exist in our society for a person with a disability, that is not always possible.

EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT TO A STUDENT

February 11, 1988

Dear Ron,

Here is the report on your testing. Basically, it says:

1. your verbal ability is good, with scores ranging from average to above-average,

2. because your use of words is so good, your reading can become much better,

3. as your reading gets better, your spelling can improve, too, and then your writing will go easier,

4. your reading problem is a kind of "dyslexia" based on difficulty breaking up a word into parts; this can be helped by working with a learning-therapist.

If I can be of further help, or can answer any questions you might have, please call. I will be away until the 22nd of February, but call then if you like; or have Sandra call with any questions.

Sincerely,

TEST INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT TO A TEACHER

Test Interpretations and Recommendations:

Joe obtained a Full Scale score of 86 on the WAIS-R which falls within the Low Average range of intelligence suggesting low average academic achievement. Joe's performance on the WAIS-R suggests that it may require more time than the average student to attain learned academic skills. Verbal abilities appear to be weaker relative to nonverbal abilities, which fall within the average range of functioning. No significant relative strengths or weaknesses are noted among individual subtests.

Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test suggests fairly average skills in this area. Figures were drawn with no errors.

Reading Recognition skills were developed to a 5.8 grade level equivalence based upon test results. Skills appear to be below average for age. Joe seems to have great difficulties decoding new words. Reading Comprehension skills appear to be below average for age also. A 7.3 grade equivalence is noted. Math Calculation skills seem to be developed to a grade equivalence of 8.5. This is an area of relative strength for Joe compared with other academic areas. Joe was able to compute basic mathematical calculations. Work is still needed in the areas of decimals, percentiles, negative numbers, and algebraic computations. Math Reasoning skills appear fairly commensurate with other areas of achievement. A 6.4 grade equivalence is noted.

Based upon the results of this assessment, it is suggested that it may require excess time to master academic skills introduced to Joe. Joe may also require more time to complete assignments in class that are timed or tests which are timed. It is recommended that Joe be given extra time to complete timed tasks. It is also recommended that skills be continuously developed until teachers recommend Joe is prepared to take the G.E.D. exam. Joe will benefit from repetition of instruction in gaining learned skills. He may also benefit from a visual instruction approach rather than an auditory approach and a more concrete method rather than an abstract. Building skills in a step-by-step fashion as opposed to a more holistic approach may also benefit.

If further information is requested, contact this examiner at 555-1234.

Signed,

MATRIX:
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Student Classification/ Status	Has Learning Disability	Does Not Have Learning Disability
Identified		
Not Identified		

KAREN W.

Karen W., a 55-year-old homemaker and mother of four, is a second-generation German-American who lives in a blue-collar suburb of Pittsburgh. Recently widowed, her life has changed dramatically since her husband died of lung cancer last year. Now that her daughters are all married and have moved to other parts of the country with their young families, she faces the prospect of managing alone the financial affairs that had always been handled by her husband. This new responsibility involves taking on tasks such as paying the bills, balancing the checkbook, figuring taxes, and budgeting money.

Karen has always considered herself an organized person, someone who gets things done, and a motivator to her children — each graduated from college and went on to get a good job. She is a creative storyteller, an accomplished seamstress, and she likes to bake pies without following a recipe. Ever since she was in high school, where she dropped out in the eleventh grade because she had to help support her family, Karen has avoided math-related tasks and consistently refused her husband's many offers to help her improve her math skills. Her husband's family and friends from her church have offered to help her get back on her feet, but she wants to be able to take care of herself.

Despite initial resistance, Karen was persuaded by her brother-in-law's admonitions about her financial affairs, and is now determined to obtain a job that will pay the bills and somehow utilize her 35 years of experience as a homemaker and mother. With prodding from her youngest daughter, she scheduled an appointment with an employment counselor at the local community college. There she took a battery of pre-employment tests. The reading and math assessments showed mixed results. Although her reading rate is slow, she has satisfactory comprehension because she can analyze words into their phonetic parts and uses her language skills for figuring out words from context. The math portion was more difficult for her. She has no problem with simple computation, but she has a difficult time aligning numbers properly and often reverses numbers. She also has difficulty solving multi-step problems and in forming a mental picture of a problem. Estimating numbers such as the dimensions for a room or the sale price of an item have always posed a challenge for her, as well.

Karen would like to obtain her GED diploma because she now regrets not having finished high school. The interview with the employment counselor also convinced her that she cannot expect to get a decent-paying job without a diploma.

SCENARIO FOCUS QUESTIONS

PERSONAL/SOCIAL CONTEXT OF LEARNING:

Identify aspects of the adult learner's context — including motivations, goals, culture, and class — that the instructor should consider when planning for instruction. Also examine where the learner's skills are shown outside the classroom setting and where these skills are likely to be tested out; the importance of this is to connect learning to where the learner wants to use it.

LEARNING STRENGTHS:

Identify indicators of learning preferences, strengths, and possible learning difficulties, and discuss implications for instructors.

ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES:

Identify strategies used to accommodate for learning difficulties. How can these be integrated into instruction so that the learner can build on strengths?

ADULT ROLES

HOME

WORK

COMMUNITY

CLASSROOM

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENTS
(To Be Completed for Session Two)

During the period between Sessions One and Two, you will work with one of your students to learn more about what they want out of the learning process, their strengths, learning challenges that they have faced and how they have accommodated for areas of weakness, their support system, and where they will apply and refine the skills they develop while in your program.

This exercise has six goals. It will:

(1) Help you see beyond what often may seem to be a set of problems (or, as some would say, "deficits").

(2) Help you focus (or remain focused) on the students' goals.

(3) Enable you to work with students to modify your approach to instruction in a manner that addresses their strengths, goals, and particular needs.

(4) Provide you with a sense of them as a whole person and enable you, if necessary, to help the students identify and harness their own strengths.

(5) Provide information that we will use in Sessions Two and Three.

(6) Provide you with an experience (and model) for new ways to work with students in a learner-centered manner. (In order to assist you in this work, we have prepared a discussion guide and series of discussion questions, which you may use during your interview [H-16b-c].)

Adult educators work with a variety of students. Your approach to the interim task may have to vary with: (a) the type of student and (b) the type of setting you work in. Students who entered the program on their own volition may respond more openly than students who entered through the pressure of a social worker or family member. Students who participate in the program voluntarily may respond more openly than those who entered the program because some official mandated their participation (e.g., in order to receive welfare benefits) or those who are incarcerated. While your tactics may vary in each case, your strategy and goal should remain the same:

- Strategy — establishing trust so that you can interview students.
- Goal — viewing your students as whole people and understanding the diverse social and cultural contexts that they live in.

While your tactics may vary, three factors may help establish trust: (1) a clear explanation of your goals, (2) an understanding of the learners' skepticism, and (3) respect for the learner.

Remember, returning to school is a heroic act for many learners — particularly for those who have learning disabilities. Adult learners are likely to drop out again if they do not feel comfortable in the classroom environment and if their goals and needs are not being met.

Bring the entire Interim Task Assignment packet with you to Session Two.

INTERVIEW BEHAVIOR

Conduct the interview in a setting that provides some privacy and breaks down the distance between you and the person you are interviewing. You may decide to meet over coffee, tea, or a soft drink.

1. Be a respectful, responsive, and active listener.

2. Ask questions and elicit information in a warm, non-threatening, non-judgmental way.

3. Remain sensitive to "touchy" areas. Don't press the person you are interviewing if he or she says "no" without an explanation. If the person you are interviewing asks you to back off, do so.

4. Acknowledge the adult's feelings.

5. Respect confidentiality.

6. Do not cut off the person you are interviewing because he or she is not following your order of chosen questions.

7. Permit the person you are interviewing to reframe questions.

8. If the person you are interviewing has a different cultural background from your own, be conscious of the fact that culture affects *your* approach and responses as well as those of the person you are interviewing.

9. Let the person you are interviewing know what you will do with the interview. (If you are just using it for the assignment, let him or her know that; if you will also use this to adapt your approaches to instruction, let the student know that as well.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Introduce the first set of questions by stating, "In order to help me become a better teacher, I would like to know more about you." (Also make it clear that if they think you are asking questions that are too private, they should tell you.)

- Tell me about yourself. What are the most important things that I should know about you?
- Tell me some of the things that you like to do most.
- Tell me some of the things that you don't like doing.
- I am interested in your goals. How did you decide to come to this [name of your program]? What do you hope to get out of participating in the program?
- Where will you use these new skills (or knowledge or confidence) and in what way? At home? At work? With your friends? In the community?

Introduce the next set of questions by stating that in order to decide how to more effectively work with them, you want to know more about how they learn and work.

- What did you like about school?
- How do you prefer to study or think things out or work on things? Where? When?

  — alone
  — with someone else
  — thinking or talking out loud
  — in a quiet room or place

- Think about the work we do here. What things make it difficult for you to study? To learn new material?
- If you think about people who have taught you (in and out of school), who helped you most? Why?
- What things should I do to help you achieve your goals?

Students will be asked to respond orally. You may take notes. Tape record the oral discussion only if you have asked the student's permission and he or she is comfortable with the idea. Use your notes or the tape recorded interview to summarize your findings.

SESSION ONE EVALUATION
LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date _____ Location of Training _____

Presenter _____

Name of Adult Education Program _____

Geographic Setting (check one): ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural

Your Position (check all that apply):

☐ ABE Teacher ☐ ESL Teacher ☐ Other (please specify):
☐ ABE Volunteer Instructor ☐ ESL Volunteer Instructor _____

Number of years experience in this position _____

Number of years of other adult education teaching experience _____

Certification in elementary/secondary education ☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Background _____ Field _____

For each of the following questions, please circle the number that best expresses your reaction.

Presentation

1. The length of time for the workshop was

   (too short) 1 2 3 4 5 (too long)

2. The small group activities were

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

3. The ideas and activities presented were

   (dull) 1 2 3 4 5 (very interesting)

4. The mix of activities used to present the material was

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The extent to which the workshop covered the topics was

   (inadequate) 1 2 3 4 5 (very adequate)

HANDOUTS

SESSION TWO

ERIC

General Comments About Presentation:

Content of Training

1. The key concepts and information presented in the workshop were

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

2. The purposes and objectives of the instructional packet were

   (vague) 1 2 3 4 5 (very clear)

3. The objectives of the instructional packet were met

   (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

4. The content of the training will be

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The theory and information presented were

   (insufficient) 1 2 3 4 5 (sufficient)

General Comments About Training Content:

Materials

1. How appropriate was the content of the

   a. printed materials

   (inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

   b. overhead transparencies

   (inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

   c. video

   (inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

2. The technical quality of the printed materials was

   (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

3. The technical quality of the overheads was

   (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

4. The video added to the overall value of the workshop

   (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (a great deal)

5. The materials presented can be adapted to my own learning environment

   (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very easily)

General Comments About Materials:

Overall Comments

1. What were the strongest features of this workshop? Please be specific.

2. What do you think were the weakest features of this workshop?

3. What suggestions do you have for improving this training?

4. Which techniques, ideas, or activities will you apply in your own classroom?

ERIC

REMINDER!

Session Two of the Workshop on

LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date: _____ _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Please remember to bring the following:

1. Completed Home-Task Worksheets
2. Materials from Session One

- -

Please complete and return this portion to:

_____

_____

☐ Yes, I will attend Session Two of the workshop on *Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches.*

Name: _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

Job Title: _____

Address: _____

_____

(City) (State) (Zip)

LEARNING DISABILITIES
SESSION TWO
AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

AGENDA:

I. Introductions/Workshop Overview

II. Review of Session One

III. Review of Interim Task Assignment

BREAK

IV. Planning for Learning

- Instructional Process
- Video Demonstration
- Conducting a Needs Assessment

V. Interim Task Assignment

VI. Evaluation, Wrap-Up

PERSON SEARCH
PART 2

1. _____ Planned a party within the last six months.
2. _____ Has a student who rarely comes to class.
3. _____ Found out that a student enjoys reading maps and charts.
4. _____ Took your car into the auto repair shop recently for a 50,000 mile servicing.
5. _____ Recommended a tutor for a student.
6. _____ Developed a set of learning objectives based on a student's needs.
7. _____ Recognized that a student has difficulty understanding verbal directions.
8. _____ Planned a family trip.
9. _____ Had difficulty understanding a student's handwriting.
10. _____ Wears eyeglasses.
11. _____ Participated in a market research survey.
12. _____ Spoke privately with a student about his or her learning needs.
13. _____ Received a letter/interim report from one of your children's teachers.
14. _____ Have identified a specific area in which you could individually work with a student.
15. _____ Had a parent/teacher conference.
16. _____ Took cooking lessons.
17. _____ Discovered that a student prefers to work in a group rather than independently.
18. _____ Is on a diet.
19. _____ Has a student who is a carpenter.
20. _____ Returned to school as an adult.

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT REVIEW
PART I

In Session One we identified four factors adult educators need to consider when assessing student learning needs.

- **Goals and Interests**
- **Learning Strengths**
- **Learning Difficulties**
- **Accommodation Strategies**

With a partner, discuss the questions below and write your answers in the space provided.

1. Why is knowing about a student's goals and interests important?

2. How can you determine learning strengths?

3. What kinds of accommodations might students with learning difficulties use?

4. What are the implications of learning strengths and accommodations for instruction for adults with learning difficulties?

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT REVIEW
PART II

I. Using the completed Interim Task Assignment packet (H-16a-c) your group will discuss the following questions:

1. What did you find out about your student's strengths (or at least what they like to do and feel comfortable doing)?

2. If you observed any accommodation strategies, please note them and discuss their implications for instruction.

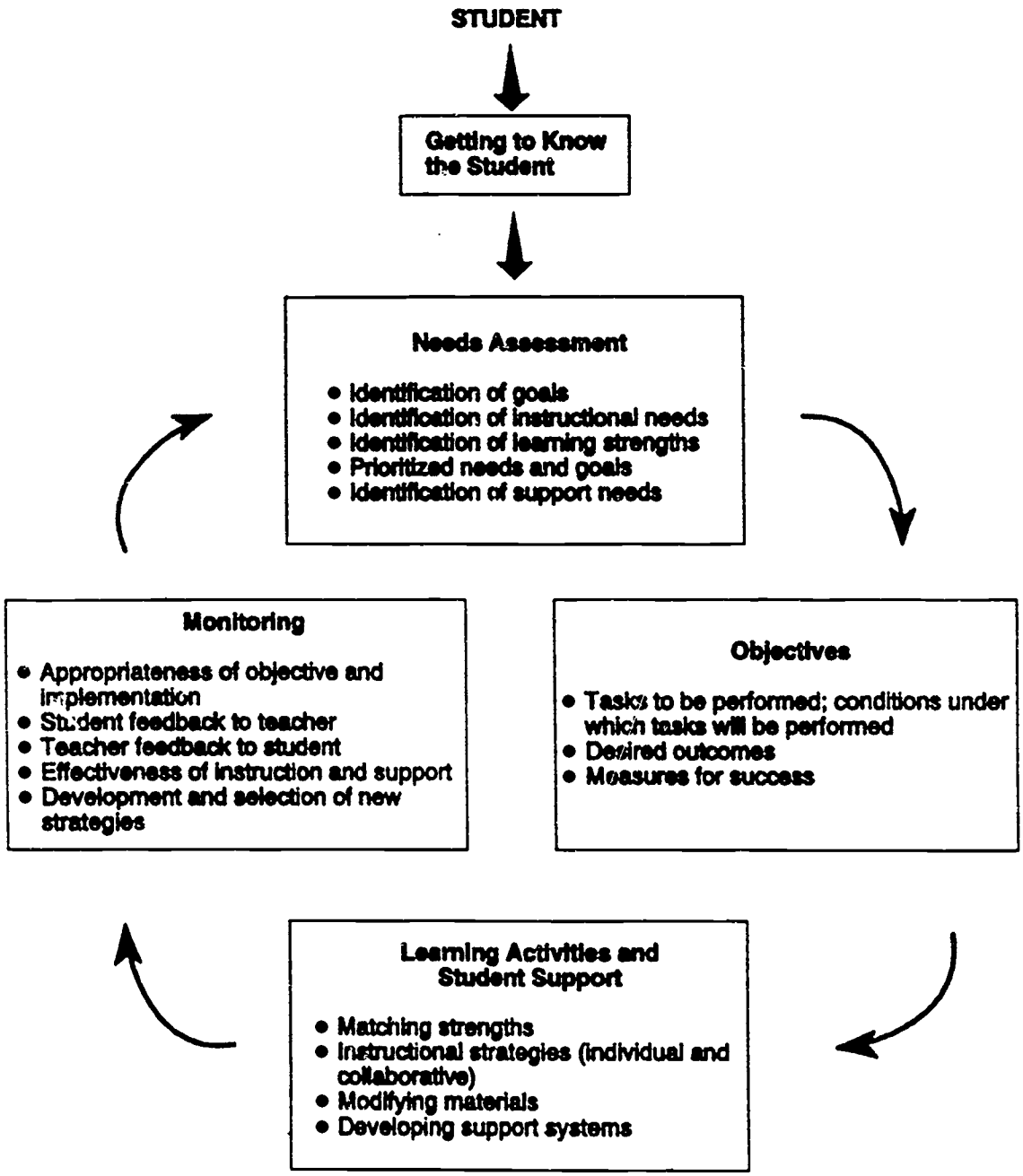
3. What were the student's attitudes and reactions toward learning?

4. Discuss problems encountered with the use of the informal interview to determine learning strengths. Brainstorm possible solutions.

II. After all members of your group have finished Part I, choose one student to profile. Briefly describe student's goals and interests, patterns of strengths and learning difficulties and any accommodation strategies that they may be using. Have a volunteer from the group record this information on T-L for presentation to the entire group.

Be prepared to discuss possible patterns of strengths and their implications for instruction. Suggest other information that would be useful and methods that might be used to obtain this information.

PLANNING FOR LEARNING
(Version 1)



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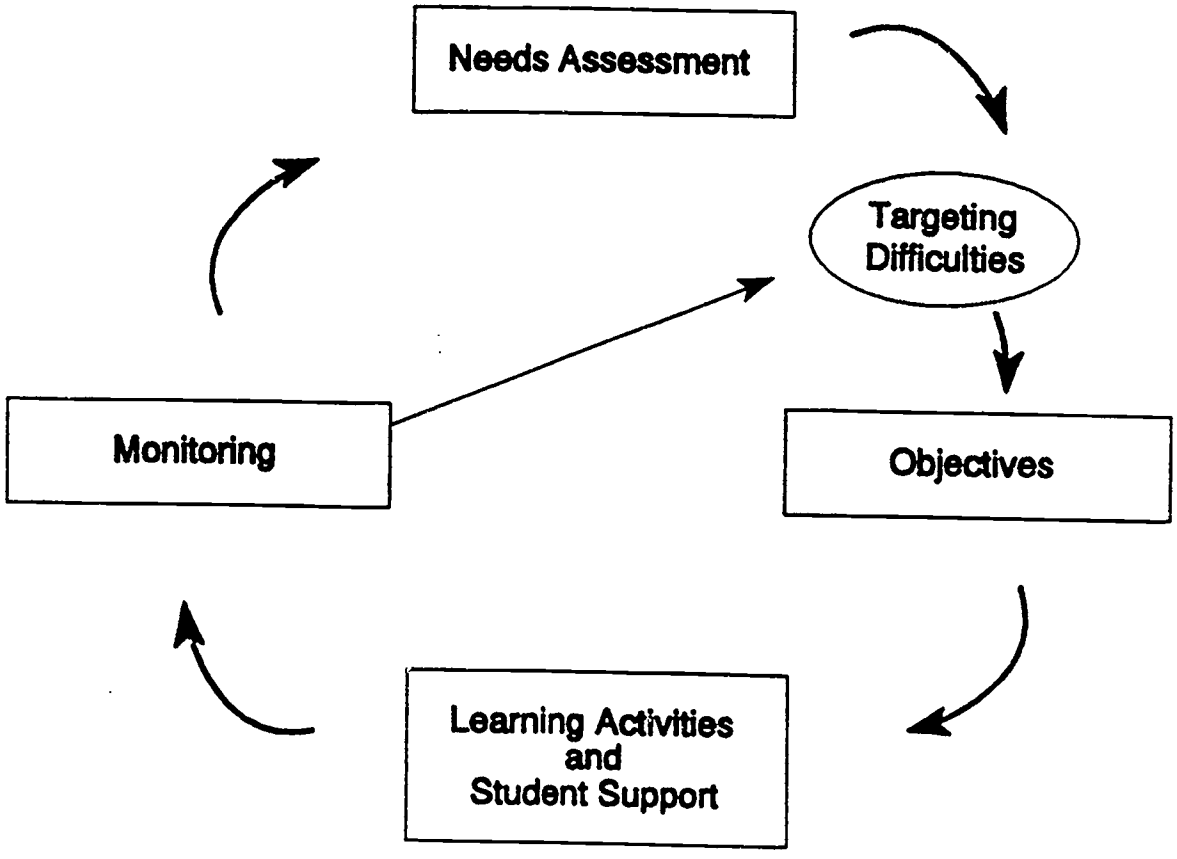

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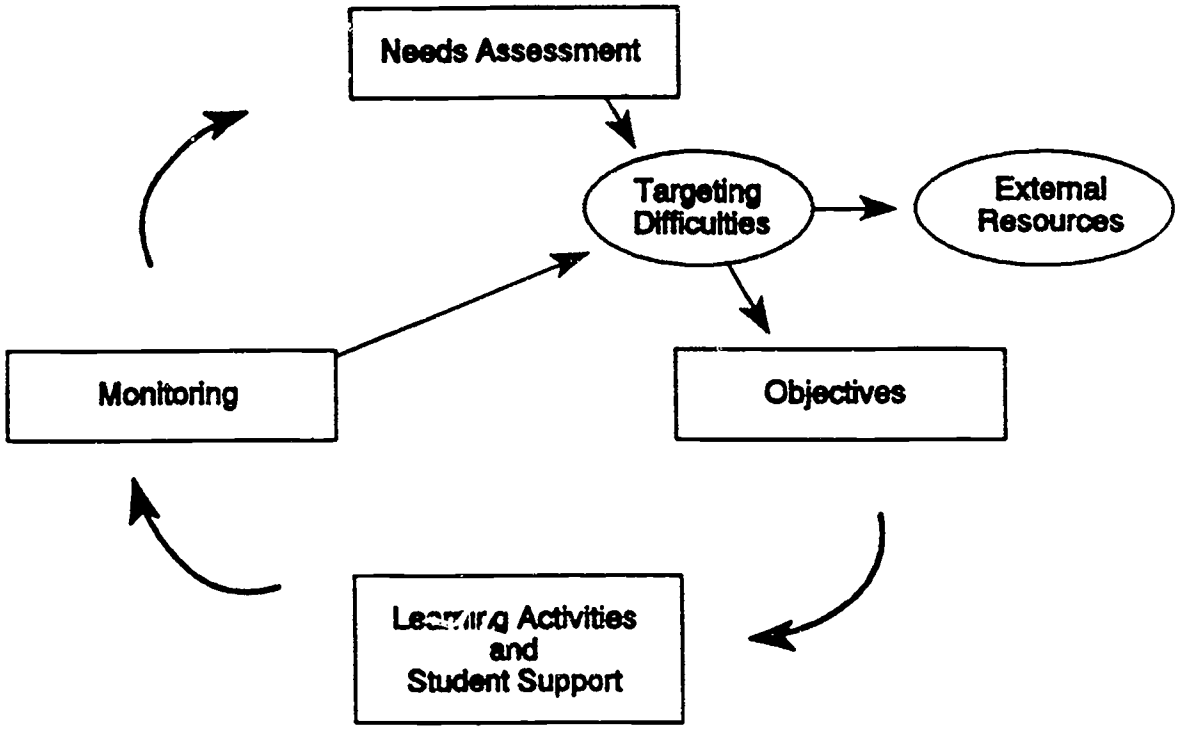

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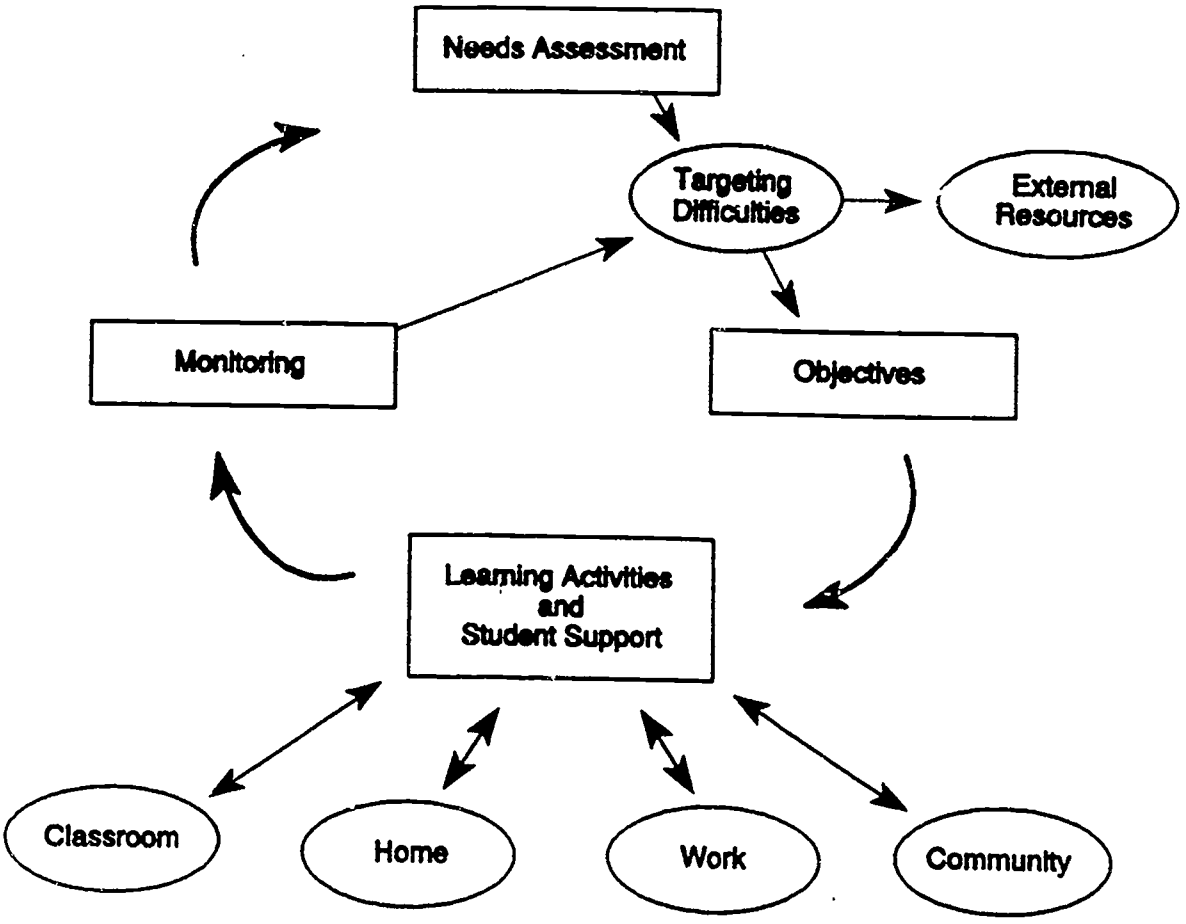

VIDEO FOCUS CHART

GOALS
LEARNING STRENGTHS
LEARNING STYLE
NEEDS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL
A Student-Centered Approach

This model is designed to provide teachers with a student-centered approach to determining learner needs. Both student and teacher observations about what the learner needs are important to this process. At this point, the focus is not on what *can* be done but on what *should* be done from the perspective of the learner.

Adult educators work in a variety of environments. Your approach to the needs assessment (as well as planning and monitoring tasks) may vary with: (a) the number of students you work with, (b) the amount of time you have to devote to planning, and (c) the culture and unique nature of your program and of each student. While face-to-face dialogue is preferable, some teachers may have to develop alternative mechanisms for engaging students. Alternatives may include:

- Surveys that provide students with an opportunity to define their needs *combined* with an opportunity for students to confirm a draft needs assessment as both addressing their goals and making sense to them, or

- Working with groups of students in a manner that combines written surveys with dialogue among students and between students and the teacher.

Whatever method you choose, make sure that the learners define their needs, shape the program, and confirm your conclusions. In addition, make sure that you are listening carefully for the learners' perceptions of what they need.

Before beginning the assessment, try to make the student as comfortable as possible. Lead into the assessment through more casual conversation. Meeting over coffee can also defuse some anxiety.

The student and the teacher collaborate on answering the following questions:

1. ***What are the student's goals? Where will those goals be used and tested out?***
   (Possible probe: What do you, the student, hope to get out of the program [e.g., speak English, get a better job working with computers]?)

2. ***What are the student's learning strengths?***
(**Possible probe:** What were your favorite subjects in school? Why?)

3. ***What is the student's learning style?***
(**Possible probes:** How do you prefer to study? Work things out? Work on things?)

4. ***What are the student's needs?***
(**Possible probes:** What things make it difficult for you to study or learn material? What things make it easier?)

5. ***Based on steps one through four, what skills, information, and experience does the student need to achieve his/her goals?***
(**Possible probes:** What can you do to help achieve your goals? Be as specific as possible. [i.e., study three hours a week, advocate for myself by letting teacher and others know what I need to learn]; What can I do to help you achieve your goals? Please be as specific as you can. [i.e., tutoring, provide more visuals aids, tape record/video tape classes].

NOTE: H-16a-c (Session One Interim Task) provides valuable information for implementing this student-centered model of assessing learner needs.

ACTIVITY: NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL
A Student-Centered Approach

1. What are the student's goals? Where will those goals be used and tested out?

2. What are the student's learning strengths?

3. What is the student's learning style?

4. What are the student's needs?

5. Based on steps one through four, what skills, information, and experiences does the student need to achieve his/her goals?

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT
(To be Completed for Session Three)

During the period between Sessions Two and Three, you will work with the same student you interviewed for the first Interim Task.

The purposes of the Interim Task are threefold:

- *To find out more about your student's learning strengths and needs* through additional discussion with the student and through your observation of the student in class (and, if at all possible, outside the classroom setting).

- To work with your student to address *one goal* that you both would like to see the student make progress on.

- *To try out an adaptive strategy* with the student that: (1) works off the students' strengths, (2) addresses the student's goal, (3) adjusts for the student's learning difficulties, and (4) makes sense to the student given his or her context. For example, if the student learns better visually, teach visually; if he or she learns better through an auditory or tactile-kinesthetic approach, teach to those strengths. If the student seems to have difficulties in these areas, use adaptive strategies (e.g., if she or he has difficulty focusing on lines, let the student read with a ruler; if a student has difficulty writing with a pen or pencil, have that individual compose on a computer; if there is a problem with spelling, show the student how to use spell check on the computer).

You should aim to be a flexible, adaptive teacher and to reflectively modify your teaching through your interaction with your student. The assignment can be completed without your using any specialized tools. It is important to utilize the information you collected after Session One to inform your time with the student for this assignment. To assist you, we have prepared a focus chart for you to record relevant information from your interactions with your student.

Bring the entire Interim Task Assignment packet with you to Session Three.

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT TWO
PLANNING *GUIDE*

STUDENT GOALS:

LEARNING STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

PROBLEMS TO ADDRESS:

MODIFICATIONS YOU INTEND TO MAKE WITH STUDENT:

LIKELY SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES:

INDICATORS OF CHANGE:

TEACHING ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

TOOLKIT

General Points

- Be learner centered.
- Monitor progress regularly.
- Focus on strengths.
- Build opportunities for active learning.
- Involve families wherever possible and appropriate.
- Be positive, encouraging, and respectful.
- Employ a customized mix of instructional tools that work for particular learners.

Planning and Goal Setting

- Enable learners to reflect on the nature of their needs and strengths, as well as on how their needs and strengths affect their life and learning.
- Collaborate with learners. Build on their strengths and create adaptive strategies based on individual needs.
- Collaboratively establish expectations: teacher/learner, learner/teacher, learner/self.
- Connect objectives and methods to the learner's personal and academic goals.
- Develop a short-term plan together, and meet frequently to monitor progress.
- When a new facet of a learner's functioning becomes apparent, discuss it openly and plainly with the learner.

Building Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem

- Capitalize on the learner's strengths. (For example, if the learner has strong listening skills, present material orally.) Teaching to strengths helps learners accommodate to weaker areas.
- Expect progress and success, but don't place unrealistic expectations on yourself or your learners. Learning new ways to teach and to learn takes time.

- Provide opportunities for success every day through positive learning experiences and exercises learners can do.
- Develop learner self-knowledge regarding: (1) their needs and strengths and (2) how they think and accommodate.
- Reframe errors as opportunities to learn.
- Support and build in opportunities for the learner to make choices and shape the learning situation.
- Pay careful attention to self-concept enhancement when working with adults with learning disabilities.
- Look for opportunities to praise.
- Establish a warm and friendly atmosphere appropriate for adult learning.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Teach anxiety and stress management techniques.
- Develop learner support groups.
- Be a sensitive teacher who treats learners with respect and dignity.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

General

- Break down tasks into small chunks and present them in a paced, sequential manner. Make lists and prioritize items.
- Use a variety of short assignments.
- Provide structure and orderliness. Avoid unrelated comments and excessive talk about other topics. Changing from one subject to another and back again is distracting to some learners. A slow transition from one idea to another can be necessary, and automatic transition should not be assumed.
- Provide closure and logical transitions when moving from one skill or task to another.
- Provide frequent feedback.
- Capitalize on the learner's strengths and teach to them (e.g., use visual modalities with visual learners).
- Use as many modalities (sight, touch, speech, hearing) as possible when presenting material. Making information available through different senses helps learners become active learners who use their strongest channels to get information.
- Employ active learning techniques.
- Connect learning to the learner context as often as possible. This can make abstract concepts more understandable.
- Teach new ideas and concepts in as concrete a way as possible. It is often easier for adults with learning disabilities to learn the theory after its practical application.

- Help the learner visualize material in order to better understand what is being presented. (Visual aids can include overhead projectors, slides, films, chalkboards, flip charts, computer graphics, illustrations, and graphic organizers for reading.)
- Use color whenever possible. Visual impact is sharper in color, and color coding can be an aid to learning.
- Provide opportunities for touching and handling materials that relate to ideas presented. This can strengthen learning.
- Provide opportunities for preview, rehearsal, repetition, review, and overlearning.
- Give simple, concise directions. Many learners benefit from directions which are broken down into steps, with one step presented at a time.
- Make announcements of changes in the schedule, assignments, or upcoming examinations both orally and in written form.
- For some learners, it may be useful for the instructor to speak at an even speed.
- Emphasize and announce important points. If there is more than one point, you might say, "The first point is. . . .", and "The second point is. . . .", etc. Points could be emphasized in writing as well.
- Make frequent eye contact, if it is culturally appropriate. When appropriate, this helps to maintain attention and encourages participation.
- Encourage learners who need to sit in the front of the room where they will be able to hear and see well.
- Provide learners with an environment as free from distractions as possible.
- Provide study carrels or other areas of quiet for learners who may need privacy and some degree of freedom from distraction.
- Create safe and engaging ways to practice and adopt skills.
- Be sensitive to the fact that some learners are very self-conscious about talking in front of groups. Ask these learners questions with short answers, and try not to interrupt the learner once he/she has begun to respond.

Reading Techniques

Provide reading instruction that is imaginative and engaging. Aim at developing independent, fluent readers who are confident in their decoding skills and who will be able to comprehend written information and texts at home, work, and in the community. While reading instruction should be individualized, it need not be delivered as one-to-one instruction. (When the teacher-student ratio is high, group work can provide more opportunities for teacher-directed instruction.) Focus teaching and coaching on four goals: (1) decoding, (2) vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency, (3) reading strategy, and (4) writing.

- Remember that the important skill is creating meaning from print and that different approaches (e.g., phonics, whole language) work for different students.

- Use engaging materials (e.g., article on issue that is important to the learner, plays, job-related materials).
- Use collaborative efforts (which may include the teacher reading out loud) to create understanding and meaning if the learner cannot read the entire text.
- Use a directed-reading approach for all assignments involving reading (across all content areas). Review any new vocabulary. Establish a purpose for reading, and provide a focus in order to enhance attention and understanding.
- Focus on words that have a great deal of meaning to the learner or that are in the learner's daily environment.
- Build vocabulary and speech sound discrimination through semantic maps, phonics identification, conversation, word games, tongue twisters, etc.
- Employ strategies using the whole language approach (e.g., ask the learner to describe in detail a job he/she has held. Write down exactly what the learner says and use it as a reading exercise for sequencing).
- In order to teach left to right orientation for reading and to correct a tendency towards word reversals, have the learner draw a line under each column in a newspaper article. This is an eye training exercise, and can be used to improve reading speed as well.
- If the learner cannot track well, encourage him/her to use a finger or a ruler to guide his/her eyes.
- If the learner confuses letters, focus in on the confusion. For example, have learners circle each "b" in a row of a piece of reading material as quickly as possible. This can be used for b/d confusion, as well as m/n, was/saw, etc. If you do this, focus on only one pair in a session.
- Read an article to the learner while the learner follows along. Discuss what was read by having the learner paraphrase or answer various questions. Ask factual questions before inferential and predictive questions.
- Adapt informational materials to the learner's reading level so content can be learned while reading skills are being practiced.
- If decoding is a problem, work on word parts, reverse word attack, or word comparisons. The teacher may want to start with words in the learner's environment since environment provides repetition.
- If learners have problems with abstract concepts, teach them to visualize what they are reading.
- If comprehension is a problem, have learners collect words and then learn to use them. (Dictionaries, which can be difficult to use, should be used with caution.)

Math Techniques

Focus math instruction on the use of mathematics in everyday life (e.g., solving problems at home, using math at work, estimating prices in stores). A functional approach may accommodate for poor math facts while teaching basic concepts. Lessons can emphasize the practical applications of math concepts and a mathematical approach to problem solving.

- Employ calculators to enable learners to focus on concepts and problem solving.
- Use manipulatives, concrete models, diagrams, maps, graphs, and so forth, whenever possible to make abstract ideas seem more concrete. Have learners create these aids whenever possible.
- Break each math concept down into a series of steps. Work through every problem in stages.
- Use problems that learners will use in their lives.
- Encourage learners to make predictions about the outcome of problems.
- Teach learners to make estimates by rounding off numbers.
- Use graph paper to accommodate dysgraphia (severe handwriting difficulties).

GROUP LEARNING SITUATIONS

Group learning and discussion is a valuable tool for adults with learning disabilities. Research indicates that many adults with learning disabilities rate their peers as being the people most helpful to them.

- Help learners to get in touch with other adults with learning disabilities, obtain a speaker, etc.
- Discuss the process of learning with learning groups: how it feels, what works, what doesn't, and why.
- Use groups as support groups, collaborative groups, problem-solving groups, and learning communities.
- Encourage the initiation of self-help groups. Evidence supports the benefits of being in a support group of adults with learning disabilities. Learners can share frustrations, learn coping strategies, ease the feeling of being alone, overcome personal problems, share successes, and learn from others, and possibly plan outings together.

STUDY SKILLS/LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

- Summarize presentations and readings and provide opportunities to rehearse activities. This will assist adults with learning disabilities who have difficulty bringing things to closure.
- Teach useful study skills like listening, time management, test taking, materials organization, and so forth.
- Teach memory techniques such as mnemonics.

- Teach organization of materials such as chunking and clustering.
- Help learners learn to skim and survey by looking for clues in boldface type, underlined and italicized words, lists, and so forth.
- Openly discuss learning strategies with the learner. Learning *how* to learn is an important part of the process.
- Help learners learn how to break tasks down into manageable chunks.
- Encourage learners to seek help in the learning process. Notetakers, tutors, tape recorders, computers, and other people and instruments can be very helpful in capitalizing on strengths.

Social Skills Techniques

- When learners raise personal problems, help them reflect on what they can learn from the experience, and to recognize their ability to have control of the situation.
- If the learner feels left out of a group situation, help him/her to evaluate why this is and how to solve the problem.
- Teach strategies for accepting and giving creative criticism.

Equipment

- Employ word processors to address dysgraphia or the need to visualize letters each time one writes.
- Employ spell checkers to address spelling problems.
- Employ tape recorders to accommodate for writing problems.
- Employ calculators and spreadsheets to facilitate computation.
- Employ computers for planning.
- Choose computer programs that are user-friendly.

Cautions

- Be very careful not to mistake language and/or cultural differences for signs of a learning disability.
- Adapt all strategies to the personal, linguistic, and cultural needs and background of the learner. Some strategies are appropriate for some learners; others are not. Be aware of who you are teaching.
- Many of these strategies are simply good teaching strategies, and can be used with many populations.
- In the area of teaching social skills, be especially aware of possible cultural differences between the teacher and the learner.

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Cooper, R. "Literacy Tutor Training: How Learning Disabilities Affect Reading, Spelling, and Writing." Presentation at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Adults with Special Learning Needs, Charlotte, NC, September 27, 1993.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (1991). *Bringing Literacy Within Reach: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Ottawa, Ontario.

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Ross-Gordon, J.M. (1989). *Adults with Learning Disabilities: An Overview for the Adult Educator*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse.

Weisel, L.P. (1993). *Creating Services that Meet the Needs of Adults with LD*. OH: The TLP Group.

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SESSION TWO EVALUATION
LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date _____ Location of Training _____

Presenter _____

Name of Adult Education Program _____

Geographic Setting (check one): ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural

Your Position (check all that apply):

☐ ABE Teacher ☐ ESL Teacher ☐ Other (please specify):
☐ ABE Volunteer Instructor ☐ ESL Volunteer Instructor _____

Number of years experience in this position _____

Number of years of other adult education teaching experience _____

Certification in elementary/secondary education ☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Background _____ Field _____

For each of the following questions, please circle the number that best expresses your reaction.

Presentation

1. The length of time for the workshop was

   (too short) 1 2 3 4 5 (too long)

2. The small group activities were

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

3. The ideas and activities presented were

   (dull) 1 2 3 4 5 (very interesting)

4. The mix of activities used to present the material was

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The extent to which the workshop covered the topics was

   (inadequate) 1 2 3 4 5 (very adequate)

General Comments About Presentation:

Content of Training

1. The key concepts and information presented in the workshop were

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

2. The purposes and objectives of the instructional packet were

   (vague) 1 2 3 4 5 (very clear)

3. The objectives of the instructional packet were met

   (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

4. The content of the training will be

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The theory and information presented were

   (insufficient) 1 2 3 4 5 (sufficient)

General Comments About Training Content:

Materials

1. How appropriate was the content of the

   a. printed materials

   (inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

   b. overhead transparencies

   (inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

2. The technical quality of the printed materials was

   (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

3. The technical quality of the overheads was

   (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

4. The materials presented can be adapted to my own learning environment

   (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very easily)

General Comments About Materials:

Overall Comments

1. What were the strongest features of this workshop? Please be specific.

2. What do you think were the weakest features of this workshop?

3. What suggestions do you have for improving this training?

4. Which techniques, ideas, or activities will you apply in your own classroom?

HANDOUTS

SESSION THREE

REMINDER!

Session Three of the Workshop on

LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Please remember to bring the following:

1. Completed Home-Task Worksheets
2. Materials from Sessions One and Two

- -

Please complete and return this portion to:

_____

_____

☐ Yes, I will attend Session Two of the workshop on *Learning Disabilities: Learner-Centered Approaches.*

Name: _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

Job Title: _____

Address: _____

_____

(City) (State) (Zip)

LEARNING DISABILITIES
SESSION THREE
AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of Session Three, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

AGENDA:

I. Introductions/Workshop Overview

II. The Reflective Practitioner: Teacher Research and Collaboration

III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task

BREAK

IV. Planning for Learning
- Targeting Areas of Need
- Developing a Learning Plan

V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy

VI. Accessing and Using Resources
- Potential Resources
- Accommodations

VII. How Do You Make It Happen?

VIII. Reflection on Workshop Processes

IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up

PERSON SEARCH
PART 3

1. _____ Referred a student to a vocational rehabilitation counselor.
2. _____ Worked with another teacher in planning a lesson for students.
3. _____ Mentored or coached another teacher.
4. _____ Was mentored or coached by another teacher.
5. _____ Changed doctors within the last year.
6. _____ Experimented with a new recipe.
7. _____ Held individual conferences with students.
8. _____ Tried out a new instructional strategy.
9. _____ Provided students with a list of child care agencies in the community.
10. _____ Requested a professional screening for a student.
11. _____ Kept an anecdotal record of students in the class.
12. _____ Developed a profile description of an ABE or ESL student.
13. _____ Modified a teaching approach based on student feedback.
14. _____ Agreed to listen to my child's "music."
15. _____ Took up a new hobby.
16. _____ Engaged in team teaching with another teacher in my program.
17. _____ Had a great insight about learning or teaching.
18. _____ Worked with a professional who really impressed me.
19. _____ Participated in a scavenger hunt before this workshop.
20. _____ Participated in a planning process.

Reflective practitioners: (1) think about what they are doing while they are doing it and (2) adapt their approaches to the needs of the situation. Reflective teachers do not use a cookbook approach to their work or treat all learners in the same way. Instead, they evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their approaches.

For Discussion:

Think of a reflective and unreflective practitioner that you have worked with or observed (e.g., a cook or chef, a mechanic or plumber, a doctor or nurse, a teacher or tutor). Describe the characteristics of a reflective practitioner. What does this look like in the case of your work?

Teachers perform a form of research (investigation) when they observe, compare, contrast, and reflect on what happens in the classroom. Their research enables them to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their teaching. These investigations are necessary tools for the reflective practitioner.

Reflective teachers and tutors evaluate and monitor their approaches to their work. This involves making observations (watching what is happening), synthesizing data (sorting your observations), formulating preliminary hypotheses (making hunches), analyzing hypotheses (evaluating your hunches), and refining approaches.

For Discussion:

Think of a case in which you have practiced the above regarding your work with a student and describe it to your partner. (If you never have, think about what factors have prevented you from doing so and what could be done to change them. Share these observations with your partner.)

Collaborative research in adult education builds upon the teacher as researcher. The research teams can come together in many forms: (a) university-based researchers and teachers, (b) teachers and their students, (c) teachers with other teachers, or (d) students with other students. In each case the participants collaboratively design, implement, and evaluate research. Collaborative research can contribute to staff development. (Susan Lytle and her colleagues call it "inquiry-based staff development.") Collaborative research can also be adapted to address the needs of students who learn differently. Students and teachers can work together to design, implement, and reflect on their findings. Their investigations expand the ability of teachers to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor their approaches.

For Discussion:

Reflective, learner-centered teachers work with students to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor the use of appropriate tools for instruction. Explore with your partner how you can collaborate with your students to evaluate, select, adapt, and monitor your approaches. One partner should explore the question from the perspective of the teacher or tutor. The other partner should explore the issue from the perspective of a student.

REVIEW OF INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT TWO

The purpose of this review is for you to reflect on the strategies you tried out with your student(s) — what worked, what didn't — and to generate as a group ways to adapt your instruction.

(1) Was your goal realistic?

(2) How did focusing on the learner's strengths affect your choice of strategies?

(3) What problems seem to recur among group members?

(4) How did input from the student affect your approach?

(5) What possible improvements or changes do you foresee in the future for the student, your class, or your own teaching in general?

TARGETING TOOL

Potential Problem Areas	*Difficulties*				
	Visual	Auditory	Tactile/ Kinesthetic	Organizational	Social/ Emotional
Input					
Integration					
Output					

INPUT, INTEGRATION, AND OUTPUT OF INFORMATION

INPUT → INTEGRATION → OUTPUT

INPUT	Seeing Hearing	Involves reading Listening to discussion, lectures, tapes
	Touching Smelling Tasting	Hands-on experiences, observing

↓

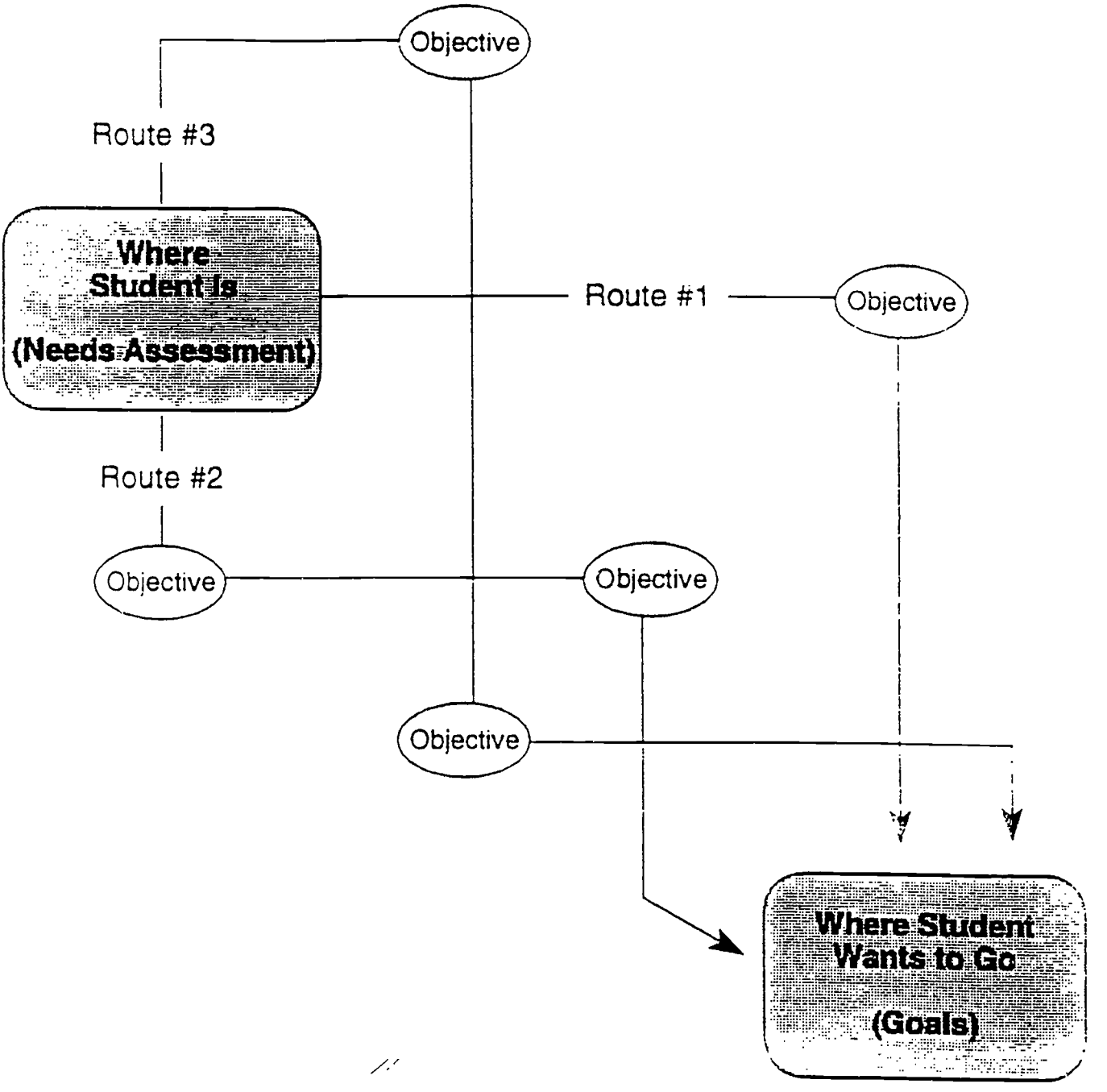
INTEGRATION	Sequencing	Organizing information into an order that makes sense, spelling
	Abstracting	Inferring meaning from words or recognition
	Organizing	Relating new information to previously learned information
	Memory	Retaining information while attending and concentrating on it from a few minutes to more than 24 hours

↓

OUTPUT	Speaking	Involves giving oral reports, participating in discussion
	Writing	Writing reports/exams
	Gestures/ Facial Expressions	Understanding social cues/body language

Goal	Learner Strengths	Learning Difficulties	Objective	Plan to Achieve Objective	Monitoring	Indicators of Achieving Objective
Passing the GED.	Visual & auditory learner. Attentive to environment. Highly motivated.	Poor vocabulary. Poor memory.	Increase vocabulary.	Focus vocabulary building measures on words that learner sees repeatedly at home, in community, at work (e.g., stop, exit, milk).	Have student read words and explain meaning. Ask student if plan is working.	Increased abilit to read and understand wor as evidenced in reading work li *and* texts.

ERIC 50



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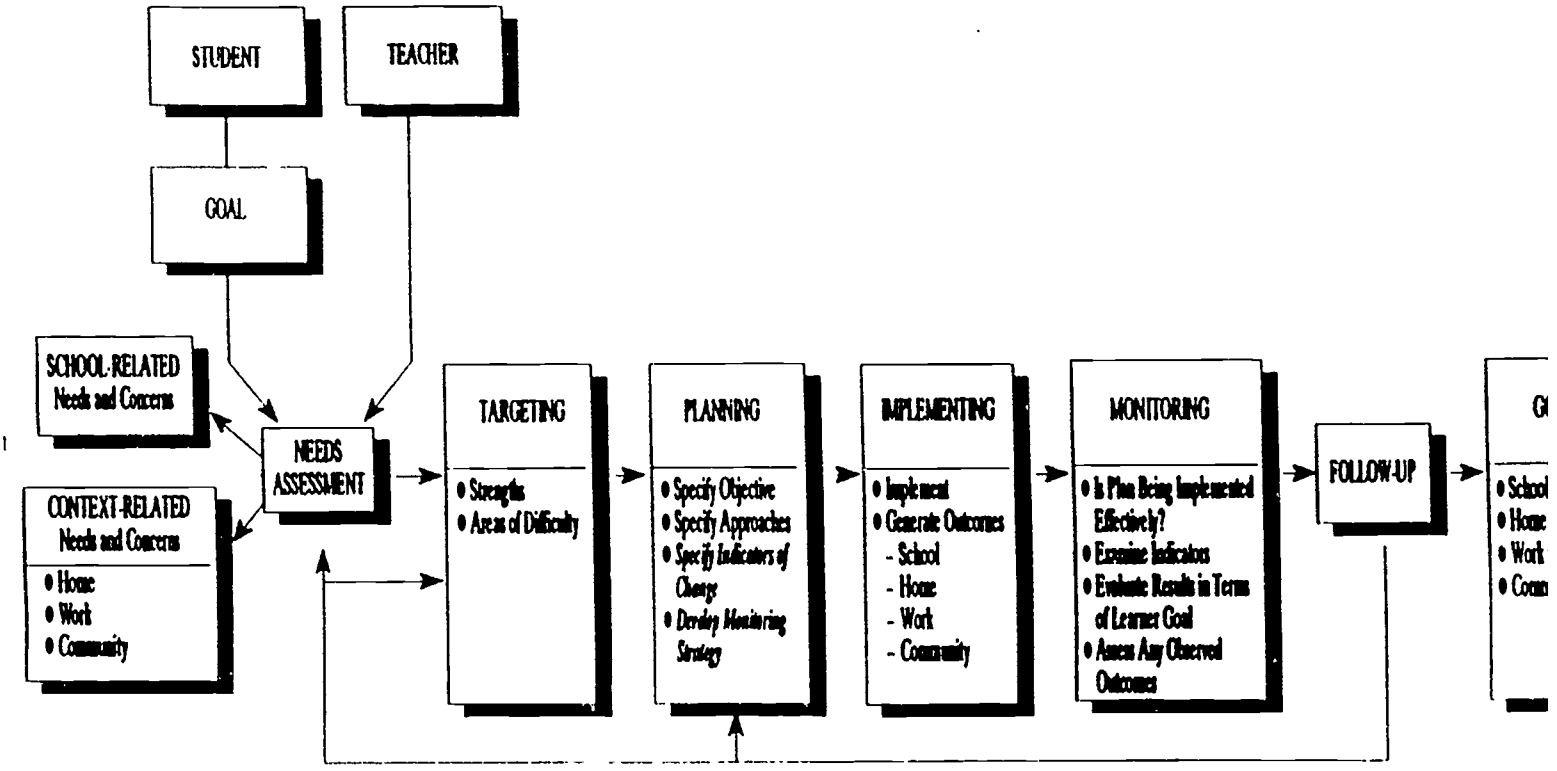
STUDENT
TEACHER
GOAL
SCHOOL-RELATED Needs and Concerns
CONTEXT-RELATED Needs and Concerns
• Home
• Work
• Community
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
TARGETING
• Strengths
• Areas of Difficulty
PLANNING
• Specify Objective
• Specify Approaches
• Specify Indicators of Change
• Devising Monitoring Strategy
IMPLEMENTING
• Implement
• Generate Outcomes
- School
- Home
- Work
- Community
MONITORING
• Is Plan Being Implemented Effectively?
• Examine Indicators
• Evaluate Results in Terms of Learner Goal
• Assess Any Observed Outcomes
FOLLOW-UP

RESOURCES ON ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

There is a good deal of published material that addresses the needs of adults with learning disabilities. Many of these are referenced in the supplementary readings.

CLEARINGHOUSES

A number of organizations disseminate information that includes materials on adults with learning differences and disabilities. Such clearinghouses include the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities, and the U.S. Department of Education's Clearinghouse on Adult Education of the Office of Adult and Vocational Education, and the Clearinghouse on Disability Information of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

ORGANIZATIONS

A number of organizations address the needs of adults who learn differently and adults with learning disabilities. These include the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the National Association of Adults with Special Learning Needs, and the Orton Dyslexia Society. Some may have branches or members in your community. Others may be located at the state capitol.

SPECIALISTS AND PROGRAMS

There are many reputable specialists and programs that work with adults with learning disabilities. You may want to contact some of the organizations listed above for referrals.

ASSESSMENTS

Many organizations have the capacity to provide competent identification of learning disabilities and their assessment. For a useful overview of this area see "Adults with Learning Disabilities: How to get an appropriate assessment of the problem." A copy of this is in your supplement.

LAWS

Three Federal laws mandate accommodating or addressing the needs of adults with disabilities — including those with learning disabilities: The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act established criteria for identifying clients with disabilities. Adult education programs can refer students to local vocational rehabilitation officers, which may be able to fund assessment or special tutoring.

Both Section 504 (which forbids discrimination on the basis of disability in federally-funded programs) and the ADA have been used to call for accommodations. Testing accommodations are a good example that may be of importance to your students. See *Testing Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities.*

SESSION THREE EVALUATION
LEARNING DISABILITIES: LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACHES

Date _____ Location of Training _____

Presenter _____

Name of Adult Education Program _____

Geographic Setting (check one): ☐ urban ☐ suburban ☐ rural

Your Position (check all that apply):

☐ ABE Teacher ☐ ESL Teacher ☐ Other (please specify):
☐ ABE Volunteer Instructor ☐ ESL Volunteer Instructor _____

Number of years experience in this position _____

Number of years of other adult education teaching experience _____

Certification in elementary/secondary education ☐ Yes ☐ No

Education Background _____ Field _____

For each of the following questions, please circle the number that best expresses your reaction.

Presentation

1. The length of time for the workshop was

   (too short) 1 2 3 4 5 (too long)

2. The small group activities were

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

3. The ideas and activities presented were

   (dull) 1 2 3 4 5 (very interesting)

4. The mix of activities used to present the material was

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The extent to which the workshop covered the topics was

   (inadequate) 1 2 3 4 5 (very adequate)

General Comments About Presentation:

Content of Training

1. The key concepts and information presented in the workshop were

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

2. The purposes and objectives of the instructional packet were

   (vague) 1 2 3 4 5 (very clear)

3. The objectives of the instructional packet were met

   (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (completely)

4. The content of the training will be

   (not useful) 1 2 3 4 5 (very useful)

5. The theory and information presented were

   (insufficient) 1 2 3 4 5 (sufficient)

General Comments About Training Content:

Materials

1. How appropriate was the content of the

   a. printed materials

   (inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

   b. overhead transparencies

   (inappropriate) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate)

2. The technical quality of the printed materials was

   (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

3. The technical quality of the overheads was

   (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

4. The materials presented can be adapted to my own learning environment

   (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (very easily)

General Comments About Materials:

Overall Comments

1. What were the strongest features of this workshop? Please be specific.

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2. What do you think were the weakest features of this workshop?

3. What suggestions do you have for improving this training?

4. Which techniques, ideas, or activities will you apply in your own classroom?

TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

TRANSPARENCIES

SESSION ONE

LEARNING DISABILITIES
SESSION ONE
AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

AGENDA:

I. Introduction, Objectives, Agenda Review

II. Adults First and Last

III. What Is and What Is Not a Learning Disability

BREAK

IV. Attitudes, Barriers, and Accommodation

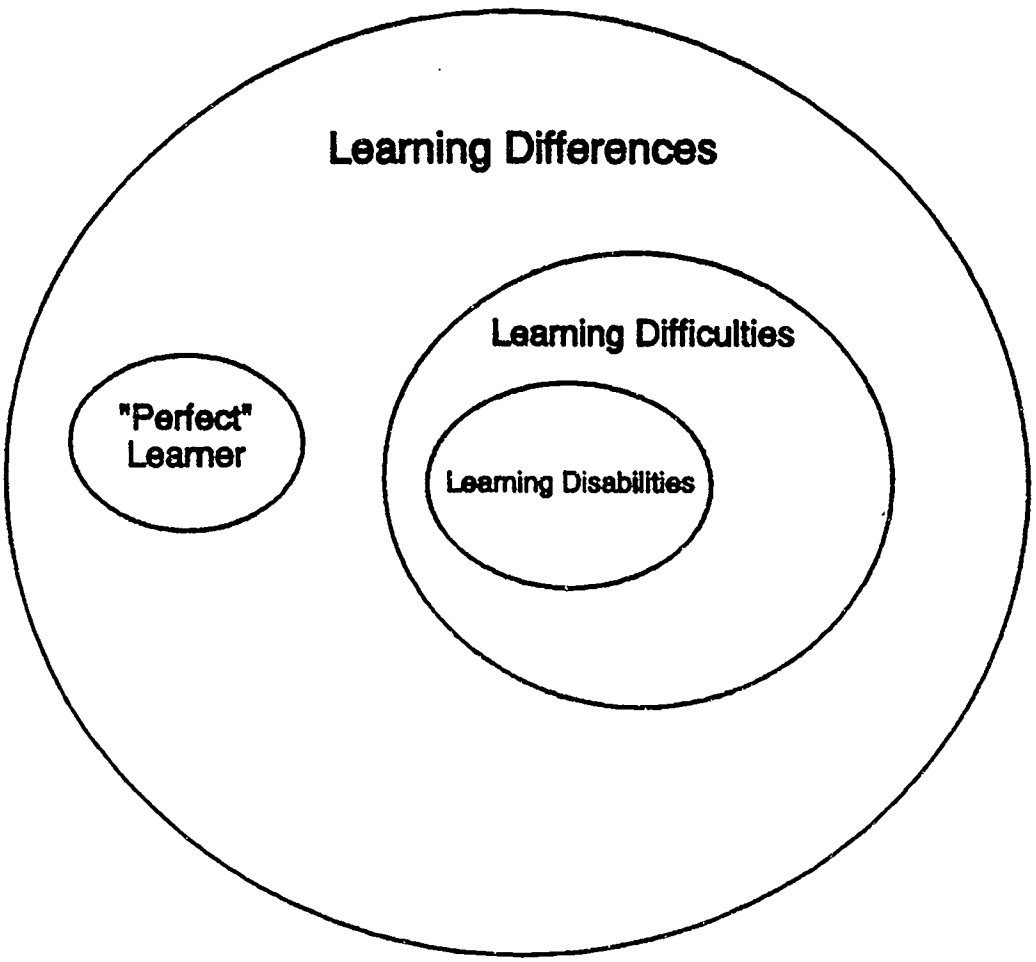
V. Practice/Application: Scenario — Looking at the Whole Person

VI. Interim Task Assignment

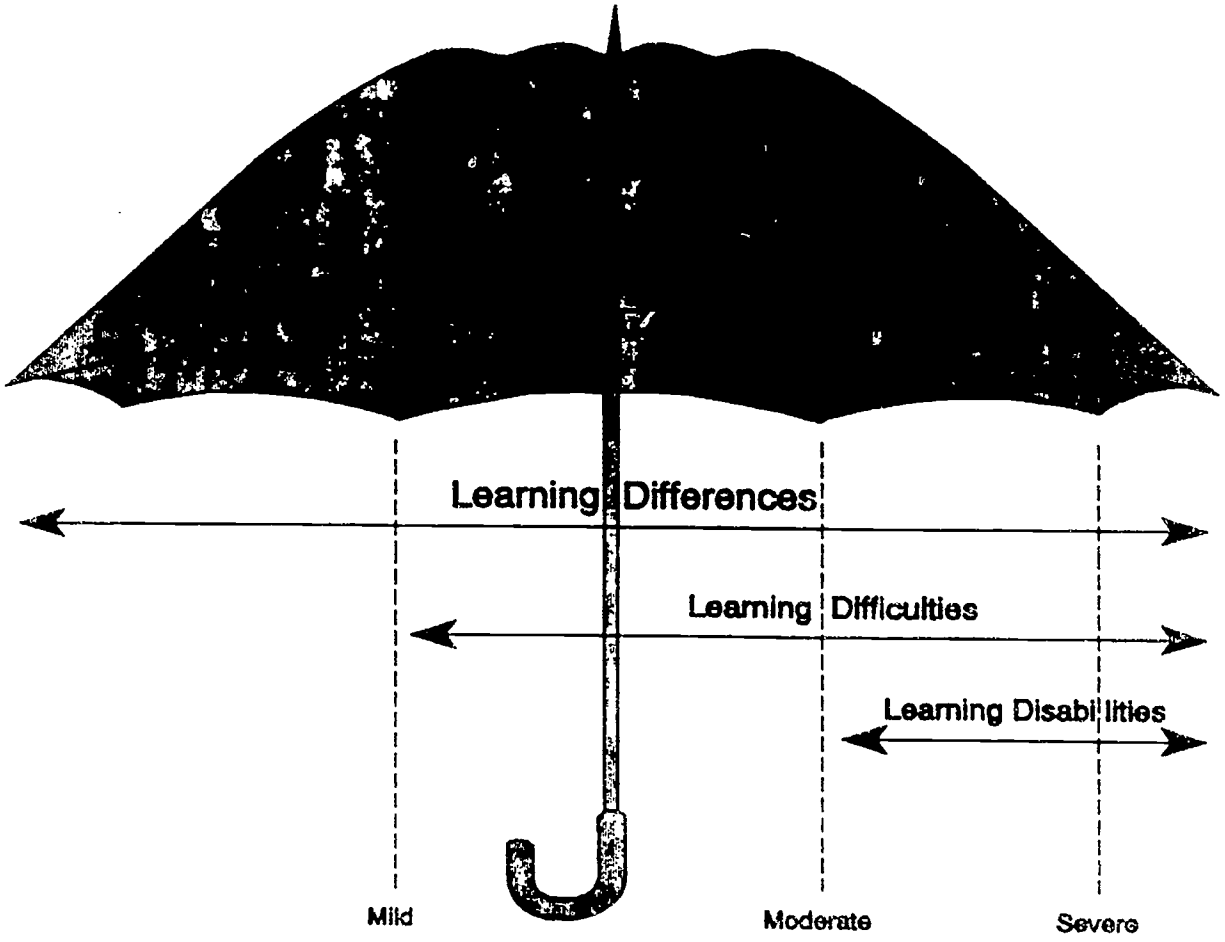
VIII. Wrap-Up and Evaluation

MOTIVATION	Who or what motivates adults to seek further education?
GOALS	What are some educational goals adults have?
ATTITUDE	What attitudes do adults bring toward learning?
ABILITY TO LEARN	What strengths do adults bring to learning?
SOCIAL CULTURAL CONTEXT	What social and cultural factors affect learning?
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	What types of teaching approaches work best with adults?

VISUALIZING LEARNING DIFFERENCES, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, AND LEARNING DISABILITIES



CONTINUUM OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND DIFFICULTIES



DEFINING LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (National Joint Commission on Learning Disabilities definition, 1988).

COMPONENTS OF DEFINITION

1. Refers to many different (heterogeneous) learning problems.
2. Presumed to be a basic dysfunction in the central nervous system.
3. May persist across the life span.
4. Occurs with varying degrees of severity.
5. Occurs across the intellectual range.
6. May impact several areas of adult life and functions.

WHAT LEARNING DISABILITY IS *NOT*

1. It is not retardation.

2. It is not due to other disabilities.

3. It is not due to cultural or linguistic differences.

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MATRIX:
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Student Classification Status	Has Learning Disability	Does Not Have Learning Disability
Identified		
Not Identified		

SCENARIO FOCUS QUESTIONS

PERSONAL/SOCIAL CONTEXT OF LEARNING:

LEARNING STRENGTHS:

ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES:

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TRANSPARENCIES

SESSION TWO

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INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENTS
(To Be Completed for Session Two)

During the period between Sessions One and Two, you will work with one of your students to learn more about what they want out of the learning process, their strengths, learning challenges that they have faced and how they have accommodated for areas of weakness, their support system, and where they will apply and refine the skills they develop while in your program.

This exercise has six goals. It will:

(1) Help you see beyond what often may seem to be a set of problems (or, as some would say, "deficits").

(2) Help you focus (or remain focused) on the students' goals.

(3) Enable you to work with students to modify your approach to instruction in a manner that addresses their strengths, goals, and particular needs.

(4) Provide you with a sense of them as a whole person and enable you, if necessary, to help the students identify and harness their own strengths.

(5) Provide information that we will use in Sessions Two and Three.

(6) Provide you with an experience (and model) for new ways to work with students in a learner-centered manner. (In order to assist you in this work, we have prepared a discussion guide and series of discussion questions, which you may use during your interview [H-?].)

Remember, returning to school is a heroic act for many learners — particularly for those who have learning disabilities. Adult learners are likely to drop out again if they do not feel comfortable in the classroom environment and if their goals and needs are not being met.

Bring the entire Interim Task Assignment packet with you to Session Two.

LEARNING DISABILITIES
SESSION TWO
AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of these workshops, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

AGENDA:

I. Introductions/Workshop Overview

II. Review of Session One

III. Review of Interim Task Assignment

BREAK

IV. Planning for Learning

V. Interim Task Assignment

VI. Evaluation/Wrap-Up

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT REVIEW
PART I

1. Why is knowing about a student's goals and interests important?

2. How can you determine learning strengths?

3. What kinds of accommodations might students with learning difficulties use?

4. What are the implications of learning strengths and accommodations for instruction for adults with learning difficulties?

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STUDENT PROFILE

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

STRENGTHS:

LEARNING DISABILITIES:

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION:

ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES:

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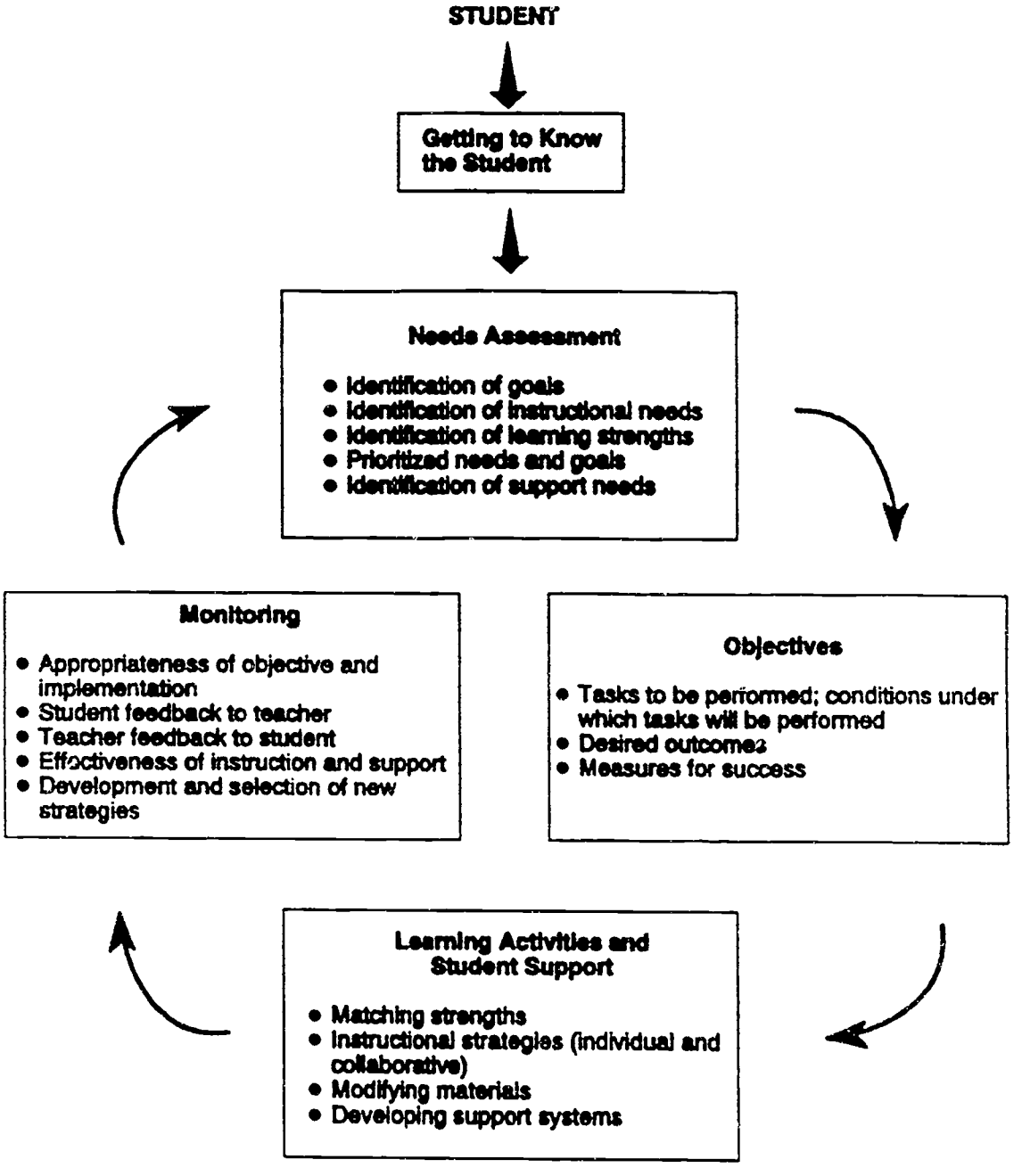
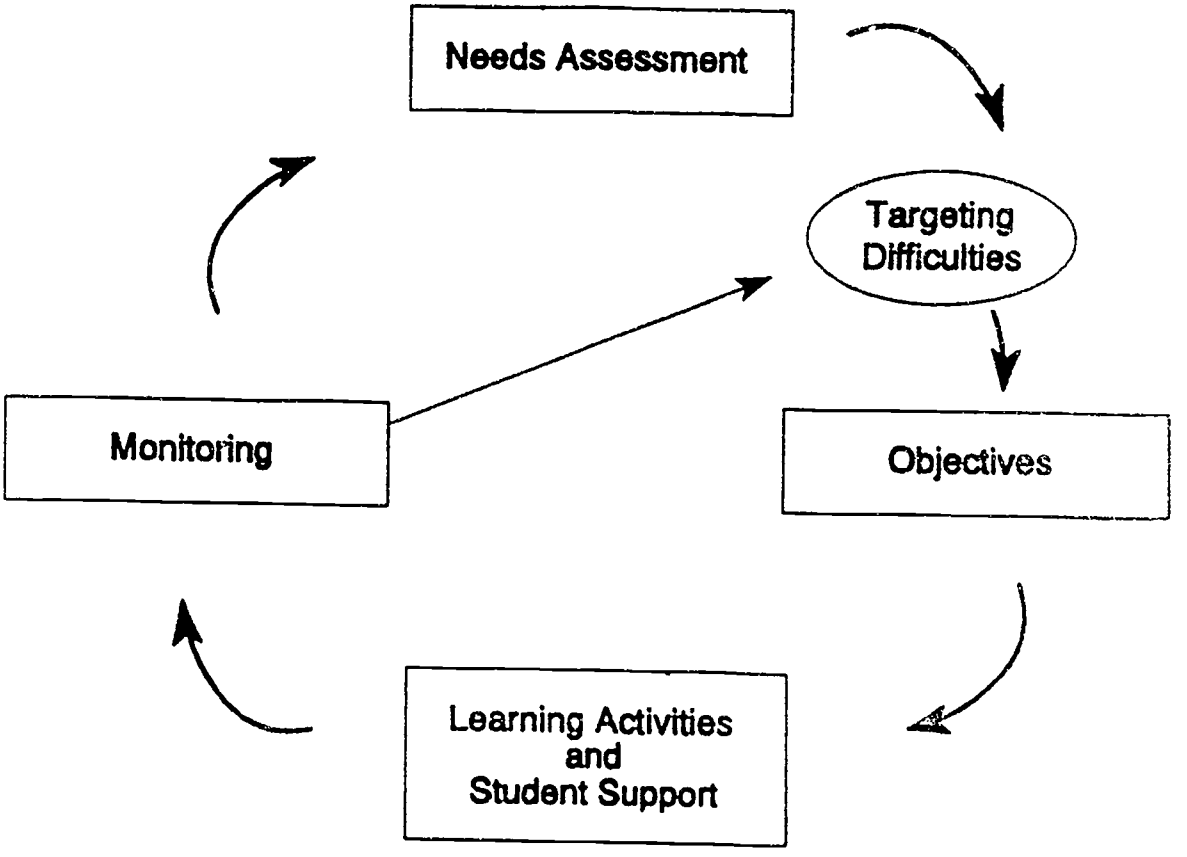
PLANNING FOR LEARNING
(Version 1)



PLANNING FOR LEARNING
(Version 2)



PLANNING FOR LEARNING
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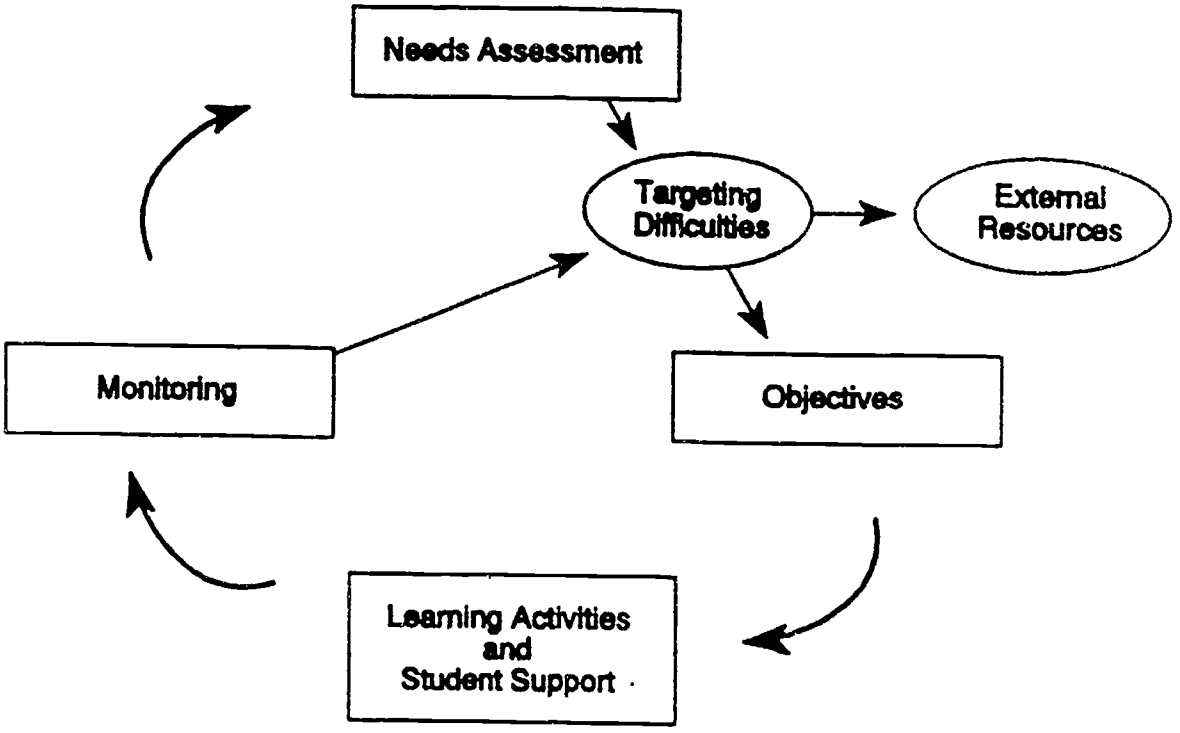
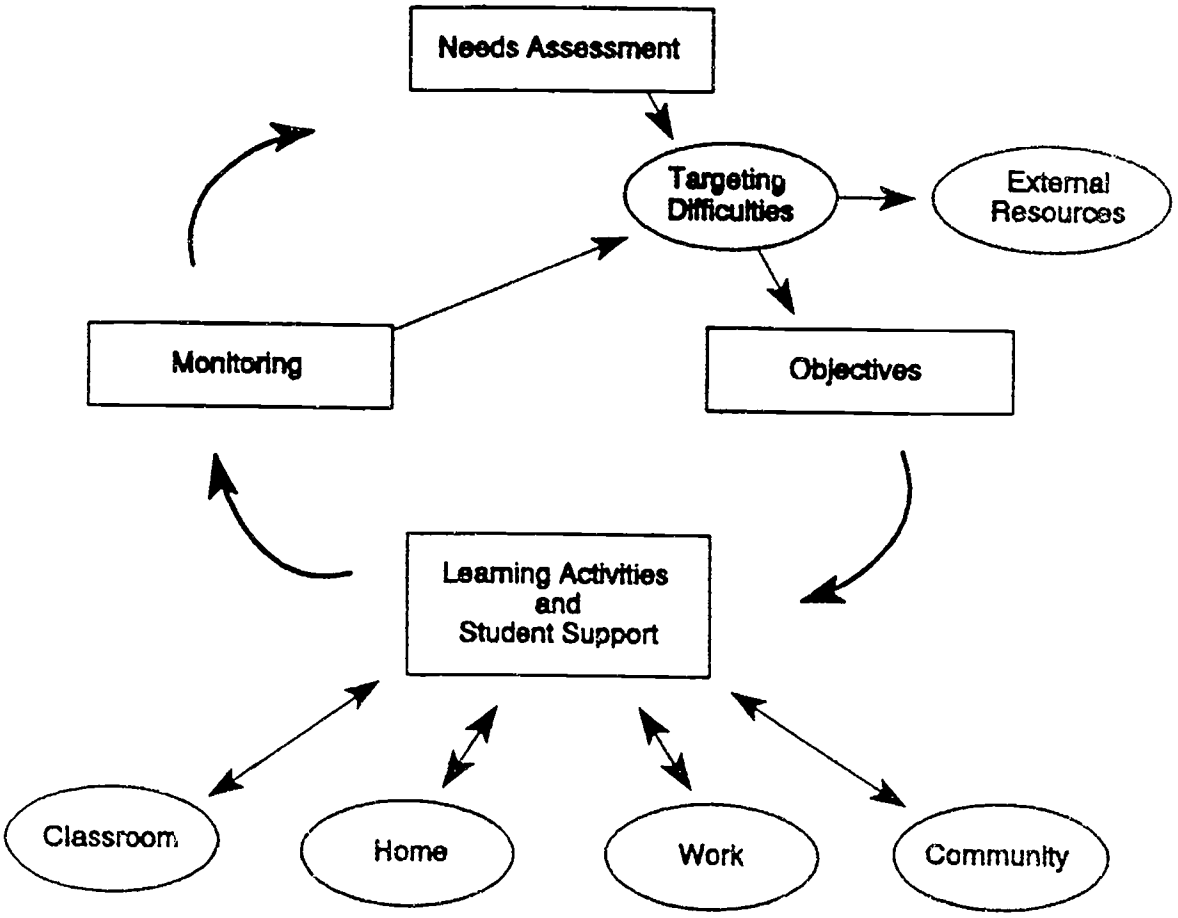


PLANNING FOR LEARNING
(Version 4)



VIDEO FOCUS CHART

GOALS
LEARNING STRENGTHS
LEARNING STYLE
NEEDS

ERIC

TRANSPARENCIES

SESSION THREE

LEARNING DISABILITIES
SESSION THREE
AGENDA

OBJECTIVES: By the end of Session Three, participants will be able to:

1) Discuss and analyze the distinctions between learning differences, learning problems or difficulties, and learning disabilities;
2) Identify learner strengths, learning styles, and needs;
3) Involve students in the identification of their own learning strengths and possible barriers to learning;
4) Reflectively modify their approaches so that they can more effectively work with students who have learning differences, learning difficulties, and learning disabilities; and
5) Make referrals when necessary and in a sensitive and appropriate manner (e.g., for students with profound learning disabilities and students who could benefit from other services).

AGENDA:

I. Introduction/Workshop Overview

II. The Reflective Practitioner

III. Review of Session Two and Interim Task

BREAK

IV. Planning for Learning

V. Developing a Monitoring Plan and Strategy

VI. Accessing and Using Resources

VII. How Do You Make It Happen?

VIII. Reflections on Workshop Processes

IX. Evaluation and Wrap-Up

INTERIM TASK ASSIGNMENT TWO
PLANNING *GUIDE*

STUDENT GOALS:

LEARNING STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON:

PROBLEMS TO ADDRESS:

MODIFICATIONS YOU INTEND TO MAKE WITH STUDENT:

LIKELY SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES:

INDICATORS OF CHANGE:

TARGETING TOOL

Potential Problem Areas	*Difficulties*				
	Visual	Auditory	Tactile/ Kinesthetic	Organizational	Social/ Emotional
Input					
Integration					
Output					

INPUT, INTEGRATION, AND OUTPUT OF INFORMATION

INPUT → INTEGRATION → OUTPUT

INPUT	Seeing Hearing	Involves reading Listening to discussion, lectures, tapes
	Touching Smelling Tasting	Hands-on experiences, observing

↓

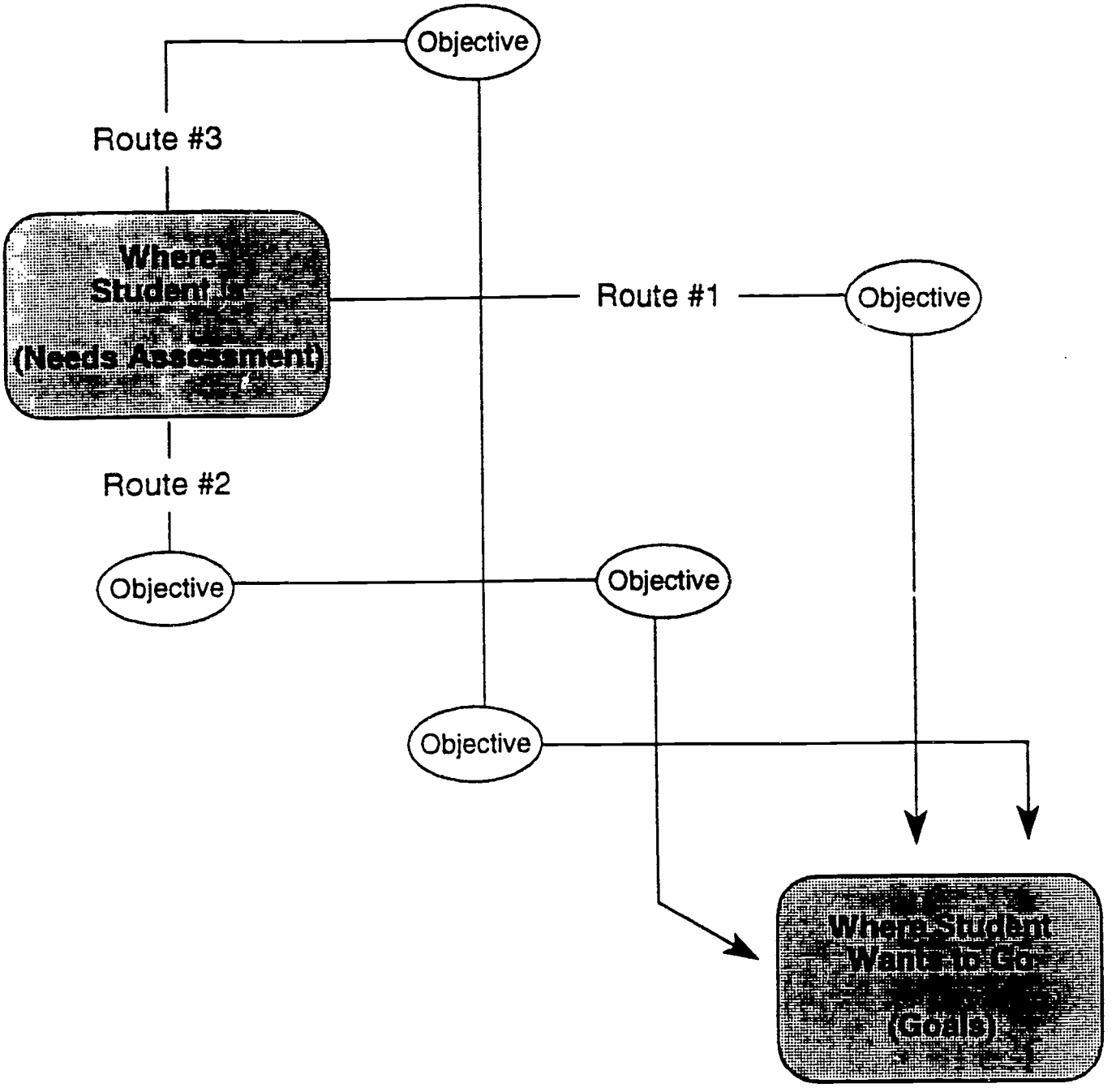
INTEGRATION	Sequencing	Organizing information into an order that makes sense, spelling
	Abstracting	Inferring meaning from words or recognition
	Organizing	Relating new information to previously learned information
	Memory	Retaining information while attending and concentrating on it from a few minutes to more than 24 hours

↓

OUTPUT	Speaking	Involves giving oral reports, participating in discussion
	Writing	Writing reports/exams
	Gestures/ Facial Expressions	Understanding social cues/body language

Goal	Learner Strengths	Learning Difficulties	Objective	Plan to Achieve Objective	Monitoring	Indicators o Achieving Objective
Passing the GED.	Visual & auditory learner. Attentive to environment. Highly motivated.	Poor vocabulary. Poor memory.	Increase vocabulary.	Focus vocabulary building measures on words that learner sees repeatedly at home, in community, at work (e.g., stop, exit, milk).	Have student read words and explain meaning. Ask student if plan is working.	Increased abil to read and understand wo as evidenced i reading work *and* texts.

NEEDS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES



Adapted from Burkhart, P. and Reuss, S. (1993), *Successful Strategic Planning.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

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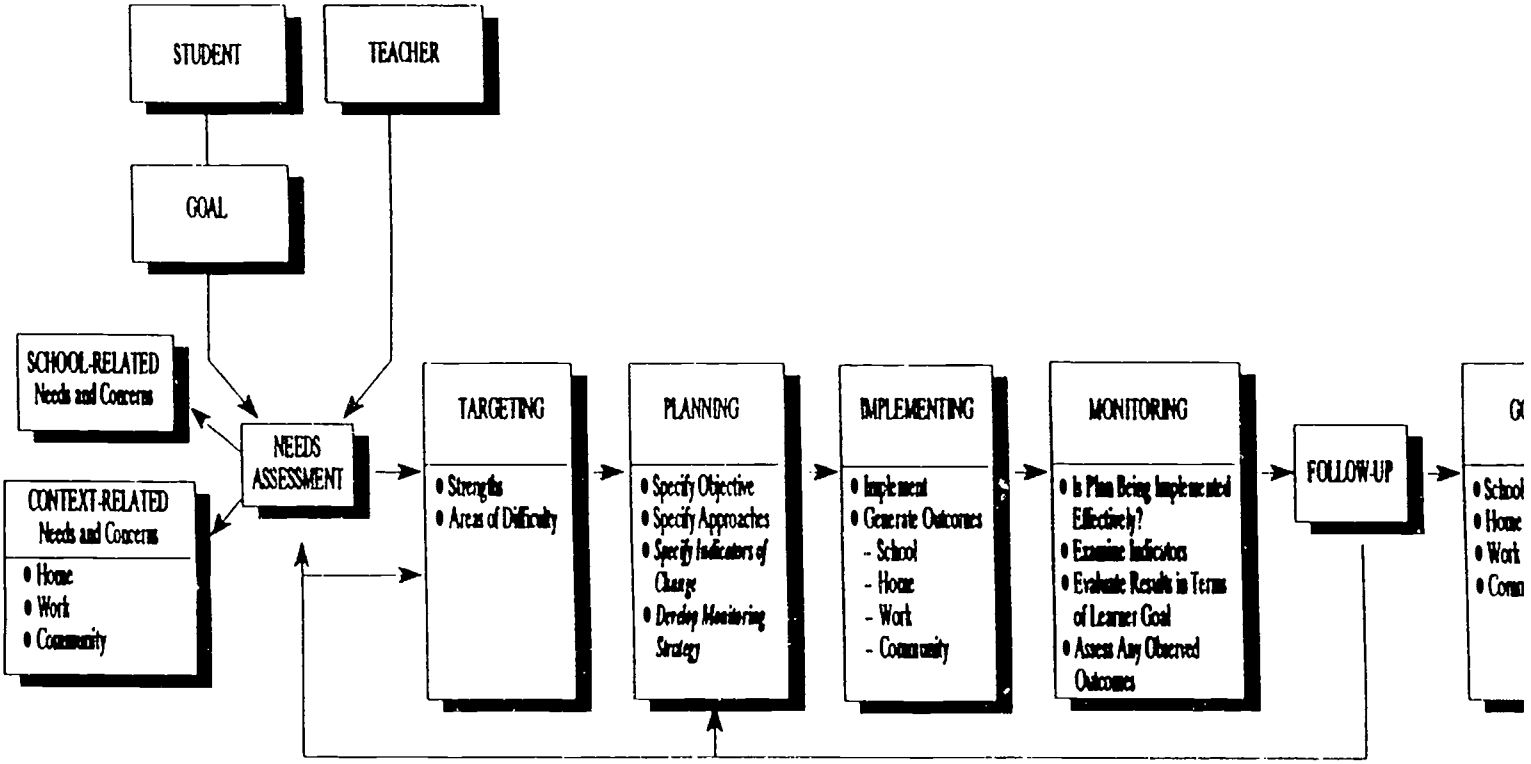
STUDENT
TEACHER
GOAL
SCHOOL-RELATED Needs and Concerns
CONTEXT-RELATED Needs and Concerns
• Home
• Work
• Community
NEEDS ASSESSMENT
TARGETING
• Strengths
• Areas of Difficulty
PLANNING
• Specify Objective
• Specify Approaches
• Specify Indicators of Change
• Develop Monitoring Strategy
IMPLEMENTING
• Implement
• Generate Outcomes
- School
- Home
- Work
- Community
MONITORING
• Is Plan Being Implemented Effectively?
• Examine Indicators
• Evaluate Results in Terms of Learner Goal
• Assess Any Observed Outcomes
FOLLOW-UP

REFLECTIONS ON WORKSHOP PROCESSES

Level of Comfort/Success with Material and Activities
Opportunity for Input
Opportunity for Social Learning
Variety
Experiences
Application

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

SESSION ONE

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SUCCEEDING AGAINST THE ODDS

Strategies and Insights from the Learning Disabled

Sally L. Smith

JT
JEREMY P. TARCHER, INC.
LOS ANGELES

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13
What Teachers Can Do

"I felt sorry for my teachers. They didn't know what to do with me!"

"If you can't learn one way, they need to try another way, and another, but most teachers won't or don't know how to."

"It's important for teachers to pull out of you what you do and don't understand."

"Classes have to be smaller. Teachers can't help you if they don't know you."

"Ask a professor for help—dog him, dog her, nag if necessary, then hope he'll take the time."

"Teachers need to learn the art of listening."

"Every teacher should be made to take a course on learning disabilities."

Many adults with learning disabilities talk of recurring nightmares about elementary school:

- being called upon and being unable to utter a word
- being asked to write something and the pencil flying out of their hands

- being asked to do a math problem, and the numbers turning into slimy creatures that squirm off the page
- sitting on a stool with a teacher pointing a stick at them

Hans Christian Andersen, author of *The Ugly Duckling*, had, in his sixties, nightmares of a schoolmaster making fun of him. Despite all their triumphs, many celebrities with learning disabilities still shudder in the presence of a teacher. Anger creeps into their words as they talk about their teachers. "He thought I was stupid and let everyone know it!" said one of them. Another got even by drawing gross cartoons of his teachers. One obliterated teachers from his mind. Still another said that his success occurred with the help of his wonderful family and friends and *despite* his teachers.

Some teachers prefer to work with the advanced, uncomplicated students who progress rapidly. They resent having to adapt their teaching methods for a student with learning disabilities. Thomas told fellow Night School students that he had experienced the impatience of these teachers, who did not want to be bothered by him or by his mother and father. One teacher calmly told Thomas that he was limited and should go to vocational school. From then on the teacher ignored him.

How could that teacher fail Thomas so totally? Perhaps the kindest answer is that many teachers, never trained to work with exceptional students, are baffled about how to help them. Many teachers are overburdened by having as many as forty-five in a class, often including at least five with special needs.

It is hard work to be a teacher, especially of students with learning disabilities, who can become all-consuming if a teacher does not have the training and support to work with them. They provoke anxiety in their teacher and make her fear that

she may never reach them. Easily defeated and afraid of failure, such students resist learning and set up impenetrable roadblocks. They convince many teachers to try another career! The students' feelings of worthlessness are contagious, and teachers sometimes catch them.

Teachers are often shocked by the depths of emotion their former students express, both positive and negative. "I was going to drop out of school in eighth grade," said Felicia, "but this one teacher would not let me do it. He argued with me. He attached himself to me. He told me there was a lot that I could do to make the world a better place. He asked me to research something about the aged for him. He got me involved in a service project, where he was the advisor. He managed to have time for a Coke after the service project and to be there for me. Eventually, he and I worked with another girl who was going to quit school because her learning disabilities were dragging her down. He even managed to develop an award with a trophy—*For the Most Giving Student to Those in Need*—and made sure I won it. He gave me *so* much confidence. He was my turning point. I'd like to give him *The Extra Mile* award because he saved my life . . . at least changed it for the better. He gave so much of himself."

There are successful adults with learning disabilities who credit a few dedicated teachers who went that extra mile for them with saving them from dropping out of school. They revere these teachers. "I overcame my particular problem because of really wonderful people, most of them teachers, who care very, very much. Gradually, with a tremendous amount of hard work and patience that I still can't believe, they convinced me somehow that I could do it. They helped me to compensate for whatever my problems were. They found a way around some of my difficulties and enabled me to gain for myself some self-confidence and some belief that I could do it," said Thomas Kean, former governor of New Jersey.

WHY TEACH?

Why do people become teachers? *Certainly it is not for the money.* It is to share the world of the mind; to bring the best out in students; to help them forge ahead, acquire skills and knowledge, develop interesting lives, and excel in their chosen professions. Sometimes teachers lose sight of these goals and try to cram facts into their students' heads rather than to encourage their curiosity or to seek better ways for them to acquire learning skills.

For example, a student had handed in her best paper to date to a university teacher who glanced at the paper, threw it back to her, and said, in front of other students, "This is not college material! Why are you here?" The college student had the thinking skills of a gifted adult but, because of her learning disabilities, the writing skills of a fifth grader. She should have been given three different grades—one for content, one for effort, and one for writing skills. Her teacher was destined to become for her one of those negative memories that we saw in the preceding section.

The best teachers, the ones who become their students' treasured memories, are those with a sense of mission. They are moved by the joy of learning, and feel compelled to share that joy with others. They take pleasure in seeing a student become excited about learning and take off on her own. Such caring, conscientious, dedicated teachers give their all to their students.

All teachers who go into special education must be such people because they will be dealing with children and adults whose lives are on the line. Because the stakes are so high and the job is so difficult, such teachers need more patience than others do. They also need to be more analytical. Special-education teachers have to keep asking what works and what doesn't. They must constantly look for patterns in learning and in

behavior that can be used successfully with particular students. What interests of the student can be built upon? Special education at its best is high-quality individualized education.

With a broad smile on his face, Garrett, a graduate of the Lab School who could not read until he was thirteen years old, told of "the day that everything clicked. I will never forget that feeling—like a deep rush of emotions pouring out, like fireworks exploding into magnificent color patterns in the sky. I could read a page, then another and another, and I went on and on. My teacher hugged me and turned red, and she had tears in her eyes. Even though I was thirteen years old, I hugged her. She had made it possible! And now I read at least a book a week."

The few adults at Night School who have had some *special* (that is, individualized) education seem far better disposed toward teachers than do the other students. Most of them embraced the instruction they received, and many adored their special-education teachers, even though they resented being in special classes and having to leave their friends to go to the resource room for special education. A graduate of the Lab School told students that "all teachers should be required to teach special education, particularly to teach the learning disabled, for one year, before they are allowed to teach in regular schools. Maybe then teachers would realize that there is a way everyone can learn, and they would learn to individualize and be creative."

THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS

The adults at the Night School have the courage to put themselves on the line. They realize that it is up to them to learn, that teachers can't open up their heads and pour in skills. They become coinvestigators into their own problems and coworkers on the solutions.

It is evening when they come in to study, most of them straight from their jobs, their families, or their universities. They are tired. Their teachers have to radiate energy and charisma. They have to arouse enthusiasm and energy in these students to ready them to start learning. And then they must deliver the very best of their knowledge and teaching. It's a tall order, night after night. Not everyone can meet the challenge.

Humor abounds at the Night School. Classes are filled with laughter and a sense of fun, which is terribly important. Students know they are with faculty who are human—who believe they can learn and will not give up on them. They rely upon being talked to very directly. They expect to be treated with respect and not talked down to. Unlike kids, who are required to go school, adults make this choice themselves. Once at school, they want the expertise of the teachers. In some ways they are more demanding than children. They wear out their teachers in a different way.

Adults with learning disabilities often have a ferocious intensity, demanding to know everything and to be able to take off in leaps and bounds. They require the most experienced, the most knowledgeable teachers, who can answer their many questions, who can explain why they are being taught in divergent ways, who can do diagnostic and prescriptive tutoring, saying, for example, "Because you tend to learn in this way, we are going to have to adapt your materials in the following way." Volunteers in literacy programs, who often know little about learning disabilities, are sometimes staggered when they encounter this intense thirst for knowledge; they don't know how to deal with it. The situation is unfair both to the volunteers and to the students unless top professionals are guiding the volunteers every step of the way.

When adults seek help at the Night School, they know that the ultimate responsibility is theirs. Faculty find it exhilarating to teach people who want to learn, who want to soak up

every bit of their knowledge. They don't have to play games with their students. Everything is laid out clearly, from the plan of instruction to goals and objectives. At each session adults expect their faculty to go over with them exactly what they will do.

Teachers working with a group of five adults have to be even more organized. Each of the five, each hour, must have an organized progression of activities written down in a folder before him. The teacher switches back and forth among the five students with ease, operating from a highly organized work plan, within which she can be creative as the need arises. But the essential goal remains matching student and teacher—creating an alliance that works.

"That teacher is not my style," said one of the adult students, Julian, to the Night School director, and the director immediately went to work to find the one that would form the proper match. Julian was back a week later reporting, "She's doing everything I need to learn!" Adults give teachers the feedback they need. They can reveal what children cannot.

Although things are improving in 1991, there are few good adult materials for low-level readers. Teachers obviously don't want to give childish materials to adults, yet the materials must be simple enough that adults with reading difficulties can follow them. Children's materials will not do. Therefore, teachers of adults have to make a lot of their own teaching materials, and they have to modify materials originally intended for children. Adults want practical materials that teach them skills they can use every day. As described in detail in chapter 7, adults tend to learn best by doing, just as children do.

When working with adults, teachers need to realize that their students are often burdened with many outside problems, such as taking care of children or parents. Although they tend to do more than is required of them and often hold themselves to standards higher than their teachers expect,

sometime the pressures of living, a job, a recession, or a war affect their work. The approach or the pace of a teacher's lessons may at times have to be changed.

A teacher of adults needs to keep himself from stepping over the line from being a friendly professional to becoming a dear friend. Sometimes adult students need to lean on a strong shoulder, but for the most part, teaching and tutoring sessions should be focused on work. Teachers ought not to cry on the shoulders of their adult students, though this sometimes does happen because the learning disabled are often extremely nice, sensitive, caring people.

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

There are a number of principles of teaching students with learning disabilities that hold for adults as well as children. These are discussed below.

Individualizing

All children and adults deserve individualized education. The individual needs and learning styles of each student must be recognized and built upon by his or her teachers. This means looking at each student and listening carefully. It also means choosing materials and methods appropriate to each student's interests, abilities, and learning style. (More about this below.)

Focusing on Strategies, Not on Problems

When a student has trouble learning, the *teacher's role* is to show her that her failure is caused by inefficient and ineffective strategies, not by lack of effort, intelligence, character, or discipline. The teacher then needs to help the student seek new strategies.

Problem Solving

A student's failure to learn means that we have not yet found the way to teach him. The teacher must keep on exploring, doing the necessary detective work, until the way is found. Older students with learning disabilities need to take an active part in this pursuit as codetectives in search of their own learning styles.

Problem solving is the essence of teaching. Teachers of the learning disabled are, by nature, problem solvers. First they must solve the puzzle of how a student learns. Then they must invent exciting ways to teach her. Teachers who are excellent problem solvers use the student's help in developing strategies that work.

Preventive questioning, a technique of problem solving, raises questions such as these:

"What part of this can you do by yourself?"

"Where will you have trouble?"

Preventive questioning alerts the student to anticipate problems that may arise.

Reframing is another technique that works. When a student says, "I'm failing everything," the teacher reframes the statement by saying, "Yes, you are failing English, but you are doing well in math and science." People with learning disabilities often have difficulties with part-whole relationships: they do not see all the parts that make up the whole, and they interpret one failure or mistake as utter confirmation of their worthlessness. If the one failure is not reframed, they tend to feel hopeless or depressed and may even back out of their academic pursuits.

Analyzing Tasks

Just as teachers need to analyze how their students learn, so they must analyze what it is they are trying to teach. A physical-education instructor hands out combination locks to his adolescent students. Does he consider what is involved in working a combination lock? José, an adult with learning disabilities, says that he failed physical education as a youth because "I wouldn't dress out [change into athletic clothes]. Why? Because I couldn't figure out the gadget, the combination lock, but, look, how did they expect me to do that when I can't tell right from left?" Part of teacher training must be in analyzing the tasks students are being asked to do. Consider the task of opening a combination lock. It can be broken down into at least seven functions demanding skills such as

- knowing left from right
- having sufficient eye-hand coordination to (1) hold the lock in one hand; (2) do the combination with the other; and (3) be able to move fingers in a direction away from the thumb
- reading symbols, recognizing numbers, seeing the spaces between each slash mark and the numbers on the lock
- remembering the combination and what to do
- understanding the sequence (left turn, right turn, left again, pull)
- having a sufficiently developed sense of timing to know when to pull the lock
- having the attention span to stick to the task

José's gym teacher expected all sixteen-year-olds to be able to do these things. He didn't notice that José had trouble with the task. If the gym teacher had taken the trouble, he

could have broken down the task, found out which parts of the task José could accomplish alone, and taught José the other parts of the task. It is good practice to start teaching such a student at a little below his competence level in order to ensure success. The teacher should have asked himself questions such as

> Will José learn best by demonstration?
>
> Do I need to talk him through it?
>
> Will he learn best by hearing instructions?
>
> Would written instructions help him?
>
> Do we need to develop strategies to help him distinguish his left side from his right?

Keith told José that he put a purple sticker on the left side of his combination lock so all he had to remember was "go purple to 5, the other way to 30, purple to 7, and pull."

Varying Teaching Methods

In general, teachers need to know all the methods and approaches that have been developed to teach a particular subject so that they can pluck out the one that they need for a particular student. Individualizing means matching the methods to the student and tailoring them to fit his needs. A teacher must analyze his own patterns of learning and understand his own learning style so that he can vary it for his students. When teachers are pressured to teach too many students at once, one unfortunate consequence is that a single method is likely to be adopted and all students will be expected to conform to it. If a student has severe auditory and language problems and her school system uses a phonetic approach to reading, she is being set up for failure after failure.

In college, where classes are smaller, professors can be encouraged to help the learning disabled seek ways they can be successful. On the other hand, some college classes have more than a hundred students in them. The college's division of Academic Services or Learning Services can help students choose the classes or instructors that will best meet their needs.

Providing Structure

Regular routines, clear procedures, and customary behavior let students know what to expect in a classroom. In general, persons with learning disabilities have difficulties in establishing and maintaining inner boundaries and parameters and therefore need even more structure in their learning environment. Teachers must establish a time, a space, and a place for all things. Open shelves help students see where things belong. Younger children need to practice how to enter a room, how to leave it, how to find materials, and how to return them to their proper places.

Since people with learning disabilities can become easily overwhelmed, the teacher has to limit the amount of stimulation in the room—the amount of work, materials, procedures, choices, and talking—all without limiting the student.

Explaining and Demonstrating Tasks

With students of all ages, teaching the approach to a task, as well as the task itself, can be very helpful. This means talking through the whole procedure, giving an overview of the task, and explaining what it is and where to begin. Often it means giving the student a dry run through the task so that he can understand it based on concrete, hands-on experience.

Students with learning disabilities, who are often language impaired, need to be given clear, precise direction in a minimum of words. Teachers need to listen to the directions

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they give and to show students what these directions mean in terms of the actions they must take. "Half the time I mess up on the directions given to me," said Mark, a college student with learning disabilities. Yolanda said that her problems were that some professors talked too fast and were barely audible. Teachers should train themselves to use vocal inflections and pauses consistently to emphasize important points in their lectures.

Giving the Gift of Time

As discussed in chapter 6, timing and time-management difficulties must be understood by teachers who have students with learning disabilities. What is hard to realize is how slowly such students process what is heard, what is read, and what has to be written. Throughout this book, the voices of celebrities tell the reader how much longer it took them to do what everybody else could finish in minutes. Teachers need to experience what it is like to be given an assignment (written in gibberish) and to watch the people next to them (whose assignments are not written in gibberish) finish in a minute while they are still struggling. The abilities of the learning disabled often cannot be evaluated when they are held to a time limit. Such people need the gift of time.

Building on Strengths

Teachers need to pick up on anything a student enjoys, be it automobiles, football, fashion, art, TV, or cooking. All these things can provide a route to learning. Make special materials to teach what students need to know through what they like to do, want to do, and *can* do. Discover the particular talents of each student and work these talents into the life of the classroom. Make sure that the student with learning disabilities holds responsibility in the area of her strengths. Do not simply praise her talent. Depend on her.

With children, it is important to schedule any remediation classes for times when a student will not have to be pulled out of his favorite classes. Adults need to have remediation scheduled at a time that does not conflict with things they like and do well.

Making Progress Visible

Students need constant and visible proof of progress, shown, for example, on graphs or charts, in cartoons, or on checklists. Certificates of accomplishment are treasured proof of competence. Students should make comparisons with their earlier work and see with their own eyes that whereas they could read only a paragraph in September, they can read a small book in April. As discussed in chapter 7, their concreteness requires that they be able to see progress.

Parents also need to see the student's strengths in some visible form. When a teacher presents a report on the student's progress, it should be concrete. Pieces of the student's work should be picked out and patterns of errors and corrections visibly displayed to parents, who often are also concrete. Successes should be highlighted as well as mistakes.

Teaching through the Five Senses

New material needs to be linked to past knowledge and experiences. Unfamiliar material can sometimes be linked to parts of the body. For instance, the five vowels can be linked to the five fingers, each with a different function.

Simple, elementary tasks need to be presented in unique, sophisticated, and alluring ways. Students can study the early history of mathematics by pretending to be shepherds tallying their sheep with knots on a string or scratches on a rock. As the flock grows, new computing methods will have to be invented. Abstract concepts in political science, such as the global balance of power, can be demonstrated with scales.

Some students have very poor rote memories. For such students a teacher must find methods of evaluation other than examinations. Drawings, cartoons, projects, tape recordings, and papers written on computers can all be used. The learning disabled know more than they can demonstrate by traditional means. So, the teacher must find each student's proper medium and have the student use it to show what she understands. Also, memory can be strengthened if a student is given a concrete reminder, such as a tea bag to hold in an American history class to recall "No taxation without representation." A whiff of curry powder can remind students that the explorers of the fifteenth century sailed around the world looking for the spices of the Orient. Vocabulary development can be helped by studying word derivations and finding their concrete origins. For example, a picture of Nicolas Chauvin in a Napoleon hat might evoke the word *chauvinism*, meaning "a blind fanatical patriotism" such as Chauvin had for Napoleon. Reinforce what has been learned by constant repetition, in different ways, through different media, until the learning sinks into the bones and becomes automatic.

Not Catching Others' Feelings

Feelings of defeat, of fear, of anger, and of guilt are extremely contagious. Teachers need to learn not to respond in kind to their students' negative feelings but rather to use those feelings diagnostically. Edwin came into the Night School angry. He started to argue with his teacher over some insignificant point. His teacher was able to register Edwin's feelings and say, "You're angry about something. I can tell because I wasn't angry this evening, but the moment I was with you, I started feeling angry. So deal with it or talk to me about it and then get to work!" Teachers have to be enough in touch with their own feelings to be able to register the feelings of their students.

Valuing Effort

All teachers know the value of praise. *It is important to give specific, not global, praise;* to value effort and positive attitudes; to show appreciation when students are willing to be taught; to ask questions; and to be sensitive to the needs of others. For example:

> "You certainly look ready to learn."
>
> "I like the way you are looking me in the eye."
>
> "I'm impressed that you remembered to bring everything for the project."
>
> "You struggled. You stuck to it and came through!"

Changing Pace

Anticipation is a key to teaching people with learning disabilities. The teacher needs to anticipate when a student will start to become overwhelmed by too much material. The teacher must stay several steps ahead in order to anticipate when the student will become restless or unable to remain in a group and will therefore need to switch to another activity. Anticipation, with humor, can facilitate a transition, as when a teacher says, "Well, now, it's about time for you to throw down your pencil, grunt, and state what a dumb, boring activity this is!" If a student can laugh, his mood changes and a problem is averted.

Changes of activity and pace help hold wavering attention. Remember, the attention span of a student with learning disabilities can often be short. Teachers have to entice attention, lure it, and hang on to it in every possible way—by catching a student's eye, altering the tone and volume of voice, using dramatic gestures, touching a shoulder, and using a student's name. As one businessman with dyslexia put it, "The

teacher is the seller. The student is the purchaser. He can be turned off easily unless the teacher really makes an attempt to sell especially to him!"

Always have alternative plans and backup material on hand. On some days (particularly on overcast, stormy days or right before the full moon), students become more restless, and teachers need the flexibility to drop a lesson and change plans. College professors who teach small seminars can change pace; in large lecture-hall classes, it is more difficult.

Setting Goals

With students who are learning disabled, it is important to set a few simple goals to be accomplished each year. These can be behavior goals such as not interrupting or academic goals such as mastering fractions. They can be goals of bringing homework in or remembering to bring a pencil to class. Students must take part in setting their goals. Teachers and students need to check in periodically through the year to see how these goals are being met. Students do best having some goals but not too many.

Adults with learning disabilities need to set different goals, such as improvement on the job or movement to another job in a few years. Such goals help them to reach higher and not be complacent. Successful adults with learning disabilities tend to have had very specific goals that they strived to achieve. Success didn't just happen to them. They aimed for it.

Innovating

When teachers use unusual, innovative teaching methods, students tend to be more interested and to learn more. The American Constitution can be taught as if to a Russian student just learning about democracy. Tyranny can be studied in the

persons of Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin, and Saddam Hussein: if they were in charge, how would they change the United States? If poetry is being studied, an Indian drum can be used to convey rhythm in the works of such poets as Vachel Lindsay and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Originality on the part of the teacher encourages individuality on the part of the student.

A sense of adventure should pervade what happens in school. Trips of the mind and the soul should take place. Surprises, from time to time, should provide delight (even though the learning disabled have trouble dealing with changes in routine). Education must be a journey into ideas, not just an acquisition of facts. All the senses need to be engaged.

The intellect needs to be challenged through using the senses. Imagination needs to be tapped to gain the total involvement of a student. The use of the absurd to get across a point works with the learning disabled. Laughter is an important teaching tool. It commands attention. It motivates. It tells the student that his troubles with studies are not catastrophic.

Teachers need to emphasize the importance of diversity and divergent thinking, not only by having students study the different backgrounds and customs of various countries but also, for instance, by encouraging them to come up with as many ways as possible

- to describe a storm
- to protect America's water supply
- to draw a map
- to protect an animal threatened with extinction
- to celebrate birthdays

Obviously, people who do not learn in orthodox ways profit from unorthodox teaching methods. A lot of the talents developed by the celebrities who appear in this book were overlooked in school. These talents could have been detected

and developed sooner if their teachers had taught in more innovative ways.

It is time to bring art forms back into the classroom so that crafts, drama, puppetry, music, dance, filmmaking, and ceramics can join the computer as learning tools. The hidden talents of students are waiting to be explored. Teachers can explore and nurture these talents, but they need supervisors who will encourage and help them. They need principals who will lead the way, encouraging their staffs to discover and use new tools. They also need school boards that will rely less on quantitative measures such as test scores, since nontraditional learning often cannot be measured annually but tends to show results only over longer periods of time.

The following charts can help teachers look for their students' strengths and weaknesses.

If a person has a preponderance of checks in the last two columns, he or she may be demonstrating a number of attentional, organizational, and social immaturity problems similar to learning-disabled students, and needs to be referred for testing.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
Extraordinarily observant				
Listens well to instruction				
Follows oral directions well				
Speaks to the point				
Well focused on tasks				
Completes tasks within time frame				
Is on time to classes				
Homework handed in on time				
Follows written directions well				
Tests well, particularly multiple choice				

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CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR (cont.)	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER
Good use of space on a page				
Moves well (not clumsy)				
Knows left from right side				
Good handwriting				
Takes good notes				
Neat desk				
Brings necessary materials to class				
Follows procedures carefully				
Good follow-through on projects				
Consistent in responses to questions				
Remembers information well				
Good with symbols and codes				
Good with foreign language				
Good with algebra and chemistry				
Good at organizing work				
Alphabetizes well, uses library well				
Self-starter				
Adjusts well to changes in routine				
Moves easily from one activity to another				
Can do several things at once				
Welcomes new approaches				
Eager for new information				
Sensitive and considerate of others				
Takes turns easily				

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THE CHANNELS OF LEARNING

What channels does each student use? Look for patterns of strengths and deficits, know the deficit areas, and build on the strengths.

ACTIVITY	VISUAL/ SPATIAL CHANNEL		VISUAL/ MOTOR CHANNEL		AUDITORY/ LANGUAGE CHANNEL	
	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
LISTENING SKILLS						
Listens attentively						
Trouble following directions						
Asks for repeats of information						
Learns best from lectures						
Difficulty rhyming						
Memorizes by repeating out loud						
Doesn't like to be read to						
Prefers to see pictures than listen						
Does not like to deal with telephone calls						
Quickly hears difference between "b" and "v"						
ORAL EXPRESSION						
Excellent vocabulary						
Difficulty asking questions						
Good storyteller						
Cannot remember the correct word						
Problems organizing thoughts, speaking clearly						
Uses grammar and syntax well						

ACTIVITY	VISUAL/ SPATIAL CHANNEL		VISUAL/ MOTOR CHANNEL		AUDITORY/ LANGUAGE CHANNEL	
	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
ORAL EXPRESSION (cont'd)						
Has good social language (pragmatics)						
Creates pictures with words using descriptive vocabulary						
Prefers to draw than talk						
READING SKILLS						
Excellent retention of words seen (sight vocabulary)						
Mixes up b, d, p, and g						
Sees patterns in words (e.g., pat, cat, rat)						
Good sound... out of words						
Blends sounds well						
Doesn't learn from phonics						
Poor memory for consonant and vowel sounds						
Skips, omits, and adds words						
Poor comprehension of reading material						
Cannot keep place in the book						
Applies rules of syllabication						
Does not see details in words (e.g., vowel sounds)						
WRITING SKILLS (written expression and handwriting)						
Spells phonetically						

ACTIVITY	VISUAL/ SPATIAL CHANNEL		VISUAL/ MOTOR CHANNEL		AUDITORY/ LANGUAGE CHANNEL	
	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
WRITING SKILLS (cont'd)						
Accurately forms and spaces letters						
Good at art, poor at writing letters						
Writes 41 for 14, "saw" for "was"						
Difficulty copying from blackboard or book						
Poor note taking						
Traces letters well						
Poor spelling						
Poor coloring, pasting, cutting						
Doesn't like to do puzzles, mazes, word searches, follow-the-dot exercises						
Mixes up sequences within a word (e.g., *gril* for *girl*)						
Good handwriting						
Likes to write messages to everybody						

ARITHMETIC SKILLS						
Remembers multiplication tables easily						
Accurately forms and spaces numerals						
Mixes up signs of + x + –						
Can't align numbers properly in columns						

ACTIVITY	VISUAL/ SPATIAL CHANNEL		VISUAL/ MOTOR CHANNEL		AUDITORY/ LANGUAGE CHANNEL	
	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak
ARITHMETIC SKILLS (cont'd)						
Difficulty with word problems						
Misplaces decimal points in math problems						
Trouble identifying and producing geometric shapes						
Difficulty seeing angles						
Understands components of algebraic statements, but gets lost when completing full problems of several lines						

LEARNING CONTENT (e.g. geography, history, chemistry, biology)						
Mixes up South America and Africa on map						
Poor recall of geographical terms						
Able to take good notes						
Does well following picture sequences of experiments						
Trouble following oral directions for procedures						
Difficulty reading charts						
Good recall of historical dates						
Poor recall of chemistry symbols						
Good fund of general information						

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SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

SESSION TWO

LEARNING DIFFERENTLY:
MEETING THE NEEDS OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

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PREFACE

The Center for Literacy Studies, The University of Tennessee, is a multi-disciplinary research center on adult literacy. Funded by grants from the Tennessee Department of Adult and Community Education, The University of Tennessee and the Knoxville News Sentinel Company, the Center's goal is to conduct research which develops our understanding of adult literacy, its causes and effects on our society, and methods and approaches for literacy education.

When the Center for Literacy Studies began its work late in 1988, we met with literacy program coordinators and teachers in different parts of Tennessee to learn about their concerns and problems. We wanted to base our research on key issues in adult literacy for the state of Tennessee. Wherever we went we kept hearing about learning disabilities. Practitioners wanted answers to their questions: "How can we tell if someone has learning disabilities?" "How can we diagnose specific problems?" "Are there special methods for teaching learning disabled adults?"

In response to these concerns, we asked Beth Bingman to review the literature in the field, and to pull together approaches to diagnosis and teaching which easily could be applied by Tennessee programs. This is her report. We have concluded that there are no easy answers to all those questions. There are no 'quick fix' solutions, no one method that meets the needs of all. But learning disabled adults *can and do* learn to read. They and their tutors need to understand what their problems are, to take a flexible approach to teaching and learning, to be creative and to work hard. All of these are within the reach of every literacy program. We hope this report will help coordinators and tutors develop their own approaches to meet the special needs of the learning disabled.

Our thanks Mallory Clarke and to Advisory Committee members Anne Hablas, Margaret Bott and Jane Cody for commenting on a draft and to Mike Lemonds for design and production.

Juliet Merrifield
Director, Center For Literacy Studies

INTRODUCTION

Few issues are of more concern to literacy coordinators, or cause more frustration to students and tutors than learning disabilities. Why do some people have such a hard time learning to read? How can we tell if someone is dyslexic? How do we teach these students? This report looks at these questions and provides some tentative answers.

We look at working definitions of learning disabilities, and how they affect reading. We discuss how learning disabilities can be diagnosed, especially when professional testing is not available. And we review some useful ideas from a variety of sources on teaching reading to learning disabled adults. A Resources section will enable anyone who wants to learn more to follow up on the ideas presented here. And a series of Appendices contain some concrete methods which have been found useful in other programs.

WHAT ARE LEARNING DISABILITIES?

Many of you have taught in public schools and found that some children learned much more easily than others. Some seemed never to learn. And now you've found the same thing with adults. What is going on? Probably several different things. A few people may not have the time or motivation to work hard enough. But these are probably very few, and their lack of "motivation" may come from the difficulties they are having with learning. Some may have vision or hearing problems. These should be checked: can the person see clearly, can s/he hear? Some people have no problem with decoding, but have trouble with comprehension because they lack the background knowledge to understand much of what they read. We need to provide a lot of material that is familiar in language and content to build their fluency and at the same time begin to build their background information in all kinds of ways — like reading, videos and discussions.

Some learners have limited intelligence. They may be mildly or moderately mentally handicapped. Their difficulty in learning affects all areas and is evident in their conversation as well as in their attempts to read. They may be great at phonics, and therefore sound like good readers, but have little or no understanding of what they have read. Or their reading may be limited to survival words, words needed specifically for work, and things like family names. They may not become readers of new materials.

Then there are learners who clearly have the intelligence to read. They may even have learned to read, but can't spell "cat." These are the learning disabled.

Then there are learners who clearly have the intelligence to read. They know and understand a great deal. They have been in school long enough to have had the opportunity to learn to read. They may even have learned to read, but can't spell "cat." These are the people we mean when we talk about the learning disabled.

Specific Learning Disabilities is a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration, and/or demonstration of verbal and/or non-verbal abilities. (ACLD Board of Directors)

Students with specific learning difficulties, commonly known as dyslexia, are those who have some interference in the basic processes involved in using language, i.e., perceptual/ motor/ linguistic processes. These difficulties are independent of school experience, social, economic, or emotional factors or intelligence. (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit Report)

These are two of many definitions of a condition which is usually called learning disability in this country and learning difficulty in Britain. You are probably familiar with the definition in P.L. 94-142 of learning disabled children which covers nearly any school problem children may have which is not called something else.

Historically, educators talked about "word blindness", linked learning disabilities with hyperactivity, and assumed brain

damage. More recently learning disabilities were assumed to be the result of visual perceptual problems, were called dyslexia, and were suspected any time someone made reversals of b and d. This is still a common perception of the problem.

Some people believe that the idea of learning disabilities has little scientific basis, but has been adopted by parents and teachers as an acceptable way to explain school failure. Our view is that learning disabilities are real, but the concept probably has been abused.

Current research seems to indicate that learning disability is primarily a language disorder, a problem with information processing.

For our purpose we will define learning disability as a problem of people who have average (or above average) intelligence, but who have *specific* difficulties with basic language learning processes which affect their ability to acquire competence in reading, spelling, and writing. When we are talking specifically of reading we may also refer to dyslexia. While not discussed in this paper it is important to remember that learning disabilities can affect areas besides reading, including social skills.

HOW DO LEARNING DISABILITIES AFFECT READING?

Probably a more important question than definition is what does it mean when someone has a learning disability? Often we assume that the learning disabled see differently, that they reverse letters, see backwards, etc. For a small proportion this may be true; their problem involves visual perception.

Current research seems to indicate that learning disability is primarily a language disorder, a problem with information processing. This approach views the mind as a computer with information going in (sensory input), being processed (analyzed, sorted, etc.), stored (in short or long term memory), and in some cases resulting in an output (speech, writing). Most learning disabled people have problems with tasks in processing and storage of information. They may not be able easily to produce a verbal label. They see, for example, a picture of a train, they

understand it is a train, but they are slower than most people in coming up with the word train.

These learners may have problems with memory, either short-term memory for things like sequences of letters, or access to long term memory. Breaking words into separate sounds (phoneme segmentation), is difficult for many learning disabled readers. They may have difficulty in learning and remembering the sounds of words, with phonics.

Most learning disabled readers have trouble with breaking words into separate sounds.

Most "normal" readers seem to start by learning sight words, often in stories they already know. But because it is difficult to memorize very many words by sight alone, new readers begin to use phonics and word patterns to decode words. They begin to pay attention to beginning sounds, to "see" and "hear" the difference between sick and stick. This process happens automatically to some extent as readers try to decode words they don't know, and as they want to write. Phonetics are even more important in spelling.

Most learning disabled readers have trouble with breaking words into separate sounds. So for these readers the phonetic cues don't come easily. They have to learn them in a structured sequential way. And even then the phonetic cues may never work as well for them.

Fortunately most dyslexic people do not have problems with the meanings of words or text and so at the next stage of reading they can use context - semantic and syntactic cues - to decipher new words. The phonics problem become less significant when we recognize that reading is gaining meaning from print. Using a combination of basic sight words, phonetic cues like initial sounds and word patterns, and the meaning of the text, most learning disabled adults can learn to read. They will continue to need special work on spelling and often in how to organize their writing.

HOW IS A LEARNING DISABILITY DIAGNOSED?

Most literacy programs do not have access to a psychologist to give the battery of tests often used to "diagnosis" learning disabilities. It probably doesn't matter. The most common "symptom" for such a diagnosis is a significant difference on the verbal and performance sections of the Weschler intelligence test. As a teacher you will can tell this difference when you have a student who seems intelligent, who you expect will not have trouble learning, and s/he does. You are seeing a difference between expected and actual performance. Or you may notice a pattern of difficulties like these:

It is important to remember that all of these difficulties can be found in beginning adult readers. It is the persistence of these symptoms over time that indicates learning disability.

** shows significant discrepancy between verbal and written performance
** experiences persistent or severe problems with spelling, even with "easy" words
** has difficulty getting ideas on paper
** loses place easily in a series or in reading
** finds it difficult to memorize or remember facts, new terminology, names, etc.
** may easily misread or miscopy
** may experience right-left confusions
** handwriting may be messy
** written work may not adequately express student's understanding, ideas, or vocabulary
** has <u>persistent</u> problems with sentence structure, punctuation, and organization of written work, (not due to lack of experience)
** has trouble generalizing, or acquiring and applying rules
** has difficulty seeing his/her errors
** does not seem to learn by "ordinary" teaching methods
** may be described as a "quick forgetter"

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Educational Diagnosis

The next step to take with a student who seems learning disabled is for student and teacher to work together on an educational diagnosis. They will explore how the student learns, their strengths and weaknesses, why learning has been so difficult, and the student's learning style. In this process, the student should find that s/he is not stupid or crazy, but is someone who learns differently. A diagnostic approach should enable the student and teacher to establish an effective, individualized program, and encourage independence and confidence in learning. There are different ways to approach this process, but it should be done with the student. In the Resources section is the STALD test, which is somewhat mechanical, but could be useful (Montgomery, 1986.) The ALBSU program in England uses the four-part diagnostic process outlined on the next page.

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TEACHING READING TO A LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT

Some general points to remember when working with learning disabled adults:

** remember, the important skill is getting meaning from print
** have student do a lot of reading, e.g., language experience
** the material should be relevant, interesting, and familiar
** be positive, build on students' strengths
** usually one-on-one tutoring is needed for at least some individualized direct instruction on needed skills
** divide learning into small chunks
** provide many opportunities for repetition, review and over-learning
** pay attention to learning style (more about this later).

ALBSU (UK) EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSIS

1. A LEARNING HISTORY - informal interview. Students tell what they view as their significant problems and strengths, talk about learning to read, family history, school experiences, and so on.

2. MISCUE ANALYSIS - looking at miscues (errors) in an oral reading passage. (See details in Appendix A.) Students with visual processing problems may have difficulty recognizing known words, may rely heavily on sounding out words, will usually have poor comprehension. Students with auditory processing problems may have trouble decoding long or unfamiliar words, but will use context to correct many errors, and will remember a great deal of detail. Asking the student to re-tell the story, and questioning her/him about significant details enables the teacher to check comprehension, memory and sequencing ability.

3. SPELLING ERROR ANALYSIS - a dictation of at least 20-25 words. With the student the teacher analyzes errors into five categories:

a) logical phonetic alternatives which follow English spelling conventions, **hart** for **heart.**
b) visual sequencing errors, **dose** for **does.**
c) rule-oriented errors which do not follow English spelling conventions, **stashun** for **station.**
d) auditory perception errors, sounds missing or confused, **natul** for **natural.** (This could also be the result of regional accents.)
e) motor integration errors, repeating or adding or telescoping parts of words: like **beginining, rember.**

Students with visual processing errors are more likely to have a number of errors in b) and c); students with auditory processing problems in d).

4. WRITING ANALYSIS, in a piece of free writing, look at handwriting, compositional skills and technical skills. Does the student use standard punctuation and capitalization? Can s/he organize his or her thoughts in a coherent way? Does the writing make sense?

Source: Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, London

When planning instruction for learning disabled adults there are three areas to consider: direct instruction in the areas the students has problems with, usually reading and spelling; learning about learning or metacognition; learning style.

Direct Instruction

Each learner is different, has different needs and different problems.

Although some claim to have it, there is no one way to teach dyslexics to read. Each learner is different, has different needs and different problems. If a method promises to be the way, be careful!

Phonics: For most people with learning disabilities a reading program should include direct instruction on basic sight words, some phonics, and a lot of reading to practice using context and phonetic and word pattern cues. For many people the Laubach program may be as effective as any. But it is important to be flexible, not to worry too much about skills like blends if the student has a lot of difficulty with them. The important skill is reading in context, so while some practice on sight words, or 'word attack skills' (consonants, prefixes and suffixes) is useful, it should not take up much of the reading session or become frustrating.

Some severely disabled readers will need a multi-sensory approach to get started with sound and sight words. Seeing, hearing, saying, and tracing words may be necessary. Laubach does this to a certain extent, but additional work may be needed. The outline of the Fernald method in Appendix B may help.

Language experience: It is important to include a lot of additional reading which is in the oral tradition of the reader in subject and language. This includes language experience stories. It is much easier to read when you know what to expect: 'I was thinking about buying a new pickup,' instead of 'The time was approaching to purchase a new automobile.' Writing and collecting good material is an activity that may be useful to the individual learner, and can be used by other learners as well.

Comprehension: Because the emphasis needs to be on meaning not decoding, work on comprehension should be ongoing. Talk about the *who, what, why, where, how* of a passage. Help the student organize verbal information so word-by-word reading is avoided. Sometimes breaking sentences into meaningful phrases can help, e.g., "I was thinking / about buying / a new pickup." Comprehension strategies like questioning as you read, reviewing meaning, and finding the main points should be taught. Making a summary, or getting the gist of a piece of writing is an important skill, although difficult particularly for people with sequencing problems. Strategies developed by Keefe and Meyer are in Appendix C as well as information on how to get copies of an article by Bill Cosby which should help more advanced readers.

The emphasis needs to be on meaning not decoding.

Spelling: Many students identify spelling as the skill with which they have most difficulty. Working on spelling can improve reading, as students learn to pay attention to word patterns. The ALBSU program uses the LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK method developed by Robin Miller and Cynthia Klein. This method is in Appendix D. They find it is important to be regular and thorough in following the method. People do learn to spell.

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING - METACOGNITION

In addition to direct instruction in skills, learning disabled adults, and probably all literacy students, need to learn about learning. This is 'metacognition.' Skilled readers use metacognition when they:

- are aware of the purpose of reading - to construct meaning from what is read
- can distinguish the important parts of text, and know where to focus their attention and what to summarize
- monitor their comprehension and have strategies for 'de-bugging' (for example, varying their speed and attention level
- apportion their time effectively

Learning disabled adults need metacognitive skills to become autonomous and active learners. "To be able to use, modify, and generalize learned skills and strategies, learning disabled students must be able to monitor how well they are performing previously learned skills and strategies" (Wong, 1987.)

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The ALBSU program includes classes specifically focussed on teaching metacognitive skills. These classes are for students with specific learning difficulties who already attend classes, but need individualized support. Learning Support Classes cover:

** Developing spelling skills, discussion of:
- what spelling is (visual-motor memory skill)
- the distinction between reading and writing
- memory and memorization

** Becoming an effective reader: discussion of:
- what reading is (gaining meaning from print)
- distinction between reading and decoding
- distinction between reading and reading aloud
- skills needed in reading for different purposes
- the active reader

** Developing writing skills: discussion of:
- proofreading and its importance in becoming an independent writer
- writing for different purposes
- link between reader and writer
- distinction between writing and speaking

** Becoming an independent learner: discussion of:
- the role of the tutor/student in learning
- role of motivation in learning
- different types of learning (memorization, under standing, and activity)

The learning support class also gives students an opportunity to discuss problems which their disability has caused and share strategies for coping. They can share experiences and discover that other people are struggling with similar difficulties.

LEARNING STYLE

A third area to consider in planning the program with the adult learner, whether disabled or not, is learning style. The term 'learning style' is often used for different concepts. Probably we are most familiar with learning style as learning modalities - visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. These modalities are important. Some of us remember what we've heard better than what we've read. For others, the opposite is true. For some, writing or even "performing" a word or concept is the best way to learn. There are many checklists and tests to determine strong and weak modalities. Observation and asking may serve as well. When you and your student are aware of how s/he learns best, instruction and practice can be modified to fit.

It is also important to be aware of your own learning style in this area, and be sure that you use the style that helps your student.

It is also important to be aware of your own learning style in this area, and be sure that you use the style that helps your student. Looking at your own learning style also helps you be sensitive to students' different needs.

Another way to look at learning style is in terms of 'global' versus 'analytic' styles. Global learners are whole word readers and learn holistically, whereas analytic learners learn things in sequential steps (as in phonics instruction.) Although dyslexic learners often read in a holistic way, they may also need some structured work on phonics. They are not as likely as other students to acquire these decoding skills without direct instruction.

The differences in the right and left hemisphere of the brain give rise to a similar theory of learning style. 'Left-brain' people tend to like sequence, be more structured and systematic, solve problems by looking at parts, are excellent planners, and are analytic. Those who are more 'right-brain' people are involved with visual-spatial activities and are more random and spontaneous; they see patterns, solve problems by looking at the whole picture, and arrive at accurate conclusions intuitively.

Other learning style theorists look at environmental preferences in determining learning style. They consider such factors as level of noise, lighting, temperature, room arrangement, group size, time of day, mobility, whether people prefer to eat or drink while they study. It may be useful for learners to explore the environment that they prefer, and try to match it as much as possible.

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Learners and teachers who take account of different learning styles when planning activities, work in styles that are most comfortable for them, but can also experience new ways of learning. One model for this is the 4MAT system developed by Bernice McCarthy. She speaks of four styles:

1- Innovative learners who seek meaning, need to be personally involved, perceive information concretely and process reflectively, are innovative and imaginative. They ask "Why?"

2- Analytic learners who seek facts, need to know what the experts think, perceive abstractly and process reflectively, are interested in ideas and concepts more than people, are data collectors, create concepts and models. They ask, "What?"

3- Common sense learners who seek usability, need to know how things work, learn by testing theories in ways that seem sensible, perceive abstractly and process actively, need hands-on experiences, have limited tolerance for ambiguity, develop practical application of ideas. They ask, "How does this work?"

4- Dynamic learners who seek hidden possibilities, need to know what can be done with things, learn by trial and error, perceive concretely and process actively, are adaptable to change, intuitive, and carry out plans. They ask, "What can this become?"

McCarthy's model, 4MAT, involves teaching in a way that uses the strengths of all four types. The instructional process goes around a "circle of learning": from a concrete experience,

through reflection to concept formation, practice, and planning and carrying out work which involves the new concepts. This model of instruction is particularly useful in planning group activities, but can also be used in a one-on-one situation.

How useful are "learning styles?" At one extreme, Adrianne Bonham says, "The general view of learning styles is one of thinly developed theory and weak instruments, supported by fragmented research, often in settings not typical of adult education." At the other extreme are the claims that all educational ills can be solved by paying attention to learning style. The truth probably lies between the two. The notion of learning style is useful in at least these ways:

1- To help tutors be aware that we all learn differently

2- To help tutors be aware of their own style and how it affects their teaching

3- In designing methods that meet the needs of all students

4- To help students realize how they learn best

Educational diagnosis, continually observing and discussing with the student what works and what doesn't is probably the most important part of "diagnosis".

CONCLUSIONS

When we talk about adults with learning disabilities or dyslexia we mean people whose intelligence is at least "normal" but who have difficulty learning to read, write, and spell because of some disability in their language processing, a disability which is probably physiological. There are others who have a hard time learning to read because they have limited intelligence or a physical disability in hearing or vision. Some of the methods used with dyslexic learners may also be helpful for these people, but they are not learning disabled.

Many coordinators mentioned a need for determining who is learning disabled. To a large extent the important issue is how the person learns and doesn't learn. This is an issue with any student. Educational diagnosis, continually observing and discussing with the student what works and what doesn't is

probably the most important part of "diagnosis". While a professional diagnosis is usually not available and not always helpful, it can be a relief to students (and tutors) to understand that the reason they have had difficulty is because of a learning disability. This understanding can relieve the guilt and poor self-concept on one hand and lead to assurance that though it may not be easy, together the student and tutor can discover ways the student can learn. Going through checklists together is one way student and tutor can reach this understanding.

While a professional diagnosis is usually not available and not always helpful, it can be a relief to students (and tutors) to understand that the reason they have had difficulty is because of a learning disability.

Current research seems to indicate that most learning disabled people have problems with processing the sounds of language. They may not "hear" the different phonemes or sound that make up a word so they have difficulty in breaking a word into sounds for spelling and in blending sounds for reading. They may also be slower in retrieving the word they want from their memory. So, for example, when shown a picture of a laundromat, they understand that this is a place where people pay to wash and dry clothes, but they are slower in retrieving the word "laundromat". Problems with short-term memory complicate learning. Some learning disabled adults do have problems with visual memory and processing, for example the reversals we have tended to associate with 'dyslexia,' but most have problems in the area of memory and auditory processing.

Learning disabled adults don't easily pick up the phonetic cues as they begin to learn basic sight words. They may not be able to determine where the words clear and clean are different. Using context, both semantic and syntactical, is more useful than phonics for learning disabled readers. At the same time, some very specific instruction in phonics, particularly beginning sounds and recognition of common syllables like ing and tion is important. Phonics can help in word recognition, but should not be used to the point of "sounding" out words.
Learning how to learn is at least as important as specific instruction in reading for learning disabled adults. The student and tutor working together discuss learning style and which learning styles works best for the students. The characteristics of a good reader, particularly reading for meaning are stressed. And specific strategies like LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK for spelling are taught.

Much of what is useful for adults with learning disabilities is useful for all adult learners. Learning how we learn, discovering how learning style affects our teaching and learning, reading as a search for meaning, not decoding—these are relevant to all of us.

Much of what is useful for adults with learning disabilities is useful for all adult learners.

RESOURCES/ BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Copies of these materials are available at the Center for Literacy Studies, or at the UTK library as noted)

L. Adrianne Bonham (1988) 'Learning style use: in need of perspective, *Lifelong Learning*, 11(5): 14-19.

Jane Callisle, Cynthia Klein and Aisling O'Reilly (1988) *Report on the ALBSU Project on Specific Learning Difficulties: March, 1986- March, 1988*, London, UK: Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit.

Marie Carbo (1987) "Deprogramming Reading Failure: Giving Unequal Learners An Equal Chance," Phi Delta Kappan, November: 197-202.
Looks at effects of learning style on children's beginning reading; not directly relevant, but thought-provoking.

Grace M. Fernald (1943) *Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects*, McGraw-Hill. (See also summary in Appendix B.)

A.L. Jorm (1983) *The Psychology of Reading and Spelling Disabilities*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983. (Available at UTK Library.)
This book is heavy going, but good for understanding the nature of learning disabilities. It is written in reference to children, but applies to adults as well.

Donald Keefe and Valerie Meyer (1988) 'Profiles of and instructional techniques for adult disabled readers,' *Journal of Reading*, 31(7):614-619.
(See summary in Appendix C.)

Cynthia Klein (1989) "Specific Learning Difficulties," *ALBSU Newsletter* No. 32, Winter.
This summary of the ALBSU Learning Difficulties Program is a very good introduction to the issues, and has many helpful ideas which have been drawn upon for this report. Reprint available from Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit, Kingsbourne House, 229/231 High Holborn, London WC1V 7DA, U.K.

Bernice McCarthy (1980)*The 4MAT System, Teaching to Learning Styles with Right/Left Techniques*, EXCEL Inc., Oak Brook, IL (Available in UTK Law Library)
A good introduction to learning style and how to plan instruction which includes all learning styles; written with children's classrooms in mind, but has adaptable ideas.

Robin Millar and Cynthia Klein (1986) *Making Sense of Spelling*, London, UK: Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), Diagnostic Center for Learning Difficulties. (See summary in Appendix D.)

Dorothy Montgomery (1986) *STALD: Screening Test for Adults with Learning Difficulties and Strategies for Teaching Adults with Learning Difficulties)*; Education Service Center Region 9, Wichita Falls, Texas. (An ERIC document available through UTK Library.)
The foreword describes this as "a testing instrument, a remediation model keyed to it, and instructional resources for those working with adults... It aims to screen adult learners individually to identify if characteristics common to those with learning difficulties are present, and if so, to prescribe specific materials and methods known to be successful with them."
I have not used either the test or many of the materials mentioned. I doubt if it's the magic solution, but the test can probably be helpful in beginning to learn about diagnosis and there are some useful suggestions about materials. Does not really involve the student in the process of diagnosis or program planning.

Edward Polloway, J. David Smith and James Patton (1988) "Learning Disabilities: An Adult Developmental Perspective," *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*, Vol. 11 (Summer): 265-272.
The nature of learning disabilities in adults is examined in relation to models and research in adult development.

Jovita Martin Ross (1987) "Learning disabled adults: Who are they and what do we do with them?", *Lifelong Learning*, 11(3):4-8.
A good general survey of the issues; does not contain a lot of specific suggestions, but does consider effects of learning disability beyond learning to read; useful for understanding what can be happening to learning disabled students.

Margaret Snowling (1987) *Dyslexia*. Basil Blackwell, Inc.
Probably more helpful than Jorm's book; surveys the research about what dyslexia really is, how it affects the reading process. (Available at UTK Library)

Linda Thistlethwaite (1986) "The adult beginning reader: Assessment/discussion/instruction, *Lifelong Learning* 10 (2): 4-7.
A good discussion of working with any adult beginning reader; not aimed at learning disabled readers, but with many good ideas.

William Vaugh (1985) "Project ABLE: Help for Adults with Learning Disabilities," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 66(6): 444-445.
Description of program in Connecticut which combines individual and group work.

Margaret Walsh (1979) 'Miscue analysis,' A.L.U. Newsletter (England), 5(June). (This article is reproduced in Appendix A.)

Bernice L. Y. Wong (1987) "How do the results of metacognitive research impact on the learning disabled individual?" *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 10:189-195.
A helpful discussion of metacognition and how this research can help the learning disabled and their teachers.

APPENDIX A

This explanation of miscue analysis by Margaret Walsh is from the ALU Newsletter (No. 5, June 1979)

Miscue Analysis

Often the most obvious truisms are worth repeating. For instance, reading is only any real use if you read for meaning and yet we often still concentrate on errors of recognition, often when they make little real difference to the sense of the piece being read. We all use approximations when calculating (sometimes we also need exact answers) whereas reading often tends to be seen as 'right' or 'wrong'.

This article by Margaret Walsh, the Literacy Organiser for South Glamorgan, looks at this truism by describing a useful technique called Miscue Analysis.

Why use it?

It's fun! It means that the tutor is actively involved while listening to a student read. No more bored looks on the tutor's face as the student practices as reading. There's more to hearing students read than merely supplying the unknown word — or helping him to sound it out.

Did you ever want to be a detective? If so now's your chance. Teachers of reading should be like detectives — always questioning. Why did my student say that? Has it altered the meaning? If not, does it really matter? Is it a good mistake or a bad mistake? The more we probe, the more we learn about the process of reading. Miscue analysis throws valuable light on this process but . . .

What is it?

Miscue Analysis? The analysis of miscues; but what's a miscue? The American, Kenneth Goodman maintains that reading involves more than merely looking closely at each letter and each word. He suggests that as teachers of reading, we should take a much broader view of the subject. We should help students select the most useful cues in order to produce the correct guess the first time.

Where an incorrect guess is made a miscue occurs. The term error is seldom used because of its negative association with failure. The tutor's task is to observe the miscues, try to analyse them with the student, and decide upon a strategy for future work. In helping the reader to select the most useful cues they are working together, towards more proficient reading. Consider the following passages: —

Example 1

In the first passage about John Cameron, the following words were substituted

- 'performance' for 'programme'
- 'hadn't changed' for 'hated change'
- 'clean' for 'clear' (but immediately corrected)
- 'found' for 'fond' (but immediately corrected)

Although different from the text, the first two words do not dramatically alter the sense of the passage. The reader has substituted noun for noun, and verb for verb clause. He is reading intelligently. His substitutions are acceptable. This word 'performance' looks like 'programme' in the same way as the clause 'hadn't changed' looks like 'hated change.'

The reader was obviously satisfied that this sounded like language, and made reasonable sense.

However, as soon as he had substituted 'clean' for 'clear', he probably noticed the following word 'up' and realised that 'clean up' didn't make sense, in that context. Until this point the sentence sounded reasonable "and watched his robot clean . . ." But as soon as he noticed what followed, he was immediately able to give the correct word.

Similarly he substituted the word 'found' for 'fond'. These again look very much alike but as soon as he had said the word 'found' he knew that it didn't sound right. He probably glanced at the last two words, and knew that by using the word 'found' the sentence was meaningless. He re-examined the word and immediately read 'fond'.

HE WAS ALL THE TIME READING FOR MEANING

He was selecting the cues which he felt

Example 1 Actual Passage from Book

Now John Cameron lived alone-apart from his household robot. And his life certainly did run smoothly. Some people changed their robot's programme every day, and left it in the 'Transit' position, that is, ready to receive orders. But not John.

He was a rigid man who hated change. He wanted every day to be the same as the one before. So HIS robot was programmed once and for all.

One weekend, he sat down after breakfast as usual, and watched his robot clear up the dishes. There were times when he felt almost fond of it. It was the silence he liked. Robots never argued-not like wives.

(From 'Knockout' 'The Man Who Loved Robots' by Jan Carroll

Passage as read by Student

New John Cameron lived alone-apart from his household robot. And his life certainly did run smoothly. Some people changed their robot's performance every day, and left it in the 'Transit' position, that is, reading to receive orders. But not John.

He was a rigid man who hadn't changed. He wanted every day to be the same as the one before. So HIS robot was programmed once and for all.

One weekend, he sat down after breakfast as usual, and watched his robot clean clear up the dishes. There were times when he felt almost found fond of it. It was the silence he liked. Robots never argued-not like wives.

were most useful to him and when one didn't work, he tried another.

At all times he considered one or other of the following:

- ☐ The look of the word
- ☐ The meaning of the word in the sentence
- ☐ How the word sounded i.e. grammar

Example 2

Now let's consider the second passage 'Wild Wheels' where the following substitutions were made:

- ☐ 'camera' for 'cinema'
- ☐ 'the' for 'to'
- ☐ 'dropping from' for 'dropped on'
- ☐ 'plans' for 'planes'
- ☐ 'arches' for 'horses'
- ☐ 'already' for 'really'
- ☐ 'move' for 'more'

In nearly every instance the substituted word changed the meaning of the sentence and the passage. Therefore each was unacceptable.

However, on closer examination we notice that most look like the original (apart from 'arches' for 'horses' and this because of the accompanying illustration.)

This reader is paying no attention whatever to the meaning of the passage — he is concerned only with reaching the end. The tutor might suggest that because he has substituted the word 'plans' for 'planes' he needs a revision of the 'magic e'. This may well be the case, but it would probably be more helpful to him if the tutor suggested he thought about what he was reading, and tried to get some meaning from it. Perhaps he needs to go back a stage and read something easier. Simple cloze exercises — where one fills in missing words — would be useful. When filling in the blanks he would be learning the art of prediction which is invaluable when learning to read.

Of the two readers, clearly the first was more proficient. Not because of the number of miscues, but because of the kind of miscues. By examining his miscues we have discovered that he reads with understanding, and always searches for meaning. It is important to stress that it is not necessarily what you read, but how you go about it, that is all important.

How often do we point out every word that is misread — whether or not it alters the meaning? How soul-destroying that must be! How can our student possibly read for meaning if he is always being interrupted or told "No, it's not 'dad' — it's 'father'." "It says 'a' not 'the'."

Marking System

Errors can be recorded in different ways, but the chart below includes the most useful symbols.

Practice makes perfect

Now that we know a little about miscue analysis, we are ready to try it out. As with everything else we learn by doing.

CHART

ERROR	SYMBOL	
Non-response	_work_	Needs prompting after a few seconds or asks for word.
Substitution	play work	Write substitution above appropriate part of text.
Insertion	his for ∧ work	Indicate by insertion sign, and write inserted word above.
Omission	work	Circle word, words, or parts of words.
Repetition	work	Underline words repeated.
Correction	ⓒ play work	Place small beside corrected word.
Reversal	work hard o n	Symbol that shows which parts of letters, words, phrases or clauses have been interchanged.
Hesitation	work/hard	Hesitation between two words.

Example 2 Actual Passage from Book

(From 'Giant' by Lewis Jones published by Longman)

Wild Wheels

In the early days of the cinema, the film star was often on a train. Stuntmen jumped on to trains from bridges, dropped on to trains from planes, fought on trains, ran along the tops of trains, jumped from trains to the ground, and on to trains from horses.

Fights on top of a train are not easy. A train not only runs forwards, it also moves from side to side. And winds can be strong. In the cinema, we think one fighter is trying to throw the other off. Often, he's really trying to hold him on.

Today we more often see fast cars in films. In the early cinema, cars were usually funny. Not now.

In the early days of the cinema stuntmen jumped onto trains from bridges

Passage as read by Student

Wild Wheels

In the early days of the camera, the film star was often on a train. Stuntmen jumped on the trains from bridges, dropping from to trains from plans, fought on trains, ran along the tops of trains, jumped from trains to the ground, and on to trains from arches.

Fights on top of a train are not easy. A train not only runs forwards, it also moves from side to side. And winds can be strong. In the camera, we think one fighter is trying to throw the other off. Often, he's already trying to hold him on. Today we move often see fast cars in films. In the early camera, cars were usually funny. Not now.

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However, before we begin, here are some points to remember.

1. Put the student at ease.
2. Tell him that you want him to read the passage through, without any interruptions or promptings from yourself. But stress that this isn't a test of any sort.
3. Encourage him to guess or skip any word he finds difficult.
4. Tell him that when he has finished reading, you will ask him to retell the story in his own words.

Retelling

This is an important aspect as it shows the reader's ability to retain meaning. It is preferable to asking direct questions, as these would give cues to the reader about the significant parts of the passage.

The better reader will probably be able to retell most of the story. Even if he makes slight alterations to the original it probably won't alter the overall meaning.

Following the unaided retelling, ask questions about

- ☐ areas the reader may have omitted
- ☐ character recall and development (Who else was in the story? What was he like etc?)
- ☐ events
- ☐ plot
- ☐ theme

What material should we use?

The passage should be new to the student, complete in itself, with a beginning, middle and end. It should be difficult enough to ensure the students will produce miscues.

Miscues tell us whether a reader is understanding and seeking meaning from the passage. What do we learn about the three students who read this passage?

Uncorrected substitutions are very revealing. Do they alter the meaning?

(A) 'large' for 'load'?

(B) 'to point' for 'and pointing'?

(C) 'lots' for 'load'?

Similarly with omissions — do they alter the meaning?

(a) 'it'

(b) 'soon'

It would appear that A is a less proficient reader than B and C, both of whom are continually looking for meaning when reading — something we must always encourage students to do. We are now able to consider reading in a new light — not merely counting mistakes but analysing miscues.

Good luck with the detective work!

A

I live in a flat and look s after myself.
the ©
As my clothes get s dirty I put them in a black/plastic
bag which is/delivered by the/council for rubbish.
On the weekend I take the bag to the/launderette.
at the
One day I left it with the attendant lady. She said
I could pick (it) up in en hour.
pint ©
Well I went for a/pint in the pub. Then I went
back to the/launderette. As soon as I opened the
door the lady was waving her hands and pointing to
large
a load of rubbish. I soon/realised that I had left the
weekly rubbish bag by mistake.

B

I live in a flat and look ed after myself.
clothes ©
As my clothes get dirty I put them in a black/plastic
bag which is delivered by the council for rubbish.
On the weekend I take the bag to the launderette.
at the
One day I left it with the attendant lady. She said
I could pick it up in an hour.
Well I went for a pint in the pub. Then I went
back to the/launderette. As soon as I opened the
door the lady was waving her hands and pointing to
a load of rubbish. I (soon) realised that I had left the
weekly rubbish bag by mistake.

C

I live in a flat and look s after myself.
As my/clothes get dirty I put them in a black plastic
bag which is delivered by the council for rubbish.
On the weekend I take the bag to the/launderette. ©
laundry
One day I left it with the/attendant lady. She said
I could pick it up in an hour.
white
Well I went for a pint in the pub. Then I went
back to the launderette. As soon as I opened the
door the lady was waving her hands and pointing to ©
lot
a load of rubbish. I soon realised that I had left the
weekly rubbish bag by mistake.

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APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF FERNALD MULTI-SENSORY APPROACH

From Fernald, *Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects*

Introduction

This method is for use with students who have no success with other methods. Fernald developed it for those with "total or extreme disability." Other methods should certainly be tried first.

Stage 1

Because of its tremendous possibilities and wide usage, the Fernald-Keller Approach should be studied in detail so that all four stages are understood by the teacher. Stage I seeks to motivate the student and get him to want to learn. New words are taught through the use of the tracing technique, along with visual and auditory emphasis. Once the student has developed facility in the use of the tracing methods and has accumulated a group of sight words which he can use, he moves into Stage 2.

Teacher	Student
1. Finds a word the student wants to learn.	**Selects word to be learned.**
2. Asks student to use word in a sentence or to give the meaning.	**Responds appropriately.**
3. Asks "How many parts do you hear?"	**Responds. With teacher rendering needed help, the student verifies his answer by dictionary**

Teacher	Student
4. In script with crayon, writes the word. - Says word - Says each syllable without distortion, as each part is written. (Pronunciation of each syllable begins with and ends with the initial stroke of the syllable.) - Going from left to right crosses t's and dots i's. -Underlines each syllable while pronouncing the syllable.	**Student observes teacher.**
5. Demonstrates tracing technique. - Index and second finger held still while tracing over words. - Says word. - Says syllable on initial stroke of each syllable. (Without distortion) - Crosses t's and dots i's from left to right. - Says word. - Repeats word until student is ready to trace.	**Student observes teacher.** **Traces the word following the procedure demonstrated until he thinks he can write the word without the copy**
6. Checks student's tracing technique.	**Pronounces. Says each syllable as he begins to make it. Says again as he underlines each syllable.**

Teacher	Student
- When student hesitates or makes an error, stops him. - Records number of tracings - Praises success	
7. Checks writing of word.	
- No erasures. - Does not stress errors.	**Compares his writing to original copy** **If successful, dates paper and files word.** **If unsuccessful, either retraces, or makes a second attempt.**
8. Checks retention the next day.	

Stage 2

In this stage the teacher-student "step-by-step" procedure in writing the word is still followed except that the student no longer traces the word. The student makes use of oral and auditory modalities. He looks at the word, pronounces the word after the tutor, watches the tutor write the word, then writes the word without looking at the copy, saying the word as he writes it.

Stage 3

The student reads the word (with tutor help if necessary) says it and writes the word.

Stage 4

The student recognizes new words from their similarity to words or parts of words he has already learned.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING LEARNING DISABLED ADULTS.

From Keefe and Meyer, 'Profiles of and Instructional Techniques for Adult Disabled Readers'

Some suggestions from Donald Keefe and Valerie Meyer for working with students at various levels. They discuss "disabled" readers without distinguishing between learning disabled and other reasons for disability, but their suggestions are practical.

For non-readers:

(1) Make a book using words the student recognizes from the environment. Cut advertisements with words like "coke" or "McDonald's" and put on one page. On the opposite page write the word in large print.
(2) Find highly predictable stories with patterns that lead the student to "read" the text.
(3) Write sentence stems such as "I can _____" or "I like _____." Have the student complete the sentence with his/her own words and read.

For readers who can read "just a little," who can read simple texts with help, it is important to stress reading as "making meaning" rather than sounding out words. For this group:

(1) Use language experience stories and tape to read at home.
(2) Encourage learners to skip unknown words and self correct miscues.
(3) Encourage learners to take risks and make guesses, for example figuring out what an ad or logo is with only a small part presented.

Additional ways to focus on meaning for readers with more skill:

(1) Silly Sentences with one word which does not make sense-"I smell with my knees." Ask the reader to figure out which word does not make sense.

(2) Written conversation between the student and tutor on some event, your feelings about work, your children, etc. The conversation is started by the tutor who briefly writes what s/he wants to say and the student responds- in writing. Keep it simple without concern for spelling or grammar.
(3) Flash card directions to force readers to read more than one word at a time. Place a few words of direction on a card. Flash each card and ask the learner to do what the card says, e.g., "Put your hands on the table." Encourage "chunking" all the words in one glance. It may take four or five flashes. Later use two directions per card.

To work on comprehension with more advanced readers:

(1) Use key word predicting activities. From a story or chapter select about 10 key words. give the list to the student and have him/her predict the content of the story. Then read to see if the predictions are correct.
(2) "GIST" requires the reader(s) to reduce the first sentence of a passage to 3 or 4 words, then the first two sentences to 5 or 6 words, three sentences to 7 or 8 words, etc. until the whole paragraph is reduced to 15 or so words which are the gist of the passage.
(3) Prepare directions for a simple card game leaving out a crucial instruction. After playing the game ask the reader to determine what has been left out.

A useful article by Bill Cosby, "How to read faster," suggests previewing, skimming, and clustering to increase speed and comprehension. It is available in reprints and as an 11" x 17" poster from:

"Power of the Printed Word"
International Paper Company, Dept. 3
P.O. Box 954
Madison Square Station
New York, NY 10010

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY OF SPELLING- LOOK, COVER, WRITE, CHECK

From Millar and Klein, *Making Sense of Spelling*

Use lists of words taken from students' writing, common words, and words with common patterns. Words with confusing patterns like -el and -le should not be used in the same list. Divide a page into 4 or 5 columns. Write each word correctly in the first column or make sure the student has copied the list correctly. Explain to the student that they should:

> LOOK at the word, noting any particular difficulty and say it aloud. Close their eyes and try to visualize the word.
>
> COVER the word. Say it aloud.
>
> WRITE the word in column 2. Say it as they write it.
>
> CHECK that the word is correct. If not, copy the correct spelling above or near the original, paying attention to the mistakes. If a mistake has been made it is important to correct it by writing the whole word again not just by changing or adding letters. The experience of writing the whole word is important (cursive is best).

Next day, repeat the process and spell each word in column 3.

Two or three days later, repeat the process and spell the words in column 4.

General memory aids which any individual student may find useful:

Teaching students to beat out syllables and then write them as they say them.

Highlighting the words with colored pens. This can be useful to help students focus on the bit of the word they are misspelling.

Saying the names of the letters, spelling in rhythm. This is useful for confusing endings such as **-cial, -ght**, etc.

Understanding the derivation of words (**television**: **tele** means "far," **vis** means "see").

Memory aids for students with auditory perceptual difficulties:

Finding words within words. This may need to be demonstrated to the student. (**Cap/a/city** for capacity; **we/at/her** for weather).

Reinforcing spelling by finding words of similar letter patterns (**please - ease - disease; sound - round - found**).

Memory aids for students with visual memory difficulties:

Exaggerating pronunciations of words: **Wed/nes/day** for Wednesday; the student is advised to "say it funny" while writing it.

Understanding the structure of words, for example morpheme, root words, suffixes, prefixes, etc.

Provide format for building on root words: for example appoint, disappoint, disappointment, disappointed, etc.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

SESSION THREE

ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES: AN OVERVIEW FOR THE ADULT EDUCATOR

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1989

ASSESSMENT

This section identifies key issues in the assessment of adults with LD and describes a number of assessment models. The question of screening versus diagnosis is examined, and guidelines for selection of diagnostic instruments are presented.

Issues and Models

If there is one caveat in the assessment of adults with learning disabilities, it might be that assessment is useful to the extent that it provides a means for helping the adult to live more fully. This criterion should be considered especially in the context of the adult previously unidentified as LD. Diagnosis can serve a useful purpose insofar as it determines eligibility for resources and support services that are not otherwise available to the individual. Additionally, a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation or reevaluation (in the case of the person identified at a younger age) can serve a viable function if it provides direction in working with the adult to determine future goals, select appropriate educational and career development programs, and develop strategies for an individualized intervention plan.

Given the scarcity of formal diagnostic tools appropriate for assessing adults with LD (Coles 1980; Ross 1987), it is even more imperative that formal testing instruments not be used in isolation, but rather be incorporated as part of a comprehensive assessment process. Vogel (1989) noted that the clinician should be trained in formal and informal assessment procedures, with sources of information including interviews, self-report, and direct observation. Vogel also noted that referrals for evaluation of adults are rarely made for the purpose of diagnosis alone, but also to develop a plan of action to enhance attainment of goals. The purpose(s) of the referral will to some extent influence the nature of the assessment process. Different procedures are appropriate for the community college (Best et al. 1986), vocational rehabilitation services (Newill, Goyette, and Fogarty 1984), or adult basic education programs (Hoy and Gregg 1984a-e), three of the primary adult education contexts discussed in current literature. In cases in which the adult has not been previously identified as having a learning disability, differential diagnosis becomes problematic across settings; an accurate history of medical, educational, and social influences on the learning problems may be hard to obtain and concomitant emotional problems may be difficult to rule out retrospectively as primary conditions.

Another unique feature of the assessment process for adults as compared to that of children is the increasing importance of the clinician-client relationship (Vogel 1989). The adult can be a valuable source of information regarding perceptions of personal strengths and weaknesses and regarding goals for the future. As a measure to reduce in part the negative

effects testing may have on the adult's self-esteem, Vogel suggested that the clinician shift the emphasis to information-seeking, discovery, and problem-solving aspects of the assessment process, an emphasis that requires the involvement of the adult in the investigative process.

Having identified several of the key issues in assessment of adults suspected to have learning disabilities, it is appropriate at this point to share several comprehensive models of assessment. Hoy and Gregg (1984a), in a guide to assessment for adult basic educators, stressed that appraisal and assessment must be ongoing and systematic. They proposed a seven-step evaluation sequence (p. 3):

1. Know why and for what the adult is being assessed.
2. Collect background information.
3. Interview the adult.
4. Observe and make a formal evaluation.
5. Organize and interrelate the formal and informal data.
6. Search for patterns of strengths and weaknesses.
7. Plan instructional strategies.

A goal of this sequence is the interpretation of input and output errors as a means of uncovering strengths and weaknesses. Hoy and Gregg stressed the importance of interviews between students and teachers as a source of otherwise unattainable information about the student, providing guidelines for structuring such an interview. They included in this discussion a list of instruments appropriate for assessment of cognitive abilities, language abilities, academic skills, written expression, and personality. In other parts of this series for ABE teachers, the authors specifically discuss assessment of reading, written language, and mathematics (Hoy and Gregg 1984b,c,d).

Johnson (1987) divided the assessment process into four key components: (1) current concerns and status, (2) history, (3) objective testing, and (4) clinical observation. She emphasized the importance of observing the adult as he or she completes the various tasks, which can be revealing in themselves. The individual's rate of processing and output, reactions to timed tests and fatigue, use of compensatory strategies, and recurring patterns across formal and informal tasks can be especially informative. Johnson also presented several principles to consider in the evaluation of achievement and cognitive processes. Tests and tasks should be designed to assess input, integration, output, and feedback modes, since processing difficulties may occur at any point along this chain. Because learners may vary in the affected modalities of learning (visual, auditory, haptic, and so on), an effort should also be made to assess intrasensory, multisensory, and intersensory learning responses. This assessment not only can indicate the weakest learning modalities but can also yield information about modality strengths, difficulties with sensory overload, and difficulties with translating information across modalities. Both verbal and nonverbal learning should be assessed, because an apparent modality strength or weakness may not affect verbal and nonverbal learning equally. For instance, knowing that a person who forgets his or her way spatially in familiar surroundings can nonetheless learn directions through maps written in words is useful to planning an intervention

program. Finally, Johnson recommended assessing both simultaneous and sequential processing. Johnson and Blalock's (1987) *Adults with Learning Disabilities* provides a general description of principles of assessment and diagnosis as well as separate discussion of assessment procedures used in a university-based clinic. Individual chapters are devoted to the topics of reading, written language, mathematics, abstract reasoning and problem solving, and nonverbal learning.

Assessment procedures at the Kingsbury Center (Zangwill and Greene 1986) are specially designed to assist adults whose coping strategies have failed after their initial successful transition from school to work. A comprehensive formal testing battery is used to assess intellectual and cognitive abilities and performance in the areas of reading, written language, and mathematics. In addition, the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (Briggs and Myers 1983) and the *Harrington-O'Shea Career Decision-Making System* (Harrington and O'Shea 1985) help to clarify job-related abilities, strategies, and values. These standardized procedures are supplemented by informal assessment procedures, behavioral observations, and interviews to determine client concerns and coping limitations, present coping strengths, strategies that have been successful, and new situational demands requiring new strategies. Intervention planning then centers around specific coping strategies as well as remediation in academic or skills areas relevant to work or social requirements.

Newill, Goyette, and Fogarty (1984) provided an evaluation plan that is designed to be consistent with requirements for determining vocational rehabilitation (VR) eligibility. Because the VR program is based on eligibility rather than on entitlement, individuals with LD who have been formerly served in school systems may not be classified as eligible for VR services, unless there are indications that the learning disability has caused substantial handicap to employment (Vogel 1989). The Rehabilitation Services Administration also requires diagnosis by a physician or licensed psychologist; evidence for medical classification according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association 1987) or the *International Classification of Diseases* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1980) is necessary to determine eligibility even though the VR definition is in terms of functional deficits (Biller 1985; Vogel 1989). The complexity of this process of determining eligibility suggests an elaborate evaluation model, such as that proposed by Newill, Goyette, and Fogarty (1984).

The first phase of the model is referred to as preliminary assessment; it includes a detailed client history (family background, medical, interpersonal, psychological, educational, and vocational factors), behavioral observations, and review of school records. The next phase, the formal diagnostic process, includes a medical history and examination, psychoeducational evaluation, and vocational assessment. The psychoeducational evaluation assesses intellectual ability, achievement, and personality functioning. Finally, Newill et al. suggested that the vocational assessment should be conducted in many forms at several levels. First, client goals are determined, then a preliminary determination of vocational aptitudes and strengths is made. The next step should involve formal assessment of both vocational aptitude or interest, including a diagnostic vocational evaluation using simulated work samples. Diagnostic guidelines can

then be applied based on the following criteria: (1) IQ of at least 80, (2) significant lags in achievement, (3) no evidence of primary emotional disturbance, and (4) no evidence of visual, auditory, motor, or mental deficiency causing the learning disability. Finally, the qualified examiner must make a clinical judgment as to the presence of SLD based upon results of the recommended procedures.

The final assessment model presented here is described in the replication manual of Project MEAL (Model for Employment and Adult Living), supported by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (Crawford, Crawford, and Faas 1987). Evaluation for that program included psychoeducational evaluation and assessments of preferred learning style (Brown and Cooper 1983), cognitive style (modality preference), social style (preference for working alone or in groups), and expressive style (oral or written). Also included in the assessment process were a career ability placement survey, a vocational evaluation using various interest inventories, a work personality assessment, and, in some cases, work sample tests.

Screening versus Diagnosis

Although the procedures described here are recommended as appropriate for comprehensive diagnostic evaluation, a number of more abbreviated procedures--ranging from checklists to specially designed tools--have been suggested for screening purposes. Scheiber and Talpers' (1987) book, *Unlocking Potential*, is a rich source of checklists that can be used by instructors in a variety of settings, as well as a Learning Channel Preference checklist by Lynn O'Brien designed for use by the learners themselves. The Screening Test for Adult Learning Difficulties (STALD) is an instrument designed to be administered in 35-45 minutes by supervisors, adult education teachers, or volunteer tutors (Montgomery 1986). This instrument has sections that focus on perceptual screening, word identification, and reading passages; it includes a remediation chart matching specific STALD errors to materials and methods. Such a tool can be useful for providing clues to remediation in the adult basic education or literacy settings in which complete evaluations are seldom possible. It may also help relatively untrained teachers or tutors identify alternative instructional strategies for students who may or may not have specific learning disabilities.

The major risk in the use of such screening instruments, however, is an inappropriate diagnosis of learning disability. Controversy followed the development and use of Weisel's London Procedure (Coles 1980), another instrument that took only 45 minutes and no special training to administer. O'Donnell and Wood (1981) questioned the use of that instrument to identify 95 percent of ABE students in Cleveland, Ohio, as "problem learners." They based their concern on the fact that the instrument was assembled using subtests from tests of perceptual processing in children--tests that were questionable according to accepted measurement criteria even when used with the intended population. This critique should signal the danger of using any single instrument, particularly one that may be interpreted by untrained administrators, as an indication of "diagnosed" learning disabilities.

The use of abbreviated screening procedures to identify adult populations as learning disabled for research purposes is a similarly questionable practice, one that

seems especially prevalent in studies of adult inmates. Lundak (1988), for example, recently used the *Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude (DTLA)--Revised* (Hammill and Bryant 1985) to conclude that 60 percent of a prison population exhibited learning disabilities. Tevis and Orem (1985) administered the *Revised Beta* (Kellogg and Morton 1978), the *Wide-Range Achievement Test* (Jastak and Jastak 1984), and the DTLA to inmates, concluding that all 30 of the inmates with an IQ of 85 or above could be considered learning disabled in one or more areas using their criterion of a range of 2 or more years on the DTLA. In a national study "on the nature and prevalence of learning deficiencies in adult inmates" conducted by Bell, Conrad, and Suppa (1984), 1,000 inmates in 3 states were tested. For the purposes of this study, any subject found to be functioning at or below the fifth-grade level on the *Tests of Adult Basic Education* (1976) was considered to be learning deficient. The authors concluded that 42 percent of the sample exhibited learning deficiencies. When the *Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale* (Wechsler 1981) and the *Mann-Suiter Learning Disabilities Screening Test* (Bell, Conrad, and Suppa 1984) were administered, 25 percent of the sample and 82 percent of the learning deficient group exhibited symptoms of a learning disability. The authors suggested appropriate discretion in interpreting the results of this screening test, and they can be commended for including intelligence, achievement, family background, and educational history data in their screening battery. Nonetheless, the need for reasonable caution becomes imperative in the face of a growing number of studies attempting to use screening measures to determine prevalence in samples of previously undiagnosed adults. Because of far-reaching implications for adults diagnosed as LD, adequately funded research to permit appropriate diagnostic procedures is needed. Only as a result of such research can reliable prevalence estimates in specific subpopulations of adults, such as in penal institutions, be obtained.

Selection of Diagnostic Instruments

A variety of instruments have been used in the assessment of adults with LD. An attempt is not made here to provide a comprehensive list of formal tests. Rather, several guiding principles are suggested for consideration in test selection. Also, several of the most frequently used and reliable instruments are mentioned by name. Additional instruments and assessment procedures are provided by Johnson and Blalock (1987), Scheiber and Talpers (1987), Hoy and Gregg (1984a), and the Educational Testing Service (1986). A special focus on procedures for assessing various aspects of career development can be found in Biller (1987). For those interested in assessing learning strategies, the publications list of the Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities will be valuable.

In selecting instruments for evaluation of adults suspected to have learning disabilities, the reader is advised to consult one of the standard guides to measurement and evaluation such as the *Tenth Mental Measurements Yearbook* (Conoley and Kramer 1989). Such a guide will indicate whether the test norms apply to an adult population, one of the key limitations regarding many of the commonly used diagnostic instruments. Reading reviews of the tests' reliability and validity found in the measurement guides is also important to gain insight into the confidence that can be placed in the test's results. For older adults, the issue of timed tests

needs to be considered; documented slowing of perceptual speed with age (Knox 1977) may place them at a disadvantage unrelated to any learning disability. Although certain tests may be selected for the purpose of assessing performance under timed conditions, this age-related factor suggests limited use of such tests. Diagnostic strategies should be planned carefully to minimize the amount of testing necessary for adults. Many will experience self-esteem and confidence problems that, if exacerbated during extensive testing, may affect overall performance. Finally, the input given by adults during the intake interview can provide valuable information relevant to the selection of those tests that seem appropriate to measure performance in those areas for which he or she has greatest concern. When duration of testing time becomes a critical factor, the adult's self-perceived goals, strengths, and weaknesses can enhance clinical judgment in the selection of only the most necessary tools. Table 3 lists several of the most frequently cited instruments.

TABLE 3

INSTRUMENTS FOR ASSESSING ADULTS WITH LD

Instrument	Measures
Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale--Revised (Wechsler 1981)	Intellectual ability
Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery (Woodcock and Johnson 1977)	Cognitive and achievement
Wide-Range Achievement Test (Jastak and Jastak 1984)	Academic achievement (screening)
Tests of Adult Basic Education (1984)	Academic achievement
Gray Oral Reading Tests--Revised (Wiederholt and Bryant 1986)	Reading
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test--Revised (Dunn and Dunn 1981)	Oral comprehension
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith 1981)	Self-esteem
Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Test Battery (Reitan 1981)	Neurological status (soft signs)

ESPECIALLY FOR ADULTS: HOW TO GET APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

When adults suspect they may have a learning disability, they often begin a search for solutions. They may have difficulty in locating resources to diagnose the disability. For many individuals, obtaining a diagnosis can involve locating one or more professionals to select, perform and interpret diagnostic tests

Why diagnostic testing?

The tests are needed because:

- Learning with a learning disability requires different strategies.
- Obtaining accurate diagnostics is the first step in overcoming the effects of a learning disability.

Locating appropriate testing

The diagnostic process for adults with learning disabilities is different from diagnosis and testing for children. While diagnosis for children and youth is tied to the special education process and local schools, diagnosis for adults is more directly related to problems in employment, life situations and education. An adult seeking a skilled evaluator will need to become an informed consumer, shopping for a diagnostician experienced in working with adults — oriented to both school and to work-related learning needs.

Adults should seek an evaluation appropriate to their age and career concerns. Until recently, the effects of learning disabilities on adults were not well recognized and the majority of evaluation methods were focused on children and youth. Thus, adults may need to expend additional time and effort seeking an appropriate evaluator. The checklist below is designed to help you in locating an appropriate *adult* evaluation.

What are diagnostic tests?

Diagnostic tests are a series of formal and informal measures of skills and abilities, including general level of intelligence and academic skill levels, designed to identify an individual's strengths and weaknesses and to assist in finding ways to learn and work more effectively.

Diagnostic testing may have several parts:

- a recent history — why is there a need for diagnostic tests?
- a life history — how people learn, work, their school experiences, successes and failures, childhood illnesses — looking at how individuals interact with other people using and understanding words and concepts.
- an academic history, looking at school performance and experiences to seek patterns that indicate strengths and weaknesses.
- psycho-educational tests, also called "IQ" tests, are used to measure small parts of the learning/work style such as visual memory or memory for numbers: when charted, they help define strengths and weaknesses.

Who will perform the testing?

Several local agencies can either perform the tests or refer you to diagnosticians *for adults* within your community. Check your telephone directory for:

- Adult Education / Adult Literacy Programs / Literacy Councils
- Learning Disabilities Association (LDA)
- Community Mental Health Agencies
- Counseling / Study Skills Centers at local colleges
- Guidance Counselors / Learning Specialists in private practice
- Orton Dyslexia Society
- Special Education Programs at local colleges
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- University Affiliated Hospitals

Interpretation of tests

Having the tests interpreted by someone who is familiar with adults with learning disabilities is very important. The interpretation should apply the information found in the evaluations to life situations. In addition to the evaluator, the person (or group of persons) who helps interpret evaluations may include:

- Adult Educators
- Diagnosticians
- LD Consumer Advocates
- Learning Specialists
- Rehabilitation Counselors

Questions to ask evaluators

- Have you tested many adults for learning disabilities?
- How long does testing take?
- After testing will I receive a written report and be able to meet with you to discuss the results?
- Will our discussion give me ideas on how to improve my area of disability (remediate) and how to get around my disability (compensate)?
- What is the cost of the testing?
- What insurance companies have you worked with?
- What other funding sources are available?
- How may payment for uninsured testing be worked out (extended payment, credit, etc.)?
- If there are additional questions, are you available for consultation? If so, what are the charges?

You may or may not agree with the interpretation of the tests and have the right to ask for another opinion. But remember that even if you disagree, the test results can still be accurate (although painful to accept).

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COOPER SCREENING TOOL

Evaluation Date ___/___/___ Client's Date of Birth ___/___/___ Age _____

Client's Name _____ Interviewer _____

Address _____ Agency _____

_____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone _____ _____

Reason for the Referral: _____

Referred by _____

Educational History

Last grade completed _____

Did you drop out of high school before graduation? Yes ____
Did you dislike school? Yes ____
Did you ever fail a subject? Yes ____
Did you ever have to attend summer school? Yes ____
Did you have difficulty with English classes? Yes ____
Did you have difficulty with math classes? Yes ____
Were you ever in special education classes? Yes ____
Were you ever called a slow learner? Yes ____
Were you ever diagnosed as having a learning disability? Yes ____
If yes, at what age? _____
Were you ever labeled (eg. LD, dyslexic, brain damaged, emotionally disturbed, retarded)? Yes ____

What Label (s) _____ _____

Reported problems _____

Summary of Educational History Total Yes ____

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Attention

Were you ever called hyperactive?

Are you an active person now? Yes ____
Do you have a high energy level compared to your peers? Yes ____
Do you find your mind racing when you get too many ideas at once? Yes ____
Do you have many tasks, projects, going on at once? Yes ____
Do you have a short attention span? Yes ____
Do you have a tendency to day dream? Yes ____
Do you leave doors and drawers open? Yes ____
Are you easily distracted? Yes ____

Summary of Attention Problem Total Yes ____

Motor Skills

Is the person's handwriting poor? Yes ____
Did you avoid playing sports as a child? Yes ____
Do you avoid playing sports now? Yes ____
Do you find driving difficult? Yes ____
Are you a poor driver? Yes ____
Do you drop things a lot? Yes ____
Do you consider yourself clumsy? Yes ____
Do you have problems with hand/eye coordination? Yes ____

Summary of Motor Problems Total Yes ____

Auditory processing

Do you find yourself listening to more than one conversation at a time? Yes ____
Can you rhyme the word CAT: ____ ____ ____
SLOW ____ ____ ____
QUICK: ____ ____ ____
Has difficulty rhyming? Yes ____
Do you often mishear words that are said to you? Yes ____
Do you misinterpret what is said to you? Yes ____
Do you often take things that are said too literally? Yes ____
Do you have trouble paying attention to long conversations or lectures? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty hearing what people say when there are other people talking? Yes ____
Does your mind race about thinking about the first things that was said to you? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty with spelling? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty sounding out words? Yes ____

Summary of Auditory Problems Total Yes ____

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Right and Left

Do you confuse right and left. Yes ____
Check How do you know your right and left sides? _____
Did you reverse letters or numbers as a child? Yes ____
Do you ever make letter or number reversals now? Yes ____
Do you have to stop and think when someone tells you to turn right or left? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty in making choices (menues, activities, dressing etc.)? Yes ____
Do you have to stop and think which way to turn a screw? Yes ____
Do you point one way when you mean another? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty with North, South, East and West? Yes ____
Do you find True and False questions difficult? Yes ____
Do you find yourself stopping at green lights? Yes ____
Do you get lost in large buildings or malls? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty reading maps? Yes ____

Summary of Right/Left Problems Total Yes ____

Organization

Are you disorganized? Yes ____
Do you collect things? Yes ____
Is your room messy? Yes ____
Do you misplace or lose things, especially little things like keys, combs, glasses, pens, pencils, homework, tools etc.? Yes ____
Are you often late? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty organizing your thoughts when you write? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty organizing your thoughts when you speak? Yes ____

Summary of Organizational Skills Total Yes ____

Employment

Are you unemployed? Yes ____
Have you ever been fired from a job? Yes ____
Did you have any difficulty completing tasks on any job? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty learning new jobs? Yes ____
Have you ever been a client of Vocational Rehabilitation? Yes ____

What types of jobs have you had? _____

_____

Summary of Employment Total Yes ____

Emotional

Are you a moody person? Yes ____
Are you a nervous person? Yes ____
Are you a worrier? Yes ____
Any problems with drugs or alcohol? Yes ____
Do you, or did you ever, have test anxiety? Yes ____
Did you ever go blank, or freeze, on a test? Yes ____

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Did you ever have a head injury? Yes ____

Summary of Emotional State Total Yes ____

Social

Are you shy? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty making friends? Yes ____
Do you have only a few friends? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty getting along with members of the opposite sex? Yes ____
Do you consider yourself a loner? Yes ____
Do you have any children Yes ____ No ____
Do any of them have difficulty with learning? Yes ____
Do you have any siblings? Yes ____ No ____
Do any of them have learning problems? Yes ____
Parent's occupations (F) _____ (M) _____
Did either have any learning problems that you are aware of? Yes ____

Summary of Social Skills Total Yes ____

Oral Communication

Do you believe that your speaking vocabulary is smaller than others? Yes ____
When you speak, do people have difficulty understanding what you are trying to say? Yes ____
Are there any words which you have difficulty pronouncing or get you tongue-tied? Yes ____
Do you have a tendency to ramble? Yes ____
Do you talk too much? Check does the person say too much? Yes ____
Do you interrupt others? Yes ____

Summary of Oral Communication Total Yes ____

Writing

Do you have a spelling problem? Yes ____
Is writing difficult for you? Yes ____
Do you avoid writing? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty deciding what to write about? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty taking notes? Yes ____
Do you speak better than you can write? Yes ____
Do you find that when you write your sentences are incomplete? Check Yes ____
Do your sentences run on? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty with grammar? Yes ____
Do you have difficulty with punctuation? Yes ____
Do you skip words when you write? Yes ____
Do you procrastinate with writing assignments? Yes ____

Summary of Writing Total Yes ____

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Print your full name.
Write your full name in cursive, script, sign your name.
Write a sentence about why you are here.
If not able, can you write a sentence about anything?
Write or print the alphabet
Write the numbers 1 to 20
Draw a picture.

Is the person's writing slanted? Yes ____
Is the person's handwriting difficult to read? Yes ____
Are the letters oversized for his/her age? Yes ____
Is the alphabet incomplete? Yes ____
Does the person mix capital and small letters? Yes ____
Are there any reversals Yes ____
Does the person write the second digit before the one when writing teen numbers? Yes ____
Does the person hold the pen or pencil in an unusual way? Yes ____
Is the person's drawing disportionate, too simple, very unusual? Yes ____

Noted Problems _____

_____

_____

Summary of Handwriting Total Yes ____

Math Skills

Do you often count on your fingers? Yes ____
Do you forget your additions facts? Yes ____
Check 9 + 7 ____ 8 + 6 ____
Do you forget your subtraction facts? Yes ____
Check 17 - 9 ____ 12 - 5 ____
Did you have difficulty learning the multiplication tables? Yes ____
Do you ever forget them now Yes ____
Check 8 x 7 ____ 7 x 6 ____ 9 x 6 ____

Summary of Number Facts Total Yes ____

Math Skills

Was it difficult for you to learn long division? Yes ____
Is it still difficult for you? Yes ____
Was it difficult for you to learn fractions? Yes ____
Is it still difficult for you? Yes ____
Was it difficult for you to learn decimals? Yes ____
Is it still difficult for you? Yes ____
Was it difficult for you to learn percentages? Yes ____
Is it still difficult for you? Yes ____
Was it difficult for you to learn positive and negative numbers? Yes ____

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Were word problems difficult? Yes ____

Have you taken algebra? Yes ____ No ____ Yes ____

If yes, did you have difficulties with algebra? Yes ____

Summary of Math Skills Total Yes ____

Math Vocabulary:

Does the person have difficulty defining "EQUAL" Yes ____

Does the person have difficulty defining "AVERAGE" Yes ____

Does the person have difficulty defining "UNIT" Yes ____

Does the person have difficulty defining "VARIABLE" Yes ____

Does the person have difficulty defining "COMPOUND INTEREST" Yes ____

Summary of Math Vocabulary Total Yes ____

Reading

Do you read only what you have to read? Yes ____

Do you dislike reading? Yes ____

Does the person have poor word attack skills? Yes ____

Does the person have poor phonic skills? Yes ____

Does the person leave off endings? Yes ____

Does the person add endings? Yes ____

Does the person leave off or change prefixes? Yes ____

Does the person misread many words? Yes ____

Does the person add words? Yes ____

Does the person skip words? Yes ____

Does the person evidence Flickering? Yes ____

Does the person substitute words for similar words? Yes ____

Does the person have difficulty pronouncing words? Yes ____

Does the person ignore punctuation? Yes ____

Does the person have a tracking problem? Yes ____

Does the person use finger or marker as a guide? Yes ____

Does the person skip lines? Yes ____

Are you embarassed to read out loud? Yes ____

Do you tilt your head when you read or study? Yes ____

Summary of Reading Problems Total Yes ____

Comprehension

Do you have difficulty paraphrasing what you read? Yes ____

Do you find yourself reading whole pages without knowing what you read? Yes ____

Are you often distracted by the words on the page (Fireworks)? Yes ____

Do you have difficulty identifying the main idea when you read? Yes ____

Do you have difficulty obtaining detail when you read? Yes ____

Are you easily distracted when you read? Yes ____

Do you find reading textbooks difficult? Yes ____

Summary of Reading Skills Total Yes

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Vocabulary

Does the person have difficulty defining

Level I	Level II	Level III	
"LAKE"	"SECTION"	"THEORY"	Yes ____
"SLOW"	"PASSIVE"	"RELUCTANT"	Yes ____
"CAPTURE"	"DEDICATE"	"TRANQUILIZE"	Yes ____
"SMOKE"	"MOTIVE"	"DILEMMA"	Yes ____
"REVERSE	"FOREIGN"	"UNANIMOUS"	Yes ____
"BEAUTIFUL"	"ARTIFICIAL"	"EXTENSIVE"	Yes ____
"DEVELOP"	"DEVISE"	"CONTEMPLATE"	Yes ____
"BIOLOGY"	"PHILOSOPHY	"ANTHROPOLOGY"	Yes ____
"CAUTION"	"INNOVATION"	" RENAISSANCE"	Yes ____
"NECESSARY"	"PRECISE"	"COLLECTIVE"	Yes ____

Is the person's vocabulary underdeveloped? Yes ____

Is the person's vocabulary ambiguous? Yes ____

Summary of Vocabulary

Total Yes ____

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1. cat stop not the bug sleep my tell do him

2. mad car sent back then down meet pay goes

3. start river bet under fishing clocks how street spent

4. hear want better match such round shark bone

5. heavy pea grave between maze knot beat beer

6. where paws earth point press foggy spike simple

7. burn rather thumb subtract yourselves harvest traveler

8. weather soil bolt slice fixture heard singer transfer

9. dodge tease passenger impact snorkel troop ward

10. reserve cute compute quench hasty practical torment

11. kennel motive council lagoon scripture haunt furrow

12. suitable artificial avert aggressive delicious avalanche

13. invitation beseech penetration scholarship promoted

14. theory protrude hearth mechanical bewilder savored foreign

15. receptionist licorice schedule repulsively perplexity

16. reluctant abrupt anticipate carbohydrate boisterous

17. tranquilize antiseptic philosophy prophecy dominant

18. emancipate immunization perceptual conscious aromatic

19. percussion quavered anonymous momentous aquatics

20. psychology utilization skepticism anecdote logistics

21. renaissance intricate appendicitis onyx innuendo

22. precocious asphyxiate scythe ricochet schism

23. plagiarize effervesce indigenous facetious chamois

Screening Summary

Name _____ Date _____

Educational History	2-3 ____	4-6 ____	7-10 ____
Attention	2-3 ____	4-6 ____	7-10 ____
Motor Skills	2-3 ____	4-6 ____	7-8 ____
Auditory processing	2-3 ____	4-6 ____	7-10 ____
Right and Left	2-3 ____	4 6 ____	7-11 ____
Organization	2-2 ____	3-4 ____	5-7 ____
Employment	1 ____	2-3 ____	4-5 ____
Emotional	1-2 ____	3-5 ____	6-7 ____
Social and Family	2-3 ____	4-6 ____	7-8 ____
Oral Communication	1-2 ____	3-4 ____	5-6 ____
Writing	2-4 ____	5-7 ____	8-12 ____
Handwriting	2-3 ____	4-6 ____	7-9 ____
Basic Math Skills		1-2 ____	3-5 ____
Math Skills	1-4 ____	5-7 ____	8-11 ____
Math Vocabulary	1 ____	2 3 ____	4-5 ____
Reading	3-7 ____	8-12 ____	13-19 ____
Comprehension	1-2 ____	3-4 ____	5-7 ____
Vocabulary	2-3 ____	4-6 ____	7-10 ____

Reading List

Number correct Lines 1 - 14 ____ X 2 ____

Number correct Lines 15 - 23 ____ X 3 ____

Number correct with help or close enough to be recognized ____

Reading list total ____

Adult - 342 -300 ____ 299 - 200 ____ 199 -150 ____ 149 -100 ____ 99 - 50 ____ 49 - 1 ____

In each state, there is an agency responsible for the administration of the programs of vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, and independent living for persons with disabilities. Each of these programs has different eligibility criteria and purposes. The vocational rehabilitation program is designed to assist eligible persons with disabilities to achieve suitable employment; the supported employment program works with individuals with severe disabilities who require ongoing support services to enter or maintain competitive employment; and the independent living program is focused on working with persons with severe disabilities to enable them to live independently in the community and in the home.

All of these programs are state-federal programs in that the federal government provides the bulk of the funds for their operation, leadership in program development, technical assistance in program implementation, and monitoring of program administration. Each state has designated an agency to be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the programs. This agency is responsible for both the determination of eligibility of persons for the programs and the provision of services.

Services are tailored to the unique needs of the individual and are guided by an individualized written rehabilitation program (IWRP) which is developed by the eligible person and a representative of the state agency. The services available under these programs are quite varied and may include the following:

- medical, psychological, vocational, and other types of assessments to determine the functional strengths and limitations of the individual as these relate to the program eligibility criteria and the development of appropriate rehabilitation programming with suitable objectives and goals;
- counseling and guidance to assist an eligible person in selecting suitable rehabilitation programming, including the types of services needed to achieve the person's choice of a goal;
- referral to secure necessary services from other agencies;
- physical and mental restoration services necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition which is stable or slowly progressive;
- vocational and other types of training, including on-the-job training, trade schools, and training in institutions of higher education;
- interpreter and reader services;
- services to family members when necessary to achieve the rehabilitation programming objectives;
- rehabilitation technology services;
- placement in suitable employment;
- post-employment services necessary to maintain or regain other suitable employment; and
- other goods and services necessary to achieve rehabilitation objectives.

The state agency can provide some of these services, such as, counseling and guidance, referral, and placement directly to an eligible person; while for other services, the agency may arrange for their provision by a vendor such as a hospital or educational institution. For many of the services, the state agency will participate with the eligible person in sharing the costs connected with the services. The extent of financial participation will vary depending on the needs and resources of both the eligible person and the agency's policies.

Since the programs are administered by the states within the broad framework of federal requirements, the states have a good deal of flexibility in the administration of these programs. Thus it is important to seek information on these programs from the state agency. In some states, the agency will be an independent agency; in other states, the agency may be part of a larger agency such as one devoted to education, employment, or human services.

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