



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

February 2015

President's Message



Greetings, CLD Members,

I hope everyone had a wonderful break during the holiday season and that you are well rested and rejuvenated for the coming semester! Whereas during the fall semester we tend to focus on the CLD conference and committee planning, the spring semester is when much of our proposed work takes place. I would like to highlight some of the work already in progress for the coming semester, with the caveat that I will not be able to touch on all of the good things taking place in our organization. As I have said in the past, I believe we have an excellent Board of Trustees, and I know that each of the committees is being productive.

First, we recently closed our elections for the position of Secretary and Vice President. Each member received an email with a link to the CLD ballot, with a short bio for each candidate listed. Voting closed on February 1, 2015, and we will be announcing the results of the election later this spring. Of course, participation in elections is an essential duty of all members of an organization, and I thank each of you for participating in the voting process.

The call for proposals for the **2015 conference in Las Vegas** were due February 1, 2015. We are currently in the review process, and we will notify presenters later this spring. We anticipate another excellent conference, based on the high quality of work presented by our members at past conferences and the quality of proposals received during this call. The CLD conference is successful because of the enthusiasm and hard work of our dedicated membership, so please plan to attend and share your work.

A number of people have been actively engaged in conference work since we met in October. **Mary Beth Calhoun**, our vice president, has drafted and posted the *Call for Proposals*, and she has also been diligently working on

the conference schedule and budget. **Judy Voress, Cathy Thomas**, and the **Conference Committee** have been working on CLD 2016, securing San Antonio as the site for that conference. In addition, **Joe Morgan, Kyle Higgins**, and the **Local Arrangements Committee** have been working to ensure that attendees at the 2015 conference in Las Vegas will have a great experience. Thanks to all who have put in your time and energy toward making future conferences successful.

Bertina Combes took over the position of chair of the **Standards and Ethics Committee** this year and has been actively working with her committee to revise our *Principles of Ethical Practice* document. In addition, the committee members have written an article outlining these principles in an effort to disseminate our perspective to a broader audience. Kudos to Bertina and her committee for moving forward with this important work in a way that will lead to greater discussion in the field.

Finally, **Chris Curran, Kat Pfannenstiel**, and the **Professional Development Committee** have been

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5 Ways To ...

Prepare Pre-Service Special Education Teachers to Teach Students with LD

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Approximately one-third of all students with disabilities served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act have been identified as having a specific learning disability (SLD; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). More than 90% of students with an SLD are educated in the general education classroom, as opposed to pull-out programs or self-contained classrooms, for more than 50% of the school day (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Subsequently, teachers entering the field are faced with multiple challenges, including being prepared to teach specialized skills to help students with an SLD achieve academically. Conversely, research has found that many students with an SLD are often placed with teachers who have little-to-no training in proficient inclusive practices for working with these students (McLeskey & Waldron, 2011; Shady, Luther, & Richman, 2013).

Although the primary responsibility of special education teachers is the overall education of students with academic delays, other elements—such as race, poverty, social class, gender, language, religion, ability, and/or age—frequently play a role in determining whether educational efforts will be successful (Busch, Pederson, Espin, & Weissenburger, 2001; Utley, Obiakor, & Bakken, 2011). In addition, teachers must have knowledge of federal, state, and local legislation, implementation practices, instruction and intervention strategies, designation of appropriate goals and objectives, progress monitoring, and differentiation strategies (Dukes, Darling, & Doan, 2014). While special education teacher education programs strive to produce teachers with high levels of skills in the above-mentioned categories, many general education teacher preparation programs are remiss in teaching these same specialized skills (Brownell et al., 2009; Dukes et al., 2014). Preservice educators in general education teacher preparation programs typically are not required to take numerous and/or specific special education courses. The courses they do take are introductory in nature and provide little in regards to specific instructional strategies (Maccini & Gagnon, 2006). Even participants in special education teacher preparation programs do not always receive highly specialized preparation. Because of the increasing challenges facing schools in regards to students with an SLD, all teacher

preparation programs must provide preservice teachers with a variety of learning experiences that model realistic expectations for working with these students.

In a 2011 study, McLeskey, Landers, Hoppey, and Williamson found that while identification of students with LD declined by 4% between 1990 and 2009, the placement of students with an SLD in the general education classroom increased by 166% during the same time frame. Therefore, general education teachers entering the profession are increasingly being given responsibility for educating this population. Teacher preparation programs must

- mentor preservice teachers in all avenues of preparation programs, including the university classroom, learning activities, and field experiences;
- present intentional opportunities for preservice educators to learn how to diversify instruction to meet the individualized needs of students with different types of learning disabilities in a variety of classrooms promoting diversity;
- present preservice educators with early, extensive hands-on experience with students with LD and offer guidance during the process;
- afford preservice educators the opportunity to self-reflect on both pedagogical and andragogical practices throughout the duration of their teacher preparation program; and
- assist preservice educators in determining how to make deliberate, justified, and diversified educational decisions regarding individualized supports for students with LD.

1 Mentorship. Mentoring general and special education preservice teachers is one way to improve these teachers' understanding of the many facets associated with students with LD. Mentors can demonstrate methods for effectively working with students with

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(**Five Ways To**, continued from page 2)

an SLD. Mentors also serve as a “safety net” to help beginning teachers avoid the many pitfalls they may encounter (Graves, 2010). Evidence indicates that mentorship has typically been delegated to student teacher mentors and first-year teaching mentors; however, it is also important to form mentorship opportunities while the preservice teacher is still in the university classroom (Stanulis, Burrill, & Ames, 2007). Faculty members who have experience working with students with an SLD can be a great resource for preservice general and special education teachers. This practical knowledge can provide grounding in the theory many students receive in their university training, which can also help guide students to other sources of mentorship upon degree completion.

Organizations such as the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) offer opportunities for emerging scholars, including preservice teachers, to partner with experienced mentors in the field of LD. These intentional partnerships are based on commonalities in research interests and experiences and are often facilitated by a program coordinator (Bell & Treleaven, 2011). One result of these formal mentorship opportunities is a better understanding of the foundations of LD as presented through professional standards, which can help bridge the gap between individual practice and those standards (Zionts, Shellady, & Zionts, 2006).

Mentorship can also be cultivated through student organizations. Becoming a faculty advisor for a student chapter (e.g., Council for Learning Disabilities student chapter) offers a prime opportunity to mentor preservice teachers. Student organization chapters can not only increase motivation of student members but also allow them to further develop appropriate teaching methodology in an environment moving from dependence to independence (Stanulis & Ames, 2009). See Figure 1 for a summary of types of mentorship.

2 **Intentional Teaching Practices.** Gagne (1977) and Hunter (1980) are frequently credited with developing the instructional sequences that include stating the objective at the beginning of a lesson or after a brief anticipatory activity. Although intended as models for all classrooms, their procedures are also incorporated into explicit instruction models, which have become a hallmark of ef-

fective practices for students with an SLD (Carnine, Silbert, Kame’enui, & Tarver, 2009; Swanson, 2001). Preservice teachers must be intentionally taught and given ample opportunities to become familiar with precise teaching practices when working with students with an SLD. Evidence-based educational practices are one example of intentional, effective teaching practices that can be utilized when working with students with LD. An *evidence-based educational practice* can be defined as an instructional strategy, intervention, or teaching program that has resulted in consistent positive results when experimentally tested (Mesibov & Shea, 2011; Simpson, 2005).

When choosing which instructional methods to use in the classroom, teachers should be aware that they might have to make modifications based on the specific needs of a student. Comprehending how to adapt interventions, and knowing which adaptations enhance intervention effectiveness, helps teachers maximize the potential impact of their interventions (Kim, Linan-Thompson, & Misquitta, 2012). Being able to define and identify applicable and individualized evidence-based practices that match the students’ goals and current skill levels is the first step in bringing these practices into the classroom (Marder & Fraser, 2012). Preservice teachers must be intentional in their instructional goals so the lesson can be purposefully designed; explicitly stated objectives serve as performance expectations and learner outcomes (English & Steffy, 2001; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2010). A crucial skill for preservice special education and general education

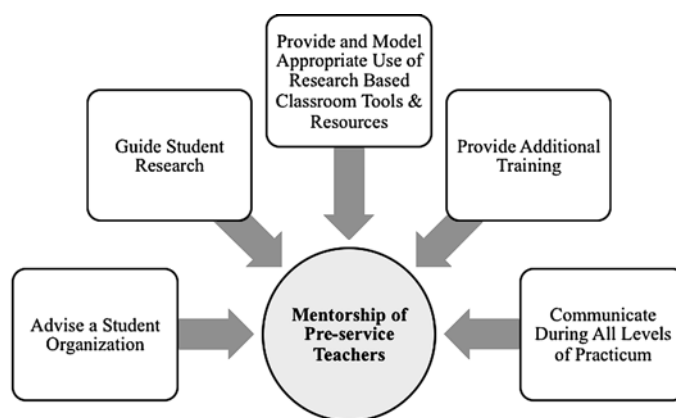


Figure 1. Examples of mentorship opportunities with pre-service teachers.

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teachers is understanding how instructional methods reflect the intervention goals and whether the interventions are being delivered as intended. This helps the preservice teacher draw appropriate conclusions linking the intervention to its effects (Kim et al., 2012; Mathes et al., 2005). Instructing preservice teachers “how” to do this can occur within all aspects of college coursework, including activities, assignments, and field-based placements (see Table 1).

3 Hands-on Experience. As teacher preparation programs provide students hands-on experiences, program developers should keep in mind that preservice teachers involved in early field experience observations must have a good grasp of pedagogy. In later field experience observations, preservice teachers need to know content and student characteristics (J. M. Jenkins, 2014). Teacher preparation programs must include an authentic, scaffolded practicum experience that provides preservice general and special education teachers with a framework in which to practice (Boehm, Pospiech, & Martin, 2010). Preservice teachers who gain insight into the individualized nature of

instruction for students with an SLD see that addressing such individualization involves more than just developing modified and accommodated lesson plans in a controlled, university-based classroom setting (Keener & Bargerhuff, 2006).

It is not enough to just provide experiences for future general and special education teachers, time must be allowed for reflection and feedback. Grudnoff (2011) concluded that while practicum experiences were meaningful to preservice teachers, first-year teachers reported a disconnect between a university practicum and real-world classroom experiences. Study results indicated that a practicum experience without reflection was not very beneficial. Smith and Lev-Ari (2005) reported that 70% of preservice teachers stated that feedback was the most useful processing tool for reflection.

4 Opportunities to Reflect on Growth and Learning. Self-reflection coupled with feedback is an effective tool that can be utilized with preservice educators. The purpose is to bring about change that will reduce the gap between the beginning and culminating views of preservice teachers. According to Collet (2012), instructional

Table 1. Examples of Intentional Teaching Practices for Pre-service Teachers

Intentional Teaching Practice	Examples
Use of explicit instruction	Modeling High rates of responding and practice Repetition Error correction Review & practice Monitoring of performance
Use of varying research-based teaching practices	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none">Modeling Math <ul style="list-style-type: none">Solve It! Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) strategies
Use of content area instruction	Content enhancement routines Recall enhancement routines

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change requires not only awareness of content and practices but also an understanding of the contexts involved in the construction and appropriation of knowledge. Reflecting on these experiences contextualizes professional development and creates opportunities for the construction of beliefs and practices grounded in teaching experiences (Collet, 2012; Britton & Anderson, 2010).

For feedback between the preservice teacher and faculty member to be effective, it should be guided by the clarity of a shared vision, an understanding of the way individuals in the program experience change, and quality communication within coaching relationships (Reinke, Sprick, & Knight, n.d.). As preservice special education teachers are challenged to view how their actions influence student outcomes, teacher preparation programs need to afford preservice teachers ample opportunities to practice skills and understand the consequences of their actions through reflection, conversations, and consideration of multiple viewpoints (Brent, Wheatly, & Thomson, 1996; l'Anson, Rodrigues, & Wilson, 2003; Miller, 2009). This reflection allows for the early development of a disposition of collaboration and continuous improvement, enables individuals to reflect upon teaching experiences, and creates an understanding of what lessons can be drawn from their past experiences and how to evaluate these lessons to improve performance (Baird, Holland, & Deacon, 1999; Britton & Anderson, 2010).

Self-reflection and feedback should occur in a cyclical process throughout the entire duration of a teacher preparation program. Important aspects include (a) setting of goals based on current levels of understanding; (b) dialogue between preservice educators and faculty members that revisits goals to check for understanding/misunderstandings and that also provides resources; and (c) revision of goals as needed to constantly promote increased learning opportunities for preservice general and special educators.

5 **Meaningful Class Projects.** Meaningful class projects, whether developing Individualized Education Program goals for a student with an SLD or creating a resource guide for parents of students with an SLD, offer preservice educators a sense of increased empowerment

and self-awareness (Chen, 2004). Special education faculty members must provide concise expectations for class projects, ground these projects in research, and structure them to offer meaningful experiences for students. A. Jenkins and Sheehey (2009) found that in the structure of coursework, students reported most often that the best part of the course was the project and its application. Morewood and Condo (2012) reported that students noted that guided practice through meaningful projects helped deepen their knowledge of content and pedagogy.

Alber and Nelson (2002) stated, “The best way to bridge the research to practice gap is to involve classroom teachers in research projects so that they may gain new teaching approaches and see first-hand how specific interventions impact their own students” (p. 30). Giving preservice teachers an opportunity to actively research their own teaching strategies can offer powerful insights into effect and affect. Postholm (2009) discovered that allowing preservice teachers to act as researchers helped improve their teaching practices and root them in evidence-based practices and validation.

Conclusion

Teaching students with an SLD can be daunting to general and special educators who do not feel prepared. Preparation of preservice educators is critical, and teachers need to be continually informed of inclusive programming and trends regarding best practices in both general and special education (Shady et al., 2013). To better prepare teachers for working with students with LD, teacher preparation programs must examine a variety of outcome variables associated with effective teacher performance (Lee, Patterson, & Vega, 2011). For teachers to effectively deliver evidence-based interventions to students with LD, programs must deliver quality opportunities for learning preparation methods and development (Garland, 2012). The five suggestions listed above offer a foundation for providing preservice teachers with meaningful opportunities and experiences that may enhance educational outcomes when working with students with an SLD.

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Beyond the Forum

Joseph Morgan, PhD

LD Forum Editor

Beginning with this issue of *LD Forum*, I would like to begin a new and exciting extension of the material you are reading. I have started a blog, “Beyond the Forum,” at this web address (<http://beyondtheforum.blogspot.com>). This blog is designed to enhance and encourage discussion of material contained in *LD Forum*. I encourage you to head over to the blog to share ideas related to the material presented in our newsletter, provide anecdotal information related to your experiences with the topic, ask questions of the authors, and engage in discourse related to the topics. I envision this blog to be a space where collaborative connections can be made and where members of the CLD can share new and innova-

tive ideas related to the education and social-emotional well-being of students with learning disabilities.

This month, “Beyond the Forum” will focus on methods for preparing teachers to work with students with LD. Drs. Dorel and Peterson, authors of the “5 Ways to” article appearing in this issue, will share additional information about their topic, and we hope you will come caucus with us about strategies you use to prepare teachers, barriers to the preparation of teachers in the field of learning disabilities, and your overall thoughts about this topic. I encourage you to post questions, ideas, and additional readings to help start a conversation about how to best meet the needs of education students in this area.

Looking forward to seeing you, beyond the Forum.

Chapter News

Texas Chapter President Honored

The Texas Council for Learning Disabilities would like to congratulate their president, **Dr. Theresa Garfield Dorel**, on her selection as the **2015 Council for Exceptional Children Susan Phillips Gorin Award winner**. This prestigious award honors a professional in the field of special education who has demonstrated exemplary personal and professional

qualities while also making great contributions to CEC and to the field of exceptionalities. CEC will present the award to Dr. Dorel in a ceremony at the 2015 CEC conference in San Diego, California. This award highlights the hard work and professionalism of members of the CLD organization. Our heartiest congratulations to Dr. Dorel!

(**Five Ways To**, continued from page 6)

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moving forward on their work to create a document that offers guidance for our organization in providing professional development, based on best practices in delivering such development and in the field of LD. They have reviewed the work of other organizations as a precursor to moving forward with creating guidelines for CLD. Thanks to each of you for your work on this important project.

I want to thank everyone for your hard work, your commitment of expertise and time, and your true desire to contribute to the work of CLD and the field of learning disabilities. It continues to be a pleasure to work with such fine friends and colleagues.

Sincerely,

Steve Chamberlain
2014–2015 CLD President

37th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities

Las Vegas, Nevada

Update: Keynote Speaker

CLD President-Elect Diane Bryant and the CLD Board of Trustees are pleased to announce the **J. L. Wiederholt Distinguished Lecture Keynote Speaker** for the CLD 2015 Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, to be held on October 1 and 2, 2015. This year's distinguished speaker is **Lynn Meltzer, PhD**. The title of her talk will be "Executive Function and Flexible Thinking: The Foundations of Academic Success and Resilience."

About the Speaker



Lynn Meltzer is the president and director of research at the Research Institute for Learning and Development (ResearchILD) and director of assessment at the Institute for Learning and Development (ILD) in Lexington, Massachusetts. She is also an associate in education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a

fellow and past-president of the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities. For 29 years, she was an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Child Development at Tufts University. Dr. Meltzer is the founder and chair of the International Learning Differences Conference, now in its 30th year at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her 35 years of neuropsychological evaluations and clinical consultations with children, adolescents, and adults have emphasized the theory-to-practice cycle of knowledge. Her recent work with her ResearchILD colleagues has centered on the development of SMARTS Online, an evidence-based executive function and peer mentoring/coaching curriculum for middle and high school students. Her extensive publications and presentations include articles, chapters, and books; most recently, *Executive Function in Education: From Theory to Practice* (2007), *Promoting Executive Function in the Classroom* (2010), and *The Power of Peers in the Classroom: Enhancing Learning and Social Skills* (2015), co-edited with Karen Harris.



Sponsor the 2015 CLD Conference



The CLD Conference Committee is now accepting sponsorships for the 2015 CLD International Conference on Learning Disabilities in fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada!

Would your company or institution be interested in sponsoring an awards ceremony, coffee break, Leadership Academy training, or other specially tailored event or product offering? We have many great options available that will increase visibility and showcase your organization!

For more information and a copy of the sponsorship packet, please visit the conference webpage or contact **Maria Peterson** (mbpeters@tamusa.tamus.edu).

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE
37th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities

October 1 & 2, 2015

Tropicana Hotel • Las Vegas, Nevada



Join CLD in Las Vegas!!! Attend the conference!!!

- Concurrent skill-building sessions on research, interventions, teacher preparation, and policies for students with LD
- President's Awards reception and interactive poster sessions on evidence-based practices
 - Networking opportunities with local, state, and national educators in LD



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www.cldinternational.org



2015 Awards Nominations

Nominations for several CLD awards will be due **May 1, 2015**. The Leadership Development Committee announced this deadline date for two 2015 awards—Outstanding Teacher of the Year and Floyd G. Hudson Service Award—while the Research Committee has provided the same date for submission of papers for the 2015 Outstanding Researcher Award.

Outstanding Teacher of the Year

This award recognizes outstanding teachers who are CLD members and who consistently provide quality instruction to students with learning disabilities. These teachers, selected by local chapters, provide direct services to students. They are dedicated to implementing evidence-based instructional practices and collaborating with general education classroom teachers and other service providers to greatly improve the quality of education for all students who struggle academically.

State chapters forward their selected nominee for Teacher of the Year to the Leadership Development Committee and Executive Committee. *Because state chapter submission processes and due dates vary, please check with individual state chapters.*

Floyd G. Hudson Service Award

This award is presented for outstanding performance and commitment by a professional who works in the field of learning disabilities in a role outside of the classroom. This CLD member, working in a leadership capacity, enhances the professional learning of others in the field and has an impact on the lives of persons with learning disabilities. Only chapter presidents or members of the Board of Trustees can submit nomination packets online.

Award recipients are guests at the annual international conference. The recipients receive a complimentary conference registration and a one-year membership renewal. During the conference award program, the recipients will be presented a certificate of recognition and an honorarium.

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) has adopted the theme “**Urban Leadership**” for their sponsored awards, activities, and sessions at the 2015 conference. Nominees therefore should represent exemplar leaders who serve in urban areas.

The online submission link and application forms for 2015 are under construction but should be available in February via the website (www.cldinternational.org). For inquiries regarding nominations from states without a CLD chapter, contact **Colleen Reutebuch**, LDC co-chair (ckreutebuch@austin.utexas.edu).

Outstanding Researcher Award

To promote and recognize research, the Council for Learning Disabilities annually presents an award for an outstanding manuscript-length paper on learning disabilities based on a doctoral dissertation completed within the last five years. The award recipient will receive a plaque and a \$500 honorarium to be presented at the 2015 International Conference on Learning Disabilities.

A submitted paper must not be under consideration for, or the recipient of, another award. Because the paper will be considered for publication in *Learning Disability Quarterly*, it cannot be simultaneously submitted to or already published in another journal.

The submitted paper must follow the style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) and should be no more than 35 pages in length, including title page, abstract, main document, and references. (Tables and figures do not have to be counted in the page limit.) Submissions that exceed the page limit will not be reviewed.

Authors should submit papers electronically to:

Dr. Deborah K. Reed, CLD Research Committee Chair via email (dkreed@ferr.org)

Submissions cannot be made by a second party on behalf of an author. Each submission should include a cover letter with the following information:

- Degree-granting university
- Major advisor
- Year doctoral degree conferred
- Confirmation that the manuscript has not been submitted to or published in another journal

The deadline for submission of papers is May 1, 2015.

Submissions time stamped after 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on May 1 will not be reviewed. The winner will be notified by August 15, 2015.

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CLD NEWS & NOTES ...

► *The Call for Nominations for the 2015 Council for Learning Disabilities Awards* is now available. For more information, visit the CLD website (<http://goo.gl/3T31Um>).

► *Continue the conversation* about teacher preparation for working with students with learning disabilities at our new blog, “Beyond the Forum.” Get into the discussion at the following site (<http://goo.gl/7yVEOT>).

► *LD Forum* is currently seeking manuscript submissions and individuals to serve on the editorial board. For more

information, visit the webpage (<http://goo.gl/PcgWUI>) or contact **Joseph Morgan** (ldforum@unlv.nevada.edu).

► Check out *the latest issues of Learning Disability Quarterly* and *Intervention in School and Clinic*! Also, consider submitting your work for publication in our flagship journals!