



Show-Me

The "Official" Newsletter of Literacy in Missouri

JUNE 2010

ISSUE NO. 174

Literacy....

FACTS AND STATISTICS ON LEARNING DISABILITIES AND LITERACY

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A Project of Florida Human Resources Development, Inc.

A State Leadership Project Funded by the State of Florida, Office of Workforce Education

September 2003

FACTS

- Learning disabilities, as opposed to other disabilities such as vision impairment or paralysis, are invisible – or considered a hidden handicap. For this reason they tend to be misunderstood and their impact underestimated.
- Because learning disabilities cannot be seen, they often go undetected. Recognizing a learning disability is even more difficult because the severity and characteristics vary.
- Learning disabilities vary from person to person. One person with LD may not have the same kind of learning problems as another person with LD.
- Learning disabilities are real. A person can be of average or above-average intelligence, not have any major sensory problems (like blindness or hearing impairment), and yet struggle to keep up with peers in their ability to learn.
- LD is a lifelong disorder that affects people's ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain. These limitations can show up in many ways--as in the ability to understand or use spoken and written language, mathematical calculations, coordination, self-control, or attention. These difficulties impact academic skills and can impede learning to read or write, or compute.
- LD is a neurobiological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store, express, and respond to information.
 - a lack of "executive functions," including self-motivation, self-reliance, self-advocacy and goal-setting;

The mission of the "Show-Me Literacy Newsletter is to provide professional information-sharing, resources and news about adult education and literacy.

- With LD a person's brain works or is structured differently. Differences interfere with a person's ability to think and remember. Learning disabilities can affect a person's ability to speak, listen, read, write, spell, reason, recall, organize information, and calculate.
- LD affects many parts of a person's life: school or work, daily routines, family life, and friendships or in social contexts. Overlapping learning disabilities may be apparent in some while others may have a single, isolated mild learning problem that has little impact on other areas of life.
- Learning disabilities affect each person differently with characteristics ranging from mild to severe. Sometimes people have more than one learning disability.
- Although learning disabilities can occur in very young children, the disorders are not usually recognized until problems are recognized at school.
- LD is not a single disorder. It is a term that refers to a group of disorders.

Definitions of Learning Disability

- Learning Disabilities are a general set of disorders that can affect a person's ability in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics.
- The Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities (CCLD), a coalition of national organizations within the learning disabilities community, defines LD as “a neurobiological disorder in which a person's brain works or is structured differently.”
- Bridges to Practice, a national learning disabilities and literacy initiative, defines LD as “a neurological problem often genetic that affects the way that persons process visual, auditory, or other sensory information.”
- The U.S. Office of Education defined LD in 1977 as “a permanent-information processing deficit (disorder) that affects the manner in which individuals with average to above average intelligence learn. Deficits in areas such as reading, mathematics and written language are presumed to be due to a central nervous system dysfunction. Learning disabilities occur regardless of gender, race, or ethnic origin and they are not the result of a poor academic background, mental retardation, or emotional disorders.”
- The same definition as above appears in the document, “How to Request Accommodations When Taking the GED High School Equivalency Tests if You Have a Learning Disability” as published by the GED Testing Service of the American Council of Education.

- Hamil defines LD in the 1990 Journal of Learning Disabilities article “On Defining Learning Disabilities: An Emerging Consensus” {23 (2), 74-84}. “LD 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 and reasoning abilities...Even though a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other disabling conditions (e.g. sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance) or environmental influences (e.g. cultural differences or insufficient/inappropriate instruction) it is not the direct result of those conditions or influences.”
- According to the Learning Disabilities Association of America, “Specific learning disabilities (SLD) is a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration and/or demonstration of verbal and/or nonverbal abilities...(It exists) as a distinct handicapping condition and varies in its manifestations and in degree of severity. Throughout life, the condition can affect self esteem, education, vocation, socialization and/or daily living activities.”
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law that provides for special education, defines “SLD as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. Skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and/or mathematics may be negatively affected.”
- The Federal definition states that learning disabilities include "such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia." According to the law, learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. Definitions of learning disabilities also vary among states.

What Learning Disabilities Are Not

- Persons with learning disabilities are not “lazy” or “dumb.” In fact, they usually have average or above average intelligence. Often they fall within the range or “gifted.” Their brains just process information differently.
- Attention disorders, such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and learning disabilities often occur at the same time, but they’re not the same.
- Learning disabilities are not the same as mental retardation and do not signify low intelligence.
- Learning disabilities are not the same as autism, hearing or visual impairment, physical disabilities, or emotional disorders.
- Learning disabilities are not the same as the normal process of learning a second language.
- Learning disabilities aren’t caused by lack of educational opportunities, such as frequent changes of

- Learning disabilities aren't caused by lack of educational opportunities, such as frequent changes of schools, poor school attendance, or lack of instruction in basic skills.
- Learning disabilities are not caused by economic disadvantage, environmental factors or cultural differences. In fact, there is frequently no apparent cause for LD.
- A learning disability is not a disease, so there is no cure, but there are ways to overcome the challenges it poses through identification and accommodation.
- Dyslexia does not mean that the person sees words "backwards."

What are Characteristics of Learning Disabilities?

- An important requirement in the diagnosis of learning disabilities is the discrepancy between intelligence, or one's ability to perform, and their actual performance.
- There is no one sign that shows a person has a learning disability. Characteristics that may be apparent include:
 - trouble learning the alphabet, rhyming words, or connecting letters to their sounds;
 - problems identifying individual sounds in spoken words;
 - not reading for pleasure;
 - not making use of reading to gather information;
 - making many errors when reading aloud, and repeating and pausing often;
 - focusing on word recognition to such a degree that it detracts from reading comprehension;
 - not understanding what he or she reads;
 - showing persistent problems with spelling;
 - having sloppy handwriting that is difficult to read or holding a pencil awkwardly;
 - struggling to express ideas and communicate in writing;

- learning language late, lacking complex language and having a limited vocabulary;
- having trouble remembering the sounds that letters make or hearing slight distinctions between words;
- having trouble understanding jokes, comic strips, and sarcasm;
- having difficulty with non-literal or figurative language such as metaphors, idioms and sarcasm;
- having trouble following directions;
- mispronouncing words or using a wrong word that sounds similar;
- having difficulty with verbal memory and processing large amounts of spoken language;
- having trouble organizing what he or she wants to say or not being able to think of the word needed for writing or conversation;
- not following the social rules of conversation, such as taking turns, and standing too close to the listener;
- confusing math symbols, misreading numbers, or difficulty retrieving math facts;
- having visual-spatial deficits and ineffective use of visual imagery;
- having difficulties in language processing that affect math problem-solving;
- difficulty retelling a story in order (what happened first, second, third);
- not knowing where to begin a task or how to go on from there;
- having a distinct gap between the level of achievement that is expected and what is actually being achieved;
- having problems with abstract reasoning;
- making impulsive decisions and judgments;
- difficulties with socio-emotional skills and behavior;

or

- problems with attention, which may be accompanied by hyperactivity, distractibility or passivity.

Statistics

- 30 – 50% of the population has undiagnosed learning disabilities. (Source: National Institute for Literacy)
- As many as 1 out of every 5 people in the U.S. has a learning disability. Almost 3 million children (ages 6 through 21) have some form of a learning disability and receive special education in school. (23rd Annual Report to Congress, U.S. Department of Education, 2001) Source: National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities - <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs7txt.htm>).
- 35% of children with learning disabilities drop out of high school. This is twice the rate of students without LD. Of those who do graduate, less than 2% attend a four-year college, despite the fact that many are above average in intelligence. (Source: National Longitudinal Transition Study)
- Only 13% of students with learning disabilities (compared to 53% of students in general population) have attended a 4-year post-secondary school program within two years of leaving high school. (Source: National Longitudinal Transition Study, 1994)
- Approximately 85% of all individuals with learning disabilities have difficulties in the area of reading. (Source: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development - <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/readbro.htm>)
- 50 – 80% of students in ABE and literacy programs with low reading skills (below 5th – 7th grade level) may have either a suspected or diagnosed learning disability (Source: Bridges to Practice - <http://novel.nifl.gov/nald/workplac.htm>).
- 43% of learning disabled are living at or below the poverty level. (Source: Bridges to Practice)
- 48% of those with learning disabilities are out of the workforce or unemployed. (Source: Bridges to Practice)

Education Excellence

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"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Motivation in the classroom by teachers helps students focus on their studies better. Students understand how they should approach a particular subject and get their doubts cleared. The aim behind motivating the students is to make them aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Good motivation can help students fix their goals in life. There are many students, who lose

interest in their studies due to lack of motivation, attention and guidance from their teachers. Because of this, students end up being failures in their life when they grow up even though they had all the skills, abilities and talent to reach the topmost position. Thus, there is a big need for motivation in the classroom.

In order to motivate students in the classroom, teachers should not overreact by criticizing them in front of the entire class for the mistakes committed by them. Instead, the mistakes can be brought to the notice of the student individually and suggestions can be given to improve them. An effective and frequent communication between the students and his teacher is imperative for motivating the students. Teachers should praise the good qualities of the students. They should encourage the students to participate in group activities with full enthusiasm. Providing the students with emotional support in times of difficulty is the task of the teacher. Small children, sometimes, are very sensitive and due to this, their performance in class can get affected due to family problems. Here, teachers play a crucial role in keeping the students motivated by assuring that everything would be just fine.

The extent of motivation in the classroom can be different for different students. There will be some students who show good results after a few words of praise. There would be others who would need prolonged support and help to excel in their task. So, teachers need to keep their cool and have patience while teaching their students. Students' motivation is possible by treating all students equally and making no discrimination among them on any grounds. Punishment can become a big deterrent in this process of motivation in the classroom. The teachers would therefore be advised to avoid punishing the students and use other methods to educate them.

Motivation in the classroom can increase the confidence of students to a great extent. So, it is high time that we understand the importance of motivating students and implement it practically.

"A teacher affects eternity;
he can never tell where his
influence stops."

~Henry B. Adams

MAACCE 2011 Conference News

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The 2011 MAACCE conference is scheduled for June 21-24, 2011 at Tan-Tar-A Resort at the Lake of the Ozarks. **The theme for the 2011 conference is WILD WILD MAACCE - Educators Roundup!**

The Missouri Association for Adult Continuing and Community Education furnishes you an important link with other disciplines concerned with community development and lifelong learning. From the annual meeting with opportunities for professional development and discussion of current topics in the field, to publications that keep you informed of adult and community education activities in Missouri, MAACCE is your link to professionals in practice.

The 2011 Conference's "Western" theme is promising to be an educational, exciting, and entertaining experience. A full schedule of outstanding speakers, informative break-out sessions, great food, fun activities, and exciting entertainment has been planned- including a western costume contest, dancing, karaoke, a photo booth and even a mechanical bull! There will be plenty of time for socializing and networking!

Silent Auction-Be sure to bring your Silent Auction items and a wagon-full of \$\$\$\$. All MAACCE participants are encouraged to bring an item of \$10.00 or higher value for the auction. Items may be dropped off at the registration desk at check in. Contact Rhonda Jones at 314.367.5000 or rhonda.jones@slps.org for more information.

Costume Contest- Ever wanted to go out in public as Wyatt Earp, Jessie James, Doc Holiday, Miss Kitty, or Annie Oakley? Now is your chance partner! At the 2011 MAACCE Conference at Tan Tar A we will be having a costume contest. Bring your western outfits along with you and see if you have what it takes to win the prize! On Wednesday June 22nd to enjoy the music of The Menagerie. **There will also be a mechanical bull to ride, and a photo booth.**

Break-Out Sessions-The conference will include nearly 50 breakout sessions for attendees to choose from. Concurrent sessions will be approximately 60 minutes in length and there are many possible topics that will be of interest to participants. Categories include Adult Education & Literacy, After School, Community Education, Teaching Technology, Higher Education, and Administration.

Conference Bunkhouse Reservations- On-line reservations can be made at www.tan-tar-a.com; Click on "Online Reservations" then "Groups and Conference." Use group number MAAC and group password MAAC or call 1-800-826-8272.

MAACCE Leadership Development Institute (LDI)-Are you looking for an opportunity to grow professionally and as a member of MAACCE? MAACCE is pleased to offer the 2011 Leadership Development Institute (LDI). The Institute offers a combination of leadership training and an orientation to the MAACCE organization. In past years this opportunity has only been open to individuals who have been members for five or fewer years, however this year anyone is welcome, no matter how long they have been a member! You will have fun, make new friends, build your leadership skills, and learn how to become actively involved in MAACCE. The Institute precedes the 2011 MAACCE Conference at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, Missouri.

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Registered for the 2011 conference.
- Committed to personal, professional, and organizational development.

Desire to have FUN, develop new FRIENDSHIPS, and exchange IDEAS.

A maximum of 20 applicants will be selected to attend the Leadership Development Institute. There is no fee for the Institute, and participants who attend the entire Institute program and who are staying at Tan-Tar-A will be awarded a

- \$50.00 stipend to defray the cost of expenses.
- Dinner June 21 and breakfast June 22 will be provided.

Visit www.maacce.org to apply for the Institute, and for additional information on LDI.

*Pack up your hats, boots, and spurs and head on down the
MAACCE Ranch
See ya all there!*

MAACCE 2011 Conference Registration

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This publication was produced pursuant to a grant from the Director, Adult Education & Literacy, Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, under the authority of Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. The opinions herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education or the U.S. Office of Education. No official endorsement by these agencies is inferred or implied.