
Editors' Note

Economic Stimulus - American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act more than doubled federal funding of special education and early intervention programs. This historic \$787 billion stimulus package invested over \$100 billion into education, including \$12.2 billion for IDEA. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) notes that this unprecedented investment is the culmination of decades of advocacy and leadership by CEC, its members, and the education and disability communities. Our next challenge is to spend these funds wisely and demonstrate their effectiveness.

Over the next two years, an additional \$80 billion of funding will be added to education, with IDEA receiving \$12 billion. ARRA creates enormous opportunities for special education and learning disabilities. It is urgent that parents and special educators to seek ways to make plans to apply for these funds to improve the lives of students with learning disabilities.

The Council for Exceptional Children has several websites that are helpful in understanding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Check www.cec.sped.org

Articles in this Issue

The articles in Volume 16, No.1. report on pertinent topics in the field of learning disabilities. We hope you enjoy reading these timely articles.

Stress and Support for Mothers of Children with Learning Disabilities and ADHD: Voices on the Internet by Malka Margalit, Marshall H. Raskind, Eleanor L. Higgins, and Punit Russo-Netzer. This is the first study to examine the online messages of mothers of children with learning disabilities and/or ADHD, and the results contribute to an in-depth understanding of mothers' stress as it relates to their identity formation. The article explores maternal stressors, needs, supports, perceptions, and self-identity as expressed by mothers of children with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in electronic messages posted on an Internet discussion board. The sample consisted of 316 mothers of children with learning disabilities and/or ADHD, who wrote 1,502 messages during a 12-month period. Participants disclosed both positive and negative perceptions of themselves, their families and their children.

Diverse Students with Learning Disabilities: Building Coherence in Personal and Fictional Narratives by Dorota Celinska. This article describes a qualitative study exploring oral personal and fictional narratives of African-American and Caucasian students with and without learning disabilities. A total of 240 personal and 82 fictional narratives were analyzed with regards to their overall coherence using two narrative frameworks: High Point Analysis and Episodic Analysis. Differences were related to the use of goal-directed episodic narrative patterns. The author also includes educational implications resulting from the use of narrative assessment with students who have learning disabilities.

The Effects of Folding-In of Basic Mathematics Facts for Students with Disabilities by Kristine Swain, Tamara D. Bertini, and Dara L. Coffey. This article studies the effects of mathematics instruction with elementary students using direct instruction methods, including drill tasks with elementary students who have mathematics difficulties. This project involves two studies that examined the effectiveness of a specific direct instruction intervention, Folding-In, on the math computation achievement of elementary students with math difficulties. Weekly CBM progress monitoring data, as well as achievement test data, were used to monitor the effectiveness of the intervention, with improvements noted in math fact fluency in both a university-based clinical tutoring and a classroom intervention setting.

Defining Learning Disability: Does IQ Have Anything Significant to Say? by Michael Dunn. This article examines the utility of IQ in the identifying students with learning disabilities. Under the *severe discrepancy* model, IQ or some indication of ability was an integral part of the identification process. However, since the advent of RTI, there has been some movement away from using IQ since it is not required for the identification process. This research project presents some evidence suggesting that the IQ may have some utility. The author also suggests how the IQ might be incorporated into the RTI process.

Effects of Text-to-Speech Software on the Reading Rate of Comprehension Skills of High School Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) by Amamda Moorman, Richard T. Boon, Christina Stagliano, Tara Jeffs. This article examines the effects of a text-to-speech software program known as *Read Please* on the reading rate and reading comprehension accuracy of two high school students with specific learning disabilities in reading. The participants were taught to utilize the features of the *Read Please* software that reads the text aloud to the participants and upon completion of the reading passage. Results of this study indicated that the use of the *Read Please* software increased the reading rate and improved students reading comprehension for both participants.

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