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ABSTRACT

A project provided more than 800 adult educators in Pennsylvania with a wide range of staff development activities and instructional strategies for teaching students with learning differences and multilevel abilities in the same classroom. It established a model for staff development that built upon previous projects and used a variety of delivery systems that could be replicated in other locations and subject areas. Training was conducted in sessions held at the Regional Staff Development centers and at adult education programs throughout the state for adult educators, volunteer tutors, and professionals from other human service agencies. The "Learning disAbilities Newsletter" was used to inform participants about the availability of training and information about learning problems and instructional techniques. A toll-free phone number was installed to provide adult educators with direct access to the project trainer who would consult with project participants about their students with special learning needs. (Appendixes contain the project brochure and five issues of Volume 13 of Learning disAbilities Newsletter. Each issue provides updates on the progress of the project and covers a different pertinent topic, including the following: learning and avoidance styles; mnemonics; multi-level classroom techniques; handwriting; and attention deficit disorder.) (YLB)

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ED 406 544

Statewide Staff Development Project

Learning Differences

and

Multi-level Classroom Techniques

by

Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

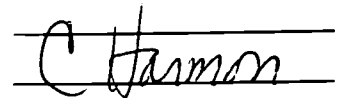
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Abstract Page

Title: Statewide Staff Development Project: Learning Differences and Multi-level Classroom Techniques

Project No: 99-6008

Funding: \$30,000.00

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Purpose: The Statewide Staff Development Project on Learning Differences and Multi-level Classroom Techniques was designed to meet the need to provide extensive training to adult educators and volunteer tutors about adults who have learning problems.

Procedures: The training was conducted through trainings sessions held at the Regional Staff Development Centers and at adult education programs throughout the state. The Learning disAbilities Newsletter was used to inform participants about the availability of training and information about learning problems and instructional techniques. A toll free phone number was installed to provide adult educators with direct access to the project trainer who would consult with project participants about their students with special learning needs.

Comments: The project provided training to more than 800 adult educators, volunteer tutors and professionals from other human service agencies. A list of the training session topics is included in this report.

Descriptors:

Project Description

The Statewide Staff Development Project: Learning Differences and Multi-level Classroom Techniques developed a model for staff development by integrating a number of previously funded 353 projects and some of the 1995 priorities into one delivery system. It demonstrated how an integrated approach of building on previous 353 projects applied to the current priorities can produce quality staff development. The project was operated by the Center for Alternative Learning's staff which includes Dr. Richard Cooper, its founder, who has a national reputation as a leading expert in the area of adults who have learning differences and the use of alternative instructional techniques. Dr. Cooper has provided services for adults with learning differences and training for service providers in adult education, welfare, vocational education and psychological services since 1981. The Center has become the national headquarters for the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs (NAASLN) and the staff has operated the association's national conference for the past three years and will operate the national conference again in 1996.

In a 1994 U.S. Department of Education survey on adult education accommodations, Dr. Cooper's staff development activities, his screening instrument and the instructional techniques he has developed, were the most frequently mentioned accommodations in the report. Dr. Cooper has been involved in many 353 projects in Pennsylvania and in projects in a number of other states. In 1994 he was a major contributor to an interagency symposium on individuals with learning differences for the state of South Carolina. Through his role as an adult education trainer in that state, and past President and current Treasurer of NAASLN, he was involved in the planning and development of this interagency activity which was held in March 1995. In Pennsylvania, Dr.

Cooper is well known as a learning specialist, trainer and as a consultant. As an adult educator, he works with adults individually and in small groups. He conducts staff development around the country (currently in 29 states). Adults with learning differences, adult educators and social service providers around the state contact him for advice on how to work with adults who manifest varying degrees of learning differences, problems and disabilities. The Center has operated numerous 353 staff development and demonstration projects, including state-wide training on learning problems.

At both the state and national level, teaching adults with special learning needs has come to the forefront as one of the most pressing staff development needs. The largest special interest group listed by the membership of NAASLN is learning disabilities and related labels (ADD, Dyslexia). The membership ranks this topic as the highest area of interest four to one (re: Membership applications). David Osher and Lenore Webb, of Pelavin Associates in Washington, D.C., cite Dr. Cooper and other experts in the field in an article entitled "Adult Literacy, Learning Disabilities and Social Context: Conceptual Foundations for a Learner-Centered Approach." (February 1994, p. 11) The authors state that there is a continuum of needs, not just one set of needs, for adults who have some type of learning problem. In Pennsylvania, the directors of the regional staff development centers report that one of the most requested trainings is on learning styles and differences. In addition to this need, many adult educators suggest that there needs to be more collaboration among the agencies who provide services to the students who are enrolled in their programs. Dr. Cooper has provided training to many social welfare and rehabilitation agencies. The professionals in these agencies report that they know little about learning problems and disabilities because the field was not

included in their curriculum of professional studies, or it was only mentioned briefly. The first step in establishing such cooperation is a common understanding of adults with various learning differences.

Another area of concern, which is often not articulated on needs assessments, is classroom management and instructional strategies for students with a wide range of academic ability and achievement. Many adult educators report having non-readers in classes with students who will soon be ready to complete their GED. Many teachers teach to the middle, leaving those at the top and bottom of the skill range to work on their own. Dr. Cooper has found that teachers' responses to the idea of strategies for multi-level classrooms have been very positive, but few have been trained in, or feel they have the time to experiment with, such techniques.

Goals

1. To establish a model for staff development building on previous projects and using a variety of delivery systems which can be replicated in other locations and subject areas.

2. To provide the adult educators in Pennsylvania with a wide-range of staff development activities and instructional strategies for teaching students with learning differences and multi-level abilities in the same classroom.

3. To facilitate the collaboration between adult education providers and the providers of other social services in the community through shared training activities with the end purpose of increasing the appropriateness of referrals to meet the full range of needs for adults with learning disabilities, problems and differences.

Objectives

1. To operate a state-wide staff development project (in each of the nine regions) focusing on one area of adult education (learning differences in the multi-level ability classroom) and document the positive and negative aspects of the project.
2. To use a variety of staff development methods (training sessions, video recordings, printed material, classroom demonstrations and observations, 800 toll free hot line, newsletter, fax and E-mail) to achieve the competencies for adult educators identified by the Bureau.
3. To provide training to at least 150 adult educators and 75 professionals from agencies other than adult education programs.
4. To conduct a minimum of 50 staff development activities in adult education and social service agencies throughout the state.
5. To encourage the learning about and the development of instructional strategies and techniques matched to the individual's learning differences rather than to a grade level.
6. To develop teacher competencies in the use of innovative and alternative techniques and teaching strategies delivered by training sessions.
7. To encourage interagency collaboration by encouraging the participation of other agencies in training sessions and by offering additional training about how learning differences affect individuals in all areas of their lives.

Procedures

The project began with a training session at the office of the Adult Basic and Literacy Education at the Department of Education. This was followed by full day initial training sessions at each of the nine staff development centers.

These sessions were video taped and copies were sent to each of the staff development centers so that others could participate in the project. Working through the nine regional staff development centers, fifty additional training sessions were conducted during the year providing training to more than 800 adult educators, volunteer tutors, and professionals interested in learning differences from many human service agencies such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Corrections.

A brochure was developed by Tana Reiff and it was distributed to all the conference participants. A copy is included in the appendix of this report. The brochure was distributed to each project participant and to others who requested it. The main purpose of the brochure was to explain the purpose of the project and list the toll free phone number for the project. An additional telephone line was installed at the Center for Alternative Learning (610-525-0800) and the toll free number was assigned to that phone line (800-204-7667). This phone line provides adult educators throughout the state with direct access to the Center for the scheduling of training and for advise about students with learning differences.

The adult educators were able to choose from the following list of training topics.

Characteristics of Learning Differences This training session details how individuals with learning differences, problems and disabilities think and learn. It is the most popular of Dr. Cooper's training sessions and provides the basis for adapting instruction to meet individual needs. (A video tape of this training session is also available)

Cooper Screening of Information Processing In this training session, Dr. Cooper administers the screening to a student from the local program to demonstrate how the screening can be used as a diagnostic teaching tool. He then goes through each of the sections in the screening explaining how to administer the screening to various types of students and how to interpret the information obtained from the screening.

Assessment of Learning Problems Participants in this session learn about the many ways to assess learning problems. Sample test reports will be shown and the significance of the test scores will be discussed.

Teaching Reading, Writing and Math This training session provides an overview of alternative techniques for teaching reading, writing and math to individuals with learning problems.

Tic Tac Toe Math The Tic Tac Toe Math system has proven to be very effective with individuals with learning differences. Many adult students have attributed their success with passing the math section of the GED to Tic Tac Toe Math. This training teaches the system and demonstrates how to teach it to students who have not been able to memorize the times tables.

Teaching Math to Adults with Learning Problems This training session provides information about why individuals with learning differences have difficulty learning math. Alternative techniques for teaching quantitative concepts, arithmetic operations and problem solving skills are explained. A demonstration of Tic Tac Toe Math is included.

Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Problems Literacy teachers and tutors report that this training provides them with many practical ideas for teaching individuals with reading problems from the non-reader to the reader with limited comprehension.

Teaching Spelling and Writing to Adults with Learning Problems This training session provides alternative techniques for teaching spelling and writing to individuals with language based learning problems.

Multi-level Classroom Techniques This training session uses the techniques taught in the other training sessions and applies them to the multi-level classroom where adults with a wide range of basic skills are grouped together.

Employment and Learning Problems Since learning problems limit the acquisition of basic academic and social skills, adult educators need to understand how they can address employability skills in their programs. This training provides them with an understanding of the problems which individuals with learning differences encounter in the workplace and with techniques for helping them cope with the situations.

Learning Problems and English as a Second Language This training session for teachers of English as a Second Language explains how learning problems can limit second language acquisition and how to recognize if a student may need to be referred for further testing.

In-Depth Session on Teaching Writing This two day training goes beyond just learning about alternative techniques. Participants experiment with the

alternative techniques. For example they are asked to draw an outline for a writing assignment and learn how to teach this technique to those who might benefit from it.

Helping Students with Test Anxiety Test anxiety is a problem for many students with learning problems. This training session demonstrates a variety of techniques to help students prepare for and take tests. These include learning how to teach students relaxation and study skills and when to implement accommodations.

Techniques for Teaching Adults Who Learn Differently This training provides 25 teaching principles which Dr. Cooper has found effective when working with individuals with learning problems.

Avoidance Activities and Learning Styles This training explores the reasons why so many individuals with learning differences avoid the very tasks they say they want to do. Participants learn how to identify avoidance behaviors and are provided with suggestions about what they can do to help students break avoidance patterns.

In addition to the training sessions, project participants received a number of handouts and publications. These materials provided adult educators and volunteer tutors with information about learning differences and multi-level instructional techniques and practical tools for teaching. The Learning disAbilities Newsletter was distributed at each of the training sessions and the project participants were added to the newsletter subscription list. Each participant received subsequent copies of the newsletter which informed them

about up-coming training and additional information about learning differences.

Since the assessment of learning differences, problems and disabilities is such a critical part of educating adults with special learning needs, Dr. Cooper placed particular emphasis on explaining the assessment process. He also demonstrated the use of the Cooper Screening for Information Processing, an assessment instrument he has developed to enable adult educators to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. He demonstrated the screening procedure by assessing 12 adult students as part of this training. This not only provided the project participants with a clearer understanding of how to use the instrument but it also provided the local programs with assessments of some of the students who did not have the financial means to obtain specialized assessments.

One additional component was added to the statewide staff development project. An adult educator from the Bidwell Training Center in Pittsburgh traveled to the Center for Alternative Learning in Bryn Mawr to receive more intense training in the administration of the screening and how to match instructional strategies to the information obtained.

Objectives Which Were Met

All the objectives were met or exceeded. The first objective was to operate a state-wide staff development project (in each of the nine regions) focusing on one area of adult education (learning differences in the multi-level ability classroom) and document the positive and negative aspects of the project. Adult educators in all nine regions received training. The positive aspects of the project were reported as being the wide variety of training available, the high attendance at the training sessions, the use of multi-delivery methods and the knowledge of the trainer. The only negative aspect reported was the imbalance

in where the sessions were conducted. Fewer were conducted in Eastern Pennsylvania.

The second objective was to use a variety of staff development methods (training sessions, video recordings, printed material, classroom demonstrations and observations, 800 toll free hot line, newsletter, fax and E-mail) to achieve the competencies for adult educators identified by the Bureau. These were all met, however, E-mail was not used frequently in this project.

The third objective was to provide training to at least 150 adult educators and 75 professionals from agencies other than adult education programs. The total number exceeded 800, the majority were adult educators with more than 100 professionals from other agencies.

The fourth objective, to conduct a minimum of 50 staff development activities was exceeded by 10 training sessions.

The fifth objective was to encourage the learning about and the development of instructional strategies and techniques matched to the individual's learning differences rather than to a grade level. This was achieved through the training about learning differences and specifically the sessions on assessment.

The sixth objective, to develop teacher competencies in the use of innovative and alternative techniques and teaching strategies delivered by training sessions was achieved and reported to be the most useful part of the training project.

The seventh objective was to encourage interagency collaboration by encouraging the participation of other agencies in training sessions and by offering additional training about how learning differences affect individuals in all areas of their lives. Although interagency collaboration is difficult to measure at the local level, the opportunity for professionals from other human service

agencies to receive training along with adult educators encourages communication which will result in more interagency referrals.

Objectives which were not met

All of the objectives of this project were met.

Evaluation

Each participant at each of the training sessions was encouraged to complete an evaluation and most did so. Ninety-two percent of these evaluations rated the training sessions as "excellent" or "very good". The other 8 % rated the training sessions as "good". No one rated the training sessions as "fair" or "poor". The coordinators of the nine staff development centers reported that the project was very successful and provided much needed training to the adult educators and volunteer tutors in their regions. The external evaluator, Dr. James Ryan, stated that the project met the objectives and was well received by adult educators throughout the state.

Dissemination

The results of this project will be disseminated in a number of different ways. First this report will be disseminated to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Adult Literacy and Basic Education, and to the Regional Professional Development Centers. Secondly it will be available upon request from the Center for Alternative Learning, and its availability will be announced in the Center's newsletter. Additionally, the list of training topics was listed in the Center's newsletter and these training sessions will be offered to adult education programs, human service agencies and employers throughout the state and around the country.

Appendix

Project Brochure

Learning disAbilities Newsletter	Vol. 13, No 1	November, 1995
Learning disAbilities Newsletter	Vol. 13, No 2	January, 1996
Learning disAbilities Newsletter	Vol. 13, No 3	March, 1996
Learning disAbilities Newsletter	Vol. 13, No 4	May, 1996
Learning disAbilities Newsletter	Vol. 13, No 5	July, 1996

INTERAGENCY TRAINING.

Personnel from human-service agencies may be invited to the training sessions hosted by the Regional Staff Development Center or participating program.

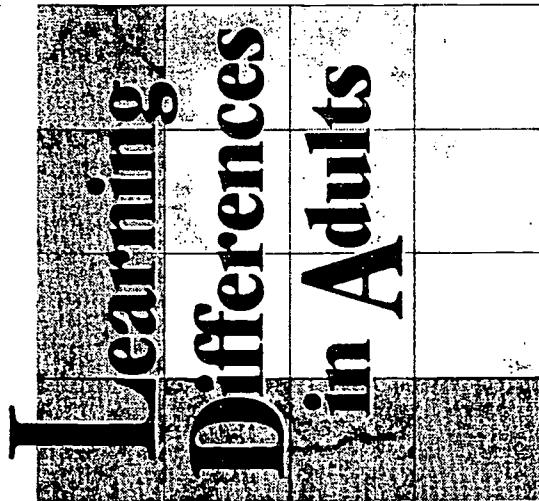
For more information on how you or your program can participate in this staff development opportunity, please contact your Regional Staff Development Center.

About Dr. Richard Cooper

Richard Cooper, Ph.D., is the founder and director of the Center for Alternative Learning in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, a specialist in adult-learning differences, and president of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs. He has been involved in a number of 353 projects in Pennsylvania, as well as in other states, and as a trainer and consultant for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, and other agencies. In addition, Dr. Cooper is on the staff at a psychiatric hospital. He has developed alternative instructional techniques and videos which are available as part of the Learning Differences and Multi-level Instructional Techniques project.

PENNSYLVANIA'S 9 REGIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT CENTERS
including counties served

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Phone: (814) 734-5610 • Fax: (814) 734-5806
- Region 2** (Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Tioga, Union)
Phone: (814) 359-3069 • Fax: (814) 359-2344
- Region 3** (Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming)
Phone: (717) 961-7834 • Fax: (717) 961-7858
- Region 4** (Armstrong, Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, Westmoreland)
Phone: (412) 661-READ • Fax: (412) 661-3040
- Region 5** (Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Somerset)
Phone: (717) 248-4942 • Fax: (717) 248-8610
- Region 6** (Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, York)
Phone: (717) 232-0568 • Fax: (717) 234-7142
- Region 7** (Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill)
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Phone: (610) 902-8518 • Fax: (610) 902-8309
- Region 9** (Philadelphia)
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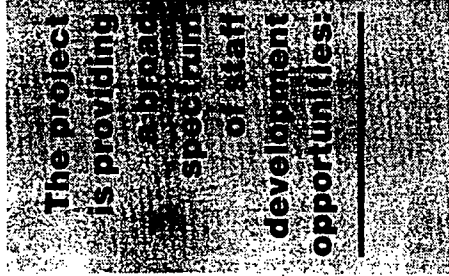
A STAFF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR ADULT BASIC AND LITERACY EDUCATORS IN PENNSYLVANIA

An important 1995-96 Section 353 special project is providing a multi-faceted training approach for ABLE practitioners. Here's information on what this project is doing and how you can benefit.

teaching adults who have special learning needs is perennially the most requested topic among Adult Basic and Literacy professionals in Pennsylvania. After all, a significant number of our adult learners did not complete a basic education program because of their learning disabilities, unaccommodated learning styles, Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD), or other learning problems.

Statewide Staff Development: Learning Differences and Multilevel Instructional Techniques is a 1995-96 special project whose goal is to demonstrate how an integrated training approach targeted to the key instructional area of learning differences can produce a model of quality staff development. Adult Basic and Literacy teachers and tutors statewide are invited to participate. The project is being conducted by the Center for Alternative Learning, under the direction of Dr. Richard Cooper and the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education, through the Regional Staff Development Centers.

Teachers and tutors working in adult basic and literacy education programs in Pennsylvania are invited to take advantage of this staff development opportunity, at no charge. Participants will experience intensive training, follow-up, and ongoing contact with the project.



REGIONAL AND PROGRAM-SPECIFIC TRAINING.

Sessions on topics determined by local programs or Regional Staff Development Centers will be held at least three times during the program year for each participating location. Topics may include:

- Screening for Information Processing Problems
- Understanding Learning and Attention Differences
- Multilevel Instructional Techniques
- Customized Training on Innovative Instructional Techniques

TOLL-FREE HOTLINE.

As follow-up to the formal training sessions, participants may call **1-800-204-7667** (or locally, 610-525-0800) for answers to questions about specific students with learning problems. This dedicated phone number will be answered two hours per weekday,

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. During other hours, an answering machine will record messages and phone calls will be returned.

FREE NEWSLETTER.

Participants will receive a free subscription to *Learning disAbilities*, the newsletter of The Center for Alternative Learning. This publication covers key topics in the area of learning differences, along with announcements of related events and resources.

RESOURCE MATERIALS.

A bibliography of important resources, along with uncopyrighted materials on special learning needs, will be sent periodically to all project participants. A substantial library of copyrighted material and videos will be available to borrow.

ON-SITE OBSERVATION.

Participating teachers and tutors may request that Dr. Cooper visit their programs and observe their classrooms in action, providing direct, specific feedback.

LEARNING disABILITIES

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 716
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
610-525-8336

Vol. 13 No. 1

November, 1995

Newsletter Has A New Look

You will notice that we have changed the appearance of the newsletter. It is expanded to bring you more information about learning differences and techniques for helping individuals who have difficulties because of these differences. In this issue Dr. Cooper has included some thoughts on avoidance activities and how these group into avoidance styles. There is a worksheet to help individuals to understand their avoidance patterns and work to overcome them. We have also included a reprint of an article written by a student. We hope to make this a regular feature. The staff at the Center for Alternative Learning would like to encourage readers of this newsletter to submit news items or other information which you believe would be of interest to others concerned about the education and well being of people with learning differences.

Pennsylvania's Statewide Staff Development Project

The statewide staff development project formally began on September 19th, when Dr. Cooper conducted a training session for 11 staff members of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education in Harrisburg. The following day he began the initial sessions of the statewide staff development project. These were completed on October 25 when Dr. Cooper conducted the last of the nine initial training sessions which provided adult educators with information about learning differences and their impact on students' achievements. In the nine trainings sessions conducted during September and October, 223 adult educators attended the five hour workshops. The training was well received and many teachers found the description of the characteristics of learning differences and information about avoidance styles very helpful in understanding their students.

The other components of the project has already begun. These include follow-up training and consultation by phone for those trained in the program. Training about learning differences and how to teach students with these differences will be offered across the state on assessment of learning problems and instructional techniques. The following is a list of training sessions already scheduled. These training sessions are open, when space is available, to individuals interested in adults with learning differences. If you would like to attend these sessions, contact our office for more information about exact location and availability of space.

Statewide Staff Development Schedule

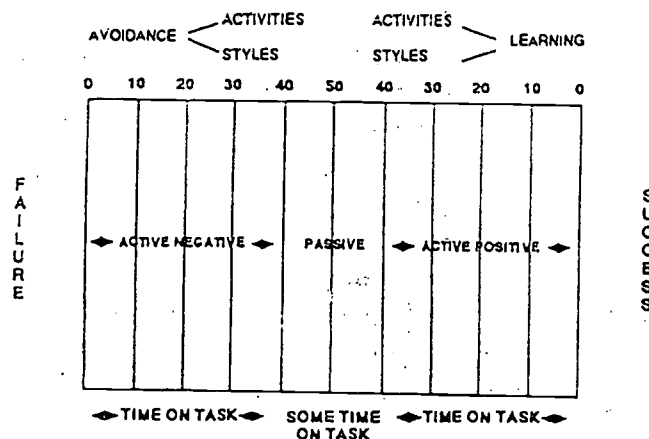
Nov. 1	Metropolitan Career Center <i>Cooper Screening for Information Processing</i>	Philadelphia 1:00 to 3:30
Nov. 6	Corrections Education Inservice <i>Tic Tac Toe Math and Other Alternative Math Techniques</i>	Danville 9:00 to 2:30
Nov. 29	YWCA <i>The Characteristics of Learning Differences Teaching Reading and Spelling</i>	Pottstown 6:00 to 9:00
Dec. 2	JCCEOA <i>Learning Differences and Multi-Level Classroom Techniques</i>	Punxsutawney 9:00 to 1:00
Dec. 4	Beaver County Community College <i>Cooper Screening for Information Processing</i>	Beaver 1:00 to 4:00
Dec. 9	Sharon Baptist Church <i>The Characteristics of Learning Differences Teaching Reading and Spelling</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 to 12:00
Dec. 11	Staff Development Region 5 <i>Assessment Multi-Level Classroom Techniques</i>	Johnstown 9:00 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:00
Jan. 12	Staff Development Region 5 <i>Cooper Screening for Information Processing Helping Students Break Avoidance Patterns</i>	Lewistown 9:00 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:00
Jan. 22	Lycoming Co. Literacy Project <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Williamsport 12:00 to 5:00
Feb. 9	Staff Development Region 7 <i>Teaching Writing Teaching Math</i>	Bethlehem 9:00 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:00

Through funding provided by the Department of Education, there is a dedicated phone number for the project. Adult educators can call the Center to obtain information for scheduling training, asking questions about students with learning problems and obtaining information about alternative instructional techniques. The number locally is **610-525-0800** and in the rest of Pennsylvania **1-800-204-7767**.

Learning and Avoidance Styles

All the assessments of a person's learning style are useless if the person is engaged in avoidance activities. There has been much attention paid to understanding learning styles and identifying ways to teach to those styles, however, many students never get to the learning because of their avoidance styles. Educators, parents and students themselves need to understand their avoidance activities, analyze their roots and engage in activities to break the patterns of avoidance.

This diagram shows how all of us use learning and avoidance activities. Using the analogy of a football field which has goals at either end and lines to mark progress, we can see that the more time spent on learning, the closer the person is able to come to success; and, contrarily, the more time a person spends avoiding, the closer they come to failure.



For example, if a person wants to learn how to use a computer there are some things that this person needs to do to be successful. Some people's learning style would push them to take a course to learn about computers when others' style would be to go out and buy one and experiment with it. Another style would be to buy a book and read up on computers before the person ever touches one. These learning activities will usually result in success: learning how to use a computer. The proficiency level will be dictated by aptitude and amount of time on task. However, in the middle, you find a person who decides that he/she is going to learn how to use a computer but does nothing actively about it. Just the fact that he/she is thinking about learning how to use a computer, can result in some passive learning. When others are talking about computers, a little may be learned and the same is true when the person hears about or sees computers and their operations in their environment.

At the other end of the continuum, a person may actively engage in activities to avoid computers. Now the desire to learn to use a computer may be a "should" or a requirement imposed by others. This person avoids computers and tunes out any reference to the machines. When anyone suggests that the person should just try to use the machine, this person will state that "I am afraid that I will erase everything." On the day of a scheduled training, the person will find a reason to be absent.

It is clear that the person most likely to learn how to operate a computer will be the person actively engaged in learning activities. The same is true for all other learning, however, it is very difficult for people, especially teachers, to understand why and how some people can avoid the basic academic skills of reading, writing, spelling and math.

There are many causes for avoidance. These include the internal factors of fear, disinterest, lack of aptitude, disability and inability. The external factors are the influence of others, the environment and lack of opportunity. The avoidance activities, too numerous to list here, can be grouped into six styles. Some examples include: **Emotional** avoidance activities like crying, anger, withdrawal; **Cheating** of all kinds; **Substitution** would be any activity instead of the learning activity; **Distractions** such as talking, clowning, drugs and alcohol; **Shifting Responsibility** -- blaming others, belittling the task, blaming a disability; **Distancing Oneself** -- being absent, sick, ignoring the task.

Developing Awareness of Avoidance Patterns

The first step in helping someone to stop avoiding is to help that person to become aware of the avoidance activities. A direct approach is to show a person a list of avoidance activities and point out those which are part of that person's behavior. An indirect approach is to discuss a list of avoidance activities in general and then ask the person if any of them apply. Another indirect approach method is to use story telling to convey the message. Modeling is an effective way to help individuals with learning differences to understand their own behavior. This can be accomplished by the teacher, tutor, friend or parent explaining how avoidance effects their performance.

Adding a little humor to lighten the mood can reduce a person's tendency to deny their avoidance behavior. Be sure to define terms and to ensure that students have a clear understanding of the terms that are being used. Sometimes, because the avoidance behaviors are so deeply ingrained, counseling may be required to help the students become aware of their avoidance patterns

Breaking Avoidance Patterns

Getting past avoidance activities requires searching for the cause of the avoidance and finding appropriate motivators. If the cause is fear, the person must either accept the avoidance or search for a way to reduce or eliminate the fear. Facing fear is a tried and true way to overcome it, but it often requires enormous courage or a helping hand. Small steps into the realm of fear enables many people to go further, and, as success is achieved, the fear is diminished. However, if failure is encountered it often increases the avoidance and the fear.

One of the best ways to break avoidance behaviors is to set goals. Many of the students' goals are short term or not realistic. By setting long, intermediate and short range goals, the student can find reasons to engage in learning activities. However, remember that the goal must exceed the task. A student who sets a goal of learning algebra and sees no need for it, has a task which exceeds the goal.

Some students do not understand cause and effect or the consequences of their avoidance. Explaining the consequences of the avoidance and the benefits of breaking these patterns can result in more time on task. But just explaining is often not enough. Frequently the students need to understand what really is involved, they need to be encouraged, and praised. They need to succeed and some of the ways to gain success is to break tasks in to small parts, set concrete goals in measurable terms and charting success to make it visual. Instead of competing with others, the students should learn to compete with themselves.

Enclosed with this newsletter is an Avoidance Worksheet. This tool can be used to help students to understand and break their avoidance patterns.

NAASLN

Another National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs' annual conference is successfully completed. The enthusiasm and commitment of the professionals who attended the 1995 Conference in Chicago was evident in the sessions and in the hallways of the hotel. There were more than 80 concurrent sessions and a General Session about Continuing Education Units as a way to improve professional development.

The new president of the association is William R. Langner who, now that he has retired from the U.S. Department of Education, is able to take a more active role in the association which he co-founded. Dr. Cooper will continue as treasurer of the association. The next meeting of the board of directors will be February 15 and 16. Anyone who would like the association to consider any issues concerning the lifelong learning opportunities of adults with special learning needs can contact: William Langner at 202-479-0976 or Dr. Cooper at 610-525-8336.

The work has already begun on the 1996 NAASLN Annual Conference which will be held in New Orleans on September 26, 27 and 28 at the Radisson Hotel on Canal Street. A call for papers was included in this year's conference program and we already have a number of proposals submitted. If you know of a person or group of people who have information to share with adult educators and other professionals interested in the lifelong learning opportunities of adults with special learning needs, please encourage them to contact our office to request a call for paper form. If you would like to help with next year's conference or with the operation of the association, please contact Dr. Cooper who is handling the daily administrative activities for the association.

"Our Trip to the Literacy Fair" -- a report by Skyline student Carolyn Thompson

I went to the Literacy Fair at Central Virginia Community College in Lynchburg, VA, with Carolyn Stone and Dawn Martin, who are teachers, and Martha Carper, my tutor. This is the first time I've been to college! I really liked the college.

We went to the first class on "Stories to Tell." Each person told their learning story. I was glad to know by staying with school you can get a better job. I'm determined! You can really do it if you set your mind to it when you hear how other folks have tried in school to learn. I made me feel good. From the question people asked, I could see how my daughter, Joy, and nephew may have learning disabilities and that it may effect how they behave.

Next I went to Dr. Cheatham's class on "Everybody Has a Story to Tell." I would like to write better. She said you start by writing down just what you are thinking and the words you know. Then you get help with the words you need. I want to start keeping a book of my writing so I can see how I'm improving. I want to write in my book what I have learned after each lesson.

After our box picnic lunch outside, I went to Dr. Cooper's class on "Learning: To Each His Own." He showed us how to do Tic-Tac-Toe Math. I really want to learn it! When Martha, my tutor, would ask me what I wanted to work on, I would do everything but math. Something about it made me nervous when I thought about it so I would avoid doing it, UNTIL I went to the Literacy Fair and listened to Dr. Cooper and watched him do math on the board. Now I'm really interested in learning math and multiplying. I'm going to order his tape for me and my daughter, Joy, to Learn Tic-Tac-Toe Math, multiplying and dividing together. I really liked him as a teacher and I'd like to hear him again, if I had the chance.

If any students feel the same way I do - not wanting to learn math - now I want to work on everything! Don't be afraid to go hear Dr. Cooper or go to any Literacy Fairs or workshops you can. It will loosen you up. I'm not afraid to learn. It was worth my while to get off a day without pay to go and learn. For any tutors and learners, it was great for us to learn together! Thank you for giving me the chance to go.

-Carolyn Thompson

Teacher Training

Dr. Cooper has developed a number of inservice workshops and courses on learning differences. The workshops range from one to six hours (a list is available upon request). The courses are 15 hours long, offered for one graduate credit and 45 hours for three graduate credits. He has offered these workshops and courses at conferences, parent groups, schools, literacy programs, universities, school districts and educational service centers. These workshops and courses, which combine theory and practice, are customized for special education teachers, regular education teachers involved with inclusion, adult education teachers, parents and children and adults with learning differences.

The following are 15 hour, one credit courses:

Teaching Math to Students with Learning Problems

Teaching Reading, Writing and Spelling to Students with Learning Problems

Teaching Social and Life Skills to Students with Learning Problems

Inclusion of Students with Learning Problems in the Regular Classroom

For more information about these courses and how they can be offered in your area, contact our office.

Speaking Schedule

Writing in the Inclusion Classroom, November 18, 9:30 to 11:00, West Chester University, PA.

Multi-Level Instructional Techniques, December 5 and 13, 6:30 to 9:30, Sewell, New Jersey.

Inclusion of Students with Learning Problems, Delaware County Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, Wednesday evenings in March, 4:00 to 9:00.

Teaching Math to Students with Learning Problems, Bucks County Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, Tuesday evenings in March, 4:30 to 9:30.

Social Skills on the Job, LDA Conference, March 8, 10:15 to 12:30, Dallas, TX.

Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities, New School for Social Research, April 13 & 20, New York, NY.

Learning Differences and Alternative Instructional Techniques, Kentucky Adult and Continuing Education Association, April 26 & 26.

Center for Alternative Learning

Since the Center has 501c3 status with the Internal Revenue Service, donations to the Center may be tax deductible. If you would like to make a donation to the Center, you can do so by adding it to your subscription to this newsletter or by sending a check to the Center. If you would like to make a donation of equipment, materials or supplies; or for more information about how your donation will be used by the staff at the Center, contact Dr. Cooper at 1-800-869-8336.

The Center for Alternative Learning is also a participating agency with the United Way so that donations to the United Way can be specified for the Center.

Adult Education Class Schedule

English as a Second Language

Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 to 11:30 AM

Basic Academic Skills (afternoons)

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 to 3:00

Basic Academic Skills (evenings)

Monday and Wednesday 6:00 to 8:00

In order to meet the varied scheduling needs of adults and to provide one on one tutoring, the Center trains volunteer tutors to work with our students. Students who would like to work with a volunteer tutor or individuals who would like to become a volunteer, should contact Anne-Louise. She will schedule an appointment for either a placement test for students or tutor orientation for volunteers.

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The Newsletter is published 5 times a year.

LEARNING disABILITIES

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 716
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
610-525-8336

Vol. 13 No. 2

January, 1996

Please share the newsletter with your friends and colleagues. If you would like to reprint the article in the newsletter, please feel free to do so. I only ask that you reference Learning disAbilities Newsletter and send me a copy of your publication.

Pennsylvania's Statewide Staff Development Project

The statewide staff development project is well received. The evaluations completed by the participants indicated that the workshops are very informative and provide the teachers with practical tips for instructing their students who have special learning needs.

To date this year, 384 individuals have participated in the staff development project on learning differences. The project began in September with nine full day training sessions about the characteristics of learning differences, problems and disabilities. Some adult educators have been able to attend the 13 follow-up workshops which have been offered to date. Six of the follow-up training sessions involved assessing learning problems and the use of the Cooper Screening for Information Processing (C-SIP). The other workshops provided instruction in alternative instructional techniques such as Tic Tac Toe Math, and teaching reading and writing to adults with learning differences.

Statewide Staff Development Schedule

Jan. 15	Staff Development Region 3 <i>Alternative Instructional Techniques</i> <i>Teaching Spelling</i>	Bradford County 9:00 to 3:00 7:00 to 9:00
Jan. 16	Staff Development Region 3 <i>Teaching Spelling</i>	Scranton 10:00 to 12:00
Jan. 22	Lycoming Co. Literacy Project <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Williamsport 12:00 to 5:00

Jan. 23	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Screening and Assessing Learning Problems</i>	Harrisburg 9:00 to 3:00
Jan. 26	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Understanding Learning Problems and What to Do About It</i>	Erie 9:00 to 3:00
Jan. 27	Staff Development Region 4 <i>Teaching Reading and Spelling</i>	Pittsburgh 10:00 to 12:00
Feb. 3	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Understanding Learning Problems</i>	Erie 9:00 to 12:00
Feb. 14	Center for Alternative Learning <i>Tic Tac Toe Math</i>	Bryn Mawr 3:00 to 5:00
Feb. 16	Staff Development Region 5 <i>Cooper Screening for Information Processing Helping Students Break Avoidance Patterns</i>	Lewistown 9:00 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:00
Feb. 23	Staff Development Region 7 <i>Teaching Writing Teaching Math and Tic Tac Toe Math</i>	Bethlehem 9:00 to 12:00 1:00 to 4:00
Feb. 27	Staff Development Region 8 <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Problems</i>	Kennett Square 3:00 to 5:00
March 1	Center for Alternative Learning <i>Teaching Spelling and Writing</i>	Bryn Mawr 9:00 to 12:00
March 23	Reading Literacy Council <i>Tactics for Teaching Adults who Learn Differently</i>	Reading 9:00 to 12:00
March 25	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Employability Skills Learning Problem and ESL</i>	Harrisburg 9:00 to 12:00 1:00 to 3:00
March 30	Staff Development Region 3 <i>Helping Students with Test Anxiety</i>	Scranton <i>To be announced</i>

Through funding provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, there is a dedicated phone number for the project. Adult educators in Pennsylvania can call the Center to obtain information for scheduling training, asking questions about students with learning problems and obtaining information about alternative instructional techniques. The number locally is 610-525-0800 and in the rest of Pennsylvania 1-800-204-7667.

Mnemonics

We all are familiar with some mnemonics, those memory clues which seem to stick in our memories forever. The names of the lines and spaces of the music staff; remember *Every Good Boy Does Fine* and *FACE* or the spelling of "arithmetic" *A Rat In Tom's House Might Eat The Ice Cream?* Why do we remember these so well? And why don't we know more mnemonics if they are so effective for remembering?

The reason we remember mnemonics easily is because these memory clues use association with something which is already known, and it usually is an uncommon juxtaposition. This gives us more than one way to remember the information: either just recalling the information or recalling the common item and the information associated with it. The reason we do not use more mnemonics is twofold. First, many people do not need the memory clues to remember things because, once the information is learned, they continue to use it. Second, most people do not have a learning problem which makes it difficult to remember. Therefore the main reason most people use mnemonics is to increase the speed of learning something new and to remember things which are not used frequently and therefore more easily forgotten.

However, individuals who have learning differences find that they need many mnemonics to assist learning. These individuals are those who have right/left discrimination and/or attention problems as they often find that they have difficulty remembering things which are similar. Those who have right/left discrimination problems have difficulty distinguishing items which have an "either/or" relationship because they cannot decide which one is which. Those with attention problems have similar difficulty, but usually because they do not pay enough attention to the items to remember what makes them different. Others, who possess stronger memory in one area: visual, auditory or haptic, find mnemonics useful because the memory clue can change the item to be learned from an area of weakness to one of strength.

I am often asked where to find a list of mnemonics which will help students with learning problems. Although I have collected many mnemonics, the benefit of teaching mnemonics is not learning as many as possible but rather learning how to make them to custom fit the need of each individual student. Some mnemonics, such as those listed above, are generally known and used, but most mnemonics are custom-made and used by the individuals who create and need them.

I remember learning how to spell the word *girl*. I still clearly remember the day in second grade when the teacher told the class that "the gi's came home and had baby girls." Most of my classmates probably have long forgotten that mnemonic because they do not have spelling problems, but for me, even as I write this article, I must recall that mnemonic in order to remember if the *i* or the *r* comes first.

Mnemonics are useful for learning and remembering many things but especially remembering lists, parts, spelling, vocabulary, math formulas and operations, sequences and directions. There are many types of mnemonics: Visual clues (visualization, pictures, symbols and diagrams), auditory clues (sentences, sayings, rhymes and melodies), movements and feelings. Many mnemonics use combinations of visual, auditory and movement clues. There are mnemonics which are general in

nature and those which are very specific. Some are widespread and others are very personal, used only by the individual who created the memory clue.

What makes a good mnemonic? A good memory clue is one that is easy to remember. Although that sounds simple, it is not always easy to find something which will be easy to remember. There are no hard and fast rules for the construction of mnemonics, but there are some guidelines. Mnemonics should associate the item to be remembered with something already known or common; use more than one sense if possible or use the sense which a person can more easily commit to memory; make it outlandish or odd.

For example, a mnemonic for remembering how to spell the word *mnemonic* is *demon*. Since *demon* is a more common word it is easier to remember how to spell. If you change the *d* to *mn* and add *ic* you have the spelling for *mnemonic*.

Making charts of the information to be remembered is a visual mnemonic. An example of the use of a chart mnemonic is demonstrated in this technique for remembering how to deal with complex sentences so as to eliminate run-ons.

He came and left.		He	came	and		left.
He came. He left.		He	came		He	left.
He came, and he left.	or	He	came	,	and	he left.
He came; he left.		He	came	;		he left.

Another example of a mnemonic using a visual clue is used by individuals who have difficulties with reversals. To distinguish between *pre* and *per* the person visualizes a tail on the *r* of *per* and think of the cat that purrs. Notice that there is not a clue for *pre*. This I call weighted learning. Individuals who have difficulties with items which have an "either/or" relationship, which causes reversals, will continue to have difficulty if there are memory clues for both parts of an "either/or". With weighted learning the student learns one side of the "either/or", and if it is not that one, it is the other.

Using the spelling of a word and little sayings are examples of mnemonics using auditory clues. "Never Eat Shredded Wheat" is used to remember North, East, South, West, and **HOMES** is used for remembering the five Great Lakes. These are examples of mnemonics used to learn something new, usually for young children. These memory clues are often remembered, but rarely used, since the points of the compass and the Great Lakes, once learned, are easy to remember because they are continually reinforced when a person looks at a map.

The following combination mnemonic helps students to remember how to spell and use correctly these words. "***T h e***" are the first three letters of each of these words which are frequently confused. Once the person has written the ***the***, they decide how the word is to be used. "***Here***" indicates place, "***heir***" to their throne and "***they are***".

the re
the ir
the y're

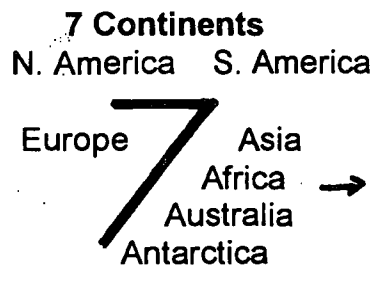
Other mnemonics for the *ie* combination are *i before e except after c* and *friend to the end*.

An example of a mnemonic using a movement is forming an L with the thumb and index finger with the left hand to remember the left side. This is a popular mnemonic for young children as they learn to distinguish right and left and one which continues to be helpful for individuals who have significant right/left discrimination problems.

One of the key elements in learning a list or the parts of a whole is to include how many items there are in a list or a group. Here are two examples: the eight parts of speech and the seven continents.

8 Parts of Speech

Noun	Adjective
Verb	Adverb
Pronoun	Preposition
Conjunction	Interjection



To summarize, when are mnemonics needed? 1) When we are first learning something before it becomes mastered; 2) as a backup for things we don't use very often; 3) for those who have various learning problems such as right/left discrimination, attention and memory problems. There are two goals for the use of mnemonics: first to learn and remember information and second, to learn how to create mnemonics in order to become an independent learner. Remember mnemonics are not magic. If they are not mastered or used frequently, they will be forgotten.

I am collecting mnemonics and putting them together into categories for our students. If you have created any mnemonics or know some, please send them to me. Please include even those which you think are widely known because many mnemonics are regional, not known nationally.

Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

NAASLN

Dear Colleague:

As a professional, teaching or working with adults with special learning needs, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs (NAASLN). NAASLN, founded in 1989, is the first and only direct service adult education membership organization in the United States whose mission is to help adults with disabilities and other special learning needs become lifelong learners. Members are located in all states of the nation and provide a network of committed professionals providing a strong national voice to build a consolidated, integrated system of lifelong learning for adults with special learning needs.

I would like to invite you to join the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs. For an application contact our office at 610-525-8336.

Bill Langner, NAASLN President

1996 NAASLN Conference Dr. and Anne-Louise Cooper traveled to New Orleans this month to finalize the conference arrangements with the hotel and familiarize themselves with transportation and local attractions. They report that the hotel is attractive and comfortable and the meeting space lends itself to much networking.

Enclosed you will find a Call for Papers. If you or someone you know would like to submit a proposal to make a presentation at the 1996 NAASLN conference in New Orleans (September 26, 27 & 28), please complete the form and return it as soon as possible to our office.

Center for Alternative Learning

One of the programs offered at the Center is a one-on-one tutoring literacy program. Individuals who have reading problems receive specialized instruction. Students are first tested to determine their learning differences and then matched with a tutor who has received training from Dr. Cooper in how to assist the student. Anyone in the Southeastern Pennsylvania area who would like to become a volunteer at the Center should contact Anne-Louise about scheduling an appointment for orientation.

If you have questions about our programs or would like to refer someone for testing or for our programs, please call the office between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM. or leave a message on our answering machine.

Adult Education Class Schedule

English as a Second Language
Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 to 11:30 AM

Basic Academic Skills (afternoons)
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 to 3:00

Basic Academic Skills (evenings)
Monday and Wednesday 6:00 to 8:00

Learning disAbilities Resources

The 1996 Learning disAbilities Resources Catalog is now available. This catalog features the alternative instructional techniques developed by Dr. Cooper and other items which he has found helpful for children and adults with learning differences.

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Speaking Schedule

Alternative Instructional Techniques, Faculty Training, Peirce College, Jan. 5th 9:30 to 12:30, Philadelphia, PA.

Learning Differences Faculty Training, Community College of Beaver County, Jan. 12th 9:00 to 12:00, Monaca, PA.

Social Skills for of Students with Learning Problems, In-Service Upper Darby School District, March 4 & 18, 4:00 to 9:00.

Inclusion of Students with Learning Problems, Delaware County Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, Wednesday evenings in March, 4:00 to 9:00.

Social Skills on the Job, LDA Conference, March 8, 10:15 to 12:30, Dallas, TX.

Teaching Children with Learning Problems, Bristol School District In-Service, March 14th, 8:30 to 3:30, Bristol, PA.

Teaching Math to Students with Learning Problems, Bucks County Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, Tuesday evenings in March, 4:30 to 9:30.

Weak Academic Skills, Meeting for Parents of children in elementary school. Upper Darby School District, March 27, 7:00 to 8:30 PM.

Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities, New School for Social Research, April 13 & 20, New York, NY. 9:00 to 5:00.

Learning Differences and Alternative Instructional Techniques, Kentucky Adult and Continuing Education Association, April 26 & 27.

Assessing Learning Problems and Multi-level Classroom Techniques, Three regional workshops at the Community Colleges, North Carolina, April 9, 10 & 11.

Alternative Instructional Techniques, Hillside School, Allentown, PA, April 15, 6:00 to 8:00.

Dr. Cooper will be in Dallas for the Learning Disabilities Association 1996 Conference where he will be speaking on social skills. The session is scheduled for March 8th. While he is at the conference, he will be available for consultations for individuals who has expressed an interest in making an appointment but find it impractical to travel to Bryn Mawr. He will also have samples of the educational materials listed in the 1996 Learning disAbilities Resources Catalog. If you would like to set up an appointment or arrange to review materials please, contact our office at 1-800-869-8336.

LEARNING disabilities

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 716
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
610-525-8336

Vol. 13 No. 3

March, 1996

Pennsylvania's Statewide Staff Development Project

As spring approaches we look forward to easier traveling in Pennsylvania. Southern Pennsylvania had record snow fall this year, the state was declared a disaster when floods inundated the state. Despite the inclement weather, the staff development training sessions were scheduled and completed. Only one had to be rescheduled. However, the travel time between training sessions was dramatically increased. Driving 25 mph behind a snowplow train on the Pennsylvania Turnpike makes for a long drive over the mountains. Detours around roads closed by swollen creeks added hours to travel time. The impact on the statewide staff development project and other operations of the Center was that Dr. Cooper was not available to return phone calls and complete correspondence. If you had contacted the Center this winter and did not get a response, please accept our apology and contact us again with you question, request for information or other concern.

To date this year, 548 individuals have participated in the 37 training sessions of the staff development project on learning differences. Nineteen more are scheduled during the spring. If you would like to attend a training session contact our office to ensure that there is space available.

Statewide Staff Development Schedule

March 23	Reading Literacy Council <i>Tactics for Teaching Adults who Learn Differently</i>	Reading 9:00 to 12:00
March 25	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Employability Skills Learning Problems and ESL</i>	Harrisburg 9:00 to 12:00 1:00 to 3:00
March 30	Staff Development Region 3 <i>Helping Students with Test Anxiety</i>	Scranton 9:00 to 11:30 1:00 to 3:00
April 1	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Harrisburg 5:00 to 8:00

April 2	Staff Development Region 4. <i>In-Depth Teaching Writing and Spelling</i>	Pittsburgh 9:00 to 3:00
April 15	Staff Development Region 9 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 10:00 to 12:00
April 22	Staff Development Region 9 <i>Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	Philadelphia 10:00 to 12:00
April 22	Staff Development Region 7 <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Pen Argyl 7:00 to 9:00
April 27	Staff Development Region 7 <i>Teaching Writing to Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Allentown 9:30 to 12:00
May 2	Staff Development Region 4 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Waynesburg 10:00 to 12:00
May 3	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Erie 9:00 to 3:00
May 4	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	Punxsutawney 10:00 to 12:00
May 7	Staff Development Region 2 Fed. Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Allenwood 10:30 to 3:30
May 8	Staff Development Region 2 State Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Coal Township 8:00 to 4:00
May 9	Staff Development Region 2 State Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Muncy 8:30 to 4:00
May 10	Staff Development Region 2 State Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Rockview 8:30 to 4:30
May 11	Staff Development Region 2 Boot Camp <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Quehanna 8:30 to 3:00
May 13	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Perry County 6:00 to 9:00
May 20	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Teaching Writing and Math</i>	Harrisburg 9:00 to 3:00

Through funding provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, there is a dedicated phone number for the project. Adult educators in Pennsylvania can call the Center to obtain information for scheduling training, asking questions about students with learning problems and obtaining information about alternative instructional techniques. The number locally is 610-525-0800 and in the rest of Pennsylvania 1-800-204-7667.

Multi-level Classroom Techniques

The classroom I was visiting was not what you would envision when you think of a classroom. It was an odd shaped room, formed when a couple of walls had been removed between rooms in an old building. There were some students seated at tables working out of workbooks. Two students were working on two of the five computers in the room. A teacher and two volunteer tutors moved around the classroom answering questions, giving explanations and assigning activities. The students came and went at different times and remained for as little as 20 minutes and as long as five hours. Most of them averaged about two hours. During any given day about 25 to 30 students would drop in the classroom, some come every day others once a week.

The students ranged in ability from low average to high average, and their academic achievement levels ranged from no skill to skills which are about high school equivalency. This classroom is an example of the drop in center with complete individualization. The students work at their own pace at their own level with help and guidance from teachers and tutors.

Contrast that to another classroom I had an opportunity to observe. This classroom was in the basement of a small community library. There are a number of tables and chairs in the room, more chairs than places at tables. All the walls are covered with books on shelves. This basement is an open area, but there are pillars and book shelves which divide the area down the middle. The largest area has chairs lined up theater style. A portable blackboard stands next to the desk which is in front of the chairs.

Students come for a three hour class in the evening where a teacher explains the lesson and then the students complete the exercises in their books. When the teacher finishes presenting the lesson, about 45 minutes, the students find a table to work. The teacher sits at the desk and answers students' questions. The students line up waiting to ask their questions. Some questions are simple and take only a few moments to answer, while others are more complex and the teacher spends many minutes with the students. The students standing in line whisper small talk to each other while they wait. Students who miss too many classes or who are not able to keep up with the pace of the class are asked to withdraw because they are not going to be able to pass the GED test at the end of the five month course.

These two examples are not the only way that adult education is delivered, but it does represent the problems that some adult education programs deal with continuously. These two classrooms also are ripe for multi-level classroom techniques. (At the elementary and secondary education level, the philosophy and the techniques would be referred to as multi-age or inclusion.) Multi-level, multi-age or inclusion classroom techniques are instructional activities which include all the students in a classroom regardless of their achievement or ability level.

A model for multi-level classroom techniques

There are many things that a teacher can do to include all the students in learning experiences, but there must be a commitment to include students at all levels. It takes extra time and effort to plan for and execute activities which involve all the students. Teachers who are accustomed to either teaching to the middle or to individualizing all instruction may find it difficult to develop new attitudes and new techniques.

The teacher in the multi-level classroom must be creative to find ways to involve all the students and assign them meaningful and level appropriate activities. This can be accomplished by including the following activities into each or, at least, most lessons. The components of the multi-level classroom are: **shared experiences, individual activities, peer interaction** and something to tie it all together such as a **preview, overview or summary**. These components do not necessarily come in this order. The order may be dictated by the schedule or the lesson. For example, if students do not all arrive at the same time, then the shared experiences should be done when most of the students are present. Some subjects, such as writing, lend themselves to peer interaction after the individual activities, while other subjects, like social studies, may begin with peer interaction in the form of small group discussions.

Shared experiences are important because they provide all students with a sense of belonging to the group and they receive the message that all students at all ability levels are working on the same concepts. There are many ways to work shared experiences into the classroom. The teacher can explain the information; students can have a discussion. For example, when students are going to read a short story, the teacher can explain the story, its characters and plot. In a math lesson, students may discuss their fear of math or why they may have had difficulty learning math. Another way to get shared experiences into a classroom is to call everyone's attention to a particular concept, a vocabulary word or a new term.

Individual activities which are carefully planned to provide each student with appropriate learning experiences, reinforce the subject matter being learned. There are a number of considerations, first, the activities need to be simple enough not to produce frustration and sophisticated enough not to cause boredom. This means that students at different levels need different types of activities. Using the example mentioned above of the class that is learning about short stories, the teacher would need to plan for activities for the student who has a severe reading disability, the students who have weak reading skills, and the students who have good reading skills. The story can be photocopied (enlarged for those who need large print). The student or students with severe reading problems can be given a list of characters and scan the story highlighting the names. Students with weak reading skills can highlight the

words they either know or don't know, collecting some of the words they do not know for study. Students with higher skills but who read slowly, can be given part of the assignment. The students without reading problems can be asked to read the short story.

Peer interactions provide the students with opportunity to work in small groups. The small group work allows the person who might not speak up or ask questions in a large group to do so. Higher level students can help those with weaker skills. In this case both benefit. The students with higher skills find that the material is reinforced when they have to explain or demonstrate it. The students with lower skills benefit because the group is small and many times another student can explain something using simpler terms or things which helped them learn it.

Preview, Overview or Summary. Depending on when this component is used, it will be either a preview of the lesson at the beginning of a class, an overview, bringing the various parts of the class together, or a summary at the end of a class. The purpose of this component is not just to tie the various parts of the class together but also to connect it to real life. Connecting the class lesson to real life makes the material more concrete and easier to remember. The students are more motivated to learn things which they can use in daily living situations.

Richard Cooper

Learning Differences Q & A

This question and answer section has been added to the newsletter in response to a number of requests from teachers. If you have a question about learning and attention differences for Dr. Cooper, please send it to Newsletter, P.O. Box 716, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

I am working with a college student who has good arithmetic skills but is having difficulty with algebra. She seems to grasp the concepts and can get correct answers for some problems. What can I do to help her?

Many students who have problems with algebra do so because they understand the operations with signed (+ and -) numbers but have difficulty keeping the signs straight when doing calculations. Also check her knowledge of signed numbers. I find that many students can add, multiply and divide signed numbers but cannot subtract them. This results in mistakes in some problems and not others. Use the mnemonic "save, change, change" to help her remember the subtraction of signed numbers if this is part of her problem.

My student sometimes misreads words. He might read "now" instead of "how" or he might say "Saturday" instead of "Sunday". Does he need glasses?

All students who have a reading problem should have a visual screening. Many of them do need glasses, but the errors you describe are usually the result of processing not perceptual problems. Therefore, they should go to a regular eye doctor. If glasses are needed, it will help the student see the words better, but it will not help them remember the words.



Speaking Schedule

Teaching Math to Students with Learning Problems, Bucks County Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, Tuesday evenings in March, 4:30 to 9:30, Doylestown, PA.

Teaching Writing And Spelling, Delaware Literacy Conference March 22, Dewey Beach, DE.

Weak Academic Skills, Meeting for Parents of children in elementary school. Upper Darby School District, March 27, 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Stonehurst Hills Elementary, Upper Darby, PA.

Assessing Learning Problems and Multi-level Classroom Techniques, Regional workshops at the three Community Colleges in North Carolina, April 9, 10 & 11th.

Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities, New School for Social Research, April 13 & 20, 9:00 to 5:00., New York, NY.

Alternative Instructional Techniques, Hillside School, April 15, 6:00 to 8:00, Allentown, PA.

Teaching Children with Learning Problems, Bristol School District In-Service, April 23th, 8:30 to 3:30, Bristol, PA.

Learning Differences and Alternative Instructional Techniques, Kentucky Adult and Continuing Education Association, April 26 & 27th, Covington, KY.

Employment Skills, New York Adult Education, May 14, New York (location to be announced)

ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) Teacher In-Service Day, Garnet Valley High School, May 31, 8:00 to 2:30 Glen Mills, PA.

Alternative Instructional Techniques, Corrections Education Conference, 1:00 to 4:00, June 10th. Seven Springs, PA.

Course on Learning Problems, 3 credit, graduate level, University of South Carolina, June 24 to 28th, Greenville, SC.

Teaching Adults with Learning Problems, 1 credit course, Nov. 5, 6 & 7th, Pierre, South Dakota.

NAASLN

William Langner, President of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs (NAASLN), announced the formation of the NAASLN Network. He would like to invite you to join the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs and participate in the Network. For an application to join the association, contact our office at 610-525-8336.

1996 NAASLN Conference The first Symposium on Accommodations for Adult Education will be held as part of the NAASLN conference in New Orleans. The University of Kansas and Kansas State University are conducting research on accommodations. Thursday, September 26, the first day of the NAASLN Conference, has been earmarked for the Symposium when presentations will be made by the researchers and the consultants for the program. For a detailed description of the Symposium contact NAASLN at 610-525-8336.

On Wednesday, September 25th, members of NAASLN will meet for a pre-conference day to discuss issues of concern to the membership and to the field of adult education of individuals with special learning needs. **Mark you calendar and plan to attend the 1996 NAASLN conference in New Orleans (September 26, 27 & 28).**

Sponsor a Student: Many more adults and children with learning problems request assessment, counseling and instruction from the Center than we can provide for with current funding. You can help by sponsoring a student at the Center for Alternative Learning. Your donation of \$150 will provide a student with an assessment of their learning difficulties. A donation to the Center of \$500 will provide the student with counseling and instruction for a semester. For more information about *Sponsor a Student Program* contact our office at 800-869-8336.

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LEARNING disabilities NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 716
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
610-525-8336

Vol. 13 No. 4

May, 1996

Pennsylvania's Statewide Staff Development Project

As we enter the fourth quarter of 1995/96 academic year, the staff at the Center is beginning to gather information to prepare a final report for the Statewide Staff Development Project. To this end we have included a survey and ask the adult educators who participated in the training project to complete this form and return it to our office as soon as possible. We are particularly interested in the long term effect of the training. Each of the participants completed an evaluation at the end of each training session. These evaluations indicated a very high satisfaction with the training. This survey is an attempt to assess how the Statewide Staff Development Project impacted the adult students in the programs. Anecdotal reports indicated that the understanding of the characteristics of learning differences has been very helpful in assisting adult educators in dealing with students with learning problems. Tic Tac Toe Math is also reported to be very helpful for many students in adult education and GED programs. Some adults report that Tic Tac Toe Math enabled them to pass the math section of the GED test. The enclosed survey will help us to add data to these anecdotal reports. Please complete the survey and return it as soon as possible but no later than June 25th. We have constructed the survey in a format which should take only a few minutes to complete. Simply check the concepts and techniques which you have found helpful.

If you are a newsletter subscriber who has not participated in the statewide staff development project this year, you are also welcome to complete the survey and return it to the Center. Please indicate on question 1 whether you have ever attended a training session with Dr. Cooper, viewed one of his videos or received services at the Center for Alternative Learning.

To date this year, over 700 individuals have participated in the 50 training sessions of the staff development project on learning differences. Although the funds for this project are exhausted, programs which have staff development funds can still arrange for training. When Dr. Cooper is in the nearby area of the state the cost of training will not include travel expenses.

Terri Supowitz, an adult educator who teaches at Bidwell Training Center in Pittsburgh, came to the Center for in-depth training. She spent three days sitting in on assessments and tutoring sessions to learn how to meet the specific learning needs of individuals with reading and writing problems.

Statewide Staff Development Schedule

April 30	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Smethport 6:00 to 9:00
May 1	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Grove City 6:00 to 9:00
May 2	Staff Development Region 4 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Waynesburg 9:00 to 3:00
May 3	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Erie 9:00 to 3:00
May 4	Staff Development Region 1 <i>Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	Punxsutawney 9:00 to 1:00
May 7	Staff Development Region 2 Fed. Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Allenwood 10:30 to 3:30
May 8	Staff Development Region 2 State Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Coal Township 8:00 to 4:00
May 9	Staff Development Region 2 State Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Muncy 8:30 to 4:00
May 10	Staff Development Region 2 State Correctional Institution <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Rockview 8:30 to 4:30
May 11	Staff Development Region 2 Boot Camp <i>Teaching Reading, Spelling and Math</i>	Quehanna 8:30 to 3:00
May 13	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Characteristics of Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Perry County 6:00 to 9:00
May 20	Staff Development Region 6 <i>Teaching Writing and Math</i>	Harrisburg 9:00 to 3:00

These training sessions are funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. If you would like to attend a training session contact our office to ensure that there is space available. If you have questions about students with learning problems or need information about alternative instructional techniques, call the Center at **1-800-204-7667** or in the Philadelphia area at **610-525-0800**.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with your friends and colleagues. If you would like to reprint the article in the newsletter, please feel free to do so. I only ask that you reference Learning disAbilities Newsletter and send me a copy of your publication.

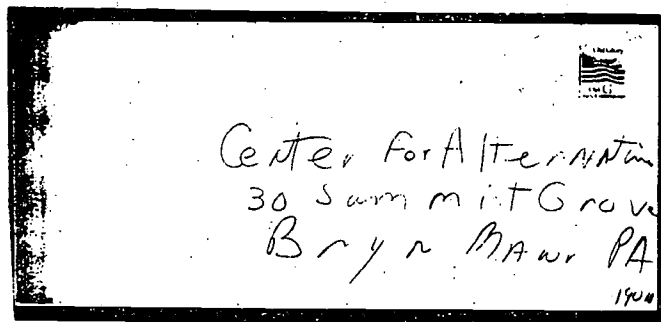
Handwriting

Those of you who have seen my handwriting know that I would not be the one to model when it comes to handwriting. However, since handwriting is a problem for me, I would like to shed some light on the subject. Can I write legibly? The answer is both yes and no. If I take my time and form the letters carefully, then others, and even I, can read my handwriting. But when I write quickly, trying to keep up with my thoughts, very few people, and often I, cannot read my handwriting. Soon after I write something, I need to use the information or type it; otherwise, I usually cannot remember what I wrote. The scribbles on the page are only reminders of the ideas I had at the time I wrote something. Over time they become meaningless.

There are many reasons why individuals have poor handwriting. Some of these reasons are solely responsible for a person's poor handwriting, but usually there is a combination of reasons which makes handwriting difficult.

The first reason for poor handwriting, and the most obvious, is poor motor control. Individuals who have a problem with fine or gross motor control, which is severe, are not able to form the letters of the alphabet. Persons who have cerebral palsy or other physical disabilities often have such a severe difficulty with fine motor control that no amount of practice, exercises or desire to write better will result in improved handwriting. Individuals with less severe problems with handwriting may be able to form the letters, but these letters may be formed inconsistently, squeezed together, slanted or poorly shaped. Depending on the severity, the person may be able to write more legibly, but it often takes enormous concentration and time.

Some people who have difficulty with visual organization/perception find it difficult to format written material. The following envelop was addressed by a person with a severe difficulty with visual organization. This person is unable to fit an address on a business size envelop.



To understand this problem, consider the ability of the artist who can draw a portrait with ease and contrast that to most people who would struggle to draw anything that would closely reflect the image of a particular person. On that same continuum we find individuals who are unable to reproduce writing formats which are easy or natural for people who do not have a problem with visual organization.

Another reason for poor or illegible handwriting is the racing mind (the term I use to describe ADD). People, whose thoughts race, write too fast. They complain that their hands cannot keep up with their thoughts. Since their thoughts do race too fast, they are unable to slow their thoughts down or make an outline. These individuals try to write as fast as their thoughts and as this speed of writing becomes a habit, the handwriting gets progressively

worse. The end result is usually a waste of time because the person often cannot read what was written.

Poor spelling skills are also responsible for poor handwriting. The poor speller often tries to hide spelling mistakes with illegible handwriting. The person with weak spelling skills writes very little and consequently there is little opportunity to improve handwriting.

For some people, handwriting is seen as a low priority. For example, John believed it didn't matter what his job application looked like; what was important was the fact that he was a good worker and could do the job for which he was applying. It was difficult to convince him that most employers will screen potential employees by the appearance of the job application.

For those people who have a serious right/left discrimination problem, handwriting can be underdeveloped. Those with severe problems in this area have difficulty remembering how to form letters, numbers and symbols. We usually think of learning to form 26 letters, but for the person who has a problem with remembering how to form these symbols, there are 104 letters (26 each, upper case, lower case, print and cursive) Additionally, there is no exact model for those who need a model. Letters can be formed in many styles.

Is handwriting important?

The answer is both yes and no. For some it is not important because they write so little. If a person has a severe problem with language, he or she may have very limited ability to read or spell. These individuals, as adults, have learned to live their lives in ways that they do not need handwriting; they live in an oral world. Other than the occasional signature, they do not write. One young man I assessed wrote his name once in six months when he signed the paper to buy a car.

In order to protect themselves from embarrassment or ridicule, it is important to many people not to write. When a person with poor handwriting communicates orally, there is no evidence of a problem, but when that same person picks up a pencil or pen and writes something, he or she exposes a weakness. Not writing is a defence mechanism. If a person who has poor handwriting does not write, then his or her weakness is not exposed.

On the other hand handwriting is important for many life skills. Although this is obvious to people who do not have writing problems, the person who does not write much may need to have these, and other reasons, detailed so that its importance can be fully understood. By improving handwriting many every day tasks are made easier. These include filling out forms such as job applications, helping children learn to write, taking notes or using notes as a tool for memory and communicating with others with notes or letters.

What can be done to help a person improve handwriting?

A person who has severe motor control problems can often be accommodated with an assistive device or assistive technology. These range from pencil grips to sophisticated computers.

Those with less severe problems can learn to prioritize the tasks so that they are prepared to write those things which are essential and not worry about those which are not essential. For example, the person who is applying for a job can practice filling out many job applications until he or she can complete them so they are legible. Other writing tasks can wait until their job search is completed. Another way to improve handwriting is to simply practice handwriting or practice motor movements by using free flowing doodles.

This will allow the person to improve the movement without concern about the formation of letters. As the person increases the ability to form shapes, the doodles can begin to represent letters and finally the person can work on the exact shape of letters.

Word processors or computers with word processing programs can be an enormous help for individuals with poor handwriting. The machines remove the concern about shaping the letters correctly, eliminate handwriting reversals (spelling reversals, some of which a spell check program will not find, still remain and can be a problem. e.g. "in" and "on") However, computers are not always the answer, since some people will have difficulty typing or even learning how to use the computer software.

All of these techniques to improve writing require that a person writes more. Breaking the avoidance patterns and the habits that go along with those patterns are often the most difficult obstacles to overcome.

Richard Cooper

Learning Differences Q & A

Q) I've heard that children outgrow attention problems. Is this true?

A) No, children don't outgrow attention problems, however, often the behavioral manifestations of their attention problems change. For example, as a child John had difficulty completing homework assignments. He would start them but not complete the assignments. As an adult, he completes assignments but only at the last moment. He has developed the discipline to complete assigned tasks on time, but he continues the same behavioral pattern of procrastination.

Q) To improve his spelling, I have my student see a word, say a word, cover the word and write the word. However, his spelling has not improved. What can I do?

A) Students with learning problems require much repetition or ways to remember how to spell words, such as mnemonics. The method you are using does not use enough repetition, nor does it utilize memory tags.



Sponsor a Student We would like to thank those of you who have made donations to the Center. Your generous support enables the staff of the Center to provide services to individuals who are unable to pay. Because of your donations, Dr. Cooper was able to provide four additional assessments free of charge to adult students. Since the Center for Alternative Learning has 501c3 status with the Internal Revenue Service, your donation can be tax deductible.

NAASLN

Pre-Conference NAASLN Day

This pre-conference day is an opportunity for NAASLN members to meet, network, and work together to collectively make an impact on improving and expanding the lifelong opportunity for adults with special learning needs. We will work on resolutions, position papers and discuss issues of importance to the field of adult education and the association. There is no fee for members.

National Symposium on Program Accommodations for Adults with Disabilities

The first national Symposium for Program Accommodations for Adults with Disabilities will discuss the beginning results of the joint National Institute for Disability Research and Rehabilitation (NIDRR) project which is being conducted by the University of Kansas and Kansas State University. This Symposium will provide adult education policy-makers, administrators and practitioners with the latest knowledge and resources on how to improve adult education programs for adults with disabilities.

Concurrent Sessions

Friday and Saturday will be packed with concurrent sessions. The annual NAASLN conferences are known for offering an exciting schedule of lively and informative sessions which cover a wide range of topics of concern to professionals in many fields besides adult education. Presentations by national experts will include topics on assessment, instructional techniques, technology, workforce education, English as a Second Language and corrections education as they apply to the field of adult education for adults with special learning needs.

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The Newsletter is published 5 times a year.

Teacher Training

During the past two years Dr. Cooper has developed a number of in-service workshops and courses on learning and attention differences for elementary and secondary teachers. Four courses have been approved for credit by intermediate units in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area. The courses are 15 hours long, offered for one graduate credit. These workshops and courses, which combine theory and practice, are offered to special education teachers and regular education teachers in both elementary and secondary education. The concepts and material presented in the courses are age independent. Teachers who have participated in these courses report that it is helpful to understand the different behaviors and problems children have at different ages.

The following are 15 hour, one credit courses:

Teaching Math to Students with Learning Problems

Teaching Reading, Writing and Spelling to Students with Learning Problems

Teaching Social and Life Skills to Students with Learning Problems

Inclusion of Students with Learning Problems in the Regular Classroom

For more information about these courses and how they can be offered in your area, contact our

The following is a paper written by one of the elementary school teachers who recently completed the math course. It reflects the sentiment of many teachers who have taken these courses.

"Everything in the universe is measurable and open to observation and discussion," states Dr. Cooper. The course has helped me further define my math goal for my students: To help integrate numbers and the environment into the students' everyday thinking. I hope to help open their minds into thinking quantitatively and become more aware and willing to investigate the numbers that surround us in everyday living. By using many of the strategies and techniques presented in this course, this kind of thinking can be perpetuated.

I plan to implement a weekly "Math Scavenger Hunt." Each week the students will be asked to search for numbers they see in their everyday living. We will discuss these and keep a math journal. This will begin to open the world of numbers to the students. They will begin to change their notion that math is just 50 minutes a day beginning when we open our books.

Two of my students have a right-left discrimination problem. I plan to use the weighted learning concept of teaching the odd/even numbers. I have also adapted this to teaching time and remembering which hand tells the hours, and which hand tells the minutes. Also, with learning to tell time, I have placed the minutes around our clock in the classroom so the students see the minutes as real numbers. The students have had difficulty memorizing the basic addition and subtraction facts. I taught the specific number fact technique of adding a number to 9, $9 + \text{any number} = \text{one less that number "teened"}$. I have tried this for a week and the students have met success.

Having the students use graph paper whenever doing math will become routine in my class. This will be helpful to all, and especially those with poor visual organizational skills and weak motor skills.

One major program I have begun is the Tic Tac Toe Math. I introduced the making of the odd numbered grids to two students who are not mastering the memorization of the tables in the traditional manner. The problem they incurred was adding in the second digit after forming the base grid from 1 to 9. They are excited and enthusiastic about this new math. I will introduce the even number grids once they have mastered the other grids.

Your list of 22 generic instructional strategies have become part of my daily plan book. I feel a new energy and enthusiasm about teaching math that is truly "Math Across Our Lives." by Eileen Cimochowski

LEARNING disABILITIES

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 716
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
610-525-8336

Vol. 13 No. 5

July, 1996

Pennsylvania's Statewide Staff Development Project

The staff development project concluded with additional training sessions during May which included five full day trainings in five prisons. This brought the total number of training sessions to 60 and the total number of participants to 800. Some adult educators in the state attended as many as four training sessions, many attended two or three, and about half attended one session. More than half of this year's training sessions were full day sessions. The shorter sessions were usually scheduled on Saturday mornings or in the evenings to accommodate teachers and tutors who were not able to attend full days sessions because of employment and other commitments. Dr. Cooper is currently writing a final report which will detail the project and summarize the responses from training evaluations and the survey which was included in the last newsletter. If you received that survey and forgot to fill it out, please take a moment to do so and fax it to 610-525-8337. Your input about the project is very important to us.

We are pleased to announce that the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education has refunded the Center for Alternative Learning for 1996/97 academic year to continue the staff development training on learning differences. Dr. Cooper will be able to honor the requests from many programs for additional training since these programs have new teachers and volunteer tutors who need to know more about learning differences, problems and disabilities.

The goals for this year's project are to continue to provide basic information about learning differences to adult education teachers and tutors and to provide in-depth training for those who have received previous training. This will be achieved with training at the regional staff development centers or at local programs. Adult educators who want to attend the in-depth sessions will need to have attended a training session which describes the characteristics of learning differences. Those who have not received that training should plan to attend one of the trainings sessions which will include this information or obtain a copy of the video tape of this training. In this way those who attended training last year will not have to attend redundant training sessions. This newsletter will continue to be sent to all the participants in the 1995/96 project and to all those who attend during the up-coming year. The toll free phone number will continue to be available to Pennsylvania adult educators. They can call 800-204-7667 to inquire about training, resources or ask specific questions about learning differences and how to work with students.

If you would like more information about the project or would like to discuss the possibility of hosting a training session on any of the topics listed below contact either Dr. Cooper at 800-204-7667 or call your local regional staff development center.

Southwest Professional Development Center
Rachel Zilcosky, Coordinator
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
100 Sheridan Square, 4th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
412-661-READ

Northwest Professional Development Center
Bootsie Barbour, Coordinator
Northwest Tri County IU #5
670 West 36th St.
Erie, PA 16508
814-866-3774, ext. 223

Southeast Professional Development Center
Sandra Strunk, Coordinator
Lancaster-Lebanon IU #13
31 South Duke St.
Lancaster, PA 17602
717-293-7636

Central-Northeast Professional Development Center
Gail Leightley, Coordinator
Central IU #10, Dev. Center for Adults
Centre Co Vo-Tech School
Pleasant Gap, PA 16822
814-359-3069

Philadelphia Professional Development Center
Diane Inverso, Coordinator
Mayor's Commission on Literacy
1500 Walnut St., 18th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-685-6602

South-Central Professional Development Center
Brian Frey, Coordinator
Tuscarora IU #11
MCIDC Plaza, Bldg. 58, 1 Belle Ave.
Lewistown, PA 17044
717-248-4942

Staff Development Training

The following staff development topics were offered during the 1995/96 statewide staff development project. The adult education agencies can select from these training sessions or contact Dr. Cooper about the in-depth sessions he is planning for the 1996/97 project.

Characteristics of Learning Differences This training session details how individuals with learning differences, problems and disabilities think and learn. It is the most popular of Dr. Cooper's training sessions and provides the basis for adapting instruction to meet individual needs. (A video tape of this training session is also available)

Cooper Screening of Information Processing In this training session, Dr. Cooper administers the screening to a student from the local program to demonstrate how the screening can be used as a diagnostic teaching tool. He then goes through each of the sections in the screening explaining how to administer the screening to various types of students and how to interpret the information obtained from the screening.

Assessment of Learning Problems Participants in this session learn about the many ways to assess learning problems. Sample test reports will be shown and the significance of the test scores will be discussed.

Teaching Reading, Writing and Math This training session provides an overview of alternative techniques for teaching reading, writing and math to individuals with learning problems.

Tic Tac Toe Math The Tic Tac Toe Math system has proven to be very effective with individuals with learning differences. Many adult students have attributed their success with passing the math section of the GED to Tic Tac Toe Math. This training teaches the system and demonstrates how to teach it to students who have not been able to memorize the times tables.

Teaching Math to Adults with Learning Problems This training session provides information about why individuals with learning differences have difficulty learning math. Alternative techniques for teaching quantitative concepts, arithmetic operations and problem solving skills are explained. A demonstration of Tic Tac Toe Math is included.

Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Problems Literacy teachers and tutors report that this training provides them with many practical ideas for teaching individuals with reading problems from the non-reader to the reader with limited comprehension.

Teaching Spelling and Writing to Adults with Learning Problems This training session provides alternative techniques for teaching spelling and writing to individuals with language based learning problems.

Multi-level Classroom Techniques This training session uses the techniques taught in the other training sessions and applies them to the multi-level classroom where adults with a wide range of basic skills are grouped together.

Employment and Learning Problems Since learning problems limit the acquisition of basic academic and social skills, adult educators need to understand how they can address employability skills in their programs. This training provides them with an understanding of the problems which individuals with learning differences encounter in the workplace and with techniques for helping them cope with the situations.

Learning Problems and English as a Second Language This training session for teachers of English as a Second Language explains how learning problems can limit second language acquisition and how to recognize if a student may need to be referred for further testing.

In-Depth Session on Teaching Writing This two day training goes beyond just learning about alternative techniques. Participants experiment with the alternative techniques. For example they are asked to draw an outline for a writing assignment and learn how to teach this technique to those who might benefit from it.

Helping Students with Test Anxiety Test anxiety is a problem for many students with learning problems. This training session demonstrates a variety of techniques to help students prepare for and take tests. These include learning how to teach students relaxation and study skills and when to implement accommodations.

Techniques for Teaching Adults Who Learn Differently This training provides 25 teaching principles which Dr. Cooper has found effective when working with individuals with learning problems.

Avoidance Activities and Learning Styles This training explores the reasons why so many individuals with learning differences avoid the very tasks they say they want to do. Participants learn how to identify avoidance behaviors and are provided with suggestions about what they can do to help students break avoidance patterns.

Descriptions of the in-depth training sessions being developed for the 1996/97 project will be included in the next newsletter.

Statewide Staff Development Schedule

July 17	MBF Center <i>Adult Students with Dyslexia</i>	Norristown 3:30 to 5:00
August 3	Wayne/Pike Adult Literacy Program <i>Teaching Reading, Writing and Math</i>	Honesdale 9:00 to 12:00
August 14	Center for Alternative Learning <i>Characteristics of Learning Problems</i>	Bryn Mawr 9:00 to 12:00
August 16	Center for Alternative Learning <i>Tic Tac Toe Math</i>	Bryn Mawr 9:00 to 12:00
Sept. 6	Center for Alternative Learning <i>Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Problems</i>	Bryn Mawr 9:00 to 12:00

These training sessions are funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. If you would like to attend the training sessions at our Center in Bryn Mawr, call our office to register at **1-800-204-7667** or in the Philadelphia area at **610-525-0800**.

Tic Tac Toe Math We are pleased to inform all users of *Tic Tac Toe Math* that there will soon be a new addition to the system's workbooks. *Workbook IV* will enable students to learn how to use the *Tic Tac Toe Math* system to find and calculate percentages. Dr. Cooper, the developer of *Tic Tac Toe Math*, said that this new workbook will expand the students' ability to make grids from whole numbers 1 to infinity to include the times tables of fractions or decimal and mixed numbers. When the students have added this aspect of *Tic Tac Toe Math* working with percentages is very easy. Most students who are not able to learn the times tables find long division as a near impossible task and the same was true for working with percentages. *Tic Tac Toe Math* now makes both long division and percentages a simple visual matching activity. For more information about the new workbook or *Tic Tac Toe Math* contact our office, or look for *Workbook IV* in the next Learning disAbilities Resources Catalog.

Racing Mind

Do you often find your mind flooded with so many thoughts about so many things that you become overwhelmed? Does your mind race off to visualize the first step of a series of directions that is being given to you, so that you do not pay attention to the rest of the steps? These are two of the many questions I ask individuals about their behavior when I screen for learning and attention differences. Although everyone may on occasion experience these behaviors, the person who frequently experiences these, and a number of similar behaviors, probably has a racing mind.

The racing mind is the term I prefer to use to describe the phenomenon often referred to as Attention Deficit Disorder. Why use different term? Although the behaviors associated with attention problems cause significant difficulty for those who have a serious attention problem, others have milder symptoms and less difficulty. There are varying degrees of attention problems, and if we reserve the term ADD for the most serious problems, then we can treat other degrees of attention problems differently. But the same thought patterns which disable a person with a serious attention problem, to a lesser degree, can interfere with a person's ability to function in many areas of life including school, work and social interactions. The concept of the racing mind can help a person to better understand their own thoughts and behaviors as being different rather than seeing themselves as having a deficit and a disorder which the term ADD states.

The term racing mind is not inherently negative. By using it instead of ADD, the individual is able to focus on some of the positive aspects of this phenomenon. While deficit emphasizes the negative, the racing mind emphasizes the positive and this term implies different not defective. This positive perspective can make a significant difference in the person's self-image.

I use an analogy of a raging river to help people understand the racing mind. Imagine a river beginning as a trickle high in the mountains, increasing volume as it flows down the mountains through the valleys, across the plain to the sea. When this river swells because of heavy rain, the water rages down the mountains, towards the sea causing much destruction and chaos. However, if this same river has a number of hydroelectric dams, the raging waters cannot only be controlled but also produce productive energy.

There are positive aspects to the racing mind. It can enable individuals to be quick witted and, although it can be overdone by becoming the class clown, it provides the person with a skill which some use to their advantage. Some people have a high energy level which allows them, or drives them, to work, play and live faster and harder than others. Some are risk takers, willing to go beyond what others believe to be safe or prudent. Many entrepreneurs fit into this category. And, although there is a high rate of failure for individuals who strike out on their own, there is much to be said for those who break through barriers to go beyond. Hard work and tenacity can result in high productivity. I find many people who are very good problem solvers because they can race

ahead to consider a myriad of possibilities. When combined with creativity, which often accompanies the racing mind, people can be the masters of flexibility and substitutions. The ultimate tool maker is the person who can find ways to accomplish tasks with whatever is available. Quick thinkers with quick movements enable many with the racing mind to be excellent athletes; even the sports extremists like those who ski off cliffs, sky-dive off bridges. Being very observant is the positive side of being distractible and in many environments, individuals with racing minds excel. Their high energy levels and quick thinking often enables them to work on several projects simultaneously

These positive characteristics are the opposites of many negative aspects of the racing mind. These negative aspects will be discussed in the next issue of this newsletter along with techniques to reduce the negative and build on the positive.

Richard Cooper

Award Dr. Cooper was honored with a Five Year Service award at Villa St. John Vianney where he provides specialized services for patients who have learning problems. He received a certificate and a beautiful pen made from fine wood.

Learning disAbilities Resources Since study skills are so problematic for individuals with learning problems, Dr. Cooper is preparing a study skills guide for students who learn and think differently. This publication will describe how students can use their strengths and avoid their weaknesses when studying. It should be ready at the end of this year and will be listed in the next Learning disAbilities Resources Catalog.

Speaking Schedule

Inclusion of Students with Learning Problems, Delaware County Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, July 19 & 20, 8:30 to 4:00.

Teaching Math to Students with Learning Problems, Montgomery Co. Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, August 5, 6, & 7, 8:30 to 2:00.

Techniques for Inclusion, Rose Tree Media School District, August 15th, 9:00 to 12:30.

Learning Problems and Literacy, Dinner Speaker, Perry Co. Literacy Council, Sept. 16th, 6:30.

Position Paper on Accommodations for Adult Students with Disabilities, Symposium, NAASLN Conference, New Orleans, LA, Sept. 26th.

Teaching Reading and Writing to Students with Learning Problems, Delaware County Intermediate Unit, 15 hour course, Wednesday evenings, Oct. 9, 16 & 23, 4:00 to 9:00.

Teaching Adults with Learning Problems, One credit course, Pierre, South Dakota, Nov. 6 & 7, 9:00 to 5:00.

NAASLN The preliminary program for the 6th Annual NAASLN Conference (Sept 26-28, New Orleans) will be ready by August 15th. If you would like a copy please contact the NAASLN office at 610-525-8336

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