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Learning Disabilities

2007-0143-F

db4503

RESTRICTION CODES

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy
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Washington, D.C. 20201

FAX (202)401-7733**TO:** Diana Fortuna**NUMBER OF PAGES:** Cover + 3**FAX NUMBER:** 202-456-7028**DATE:** 6/21/96**FROM:**

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Floyd Brown	☐	Jennie Harvell	☐	Robyn Stone	☐
Robert Clark	☐	Ruth Irwin	☐	Tammy Terrell	☐
Pamela Dory	☐	Ruth Katz	☐	Brenda Veazey	☐
John Drabek	☐	Gavin Kennedy	☐		
Nancy Eustis	☐	Nadine Langon	☐		

REMARKS/COMMENTS

For the meeting on Tuesday.
Kathy Bond

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Child Health
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Bethesda, Maryland 20892

June 20, 1996

TO: Peter Edelman, Esq.
FROM: G. Reid Lyon, Ph.D.
SUBJECT: Presentation Outline for June 25

Peter, Here is a brief description and rationale for our discussion of the recommendations on reading disability among young children.

SHORT-TERM GOAL: To produce an Interdepartmental/Interagency resource that provides the professional and parent communities with research-based guidelines for early reading instruction.

DESCRIPTION: This resource could serve to consolidate the major replicated research findings of the past decade and translate them into guidelines for effective teaching practices for the development of pre-reading and beginning reading skills in kindergarten and the primary grades.

The development of this resource follows nicely on existing collaborations between OSEP, NICHD, OERI, and the NAS. OSEP in collaboration with NICHD has mounted a campaign to disseminate general information regarding early reading, and the NAS is now in the process of reviewing the major research findings obtained by NICHD and OSEP researchers. The proposed resource would provide more specific information for schools and parents than existing sources and would provide the following information:

- 1) A review of the elements of valid research - Few parents and teachers understand how to distinguish between valid and invalid research findings. This section of the resource guide could provide a "user-friendly" overview of the conditions that should be in place in any research study that is used to inform practice or to serve as a foundation for specific teaching practices. A checklist could be developed along with examples to aid the user in evaluating methods and materials.

Page 2 - Mr. Edelman

2) A guide to essential skills required for each phase of early reading - Sections of the resource guide would be devoted to an examination of the specific elements that children need to know in order to become skilled readers. This section of the resource guide would be divided into subsections devoted to each pre-requisite and reading skill. Within this context, examples of sub-sections could be: The development of the language skills necessary for reading; The development of alphabet naming skills; the development of phonological processing skills; the development of decoding skills; the development of word recognition skills, the development of fluency and automaticity; the development of comprehension skills.

In the discussion for each of these subskills, a clear rationale for the development of the skill would be provided, along with clear documentation of the research that supports the necessity of the skill and the recommended teaching practices and methods for each element.

NOTE: In producing such a resource guide, a number of themes would have to be emphasized. First, the information presented in the guide is dynamic and subject to modification as new research becomes available. In the main, modification would consist of additions to the information presented rather than deletions in the information presented. This is because any information that is presented would evolve from a replicated data base and thus be robust enough to stand over time. Second, users of the resource guide would be consistently and powerfully provided the message that the information presented is based upon the questions: "what does a child need to know in order to become a skilled reader?" and "What teaching elements and/or conditions need to be in place in order to teach the child these essential skills?"

This second theme would serve to reinforce a problem-solving strategy for teaching early reading. Specifically, rather than providing a cook-book menu for a teaching method that is certain to fail some children, resource guide users can become sensitized to the need to first understand what it takes, from a skill perspective, to become a strong reader, and to then realize that multiple teaching methods can be brought to bear in teaching such skills.

NOTE: This resource guide can be modeled, in part, on the "clinical Practice Guideline Development" information that is provided by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research in HHS.

Page 3 - Mr. Edelman

A third theme is that research that is conducted with youngsters who have difficulty learning to read can be applied with great success to the teaching of reading, in general. If this point can be made effectively, one could expect that research-informed early reading teaching practices could serve as a preventative measure for later reading difficulties.

A fourth theme is that the information that is presented in the resource guide reflects a collaboration among HHS, DOE, Labor, and justice and a consolidation of replicated research that meets the highest standards (as discussed in point 1).

RATIONALE FOR THIS PRODUCT

1. Reading is a gateway to learning, citizenship, and employment.
2. The public has urgent and compelling concerns about reading.
3. Reading achievement can be substantially improved if practices are based on a critical mass of replicated research.
4. A solid foundation for this type of product has already emerged via the Learning to Read, Reading to Learn kit developed via funding from OSEP. The proposed resource guide would build on this foundation in the direction of greater detail and the presentation of specific research-based suggestions for identifying and teaching critical pre-reading and reading skills.

LONG-TERM GOAL: To develop an interdepartmental/interagency entity that would serve as a public resource to (1) validate and build the knowledge base in the teaching of reading; (2) identify high performing schools, and, the critical elements that produce this high performance; and (3) develop "research to practice" models and support those states that are interested in tapping this knowledge utilization.

NOTE: The development of specific activities to support this goal could be modeled after the "Clinical Practice Guideline Development" operations supported by HHS.

RATIONALE: Educators at all levels have been frustrated by the absence of a knowledge validation process that is at the heart of all other professions. The entity proposed here could address these concerns by melding the practical expertise of the Department of Education and the long-term research findings and validation process from HHS to support state and local efforts to solve pressing educational problems. A major outcome from such an entity would be "to update educational leaders responsible for the preservice and inservice education of teachers on the implications of recent research developments."

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Diana --

Here is a list of those who have said they will attend the meeting tomorrow

DOB for meeting 6/25/96

Name

DOB

Glenn Young
Thomas E. Hehir
Liz Savage
Ann Murray Segal
Speed Davis
Libby Queen
Gerri Fiala
Janet Bendann
Robert Kirkendall
Andrew Imparato
Dale Brown
Yvonne Howard
Jan Grossman
Kathleen Mary Bond
Peter B. Edelman
Ruth E. Katz
George Reid Lyon
Gerald N. Tirozzi
Judith E. Heumann
Joyce Brown-Moore

[001]

(For Susan Daniels)

(b)(6)

(Judith's attendant)

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Roberta Kirkendall ✓
Andrew Imperator ✓
Dale Brown ✓
Yvonne Howard ✓
Jan Grossman ✓
Kathleen Mary Bond ✓
Peter B. Edelman ✓
Ruth E. Katz ✓
George Reid Lyon ✓
Gerald N. Tirozzi ✓
Judith E. Heumann ✓
Joyce Brown-Moore ✓

[002]

(For Susan Daniels)

(b)(6)

(Judith's attendant)

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TO: Niana FastmanNUMBER OF PAGES: Cover + 11FAX NUMBER: 456-7028DATE: 6/6/96

FROM:

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Kathleen Bond	☒	Mary Harahan	☐	Bill Marton	☐
Floyd Brown	☐	Jennie Harvell	☐	Robyn Stone	☐
Robert Clark	☐	Ruth Irwin	☐	Tammy Terrell	☐
Pamela Doty	☐	Ruth Katz	☐	Brenda Veazey	☐
John Drabek	☐	Gavin Kennedy	☐		
Nancy Eustis	☐	Nadine Langon	☐		

REMARKS/COMMENTS

Niana and Rex, I will e-mail these materials to you also, so that you can edit or make corrections as necessary. Bond



Date

To: Interdepartmental Working Group on Learning Disabilities

From: Diana Fortuna
White House Domestic Policy Council

and

Peter B. Edelman
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Department of Health and Human Services

Re: June 25th Meeting

Please join us at the **Old Executive Office Building** for a second meeting of the interdepartmental working group on learning disabilities on **Tuesday, June 25** from **10:00 a.m. to noon**. We will discuss our activities over the last several months and consider additional areas where interdepartmental collaboration and coordination may be useful. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Since our first meeting at the White House last November, the members of our informal working group have discovered and shared a great deal of information and interest in learning disabilities. We see more opportunities now than we did then to intensify what we do in individual agencies and collaboratively about learning disabilities among both children and adults.

A subgroup of us has focused during the last several months on reading disabilities among young children. We have discussed the nature of reading disability among young children and specific ways to address the problem on a broad scale. Another group has concentrated on adolescents and adults whose learning disabilities affect their everyday lives in important ways, including success at school and work. Both groups have now considered potential next steps and action items in their respective areas of interest.

It is an appropriate time for all of us, including some new participants, to come together to discuss what we have learned and consider next steps regarding learning disabilities. A tentative agenda for the meeting and a list of invitees is attached.

Page 2

Please respond to Gus Chiarello (202-456-5574) of Diana Fortuna's staff regarding whether you are able to attend. You will need to give Gus your full name and date of birth in order to be admitted to the Old Executive Office Building. A picture identification will also be required at the gate for entrance.

A few days before the meeting, we will send some brief background information to each of you. Thank you in advance for attending the meeting.

We look forward to seeing you on June 25th.

Attachments (2)

AGENDA***Interdepartmental Meeting on Learning Disabilities*****June 25, 1996****10 a.m. - Noon****Domestic Policy Council****Room 472
Old Executive Office Building
The White House**

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 10:00 - 10:10 | Call to Order and Statement of Purpose

Diana Fortuna, Domestic Policy Council
Peter Edelman, Assistant Secretary for Planning and
Evaluation, DHHS |
| 10:10 - 10:20 | Self-Introductions |
| 10:20 - 10:40 | Presentation and Recommendations on Reading Disability Among
Young Children

Dr. Reid Lyon, DHHS
Dr. Thomas Hehir, DOE |
| 10:40 - 10:55 | Discussion |
| 10:55 - 11:15 | Presentation and Recommendations Regarding Adolescents
and Adults with Learning Disabilities

Andrew Hartman, NIFL |
| 11:15 - 11:30 | Discussion |
| 11:30 - Noon | Presentation of Draft Statement of Broad Objectives of the
Working Group and Discussion of Next Steps

Diana Fortuna
Peter Edelman |

Invitees to Interdepartmental Meeting on Learning Disabilities*June 25, 1996**10:00- Noon, Room 472, Old Executive Office Building***Department of Health and Human Services****PETER B. EDELMAN** ✓

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Office of Management and Budget

JANET LOONEY

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Commissioner on Disability
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Childhood Disability Branch
Office of Disability
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The White House

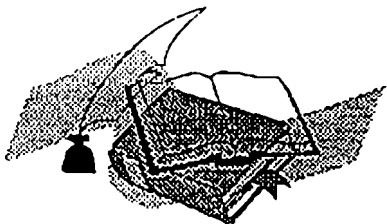
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Phone:

Fax: 456-7028

From: Glenn Young

Phone: 632-1042

Fax: 202/632-1512

Remarks: ☐ Urgent ☒ For Your Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Reply ASAP ☐ At your request

Memorandum

TO: Interagency Working Group on Learning Disabilities
Adult and Adolescent Subcommittee

FROM: Glenn Young
Learning Disabilities Specialist

SUBJECT: Draft - Action Steps

Per our June 4th meeting, the following is a revised and reorganized draft of our subcommittee's action steps. The first section deals with collaborative efforts and includes the four categories we discussed:

- 1) Research and Evaluation
- 2) Dissemination
- 3) Technical Assistance
- 4) Leadership

The second section contains recommendations that are more agency-specific.

The goal of this draft is to outline action steps that our group can feel comfortable presenting at the June 25 meeting of the LD interagency working group. Since we agreed at our meeting not to set priorities at this point, the list is essentially an information document to let the larger group know the vision that our Subcommittee is in the process of developing.

Please feel free to mark up and make changes to this draft. I will need your comments by COB Wednesday, June 12th.

DRAFT ---- LD Interagency Working Group - Adult and Adolescent Subcommittee

Suggested Action Steps

I. Collaborative Efforts:

A. Research and Evaluation

- #1
1. Develop research agenda. APSE, NICHD, NADIR and ADD will coordinate effort. The group would look to set goals and define areas of responsibilities in research in the LD area.
 2. Identify resources for cross-cutting pilot projects. DOL/ETA, DHHS/ACF, DOJ/Civil Rights, and ED/RSA, OVAE will provide leadership. Pilots would be designed as interagency efforts to identify, remediate, and accommodate persons with LD in a wide range of cross-cutting programs intended to develop self-sufficiency.
 3. Develop an update of the 1987 "Report to Congress." The Health Research Extension Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-158) established an Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities, which produced the 1987 publication "Learning Disabilities: A Report to the U.S. Congress." 1997 will be the tenth anniversary year of that report and an appropriate time to evaluate what has, in fact, been accomplished and what new federal goals should be set.
 4. Incorporate findings of the DHHS Disability Survey into service models. The Office of Disability, Aging, and Long-term Care is completing a major study of disabilities in the United States, including LD. The findings will provide a wider understanding of the impact of LD and how persons with LD interact with public services.
- W

B. Dissemination of present knowledge and best practices.

1. Identify resources and develop plan for distributing current federal publications to states and local programs. Publications will include--
 - a) National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) Newsletter and National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center (NALLDC) products.
 - b) ED's Reading reports (also Attention Deficit Disorder Information)
 - c) DOL's "The Learning Disabled in Employment and Training Programs"
 - d) DHHS Inspector General's report on Functional Impairments
 - e) NICHD's reports on definition and reading.
 - f) DOJ's papers on LD

2. Develop a national bibliography on LD in adults and adolescents, focusing on a wide range of topics drawn from state and local programs and from the private sector. Topics will include --

- a) Juvenile Justice and Adult Corrections
- b) School to work Transition
- c) Post-secondary issues
- d) Social programs and poverty
- f) Work place and accommodations
- g) Literacy

3. Commission new papers on current best practices.

1. Develop technical assistance program for state and local governments

- a) Develop an interagency manual on LD and its impact
- b) Develop federal and regional speaker's bureaus for presentations on LD
- c) Along with OVAE and ACF, develop LD staff positions within offices and departments.

2. Develop Interagency strategies for addressing learning disabilities as they affect major national issues, including;

- a) teen-parents
- b) School to Work.
- c) welfare to work
- d) youth violence
- e) literacy/ESL
- f) Goals 2000 and other educational reform efforts
- g) worker retraining

D. Leadership:

1. Develop a strategy through the Domestic Policy Council for making the LD adult issue to a focus of concern. A wide range of options exist for how the Administration can call attention to the issue. DPC will evaluate options and make recommendations on direction.

II. Agency-specific Action Steps

→ A. DOJ: Create an intra-agency task force, including Civil Rights, Corrections, Juvenile Justice, that looks at steps such as:

1. Developing an Advisory Council on LD and JJ
2. Developing a presentation for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coordination Council.
3. Including LD issues in training for COPS (Community Orientated Policing)

↘ B. ED

1. Develop staff position on LD in OVAE (in process)
2. Include NIDRR and other parts of OSERS by expanding the scope of the group to include adolescents (youth in transition, school to work, etc.)
3. Work with standardized testing programs such as, GED, SAT, and GRE to develop process through which more students can access accommodations while taking tests.
4. Work with postsecondary education to develop better support services
5. Develop standards to address transition services and vocational rehabilitation.

↘ C. DOL

1. Reprint and distribute the Report "The Learning Disabled in Employment and Training Programs."

↘ D. DHHS

1. Greater technical support on LD to AFDC programs.
2. Incorporate knowledge on improving family literacy practices in training and technical assistance to Head Start programs
3. Include LD in the HHS Health People Initiative
4. Development of means to communicate findings of the Disability Survey to a wide audience.
5. Include Public Health in the process.

↘ H. NIFL

1. Continued support for the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center (NALLDC)
2. Dissemination of other agencies materials as appropriate.
3. Providing staff support to learning disabilities working group.

Does this motivate
people who know nothing
to learn more and take action.

Invitees to Interdepartmental Meeting on Learning Disabilities
June 25, 1996

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Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

ANDREW IMPARATO

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

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The White House

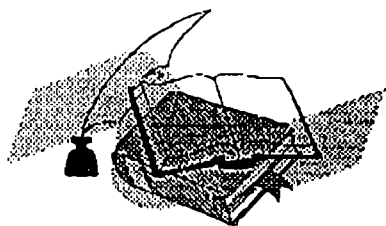
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National Institute for Literacy

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National
Institute
For
Literacy

Facsimile Transmission

Date:
Number of pages
including cover sheet:

To: Diana Fortuna

Phone:

Fax:

From: Glenn Young

Phone:

Fax: 202/632-1512

Remarks: ☐ Urgent ☐ For Your Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Reply ASAP ☐ At your request

Kathy Bond did a once over
and here is an updated
and better vrs—

Thanks
Glenn

6/21/96

Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative - Draft Statement-

Learning disabilities stand in the way of success -- for people, programs, and national progress. "...The presence of undiagnosed learning disabilities in a high percentage of low-income people greatly impedes governmental efforts to effectively provide a wide range of services..." If this Administration is to reach its most urgent social and economic goals, from safe streets to welfare reform to school -to-work and better jobs, we must find better strategies for helping children, youth and adults with learning disabilities, and make these strategies more widely available to federal, state, and local programs aimed at supporting the administration's goals.

LD is defined as a generic term covering a group of disorders that have a presumed neurological origin and that appear as disorders in persons with areas of strength in general intelligence. The disability is most often shown in an unexpected, imperfect ability -- or an inability -- to read, write, spell, listen, speak, or to perform mathematics.

Recent major findings of research supported by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) confirm the existence of organic causes of learning disabilities, their persistence over the life course and their occurrence in females and males at about the same rate.

Learning disabilities can be directly linked to or exacerbated by some of the conditions of poverty (e.g., limited access to proper health care, poor nutrition, toxins in the environment etc.). These causes of learning disabilities include:

- Prenatal malnutrition
- Lead poisoning
- Chronic and untreated ear infections
- Prolonged early childhood high fevers
- Birth trauma
- Diet deficiencies
- Head trauma

Genetic (hereditary) defects are cross-cutting causes that can be found in all income ranges.

The Scope and Impact of the Problem.

While estimates of the incidence and consequences of LD vary, the national consensus is growing stronger with every new finding: a significant number of children, adolescents, and adults have undiagnosed or untreated LD, and the negative impact can be seen throughout our society.

It has generally been assumed that 5-10% of the population has LD. However, the latest research by the NICHD finds that as many as 17% of children may have reading disabilities. NICHD also points out the urgent need to identify children at risk for LD at very young ages and to develop intervention efforts that begin long before school failure. In addition, the research is showing that

Page 2 - Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative

for most children and adults with learning disabilities, reading problems are based on a lack of phonemic awareness and that they need to be taught to read in a manner that focuses on addressing phonemic skills.

Adolescents and adults are especially affected when the learning disability is undiagnosed as is commonly the case. Only in the last 15-20 years have we come to understand that learning disabilities are not "outgrown," and that they can have persistent and often highly detrimental effects over the entire course of people's lives. Even more recent is the evidence that undiagnosed learning disabilities among low-income people may greatly impede the success of a wide range of services aimed at supporting self-sufficiency.

Reports show high rates of learning disabilities in school drop-out populations, in correction populations, and in under- and unemployed adults. A recent study found that 43% of adults with learning disabilities were living at or below the poverty line, with an average income of only \$14,000. Other studies state that LD impacts efforts in a wide range of social services, including:

- Adult basic education (ABE) - estimates of 50-80% LD.
- Job training programs (JTPA Title IIA) - estimates of 15-23% LD
- Welfare (AFDC) - estimates of 25-40% LD
- Juvenile justice - estimates of 36% LD

While some services exist for adults with learning disabilities through community and four-year colleges, about 85% of adults with LD never enter any post-secondary educational programs.

Recent Federal Efforts:

Federal activities in two important areas have had a significant impact in the area of LD. The first is inclusion of LD as a covered disability in a number of education and civil rights laws, including; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA). In addition the JTPA amendments of 1992 and the National Literacy Act of 1991 both recognized LD as an issue.

The second effort has been in the area of research on LD and its impacts. In 1986, a Federal Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities developed a report to Congress, which focused on medical issues associated with LD. As a result of that report, the NICHD has conducted extensive investigation of the nature and origins of learning disabilities as well as on intervention strategies that be effective with young children.

Next Steps

The federal government is reconsidering its role with regard to LD. This time the focus is on the need for additional research and on the impact of LD in areas ranging from early childhood

Page 3 - Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative

education to adult employment and the criminal justice system. A working group has been formed consisting of representatives from several Federal organizations, including:

- Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Justice and Education
- The National Institutes for Health, and the National Institute for Literacy
- The Presidents Committee for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, the National Council on Disabilities and the EEOC
- The White House Domestic Policy Council.

The working group is developing a list of suggested action steps aimed at creating a federal approach that will better integrate issues of learning disabilities into federal programs and services. The group is also looking at means to better inform states and local governments about the impacts of LD. The group's initiatives will fall into four major areas:

- Research and evaluation
- Dissemination of information,
- Technical assistance
- Leadership.

As initiatives are developed, the working group will be turning to its member agencies for advice and support in implementation.

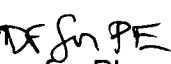
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 11, 1996

To: Interdepartmental Working Group on Learning Disabilities

From: Diana Fortuna 
Senior Policy Analyst
White House Domestic Policy Council

and

Peter B. Edelman 
Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Department of Health and Human Services

Re: June 25, Meeting

Please join us at the **Old Executive Office Building** for a second meeting of the interdepartmental working group on learning disabilities on **Tuesday, June 25 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** We will discuss our activities over the last several months and consider additional areas where interpartmental collaboration and coordination may be useful. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Since our first meeting at the White House last November, the members of our informal working group have discovered and shared a great deal of information and interest in learning disabilities. We see more opportunities now than we did then to intensify what we do in individual agencies and collaboratively about learning disabilities among both children and adults.

A subgroup of us has focused during the last several months on reading disabilities among young children. We have discussed the nature of reading disability among young children and specific ways to address the problem on a broad scale. Another group has concentrated on adolescents and adults whose learning disabilities affect their everyday lives in important ways, including success at school and work. Both groups have now considered potential next steps and action items in their respective areas of interest.

It is an appropriate time for all of us, including some new participants, to come together to discuss what we have learned and consider next steps regarding learning disabilities. A tentative agenda for the meeting and a list of invitees is attached.

Page 2

Please respond to Gus Chiarello (202-456-5578) of Diana Fortuna's staff regarding whether you are able to attend. You will need to give Gus your full name and date of birth in order to be admitted to the Old Executive Office Building. A photo identification will also be required at the gate for entrance.

A few days before the meeting, we will send some brief background information to each of you. Thank you in advance for attending the meeting.

We look forward to seeing you on June 25th at 2:00 pm.

Attachments (2)

AGENDA

Interdepartmental Meeting on Learning Disabilities

June 25, 1996

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Domestic Policy Council

Room 476

**Old Executive Office Building
The White House**

2:00 - 2:10 Call to Order and Statement of Purpose

Diana Fortuna, Domestic Policy Council
Peter Edelman, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, DHHS

2:10 - 2:20 Self Introductions

2:20 - 2:40 Presentation and Recommendations on Reading Disability Among Young Children

Dr. Reid Lyon, DHHS
Dr. Thomas Hehir, DOE

2:40 - 2:55 Discussion

2:55 - 3:15 Presentation and Recommendations Regarding Adolescents and Adults with Learning Disabilities

Andrew Hartman, NIFL

3:15 - 3:30 Discussion

3:30 - 4:00 ~~Presentation of Draft Statements of Board Objectives of the Working Group and Discussion of Next Steps~~

Diana Fortuna
Peter Edelman

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

AGENDA

Interdepartmental Meeting on Learning Disabilities

June 25, 1996

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Domestic Policy Council

**Room 476
Old Executive Office Building
The White House**

- 2:00 - 2:10** Call to Order and Statement of Purpose
- Diana Fortuna, Domestic Policy Council
Peter Edelman, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, DHHS
- 2:10 - 2:20** Self Introductions
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- 2:40 - 2:55** Discussion
- 2:55 - 3:15** Presentation and Recommendations Regarding Adolescents and Adults with Learning Disabilities
- Andrew Hartman, NIFL
- 3:15 - 3:30** Discussion
- 3:30 - 4:00** Discussion of Next Steps

National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Child Health
and Human Development
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

June 20, 1996

TO: Peter Edelman, Esq.
FROM: G. Reid Lyon, Ph.D.
SUBJECT: Presentation Outline for June 25

Peter, Here is a brief description and rationale for our discussion of the recommendations on reading disability among young children.

SHORT-TERM GOAL: To produce an Interdepartmental/Interagency resource that provides the professional and parent communities with research-based guidelines for early reading instruction.

DESCRIPTION: This resource could serve to consolidate the major replicated research findings of the past decade and translate them into guidelines for effective teaching practices for the development of pre-reading and beginning reading skills in kindergarten and the primary grades.

The development of this resource follows nicely on existing collaborations between OSEP, NICHD, OERI, and the NAS. OSEP in collaboration with NICHD has mounted a campaign to disseminate general information regarding early reading, and the NAS is now in the process of reviewing the major research findings obtained by NICHD and OSEP researchers. The proposed resource would provide more specific information for schools and parents than existing sources and would provide the following information:

1) A review of the elements of valid research - Few parents and teachers understand how to distinguish between valid and invalid research findings. This section of the resource guide could provide a "user-friendly" overview of the conditions that should be in place in any research study that is used to inform practice or to serve as a foundation for specific teaching practices. A checklist could be developed along with examples to aid the user in evaluating methods and materials.

2) A guide to essential skills required for each phase of early reading - Sections of the resource guide would be devoted to an examination of the specific elements that children need to know in order to become skilled readers. This section of the resource guide would be divided into subsections devoted to each pre-requisite and reading skill. Within this context, examples of sub-sections could be: The development of the language skills necessary for reading; The development of alphabet naming skills; the development of phonological processing skills; the development of decoding skills; the development of word recognition skills, the development of fluency and automaticity; the development of comprehension skills.

In the discussion for each of these subskills, a clear rationale for the development of the skill would be provided, along with clear documentation of the research that supports the necessity of the skill and the recommended teaching practices and methods for each element.

NOTE: In producing such a resource guide, a number of themes would have to be emphasized. First, the information presented in the guide is dynamic and subject to modification as new research becomes available. In the main, modification would consist of additions to the information presented rather than deletions in the information presented. This is because any information that is presented would evolve from a replicated data base and thus be robust enough to stand over time. Second, users of the resource guide would be consistently and powerfully provided the message that the information presented is based upon the questions: "what does a child need to know in order to become a skilled reader?" and "What teaching elements and/or conditions need to be in place in order to teach the child these essential skills?"

This second theme would serve to reinforce a problem-solving strategy for teaching early reading. Specifically, rather than providing a cook-book menu for a teaching method that is certain to fail some children, resource guide users can become sensitized to the need to first understand what it takes, from a skill perspective, to become a strong reader, and to then realize that multiple teaching methods can be brought to bear in teaching such skills.

NOTE: This resource guide can be modeled, in part, on the "clinical Practice Guideline Development" information that is provided by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research In HHS.

A third theme is that research that is conducted with youngsters who have difficulty learning to read can be applied with great success to the teaching of reading, in general. If this point can be made effectively, one could expect that research-informed early reading teaching practices could serve as a preventative measure for later reading difficulties.

A fourth theme is that the information that is presented in the resource guide reflects a collaboration among HHS, DOE, Labor, and justice and a consolidation of replicated research that meets the highest standards (as discussed in point 1).

RATIONALE FOR THIS PRODUCT

1. Reading is a gateway to learning, citizenship, and employment.
2. The public has urgent and compelling concerns about reading.
3. Reading achievement can be substantially improved if practices are based on a critical mass of replicated research.
4. A solid foundation for this type of product has already emerged via the Learning to Read, Reading to Learn kit developed via funding from OSEP. The proposed resource guide would build on this foundation in the direction of greater detail and the presentation of specific research-based suggestions for identifying and teaching critical pre-reading and reading skills.

LONG-TERM GOAL: To develop an interdepartmental/interagency entity that would serve as a public resource to (1) validate and build the knowledge base in the teaching of reading; (2) identify high performing schools, and, the critical elements that produce this high performance; and (3) develop "research to practice" models and support those states that are interested in tapping this knowledge utilization.

NOTE: The development of specific activities to support this goal could be modeled after the "Clinical Practice Guideline Development" operations supported by HHS.

RATIONALE: Educators at all levels have been frustrated by the absence of a knowledge validation process that is at the heart of all other professions. The entity proposed here could address these concerns by melding the practical expertise of the Department of Education and the long-term research findings and validation process from HHS to support state and local efforts to solve pressing educational problems. A major outcome from such an entity would be "to update educational leaders responsible for the preservice and inservice education of teachers on the implications of recent research developments."



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Child Health
and Human Development
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

June 20, 1996

TO: Peter Edelman, Esq.

FROM: G. Reid Lyon, Ph.D.

SUBJECT: Presentation Outline for June 25

Peter, Here is a brief description and rationale for our discussion of the recommendations on reading disability among young children.

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- 1) A review of the elements of valid research - Few parents and teachers understand how to distinguish between valid and invalid research findings. This section of the resource guide could provide a "user-friendly" overview of the conditions that should be in place in any research study that is used to inform practice or to serve as a foundation for specific teaching practices. A checklist could be developed along with examples to aid the user in evaluating methods and materials.

2) A guide to essential skills required for each phase of early reading - Sections of the resource guide would be devoted to an examination of the specific elements that children need to know in order to become skilled readers. This section of the resource guide would be divided into subsections devoted to each pre-requisite and reading skill. Within this context, examples of sub-sections could be: The development of the language skills necessary for reading; The development of alphabet naming skills; the development of phonological processing skills; the development of decoding skills; the development of word recognition skills, the development of fluency and automaticity; the development of comprehension skills.

In the discussion for each of these subskills, a clear rationale for the development of the skill would be provided, along with clear documentation of the research that supports the necessity of the skill and the recommended teaching practices and methods for each element.

NOTE: In producing such a resource guide, a number of themes would have to be emphasized. First, the information presented in the guide is dynamic and subject to modification as new research becomes available. In the main, modification would consist of additions to the information presented rather than deletions in the information presented. This is because any information that is presented would evolve from a replicated data base and thus be robust enough to stand over time. Second, users of the resource guide would be consistently and powerfully provided the message that the information presented is based upon the questions: "what does a child need to know in order to become a skilled reader?" and "What teaching elements and/or conditions need to be in place in order to teach the child these essential skills?"

This second theme would serve to reinforce a problem-solving strategy for teaching early reading. Specifically, rather than providing a cook-book menu for a teaching method that is certain to fail some children, resource guide users can become sensitized to the need to first understand what it takes, from a skill perspective, to become a strong reader, and to then realize that multiple teaching methods can be brought to bear in teaching such skills.

NOTE: This resource guide can be modeled, in part, on the "clinical Practice Guideline Development" information that is provided by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research In HHS.

A third theme is that research that is conducted with youngsters who have difficulty learning to read can be applied with great success to the teaching of reading, in general. If this point can be made effectively, one could expect that research-informed early reading teaching practices could serve as a preventative measure for later reading difficulties.

A fourth theme is that the information that is presented in the resource guide reflects a collaboration among HHS, DOE, Labor, and justice and a consolidation of replicated research that meets the highest standards (as discussed in point 1).

RATIONALE FOR THIS PRODUCT

1. Reading is a gateway to learning, citizenship, and employment.
2. The public has urgent and compelling concerns about reading.
3. Reading achievement can be substantially improved if practices are based on a critical mass of replicated research.
4. A solid foundation for this type of product has already emerged via the Learning to Read, Reading to Learn kit developed via funding from OSEP. The proposed resource guide would build on this foundation in the direction of greater detail and the presentation of specific research-based suggestions for identifying and teaching critical pre-reading and reading skills.

LONG-TERM GOAL: To develop an interdepartmental/interagency entity that would serve as a public resource to (1) validate and build the knowledge base in the teaching of reading; (2) identify high performing schools, and, the critical elements that produce this high performance; and (3) develop "research to practice" models and support those states that are interested in tapping this knowledge utilization.

NOTE: The development of specific activities to support this goal could be modeled after the "Clinical Practice Guideline Development" operations supported by HHS.

RATIONALE: Educators at all levels have been frustrated by the absence of a knowledge validation process that is at the heart of all other professions. The entity proposed here could address these concerns by melding the practical expertise of the Department of Education and the long-term research findings and validation process from HHS to support state and local efforts to solve pressing educational problems. A major outcome from such an entity would be "to update educational leaders responsible for the preservice and inservice education of teachers on the implications of recent research developments."

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Diana --

Here is a list of those who have said they will attend the meeting tomorrow. I have included the agency next to the one's that were listed. Unfortunately, I do not have the office of all meeting attendees.

The names at the bottom are highlighted as they are new attendees.

DOB for meeting 6/25/96

Name	DOB	[003]
Glenn Young		National Inst. for Literacy
Thomas E. Hehir		DOE - OSERS
Liz Savage		DOJ
Ann Murray Segal		HHS Off. of Human Services Policy
Speed Davis		National Council on Disability
Libby Queen		DOL - Emp. and Training Admin.
Gerri Fiala		DOL - Office of Policy and Research
Janet Bendann		(For Susan Daniels)--SSA
Robertta Kirkendall		DOJ - Civil Rights Division
Andrew Imperato		EEOC
Dale Brown		Pres. Com. on Emp. of PWD
Yvonne Howard		Admin. for Children & Families
Jan Grossman	(b)(6)	
Kathleen Mary Bond		HHS
Peter B. Edelman		HHS
Ruth E. Katz		Of. of Disab., aging...HHS
George Reid Lyon		Nat. Inst. of Child Health...
Gerald N. Tirozzi		Elem. and Sec. Ed., DOE
Judith E. Heumann		OSERS
Joyce Brown-Moore		(Judith's attendant)
S. Colene Nelson		
Wendy Jo New		
Suzanne Tillman		
Ellen Schiller		

New Additions: (As of 11:00 am)

Robyn I. Stone	(b)(6)	HHS (Kathleen Bond)
Susan Green		National Inst. for Literacy

Gina Wood
Kenny

Draft

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 24, 1996
TO: Peter Edelman
Diana Fortuna
FROM: Andy Hartman
SUBJECT: Agenda for the interagency working group meeting

I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to present the recommendations of the adults/LD subgroup at the meeting tomorrow. Attached is a summary of the comments I plan to make. By way of overview:

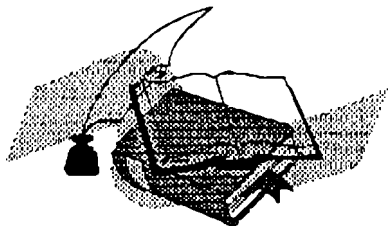
- A few background comments on why and how the issue of LD/adults is different from LD/children from a programmatic, research, and policy perspective. The conclusion will be that it is not as well developed as an issue, but equally important as a national human resource problem.
- A brief description of the process that went into producing the list of recommendations from the various agency representatives (copies will be available for all participants). Rather than go through the list item by item, I plan on describing the four broad categories of recommendations and highlighting one example from each category.
- Finally, I will make a pitch for the group to make a decision at this meeting to take on at least one of the recommendations. I think it would be a lost opportunity and send the wrong message if we only talked about how much could be done but did not commit to any action. My own personal choice is to develop a brief resource guide (a companion to the K-12 reading guide), that would be oriented towards 2-3 specific high profile federal programs. These could include school-to-work and welfare-to-work. Each guide would have a common "look and feel," contain similar core information across the different guides, but be individualized to the realities and needs of each of the different programs.
- I plan to leave discussion of the "leadership" issue (the fourth recommendation) to both of you during the last part of the agenda.

Please let me know if you have any comments or concerns about any of the above. I look forward to seeing you both tomorrow!

SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY ANDY HARTMAN FOR
THE INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP MEETING
6/25/96

- To date, the primary focus of the federal involvement in LD has been on preschool and school age children. This focus was driven by federal legislation requiring a free and appropriate education for all disabled children (up to the age of 21). Congress has created a variety of complementary programs and institutions to help implement the letter and spirit of this law. These include several major research centers, programs offices, and technical assistance efforts.
- There has been no other similar driving force for adults (although one could argue that the ADA has the potential to be such a force). What we on the Adults and Adolescents LD subgroup have learned is that LD is not something that one "cures," but rather it is a lifelong disability for which one does or does not learn to cope and find accommodation.
- As a result, LD is a significant issue for millions of adults in our prisons, literacy programs, welfare programs, and job training programs. It is a part of the problem in creating safe neighborhoods, moving parents from welfare to work, helping teen parents get back into school, and providing job training to dislocated workers.
- Because there has been much less attention paid to the issue of adults with LD, there is also much less by way of a history of building an agenda or plan for how to deal with the issue at the national level. The work that Glenn Young has done in interviewing many of you for ideas and recommendations is one of the first efforts to look across federal agencies and find ways we can work together to accomplish something meaningful.
- You each have a set of recommendations that are a result of Glenn's interviews. They were subsequently discussed and reshaped by the adult subgroup and fit into four categories of action: research and evaluation, dissemination, technical assistance, and leadership.
- I would like to highlight just one example from each of the categories to give you a feel for what the group has recommended:
 1. research and evaluation -- Joint funding of pilot projects to demonstrate interagency approaches to the identification, remediation, and accommodation of adults in a wide variety of programs (e.g.--corrections, welfare, job training).

2. dissemination -- Create and disseminate an annotated bibliography for distribution to state and local programs.
 3. technical assistance -- Develop resource guides for several major federal initiatives that would have both a common "look and feel" and similar core information across programs.
 4. leadership -- Leave until last section of the meeting.
- I would hope that we would come away from this meeting with an agreement to take on at least one of these recommendations. We have learned too much about the need out there and the potential resources to not do anything.

*National Institute for Literacy**800 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 200**Washington DC 20006*

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From: Glenn Young

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Fax: 202/632-1512

Remarks: ☐ Urgent ☒ For Your Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Reply ASAP ☐ At your request



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

Memorandum

TO: Interdepartmental Work Group on Learning Disabilities
Adult and Adolescent Subcommittee

FROM: Glenn Young 
Learning Disabilities Specialist

SUBJECT: Draft - Action Steps

Attached is a new draft of the draft action steps. I have attempted to address the issues and concerns raised by members of the group as a result of distribution of the last version.

Thank you for your input. The major changes are in **BOLD**.

This draft is the version that will be presented at the June 24 meeting of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Learning Disabilities, to describe the direction being undertaken by the adolescent and adult sub-group. If you feel the need for additional changes, please let me know asap.

Thanks

14 + NY Ave.

S2 - 14 + Ind

17th + I - 34
(Mellor Gardens)
Rensselaer - 18th

Tash
Natasha
53397
Linda

^{mtg}
Main - attendance

DRAFT --- Interdepartmental Work Group on Learning Disabilities - Adult and Adolescent Subcommittee

Draft Action Steps
Draft Date: 6/17/96

I. Collaborative Efforts:

A. Research and Evaluation

1. Develop research agenda. ASPE, NICHD, NIDRR and ADD will coordinate effort. The group would look to set goals and define areas of responsibilities on research in the LD area.
2. Identify potential sources for support for cross-cutting pilot projects. DOL/ETA, DHHS/ACF, DOJ/Civil Rights, and ED/OSERS, OVAE will provide leadership. Pilots would be designed as interagency approaches to identify, remediate, and accommodate persons with LD in a wide range of cross-cutting programs intended to develop self-sufficiency. One approach could be to "pool" funds for a joint RFP to states soliciting applications for service design models for persons with LD.
3. Develop an update of the 1987 "Report to Congress." The Health Research Extension Act of 1985 (P.L.99-158) established an Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities, which produced the 1987 publication "Learning Disabilities: A Report to the U.S. Congress." 1997 will be the tenth anniversary year of that report and an appropriate time assess status of the goals, and to identify new federal goals that extend beyond the 1987 medical model design.
4. Explore ways to incorporate findings of the DHHS Disability Survey into service models. The Office of Disability, Aging, and Long-term Care has supported and will analyze the results of a major study of disabilities in the United States, including LD. The numbers and characteristics of persons with disabilities and the service utilization patterns will provide a wider understanding of the impact of LD and how persons with LD interact with public services.

B. Dissemination of present knowledge and best practices.

1. Develop a national mailing listing for information distribution.
2. Identify resources and develop plan for distributing current publications on state of the art information to states and local programs. Publications, from federal sources, could include--
 - a) National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) Newsletter and National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center (NALLDC) products.
 - b) Dept. of ED's Reading reports (also Attention Deficit Disorder information)

Page 2 DRAFT ---- Interdepartmental Work Group on Learning Disabilities - Adult and Adolescent Subcommittee

- c) DOL's "The Learning Disabled in Employment and Training Programs"
 - d) NICHD's reports on definition and reading.
 - e) DOJ's Report on LD
 - 3. Develop a national listing of publications on LD in adults and adolescents, focusing on a wide range of topics drawn from state and local programs and from the private sector. Topics will include --
 - a) Juvenile Justice and Adult Corrections
 - b) School to work Transition
 - c) Post-secondary issues
 - d) Social programs and poverty
 - f) Work place and accommodations
 - g) Literacy
 - 3. Commission new papers on current best practices.
- C. Technical Assistance:
- 1. Develop technical assistance program for state and local governments.
 - a) Develop a cross-agency manual on LD and its impact.
 - b) Develop a federal and regional speaker's bureaus for presentations on LD
 - c) Along with OVAE and ACF, **develop staff LD expertise.**
 - 2. Develop cross-agency strategies, or provide support to agencies in their processes of development of strategies, for addressing learning disabilities as they affect major national issues, including:
 - a) teen-parents
 - b) School to Work
 - c) welfare to work
 - d) youth violence
 - e) literacy/ESL
 - f) worker retraining
 - f) Goals 200 0 and other educational reform efforts
- D. Leadership:
- 1. Develop a strategy for making the LD adult issue to a focus of concern.
A wide range of options exist for how the Administration can call attention to the issue. **The Interdepartmental Working Group on Learning Disabilities will evaluate options and make recommendations on direction.**

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II. Agency-specific Action Steps

A. DOJ: Create an intra-agency task force, including Civil Rights, Corrections, Juvenile Justice, that looks at steps such as:

1. Developing an Advisory Council on LD and JJ
2. Developing a presentation for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coordination Council.
3. Including LD issues in training for COPS (Community Orientated Policing)

B. ED

1. Develop staff position on LD in OVAE (in process)
2. Include NIDRR and other parts of OSERS by expanding the scope of the group to include adolescents (youth in transition, school to work, etc.)
3. Work with standardized testing programs such as, GED, SAT, and GRE to develop process through which more students can access accommodations while taking tests.
4. Work with postsecondary education to develop better support services.
5. Develop stronger linkages between school to work and other transition services and vocational rehabilitation.

C. DOL

1. Reprint and distribute the Report "The Learning Disabled in Employment and Training Programs."

D. DHHS

1. Work to increase awareness of LD and its impact with state and local partners in such areas as AFDC, Head Start, Runaway programs, and public health programs, including such things as:
 - a) Incorporate knowledge on improving family literacy practices in training and technical assistance to Head Start programs
 - b) Include LD in the HHS Health People Initiative
 - c) Provide information on LD to state and local providers of job training services to AFDC/JOBS populations
2. Development of means to communicate findings of the Disability Survey to a wide audience.

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E. NIFL

1. Continued support for the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center (NALLDC)
2. Dissemination of other agencies materials as appropriate
3. Providing staff support to learning disabilities working group.

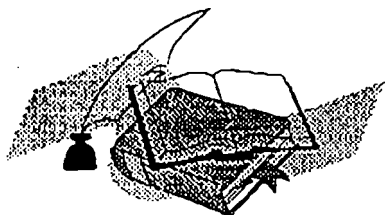
F. Develop Action steps with new members as they enter the process.

- 1) President's Committee on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities
- 2) National Council on Disabilities
- 3) EEOC
- 4) Others

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Washington DC 20006



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glenn

Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative

- Draft Statement -

"...The presence of undiagnosed learning disabilities in a high percentage of low-income people greatly impedes governmental efforts to effectively provide a wide range of services..."

1995 Memorandum, U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

The Challenge to Federal Agencies

Learning disabilities stand in the way of success -- for people, programs, and national progress. If this Administration is to reach its most urgent social and economic goals, from safe streets to welfare reform to school -to-work and better jobs, we must find better strategies for helping children, youth and adults with learning disabilities, and make these strategies more widely available to federal, state, and local programs aimed at supporting the administration's goals.

Definition:

There are several important federal definitions of learning disabilities, including those found in Public Law 94-142/ IDEA (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and developed by the 1986 Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD). They all define LD as a generic term covering a group of disorders that have a presumed neurological origin and that appear as disorders in persons with areas of strength in general intelligence. The disability is most often shown in an unexpected, imperfect ability -- or an inability -- to read, write, spell, listen, speak, or to perform mathematics.

Recent major findings of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) confirm the existence of organic causes of learning disabilities, their persistence throughout the life span, and their occurrence in females and males at about the same rate.

Causation:

According to a 1991 U.S. Labor Department report, most recognized causes of learning disabilities can be directly linked to or exacerbated by the conditions of poverty (e.g., limited access to proper health care, poor nutrition, etc.). These causes of learning disabilities include:

- Prenatal malnutrition
- Lead poisoning
- Chronic and untreated ear infections
- Prolonged early childhood high fevers
- Birth trauma
- Diet deficiencies
- Head trauma

Genetic (hereditary) defects are cross-cutting causes that can be found in all income ranges.

Page 2 - Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative

The Scope and Impact of the Problem.

While estimates of the incidence and consequences of LD vary, the national consensus is growing stronger with every new finding: a significant number of children, adolescents, and adults have undiagnosed or untreated LD, and the negative impact can be seen throughout our society.

It has generally been assumed that 5-10% of the population has LD. However, the latest research by the NICHD finds that as many as 17% of children may have reading disabilities. NICHD also points out the urgent need to identify children at risk for LD at very young ages and to develop intervention efforts that begin long before school failure. In addition, the research is showing that for most children and adults with learning disabilities, reading problems are based on a lack of phonemic awareness and that they need to be taught to read in a manner that focuses on addressing phonemic skills.

Adolescents and adults are especially affected when the learning disability is undiagnosed. Only in the last 15-20 years have we come to understand that learning disabilities are not "outgrown," and that they can have persistent and often highly detrimental effects over the entire course of people's lives. Even more recent is the evidence that undiagnosed learning disabilities among low-income people may greatly impede the success of a wide range of services aimed at supporting self-sufficiency.

Reports show high rates of learning disabilities in school drop-out populations, in correction populations, and in under- and unemployed adults. A recent study found that 43% of adults with learning disabilities were living at or below the poverty line, with an average income of only \$14,000. Other studies state that LD impacts efforts in a wide range of social services, including:

- Adult basic education (ABE) - estimates of 50-80% LD.
- Job training programs (JTPA Title IIA) - estimates of 15-23% LD
- Welfare (AFDC) - estimates of 25-40% LD
- Juvenile justice - estimates of 36% LD

While some services exist for adults with learning disabilities through community and four-year colleges, about 85% of adults with LD never enter any post-secondary educational programs.

Recent Federal Efforts:

Federal activities in two important areas have had a significant impact in the area of LD. The first is inclusion of learning disabilities as a covered entity in a number of education and civil rights laws, including: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA). In addition the JTPA amendments of 1992 and the National Literacy Act of 1991 both recognized LD as an issue.

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Page 3 - Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative

The second effort has been in the area of research on LD and its impacts. In 1986, a Federal Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities developed a report to Congress, which focused on medical issues associated with LD. As a result of that report, the NICHD has conducted extensive investigation of the nature and origins of learning disabilities.

Next Steps

The federal government is reconsidering its role with regard to LD. This time the focus is on the need for additional research and on the impact of LD in areas ranging from early childhood education to adult employment and the criminal justice system. A working group has been formed consisting of representatives from several Federal organizations, including:

- Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Justice and Education
- The National Institutes for Health, and the National Institute for Literacy
- The Presidents Committee for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, the National Council on Disabilities and the EEOC
- The White House Domestic Policy Council.

The working group is developing a list of suggested action steps aimed at creating a federal approach that will better integrate issues of learning disabilities into federal programs and services. The group is also looking at means to better inform states and local governments about the impacts of LD. The group's initiatives will fall into four major areas:

- Research and evaluation
- Dissemination of information,
- Technical assistance
- Leadership.

As initiatives are developed, the working group will be turning to its member agencies for advice and support in implementation.

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NIFL

Phone: 632-1042

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Comments

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Pruthy Katarman

Mace Tillman

Pruthy Katar

Does this make
the test? glenn

Andy Harbison
gone next
week



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

Memorandum

TO: Diana Fortuna, Office of Domestic Policy

FROM: Glenn Young, Learning Disabilities Specialist *GL*

SUBJECT: Draft Statement on Learning Disabilities

Per your request at the June 4, 1996 meeting on learning disabilities, here is a draft document addressing why and how the federal government is involved in the issue, and a potential role for the interagency working group. Since this request came to the adolescent and adult sub group, I framed it to primarily address that population. It would not be too difficult to make it more child focused if that is your request.

I look forward to your comments. I am also sending this to others for review and comment I am also sending it to Peter Edelman, Ruth Katz, Zanne Tillman, and Andy Hartman for review and comment.

Do you see a role for this paper at the June 25th meeting?

Thank you.

cc Peter Edelman
Ruth Katz
Andy Hartman
Zanne Tillman

Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative
Draft Statement. ✓

"[A] major cause of illiteracy is undiagnosed or ineffectively remediated learning disabilities."

Governor of Arkansas Bill Clinton in a letter to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander, July 25, 1991.

"...The presence of undiagnosed learning disabilities in a high percentage of low-income people greatly impedes governmental efforts to provide a wide range of services"

*1995 memorandum, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Administration for Children and Families*

The Challenge to Federal Agencies

Learning disabilities stand in the way of success – for people, programs, and national progress. We must find better and more widely available ways to help children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities if this Administration hopes to reach its most urgent social and economic goals, from safe streets to welfare reform to school-to-work and better jobs.

In recognition of this need, federal representatives from the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Justice, and Education are cooperating with the National Institute for Literacy and the President's Domestic Policy Council in an initiative to examine the impact of learning disabilities on children, adolescents, and adults. This interagency working group is developing an action agenda that will result in federal policies and programs that deal more effectively with the issue of LD. The goal of the working group is to develop initiatives for LD in four major areas:

- Research and evaluation
- Dissemination of information
- Technical assistance
- Leadership.

White House

The Scope and Impact of the Problem:

While estimates of the incidence and consequences of LD vary, the national consensus is growing stronger with every new finding: a significant number of children, adolescents, and adults have undiagnosed or untreated LD, and the negative impact can be seen throughout our society.

This is as true with adolescents and adults as it is with children. Only in the last 15-20 years have we come to understand that learning disabilities are not "outgrown," and that they can have persistent and often highly detrimental effects over the entire course of people's lives. Even more recent is the evidence that undiagnosed learning disabilities among low income people may greatly impede the success of a wide range of services aimed at supporting self-sufficiency. Reports show high rates of learning disabilities in school drop-out populations, in correction populations, and in under- and unemployed adults.

Page 2 - Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative

According to Dr. Reid Lyon of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD):

[L]earning disabilities, as they are manifested in difficulties in school learning, are extremely deleterious to the development of children and have far-ranging consequences that go well beyond school failure. Poor peer relationships, decrements in self-conception, poor post-school adjustments, juvenile delinquency and limited occupational status are some of the known correlates and outcomes of LD.

Among the compelling statistics on LD in the adolescent and adult area are the following:

- The Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities, in its 1987 Report to Congress, stated that "5 % to 10 % is a reasonable estimate of the percentage of ... persons affected by learning disabilities. It is clear that prevalence is somewhat higher among socioeconomically disadvantaged populations....."
- Studies cited in a 1992 Department of Labor report indicate that --
 - * 50-80% of ABE (Adult Basic Education) clients may be learning disabled.
 - * 15-23% of all JTPA Title IIA participants may be learning disabled.
 - * 25-40% of all adults on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and in the Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program may be learning disabled.
- A 1995 study of AFDC clients in Washington State found that 39% of JOBS applicants had undiagnosed learning disabilities.
- In 1991, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges reported that 36.5% of officially adjudicated delinquent boys were learning disabled.

Perhaps the most striking examples of LD's effects on people's daily lives can be seen in the findings of the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), in which 3% of the adult population identified themselves as having LD. The NALS results indicate that --

- Adults reporting LD made up 19% of those with the lowest literacy skills.
- 43% of adults reporting LD were living at or below the poverty line, as compared with 18% of the general population.
- 17.5% had had postsecondary education, as compared with 43% of the general population.
- The average income of adults reporting LD was \$14,000, as compared with \$23,000 for the general population.
- 12.1% were on AFDC, as compared to 5.8% of the general population.

Page 3 - Federal Learning Disabilities Initiative

The Federal Role in Finding Solutions

The most important federal actions on the issue to date have taken the form of legislation that has great real and potential benefit for persons with learning disabilities:

- The regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 recognizes LD as a disability and assures rights to accommodations in employment and education settings.
- The Rehabilitation Services Administration in 1981 includes learning disabilities in its listing of disorders eligible for services under vocational rehabilitation.
- The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act extends the right to accommodations for persons with learning disabilities into private sector employment and education settings.
- In 1990, the Educational for All Act (94-142) was updated as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA continues the right to Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), includes efforts at early identification, and calls for school-to-work/ school-to-school transition planning for all students with learning disabilities.
- The National Literacy Act of 1991 specifically called for the development of a research center on learning disabilities and adult literacy, which has since been funded as the NIFL's National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center.
- The 1992 changes to the JTPA regulations recognized learning disabilities as a significant barrier to employment.

These legislative provisions offer a very strong policy framework for developing programs and services that work for people with LD.

Next Steps

Through a collaborative interagency approach, the Working Group on Learning Disabilities will use the legislative framework in designing federal initiatives that better address the real-life issues faced by people with LD. The working group will use existing information on the impacts of LD and on interventions that could greatly lessen the negative effects of LD. Some of these interventions involve different educational and training techniques and approaches. Other interventions, based on Federal civil rights laws for persons with disabilities, involve providing educational and workplace accommodations that will help people with learning disabilities function better. The working group's ultimate goal is to create a network of federal responses to the needs of the LD population at all stages of life.

Background on Learning Disabilities

Definitions:

Two of several important federal definitions of learning disabilities are the following:

- "... a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. . . ."

(from Public Law 94-142, passed in 1973, and updated in 1990 as IDEA -- the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:)

- "Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities or of social skills. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual and presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction. Even though a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions . . . or with socioenvironmental influences . . . a learning disability is not the direct result of those conditions or influences."

(from the Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD), which was formed as part of the Health Research Extension Act of 1985 [P.L. 99-158]).

Causation:

According to a 1991 U.S. Labor Department report (R&E report series 91-E), most recognized causes of learning disabilities can be directly linked to or exacerbated by poverty, (e.g., limited access to proper health care, nutrition, etc.). These causes include:

- Prenatal malnutrition ✓
- Birth trauma .
- Lead poisoning .
- Diet deficiencies .
- Chronic untreated ear infections ✓
- Head trauma .
- Prolonged early childhood high fevers .

Genetic defects (heredity) are cross-cutting causes that can be found in all income ranges.



Newsletter

Volume 4, Number 3

April-May 1996

From the Director

 The literacy field has its share of complex issues, and perhaps none more so than the issue of learning disabilities among adult learners — its definition, prevalence, identification, and treatment. With a focus on helping the literacy practitioner better serve students, the NIFL has invested in a major effort to sort through the complexities of learning disabilities for adults — our National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities (AALD) Center.

For some time, we have been contemplating a newsletter on the topic of literacy and learning disabilities, and two major changes in our human resources make it especially appropriate now.

The first is the departure in June of Neil Sturomski from his position as director of the National ALLD Center. Over the past three years, Neil has done a masterful job of getting this new and highly complex enterprise started and on its way to building a solid bridge between the fields of literacy and learning disabilities. Neil has been literally tireless in his efforts for the Center's many initiatives in awareness-raising, training, and materials development. Under his guidance, the Center has begun to establish itself as a unique and increasingly important resource for both fields. Neil is leaving the directorship to pursue other professional goals, but he will continue a supportive relationship with the National ALLD Center — and a deep commitment to adult learners.

The second change is in the NIFL's Presidentially-appointed Advisory Board. Among the original members, all of whom have now completed their three-year terms, two have been especially strong and outspoken advocates for paying greater attention to the issue of learning disabilities as they affect literacy — Dr. Susan Vogel and John Corcoran.

Susan Vogel is currently on sabbatical from her position as professor and chair of the Department of Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education at Northern Illinois University. Also a fellow of the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities, she has focused a great deal of attention on adults with LD, including her collaboration with Dr. Stephen Reder on further analyses of data relating to adults with LD from the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). Susan has kept us at the NIFL current on the most important trends relating to literacy and LD, and she has gently but persistently made sure that we remember the issue in all our major program decisions.

John Corcoran's 48 years of experience of living with a literacy handicap have made him an eloquent spokesperson, not just for the adult with learning difficulties, but for the children who continue to struggle their way through our educational system. In his travels throughout the nation and his advocacy work in California, John has never flagged in his deep and active conviction about the need for a national focus on literacy.

This newsletter highlights the work of the National ALLD Center, as well as other groundbreaking efforts — and differing perspectives — that deepen our understanding of the adult literacy-LD connection. It is also a chance to thank our Advisory Board members for their guidance and commitment over the past three years. Finally, it is the perfect place to salute Neil Sturomski for his help in bridging this major gap in literacy practice, and to wish him well in his future work.

One regret: this newsletter does not address the significant and exciting efforts for literacy and LD that are going on today in many states. We hope to share information on these efforts in the future.

Andy Hartman

DRAFT

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DRAFT

THE NATIONAL ALLD CENTER: Building Bridges of Understanding and Knowledge

WHY a center for learning disabilities?

When the NIFL was created by the National Literacy Act of 1991, Congressional discussions about the legislation included a strong suggestion that the NIFL establish a center to "develop a battery of tests for the diagnosis of learning disabilities in adults and intervention strategies to address these disabilities." The NIFL decided that the intent of Congress—and the needs of the field—would best be served by a center that focused on helping practitioners find and use the most effective tools for identifying and serving adults with learning disabilities.

In 1993, after a major competition, the NIFL awarded a grant for a National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center to the Washington, D.C.-based Academy for Educational Development (AED), working in cooperation with the University of Kansas's Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities (KU-IRLD).

WHAT are the Center's mission and goals?

The National ALLD Center's mission is to promote awareness about the relationship between adult literacy and learning disabilities, to build the capacity of literacy practitioners to help identify and serve adult students with suspected or diagnosed learning disabilities, and to produce and refine materials that enhance the knowledge base for adult literacy and learning disabilities.

The goals of the Center are to—

- act as a national resource for information on learning disabilities and their impact on the provision of literacy services.

- develop a "tool kit" for literacy practitioners that includes information on screening instruments, best instructional practices, and related training materials to help identify and serve adults who may have learning disabilities.

- establish systems for training, technical assistance, and support of literacy practitioners.

The Center's ultimate goal is to help literacy practitioners, researchers, and policymakers better meet the needs of adults with learning disabilities.

HOW has the Center done so far?

The National ALLD Center has forged relationships with virtually all major public and private organizations concerned with literacy and learning disabilities at the national level. Center staff have collaborated on a variety of joint projects in awareness and training with groups such as the Learning Disabilities Research and Training (LDR&T) Center, the National Center for Learning Disabilities, and the National Association of Adults with Special Learning Needs (NAASLN).

The Center's major accomplishments to date:

- The creation of a network for sharing knowledge and resources between the adult literacy and learning disabilities field. The network currently includes—

Directories of national and state resources:

National Resources for Adults with Learning Disabilities, an annotated guide to organizations, programs, and publications that can help adults who suspect or know they have a learning disability, produced in collaboration with the HEATH Resource Center.

State Resource Sheets on literacy and LD contacts for each U.S. state and territory.

Publications about adult literacy and learning disabilities:

LINKAGES, the Center's semi-annual newsletter targeting important issues that link literacy and learning disabilities stakeholders. The first four issues of LINKAGES have focused on self-esteem, the workplace, social skills, and family literacy.

facts sheets on definitions and related issues, screening, and instructional techniques.

A home page on *LINCS*—the NIFL's Literacy Information and Communication System.

What National ALLD Center Focus Group members said:

Comments related more to the social aspect, or "real world" implications, of learning disabilities than to information processing issues. Participants were interested in the "whole" person and concerned about providing meaningful and immediately useful outcomes for the adult.

Participants were strongly inclined to think of screening as a source of prescription for intervention. Many perceived screening as a means to profile strengths and weaknesses, as opposed to an indicator of potential LD. Comments suggested a strong need to have a resource for intervention techniques.

A *LINCS* e-mail listserv that currently involves over 165 subscribers nationwide in on-line discussions on a wide range of topics related to adult literacy and LD.

An 800 voice-mail number for requests for publications, referrals, and other information.

- **Targeted training and technical assistance for literacy practitioners.** Center staff have visited at least half the states and offered over 70 presentations and training sessions at national, state, and local conferences.

- **Groundwork for the tool kit:** Gathering information on current best practices and developing consumer-driven standards for screening and intervention tools. In order to design a tool kit that would be of the greatest use to practitioners, the Center gathered extensive information on screening and intervention tools being used successfully nationwide and began the development of

national consumer standards that can be used to evaluate such tools.

Eight focus groups were held nationwide involving professionals in adult education, literacy, and LD. Through nomination by major groups in the fields, focus group participants were chosen to reflect the great diversity of programs, stakeholders, and settings; including research institutions, state ABE and GED programs, correctional and ESL programs, and libraries. The focus groups resulted in preliminary standards which are being further refined in response to a nationwide questionnaire of stakeholders.

WHERE will the Center go from here?

Over the next two and a half years, the Center will maintain and enhance the information network while it con-

centrates on achieving its two long-term goals in behalf of practitioners:

- **Finalizing the Tool Kit.** A tool kit prototype will be field-tested in six to ten communities across the nation to assure that the materials included meet the needs of a broad range of literacy practitioners and their clients.

- **Developing systems for training, technical assistance, and support.** The Center will continue working to develop systems that enable national, state, and local literacy groups to provide ongoing help to literacy practitioners in serving adults who may have learning disabilities.

The NIFL's ultimate goal for the National ALLD Center is that it will develop a body of knowledge and expertise about LD and literacy that practitioners can use and build on for generations of adult learners to come.

Which definition of learning disabilities does the National ALLD Center use?

Many definitions for LD have been used by different educators, federal agencies, advocacy groups, and professional organizations. The National ALLD Center's Advisory Board chose to use the Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities' definition (see following page) because it reflects current information and issues associated with LD, allows for the presence of learning disabilities at any age, and was acceptable to a committee with broad representation in the LD community.

The Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities' definition of LD:

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

Definition Highlights

- There are many variations of learning disabilities.
- Learning disabilities may involve difficulties in any of the following skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, and mathematics.
- Social skills may be affected by the learning disability.
- Learning disabilities may be due to a central nervous system disorder.
- Although a learning disability may be present with other disorders, these other conditions are not the cause of the learning disability.

What a Decade of Research tells us about Learning Disabilities in Children and Adults

Focus on Phonemes: the research

Dr. Reid Lyon directs and manages the research programs in learning disabilities, language disorders, and disorders of attention for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Over the last ten years, the programs he oversees have made great strides in gathering revealing and useful longitudinal data about the several types of learning disabilities — especially reading disabilities. The following is drawn largely from his statement last year to the Subcommittee on Disability Policy of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

The Context

Learning disabilities are unexpected. That is, the children and adults who have LD usually have strengths in general intelligence and have received the same educational opportunities as other students. Their difficulties in learning are not because of emotional or behavior problems, although behavior problems can certainly result from the frustration that comes from difficulties in learning to read, write, or calculate and reason arithmetically. Thus, LD does not occur because the child or adult lacks mental ability, motivation, or parents and teachers who are very supportive of their efforts to learn. LD occurs for some

very specific reasons that our research has identified, and LD produces a devastating array of specific learning difficulties that affect the lives of many. There are probably few families in this country that have not been touched by a learning disability in some way.

For most individuals with LD, the primary learning difficulty is one that involves reading. In fact, at least 60 to 80 percent of children and adults diagnosed with LD have their most severe difficulties in learning to read. This is unfortunate, since the major task in the early school grades is to learn to read, and most activities in the early and later grades, as well as in adulthood, involve and rely upon the ability to read. Consider the long-term consequences of these unexpected difficulties in learning that go beyond school and beyond childhood. The eager third graders experiencing reading difficulties become, in turn, the frustrated ninth graders who drop out of school, the barely literate 25-year-olds who read at the fourth grade level, the members of the 30-something generation who are unemployed and defeated adults struggling to raise families and forced to rely on public assistance.

The Research

The goal of the NICHD learning disabilities research program is to halt this cycle of failure and do so at the earliest possible moment. Following the Congressional mandate set forth in the Health Research Extension Act of 1985 (PL 99-158), which directed the NIH to increase the effectiveness of research on LD, the NICHD was given the lead role

in developing a network of multidisciplinary learning disability research programs. The major objectives of these programs were to develop new knowledge about the causes and outcomes of the different types of LD, their diagnosis, their epidemiology, their developmental course, and their response to different types of treatment and teaching interventions.

Each of the research centers and program projects within the NICHD Learning Disability Research Network was charged initially with the comprehensive study of reading disorders, or dyslexia. This prioritization was based on the fact that reading disorders are the most frequently occurring type of LD and have a debilitating impact on the ability to learn and function in school situations and later on in the workplace.

Since the NICHD initiated this systematic program of research, we have made a number of highly significant discoveries in the area of reading disabilities. We now know more about how many children are affected and what happens to them over the course of their development. We also know the basic or core deficit responsible for difficulties in learning to read, and we have some very good ideas about how to identify this deficit before youngsters enter school so that early Intervention programs can be implemented.

Building on these findings, NICHD-supported research has begun to identify treatment programs that can help children and adults at all ages to learn to read in a more effective manner. In addition, a number of exciting new studies conducted by NICHD-supported

scientists have begun to identify the underlying brain mechanisms and the specific neural systems that appear responsible for difficulties in the development of language and reading abilities.

The Findings

Among the major findings of NICHD's decade of research are the following:

- Disabilities in reading reflect a common disorder in grades one through nine, affecting at least 10 million children, or one child in five.
- Reading disability is persistent. Scientists at Yale have found that of the children who are reading disabled in the third grade, 74% remain disabled in the tenth grade. Reading disability does not go away and cannot be characterized as a developmental lag, but represents an enduring deficit that remains with the child from the beginning of school, into high school, and most likely into adulthood. These are children who often become our next generation of low-literate and unemployed adults.

A major core deficit responsible for the majority of cases of reading disability is at the most basic level of the language system — the level of the phoneme.

- NICHD research has uncovered the major cognitive deficit that prevents a child — or an adult — from learning to read. For many years, it was thought that reading disability or dyslexia reflected a visual problem where children tended to read letters and words backwards. Today, converging scientific evidence shows that it is not the visual, but the language system that is implicated in reading disability. Reading reflects language. A major core deficit responsible for the majority of cases of reading disability is at the most basic level of the language system — the level of the phoneme.

- The phoneme is the basic unit of language. Defined as the smallest unit of functional sound, the phoneme represents the common building block of all spoken and written words. Just as proteins must be broken down into their constituent amino acids before they can be digested, words must be broken down into phonemes before they can be processed by neural systems within the brain.

- LD children and adults with reading disability have difficulties with this most basic step in the reading pathway: breaking the written word into smaller phonologic units. This discov-

ery of the phonologic basis for reading disability now allows us to understand why even bright individuals cannot learn to read.

- Difficulties in breaking words into their constituent phonemes results in a highly labored, slow, and inefficient approach to reading. Since the ability to read well depends upon rapid and automatic recognition and decoding of words, slow and inaccurate decoding is the most powerful predictor of difficulties in reading comprehension.

- Phonologic difficulty is independent of an individual's intelligence. The finding of a core deficit in phonology crystallizes the essence of what reading disability is about and who it affects—children and adults with good intelligence who cannot use their often excellent verbal and spatial reasoning abilities and problem-solving skills to decode written language, primarily because of a block in the first step of the reading pathway.

- Several NICHD-supported scientists are now beginning to identify the brain regions responsible for phonology and deficits in phonology. A new non-invasive neuroimaging technology that allows us to directly visualize the activity in the brain while a person is attempting to read has provided the first look at where phonological processing, the basis of reading, takes place in the central nervous system. Preliminary data show that, for reading disabled adults and children, those areas of the brain responsible for phonological processing behave differently than for individuals who read well.

- The identification of a phonological deficit as one of the core impediments in learning to read has, in turn, led to a number of discoveries that can help us identify early those kindergarten and first grade children who are likely to have difficulties learning to read. NICHD-supported researchers have produced converging evidence that poor read-

—Continued on page 11



Getting the Picture: One Adult Educator's Experience

Focus on Phonemes: the practice

Meg Schofield directs the Chula Vista Public Library's Literacy Team Center in San Diego County, California. Her program was recently named the top community-based literacy provider by the State Collaborative Literacy Council in California's Exemplary Literacy Program award competition. For further information, she can be contacted at: Chula Vista Literacy Team Center, South Chula Vista Library, 389 Orange Avenue, Chula Vista, California 91911, 619/585-5764, 420-1328 FAX.

Not long ago, my husband, a motorcycle racing enthusiast, took me to a well-known racetrack out in the desert, where I had an experience that helped me get closer to the adult students in my literacy program. I was more or less on my own because my husband was working in the pits. I knew only the most obvious things about motorcycle racing: the riders would go as fast as they could (ideally, in the same direction), somebody would end up being first, and somebody would be last.

Around me, the fans in the stands frequently turned to each other, as if on cue, screaming in unison, "DID YOU SEE THAT !!!!!?" I would spin my head around, squinting, scanning the blur, thinking, "See what? WHAT?" Within twenty minutes, the thrill of the deafening engine revs reverberating through my body had worn off, and I settled down

into a glazed-over state of disoriented confusion. Races started, stopped, stalled, started over, ended, or seemed to end, all for reasons that I could not discern. I failed to "Ooooooh" and "Ahhhhh" on cue with my fellow fans.

My state of confusion made me anxious, and I grew bored and listless. Despite the fact that everyone around me seemed to be deriving enormous pleasure from the event, I was thinking of all the things I would rather be doing. I retreated to the car and read my book. I made a mental note to be sure to come back to the track again the following month. Yeah, right.

I understand a little better now the experiences of the many adults I know for whom learning to read has been virtually a lifelong struggle. My problem at the racetrack was similar in one very germane respect to their problems with printed text. Like my students facing a typewritten page full of indecipherable words, I could see 'the whole' all right, but my picture was a frustrating mess. Unfortunately, the whole was not greater than the proverbial sum of its parts.

In fact, it was precisely the *parts* that I failed to grasp, because I did not know how to look. Although I was completely unaware of it, what seemed to be a maddening chaos of noise and exhaust was, in fact, governed by a definite system. The system provided the initiated with a host of helpful cues (colored flags, riders' numbers and plates, bike modifications, etc., etc.) which, once understood, help bring focus, meaning, and thus satisfaction to the race-track experience.

Likewise, an emerging consensus of research findings on reading difficulties points to the need to get

down to the 'parts' level, waaaaay down, before the system that governs the language will ever be accessible to disabled readers. Without access to the system, those poor readers are not likely to derive satisfaction on their own from pages of print. I know just how it feels to 'scan the blur.'

During the past several years the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has invested over \$80 million in large-scale research projects and longitudinal studies of children to ascertain the causes of learning disabilities. Prominent researchers like Dr. Reid Lyon of NICHD and Dr. Joseph Torgesen of Florida State University have recently pointed their collective finger at the culprit responsible for the majority of reading problems linked to learning disabilities. As adult literacy practitioners, we had better sit up and take note. We must look the culprit squarely in the eye, because its implications for our students and our profession are profound.

The truth about the primary problem underlying so many individuals' difficulties with reading and spelling lies with the most basic of language building blocks: phonemes (language sounds). The research examining children, both good and poor readers, clearly shows that a construct known as phonological *synthesis*, i.e., the ability to blend separately presented phonological segments into whole words, is required for reading.

A similar, related construct known as phonological *analysis*, i.e., the ability to identify discrete sounds within words presented as a whole, is critical for spelling. (Torgesen et al., Longitudinal Studies of Phonological Processing and Reading, Journal of Learning Disabilities,

Vol. 27, No. 5, May, 1994, pp. 276-286). According to the January 1995 publication, *Research in Learning Disabilities at the NICHD*, "disabled readers do not readily acquire the alphabetic code when learning to read, due to *deficiencies in phonological processing*." It also states: "Deficits in phonological awareness reflect the core deficit in dyslexia."

Phonological awareness is the cornerstone upon which most of us construct our knowledge of language concepts. The majority of us internalize these concepts with seemingly little effort. In a "normal" reader, the process of making and registering sound/letter generalizations goes on thousands and thousands of times throughout the period of learning to read.

But what of those students for whom this process is not so easily acquired, for whom years of primary education, (often, yes, often including phonics programs!) have failed to alleviate their struggle with reading and spelling? The ability to distinguish, identify, label, process, store, and retrieve language sounds apparently is critical to the process of learning to read and spell. Torgesen writes that "without awareness of the phonological segments in words, our alphabetic system of writing is not very comprehensible." I am reminded of my personal experience 'scanning the blur.'

Unfortunately, most traditional phonics programs do not teach phonological analysis, nor do they present in a logical, systematic fashion the concepts in the English language needed for accurate phonological synthesis. Many adult literacy students have been exposed to some level of phonics instruction, but (and this is a BIG but) those with a language-based learning disability (i.e., those who have underdeveloped phonemic awareness), were not able to absorb, internalize, or apply that instruction. They learned instead to rely almost exclusively on two well-rehearsed strategies: memorizing whole words

(some are remarkably good at it!), and guessing.

Should the research on learning disabilities in children inform our practices working with adult literacy students? You bet. The NICHD research summary reports that "reading disability reflects a *persistent deficit* rather than a developmental lag in linguistic and reading skills."

It is easy to jump to the conclusion that phonics strategies are inconsistent and inefficient, and therefore a waste of time for such learners. However, quite the opposite is true.

In other words, it is not something that one simply "grows out of." Our adult learners are living proof of this. The summary also states that "reading disabled or dyslexic children comprise 20% of students. Three-quarters of third-grade students who are reading disabled will *remain* disabled in the ninth grade." It might have gone on to say "... and for the rest of their lives," since there are few reported cases of miraculous reading recoveries between the ninth grade and adulthood. The types of interventions that would have helped students with a language-based learning disability in elementary school can still help them now, with some modifications of course. The question is, what kinds of interventions and programs have proven helpful?

Many observers of poor readers have noted that they appear to try 'sounding out' unfamiliar words, only to get bogged down in the process. It is easy to jump to the conclusion that phonics strategies are inconsistent and inefficient, and therefore a waste of time for such learners. However, quite the opposite is true. The whole idea of phon-

ics needs to be expanded to include phonological awareness and the much broader concept of phonology.

According to Torgesen, "the interventions that produced the most powerful effects on subsequent growth in reading skills were those that combined training in phonological awareness with explicit training in application of these skills to reading, which always involved some instruction in grapheme-phoneme correspondences." And Lyon argues that "disabled readers must be presented highly structured, explicit and intensive instruction in phonics rules and the application of the rules to print."

In other words, we must provide language learning disabled students with activities that teach them DIRECTLY and systematically how to look at words, how to determine the sequence of sounds in words, how to predict the sound behavior of groups of letters in the chunks we call syllables.

Without careful screening measures designed to test students' phonological knowledge, and students' ability to *apply* that knowledge to reading and spelling, adult literacy programs may be missing the mark entirely in terms of identifying students' underlying reading instructional needs. Most of us offer programs to meet the *external* needs, the life skills and "competencies" we know adults require. Of course they need to be able to fill in application forms, write checks, read the directions at the self-serve gas pump and on the Tylenol bottle. A lot of students arrive at our doors in need of quick fixes. For many, time for school or tutoring is very limited. We must respect that, and acknowledge that as adults they do need to "make it" in the adult worlds of work, family, and community.

But the vast majority of adult literacy students really want to know one thing, and that is to be able to read and write just about anything, like the rest of us. They want the tool that's in all of our toolboxes.

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(As my husband points out, if the team's motorcycle overheats in the first race of the day, any number of 'urgent care' stop-gap measures might get it through race weekend. No doubt the underlying problem, the cracked cylinder head or blown head gasket, is a lot more difficult and time-consuming to repair, but it must ultimately be dealt with.)

The same type of explicit phonology program supported by the NICHD and other research may indeed be required for students who score into the junior *high school* range on tests of word identification or passage comprehension, as well as for those who are virtual nonreaders. This is because the severity of learning disabilities varies greatly from individual to individual, and some students have managed to memorize an amazing number of words. Don't be fooled; many such students read way below their actual potential, and continue to find reading and spelling a great struggle. (They may, for example, recognize the word 'photograph,' but be

unable to spell it, or to read correctly 'photographic' or 'photogenic.') I know so many students like this who are practically euphoric when they discover that there is a system governing the English language, and that the system can, at last, belong to them too! Of course, we as adult educators need to allow our students to work through systematic language programs at paces determined by their own mastery of the material.

At the Chula Vista Public Library's *Literacy Team Center* in the County of San Diego, California, every adult learner is screened for phonological awareness, decoding, and spelling skills, as well as for a history of reading problems in school. If deficits are identified in these areas, students are likely to be placed in a highly structured, systematic, multisensory phonology program. Programs that logically structure and control the vocabulary introduced to students are offered *alongside* "whole language" or context-based writing and life skill lessons. A great many of our students

take advantage of both approaches, depending on their needs, their skill levels, and their available time.

I am personally annoyed by the head-butting "phonics vs. whole language" boxing match that has consumed so much energy among educators in this country. If we are going to help the thousands of adults with reading problems, we need more than just one corner to retreat to. We need a greater understanding and awareness of the types of problems that underlie reading difficulties, and of the different instructional programs designed to address them.

We don't need to throw out many of our wonderful context-based approaches that ease some of the day-to-day strains on our students and that build their confidence. We do need to broaden our scope and offer programs that help students focus on the critical building blocks of our language, so that the maddening blur can at last become a clear, sharp picture for them, a picture they can enjoy *independently*, a picture that makes sense.

Need Something to go here

"Literacy, Education, and Learning Disabilities:" Beginning to Explore the Broader Implications of Learning Disabilities in Adults

Dr. Stephen Reder, former Director of the Literacy, Language & Communication Program at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, is currently professor of psychology at Portland State University. Dr. Reder conducted secondary analyses of the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) data on adults who identified themselves as having learning disabilities. The following article is abstracted from a draft of his report prepared for the National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL).

Learning disabilities are widely assumed to be closely linked to the development of literacy skills and educational attainment. To date, however, little research has been done that provides comprehensive estimates of the incidence, distribution, and impact of learning disabilities in the adult population. Because so little information has been available, it has also been difficult to ascertain the social and economic impacts of learning disabilities in adults.

Although previous research shows that learning disabilities are generally associated with lower levels of literacy proficiency and educational attainment, we do not know if the employment and economic problems of adults with learning disabilities are more severe than those of adults without learning disabilities but with equally low levels of literacy proficiency and educational attainment. This is a matter of both theoretical and practical importance. Many practitioners and

policymakers are calling for adult literacy programs to develop better screening and assessment procedures in order to identify and provide specialized services to adults with learning disabilities. The rationale for specialized services is that students with learning disabilities do indeed face different challenges from other adult learners with equivalently low levels of literacy skill and educational attainment.

This study addresses these issues through a secondary analysis of data from the NALS, which allowed for self-identification of learning disabilities. The NALS assessed the proficiency of over 26,000 American adults on three scales — prose, document, and quantitative. The scores on each scale, which ranged from 0 to 500, represent degrees of proficiency in that particular dimension of literacy.

To summarize the study's findings, the NALS results indicate that 3.1 % of the noninstitutionalized adult population report having learning disabilities. Although this is lower than many other estimates, it nevertheless represents a large population nationally — close to 6 million adults. And, in comparison to the general adult population, these adults show low levels of literacy performance and very high levels of need.

Adults reporting learning disabilities have significantly lower literacy proficiencies than those without learning disabilities, a difference averaging about 70 points on each of the proficiency scales of the NALS.

Although some of these profound differences in literacy are associated with the lower educational attainment of adults with learning disabilities, there is still a major gap in skills when the groups are equated

for education. When educational attainment and other background variables are held constant through multiple regression techniques, those with learning disabilities average nearly 40 points lower on the literacy proficiency scales than those without learning disabilities.

Adults with learning disabilities report using libraries less, reading newspapers less, and using written materials less frequently in their lives. Learning disabilities thus appear to be strongly associated with both lower literacy skills and less engagement in literacy practices.

Those reporting learning disabilities are highly over-represented among the undereducated, among the unemployed and underemployed, and among the poor.

Employed adults with learning disabilities work fewer hours, command lower wages, and earn less annually. The median annual earnings for individuals with learning disabilities (\$10,400) is only 58.1 % of the median earnings of those not having learning disabilities (\$17,886). This comparison includes only individuals who are working.

Forty-two percent of the families of adults with learning disabilities are below or near the federal poverty line, compared to only 16 % of the families of adults without learning disabilities.

When both educational attainment and assessed literacy proficiencies are statistically controlled (along with demographic and other background variables), adults with learning disabilities still appear distinct in terms of social and economic outcomes. Those having learning disabilities, for example, earn signif-

—Continued on page 14

(from the National ALLD Center's LINKAGES, Spring 1995, Vol. 2, No. 1)

Tips on Workplace Literacy and LD

Workplace literacy skills are certainly not the only skills adults with reading disabilities need to develop, but they are the most important for survival. Increasing an individual's workplace literacy skills results in the individual not only being able to meet the ever-increasing literacy demands of jobs that he or she already has, but also to climb the job ladder to higher level positions that require more advanced reading skills.

For the adult learner

- Know your learning style and how that style matches up with different jobs.
- Apply for job positions for which you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform at the level required by the employer.
- Know your strengths and be able to describe them; present yourself as a capable individual who can competently perform the job.
- Pursue informational interviews and on-site visits in order to get a feel for different workplace environments and job tasks.
- Request and review job descriptions before applying for positions.
- Disclose learning disabilities to the personnel/ human resources staff person after the job has been offered; do so in person (never over the phone) after you have accepted the job.
- Then make arrangements to speak with the job-site supervisor if and when necessary.
- At the time of disclosure, describe the strategies you have developed that assist you in performing job requirements and state workplace accommodations that can help you.
- Ask the supervisor for written job performance expectations—what you will be required to learn and apply within the job setting.

Tips on Workplace Literacy (cont.)

- Ask for specific timelines for performance evaluations; be sure you understand when and how your performance will be evaluated.
- Know when and how to request appropriate accommodations.
- If accommodations are provided, establish an evaluation process through which you and your supervisor can review the effectiveness of the accommodations and the possibility of adjustments.
- Do not use your learning disability as an excuse for not doing your best.

Nancie Payne, President of Payne & Associates and consultant to employers and employees for workplace accommodations

For the practitioner

- Identify the literacy tasks required for the specific job the individual is being trained for or currently holds.
- Involve the student in the process of identifying his/her needs in meeting the reading demands of the vocational training program and/or job.
- Use the individual's prior knowledge concerning performance of job tasks as the basis of instruction.
- Identify vocabulary pertinent to reading-to-do tasks, and assess the individual's knowledge of the meaning of the vocabulary. If the word is not understood, teach its meaning first and then teach how to read the word.
- Use the actual reading materials that are used in the vocational training program or on the job.
- Have the individual apply all reading skills already mastered (e.g., phonics, contextual clues) to the workplace reading task.

*Dr. Esther H. Minskoff, Professor of Special Education,
James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.*

Reasonable Accommodations: People with LD Deserve Them

Glen Young, MPA, is a learning disabilities specialist in Seattle's Region X Office of the Department of Health and Human Services. He is also a learning disabled adult and an especially strong spokesperson for LD as a civil rights issue. He has also acted as an advisor to the NIFL and helped in the planning and funding of the National ALLD Center. The following is based on an article originally published as a "First Person" account in The Network Exchange.

 key question being debated today in the educational and learning disabilities communities asks when is it appropriate to stop teaching and start accommodating. This is a false debate. The real question is how to incorporate reasonable accommodations into teaching models to allow those with learning disabilities to participate fully in the educational process.

Before I give a personal history, it's important to understand: having a learning disability means having a disability. "Specific learning disabilities" is designated as a covered entity in federal law concerning disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. Based on these laws, persons with learning disabilities are entitled to "reasonable accommodations," meaning: "modifications or adjustments...that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions [of the job or activity] (ADA regulation, section 1030.2(0)).

Therefore, people with learning disabilities should be allowed to use accommodations from the beginning of the process to assist in education and the work setting. The accommodation is a tool that allows persons with LD to show their knowledge

and skill — a right, not a crutch. Accommodations do not provide unfair advantages; they level the playing field for people with LD.

I was first diagnosed as having LD at age thirty. At that point, I had almost no phonic skills and spelled and wrote, at best, on a first grade level. After several years of working with a tutor, I had increased my skills dramatically. Through employment activities and private training, I built up my skills so that, at age 37, I was able to enter college.

Even with these years of effort, my LD interfered with my achievement in important areas. But in three and a half years, using reasonable accommodations, I completed requirements for an Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degree. The accommodations that made this possible included:

- for dyslexia: books on tape.
- for dysgraphia: lap-top computer and waiver of requirements for handwritten materials (including all tests).
- for auditory processing: note-takers, courses on foreign culture to satisfy foreign language requirements.
- for problems with distraction: tests in isolation.

There is one thing of which I am sure. Without reasonable accommodations, my educational and employment efforts would have failed. Even today, as a published author with several degrees and a position with major responsibilities, I would probably fail any test or task that did not allow for accommodations.

All persons with LD are entitled to use reasonable accommodations designed to meet their particular needs. If they were all allowed their rights in educational settings, and the false debate between teaching and accommodation disappeared, success stories like mine would become simply

Research—Continued from page 5

ing can be predicted in approximately 85 percent of the cases as early as mid-kindergarten using inexpensive screening measures.

These findings are critical, given that children who are identified after the age of nine have a much greater difficulty ever learning to read efficiently. (->-)

- The most powerful interventions that have been identified for reading disabilities to date consist of a combination of explicit and direct instruction in phonemic awareness, direct instruction in sound-symbol relationships (phonics), and direct and integrated instruction in text reading and comprehension. This balanced approach appears to be necessary for adults as well as children with reading disabilities.

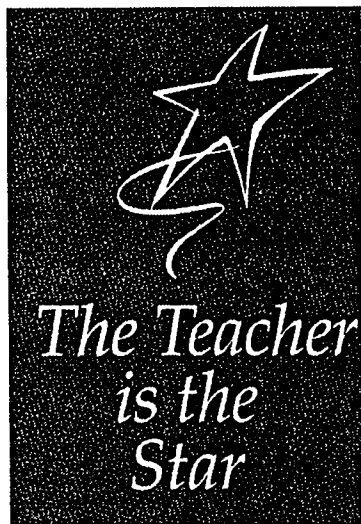
The Challenge for Practitioners

NICHD research findings have given us a much greater understanding of learning disabilities and, with it, new abilities in identification and treatment. But too few of our nation's teachers are aware of these facts and the diagnostic and instructional methods that are based on them. A substantial gap exists between the information we now have about learning to read and the information that teachers are provided during their training. This gap must be closed, for the sake of both our children and the adults they have, and will, become.

Extra Space

PLEASE EDIT THIS IT IS APPROX. 3 LINES TOO LONG

We asked Neil Sturoniski to write about the lessons he has learned as National ALLD Center Director. This article presents his unique perspective on the issue that underlies all contributions to this newsletter—the critical need to help prepare practitioners to do their best work with adult learners.



Barbra Streisand is a rarity. She is a successful performer in a variety of mediums. She has an incredible voice. She has acted on Broadway and in movies and television specials. She has performed in concert and recorded numerous albums. In addition, she is a producer and a director. She has proven herself a success in different aspects of the entertainment industry.

Tony Bennett is also a successful performer. He is a famous singer. He has performed in concert and recorded music. But his success, like that of most singers, has been limited to singing. He has not transferred that success to acting, directing, or television, nor does he have to.

Like Barbra Streisand and Tony Bennett, teachers, too, are performers. According to their individual talents and teaching styles, they perform before their audiences. And like an actor or singer, it is the teacher who is ultimately responsible for communicating with that audience—for using every skill he or she has to open eyes, communicate content, and make an impact on the learner's life. But it is the rare teacher, who, like Barbra Streisand, is successful at performing in a variety of mediums.

Most, like Tony Bennett, develop their talents in one particular medium, one particular style in which they feel most comfortable.

As with any major production—and adult education in the United States is certainly a huge endeavor—there are many others behind the scenes. In entertainment, there are writers, producers, directors, coaches, and set designers, to name a few. And at the center is the star. Like their counterparts in the entertainment industry, literacy program directors know that successful teachers are the stars of their production. And it is the teacher's distinctive style, his or her own teaching strength, that program directors should strive to respect, hone in on, and match with students' unique learning styles. This is an essential element in the design of successful literacy programs that serve all adults including those with learning disabilities.

As director of the National ALLD Center, my extensive interaction over the past three years with literacy and learning disabilities practitioners who are working in a variety of settings, serving a variety of clientele, operating under a variety of educational philosophies, has established

this point clearly in my mind. Taking the extra time up front to match strength for strength—teacher's strength for learner's strength—will underwrite the greater success of adult learning programs. Students will stay with programs and enjoy the success of doing so.

Capitalizing on a teacher's special style—the star quality—is one critical element of successful programs for adults. But we know that the impact with which the successful actor delivers his line or the singer his song is the product of years of hard work. Voice coaches, drama coaches, endless rehearsals, and watching others at work enable the performer to polish his or her skills and incorporate new techniques into his or her own repertoire. In the same way, ongoing training for educational performers permits teachers to learn new techniques and interventions, use a wider range of methods and modalities, and increase the flexibility of their performances.

Over the past three years, my perspective on the issues of learning styles, teaching styles, and training has been broadened. Most important, I've realized the critical need to change the status quo by providing ongoing professional development in the use of various teaching techniques and methodologies in order for adult education and literacy programs to be effective. This flexibility is especially important for those programs having a significant number of students with suspected or diagnosed learning disabilities.

Professional development takes a lifetime. Teachers need to be pro-

vided with the opportunity to be exposed to creative ideas that help them change as times change, to know about strategies and techniques that work with special learning needs. The kind of professional growth that needs to occur cannot happen in a two-hour workshop. Only by setting up an ongoing professional development plan and consistently working on that plan can adult educators benefit from the most current information in their field. Through conferences, workshops, coursework, and independent reading, educators can develop themselves professionally, learn new ways to grow, expand their knowledge, and be successful.

Finally, a successful production occurs only when all the participants — the stars, directors, producers, and others — share an unwavering commitment to collaboration. In producing a successful adult literacy program, there are many key participants who must work together effectively: literacy practi-

tioners, classroom instructors, learning disability specialists, program directors, and administrators at the local, state, and federal level. They all support the work of stars — the teachers — and make them successful. Teachers must be able to tap the expertise of those other professionals to help make them successful performers, and all participants must be committed to the same educational goals.

Collaboration takes time and energy, sharing information and expertise, and relinquishing professional territory. It allows for the best use of limited funding by using the knowledge of experts that currently exists. Meeting the crucial literacy demands in this country over the next decade will entail sharing visions and sharing through collaboration. Teachers must be integral players in this process of collaboration.

Barbra Streisand and Tony Bennett, as all true professionals, have over the years of their careers devel-

oped themselves in their chosen crafts and expanded their horizons. They have worked with others on their visions and sought out experts in their field in order to become successful. They have discussed and listened and tried new ways of performing. They have been open to new ideas and learned from their experiences.

Literacy practitioners and adult education instructors are the stars of our field — creative, dedicated people who need support. They need to know their strengths, build on them with continuing new knowledge, and use those strengths in collaboration with others. This will enable them to help more and more students with diverse needs. Being successful and staying on top involves keeping up-to-date. Over the years, Barbra Streisand and Tony Bennett have both found new ways to reach new audiences. With our combined efforts, adult educators can turn in award-winning performances for years to come.

Two New Videoconferences on Adults with Learning Disabilities

With support from the NIFL, the Correctional Education Association has collaborated with the National ALLD Center in producing two upcoming videoconferences:

1. Screening for Learning Disabilities in Correctional and Adult Education Settings

May 17, 1996, 12–2 p.m., EST

Viewers will learn about:

- Staff training
- What it means to be learning disabled
- Screening for learning disabilities
- Screening methods designed specifically for incarcerated students and adult learners
- Learning styles and cognitive preferences
- Writing instructional plans with students which include learning style and instructional accommodations
- Accommodations for compliance with the ADA and IDEA
- Where to send students with suspected learning disabilities for diagnosis

2. Teaching Learning Disabled Adults in Correctional and Adult Education Settings

June 7, 1996, 12–2 p.m. EST

Viewers will learn about:

- How to create a positive classroom environment for adults with learning disabilities
- How to make space and equipment accommodations in the classroom—accommodations that make instruction work where it hasn't worked before
- Instructional interventions, including multisensory techniques, for use with the adult with learning disabilities
- How to make teacher collaboration work for teachers and students

Teaching Suggestions for Adults with Suspected Learning Disabilities/Differences

Dr. Susan A. Vogel prepared the following list of pointers as a contribution to Literacy Volunteers of America's training guide for tutors

 Some adults with severe learning disabilities (LD) or learning differences may need specialized and intensive instruction in order to learn how to read and write; but most will be able to make slow, steady progress. The following are some general teaching suggestions based on principles of learning. They are not unique to the field of learning disabilities. All learners will benefit when you use them, but especially adults with LD.

Break tasks down into a logical sequence of discrete steps.

Pre-test, teach, test, reteach, as needed, and review.

Provide multiple opportunities to respond, interact with the teacher and classmates, and participate. The more active the learner, the more learning is taking place.

Be sure mastery has been achieved before moving on to the next step in the sequence of learning tasks.

Provide frequent feedback that describes what was done well and how it might be improved.

Encourage students to tell you how they learn best, and use this information to design future lessons.

Use color, highlighter, enlargement of print, and underlining to strengthen the visual input and enhance visual memory.

De-emphasize oral reading as this may interfere with comprehension and also embarrass the student. Use oral reading only for select purposes and in private. When instruc-

tion takes place in small groups, call on students with LD only if they volunteer to participate. Preparing passages for oral reading in advance of the group instruction may help prevent failure and embarrassment. Choral reading may be helpful. De-emphasize closely timed tests and tasks.

Slow down the rate of your speech (assuming it is usually rapid) emphasizing important points. Maintain eye contact in order to assess level of comprehension, encourage participation, give and get feedback, and maintain attention.

Maximize success and enhance self-esteem by providing opportunities for the student to be successful.

Encourage the use of compensatory strategies (e.g., tape recording sessions, directions, assignments, and discussions) as aids for those with memory deficits.

Teach word processing skills, use of spelling and grammar checkers, and other software.

Use multi-media approaches such as audio cassette with text or video tape to preview story line of novel to supplement information from print.

Teach memory enhancement strategies that will aid recall, such as listing, rewriting, categorizing, alphabetizing, visualizing, and use of associations and acronyms.

The specific strategies of choice should be individualized based on the individual's profile and the effectiveness of each strategy. This segment of the adult education population is one of the most challenging to work with, and you may also want to reach out for assistance and refer the adult with a suspected learning disability to specialists for a full assessment, career counseling, and further literacy training.

Literacy—Continued from page 9

icantly less and are far more often living in poverty than a comparable population having the same education and literacy proficiencies. In terms of a range of post-school social and economic outcomes, learning disabilities evidently entail other difficulties besides low literacy skills and educational attainment.

These findings point to the need for further research, as well as for adult educators' special attention. Adults reporting learning disabilities experience higher levels of social and economic problems than adults with equivalent levels of literacy and education but without learning disabilities, and this should be of particular concern to literacy practitioners — and others working in areas of human resource development (i.e., welfare-to-work and re-employment) — who want to help their clients meet their broad life goals.

EXTRA SPACE

Some Thoughts on Learning ABILITIES: Another Point of View

 Leslie Shelton is the Director of Project Read in South San Francisco and a current NIFL fellow. With the help of adult learners, she has developed a training curriculum called "Honoring Diversity," based on the theory of multiple intelligences and the importance of gearing instruction to students' learning styles. The following points touch on some of her perspectives about how we deal with adult learners.

- Where do we focus our efforts in working with adults? There are two possible vantage points — an emphasis on disabilities or an emphasis on abilities. Do we follow a "medical model" approach to dissecting and analyzing problems, or do we focus on understanding how people learn, on promoting excellence in learning? While these aren't mutually exclusive, I fear we're concentrating on another specialty area that breaks a human being's cognitive processes into small pieces rather than looking at the whole person. We spend too much time focusing on a person's incapacities instead of capacities, on the part of the person that's "not working" versus the part that is.

- It's important to understand and identify barriers to learning, and to develop assessment tools that can be used to identify processing difficulties, but we need an equal, if not greater, effort to develop and disseminate instructional strategies that work.

- The label "learning disabilities" has benefits and drawbacks. The field benefits from research that helps us understand what's happening to people neurologically. And it can help learners understand that

they aren't crazy or stupid. But what's the price? Does the label become a crutch, or a cross to bear? And how do they benefit once they're "diagnosed?"

- People with significant learning disabilities may benefit from the label if they need reasonable accommodation in a work setting or test-taking situation. But most of the adult learners I see do not have significant learning disabilities. Rather, their strongest learning intelligences don't match the way we teach. They often have strong spatial, body, social, and musical intelligences — strengths that have been minimally used to teach literacy.

- One of the biggest problems I see is low self-esteem due to the labeling or being placed in special education as children. I have noticed that learners often will come into the program and say they think that they are dyslexic, but not that they are learning disabled. For many people, there is a stigma to "learning disabled," and it does not boost a person's self-esteem.

- From a Multiple Intelligences point of view, we are all unique as learners. Our "learning portrait" is as unique as our face. We all have learning difficulties in something, but we don't learn by focusing on our difficulties. Why do we say that people with reading difficulties are "compensating" when they use their social skills or artistic skills or physical talents to help them learn, but we don't call it compensating for others who use their talents to get around weaknesses? Focusing on strengths is much more powerful than focusing on disabilities.

- Who's the expert? The learner is often the best authority on what

works for himself. Many of them have already figured it out. Learners need to be equal *partners* in the process. And we the educators need to —

1. Focus on what's right instead of what's wrong.
2. Teach adult learners about the many ways they are smart.
3. Help them do their own analysis of how they learn best, and include them in developing strategies that work.

Attachment 1
DRAFT ---- LD Interagency Working Group - Adult Sub-Group

ACF
→ rank the
culture

Suggested Action Steps:

I) Collaborative Efforts:

- A) Become more inclusive of the LD issue by expanding committee membership to include :
 - President's Committee for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities
 - National Council on Disabilities
 - SSA/SSDI
 - EEOC
 - OMB
- B) Development of research agenda, with ASPE, NICHD and ADD coordinating effort.
- C) Dissemination of new information, focused on informing governments on the impact of LD.
 - 1) NIFL Newsletter and NALLDC products
 - 2) Dept of Ed's Reading reports
 - 3) Dept of Labor's report
 - 4) DHHS Inspector General's report on Functional Impairments
 - 5) NICHD's reports on definition and reading.
- D) Development of statement on LD for signature by Secretaries and/or President.
- E) Development of technical assistance program for presentations to various state and local government organizations.
- F) Development of an interagency strategy for addressing such efforts as School to Work.
- G) Joint efforts at development of resources on cross cutting pilot projects.
- H) Development of an update on the 1987 "Report to Congress."

Grassroots
Init

II) Individual Department and Agency Actions:

- A) Juvenile Justice:
 - 1) Development of Advisory Council on LD and JJ
 - 2) Development of a presentation for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coordination Council.
 - 3) Bring Civil Rights Division into the process.
- B) Education
 - 1) Development of staff position on LD in OVAE.
 - 2) Support the inclusion of LD in Goals 2000 efforts.
 - 3) Work with GED testing service to develop process by which more students can access accommodations while taking the GED.
- C) LABOR
 - 1) Develop national training package on LD and impacts on job training
 - 2) Development of pilot projects to identify LD in populations and to develop service delivery models.
 - 3) Reprint and distribute the Report "The Learning Disabled in Employment and Training Programs."
- D) HHS
 - 1) Development of a statement on how LD and Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) intersect.
 - 2) Greater technical support on LD to AFDC programs.
 - 3) Promote the early identification efforts through Head Start, and expand the work that is underway with the National Center on Learning Disabilities
 - 4) Include LD in the HHS Health People Initiative