
Editors' Note

Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders

Precipitous changes are occurring throughout our world, and the field of learning disabilities has not escaped its own modifications and changes. The problem of defining, identifying, and understanding learning disabilities has become much more complex and complicated. When the field of learning disabilities first began at the historic meeting in 1963, the concept of *Specific Learning Disabilities* was quite clear — learning disabilities were viewed as significant problems in a specific area of academic learning, such as reading or math for children who were otherwise intact. Children with other types of difficulties in the social, emotional, neurological realm were not included within the definition of learning disabilities.

Today, after over 40 years of experience, our concept of learning disabilities is undergoing dramatic change. Learning disabilities are seen as much more complex and involved than originally envisioned. Today, many students who receive learning disabilities services have concurrent, co-occurring, co-morbid related disorders. Problems such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, nonverbal learning disabilities, Asperger's Syndrome, gifted and talented children with learning disabilities, depression, bipolar disorders, and other neurodevelopmental syndromes are often evident. It is important that parents, educators, and other professionals are aware of these changes and what they imply for their children and for the field of learning disabilities.

The articles in this issue report on some of the changes that are occurring in the field of learning disabilities. We hope you enjoy reading these timely articles.

Articles in this Issue

How Do We Know What a Learning Disabilities Is by Kenneth A. Kavale. This article was the keynote address at the 41st Annual Conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of America. Dr. Kavale discusses changes in our views and definitions of learning disabilities.

Vocational Outcomes for Young Adults with Multiple Learning Disabilities by Robert Harth and Carol Burns. The authors report on a study of the vocational outcomes for a group of young adults with multiple learning disabilities who attended a two year post-secondary program.

Using Color to Increase the Math Persistence of Co-occurring Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficits by David L. Lee and Jennifer Asplen. This study examined the effects of added environmental stimulation on student performance and behavior during a role mathematics task. They found that by adding stimulation and novelty in the form of color increased overall task persistence.

Parental Perspectives of Needs and Services Provided for Families of Children with Mild Disabilities by Effie Kritikos and Barry Birnbaum. This study reports the results of interviews of caregivers of African-American children with mild disabilities. The authors report information about the caregivers' views of the needs and services that are provided for families of children with mild disabilities.

Students with Learning Disabilities Construct Meaning Through Graphic Organizers; Strategies for Achievement in Inclusive Classrooms by Eileen D. Sabbatino. This article reports on the use of graphic organizers as an effective comprehension strategy for students with learning disabilities who are in an inclusive setting.

Janet W. Lerner
Frank Kline
Co-Editors