



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

August 2014

President's Message



Dear CLD Members,

It is with great pleasure that I write this message as president of CLD. CLD has a proud tradition of providing space for professionals in the field of LD to join together in common work to increase our understanding of LD and improve our ability to serve individuals with learning disabilities.

CLD has provided many of us with professional mentoring and helped give our careers focus. I have been fortunate to be involved with such a wonderful group of professionals, and I am honored to now serve as its president.

The field of LD has evolved rapidly over a relatively short period of time. When I first entered it in the late 1980s, there was concern over the efficacy of special education. Today, we have an ever-growing database indicating the effectiveness of interventions. As program chair for the 2013 conference, I was extremely impressed by the quality of proposals describing well-designed research projects. Although we continue to debate a variety of issues in the field of LD, ours is a data-driven field that should continue to improve educational outcomes for individuals with LD.

Most of you don't know how I came into the field of LD. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Lee Wiederholt, who recruited me into graduate school during a time of personal difficulty. I wouldn't be where I am today without his guidance. After Lee's passing, I heard numerous former students tell similar stories about how Lee helped guide them into the field. From my perspective, the bestowing of the J. Lee Wiederholt Award at the annual conference is quite an honor. Early in my educational career I took courses from Lee, Brian Bryant, Judy Voress, and Steve Larsen, and then later from Diane Bryant. I was also fortunate to have studied in the area of bilingual special education under Shernaz García and Alba Ortiz. In reflection, it is easy to see how important these mentors were to my career. I have found this kind of mentorship in CLD and encourage you to be active members in its governing body, where I think you will find

opportunities for professional growth in a variety of ways. Feel free to contact me or any other member of our board if you are interested in serving.

I want to thank **Silvana Watson**, our immediate past president, for the tremendous work she did this past year. Under her guidance, CLD accomplished many goals, including the revision of its mission and vision statements, an ongoing revision of its Best Practices document, implementation of the electronic proposal submission for the conference, an improved website, and a very successful conference. Thank you, Silvana.

During my term as president, I hope to continue the good work started by past presidents and move forward with some new ideas as well. Our organization is fortunate to have such an outstanding Board of Trustees. I don't think I'm overstating it when I say we have some of the finest people serving on it. I intend to facilitate their excellent work in the coming year in whatever way I can.

I would like to welcome the newest member of our Executive Committee, our new vice president, **Mary Beth Calhoon**. She has just moved from Lehigh University to the

(continued on page 7)

In This Issue ...

- President's Message 1
- 5 Ways To 2
- Welcome New LD Forum Editor 6
- From the LD Forum Editor 6
- Chapter News 6
- Calls for Nominations 7
- CLD 36th Annual Conference 8
- 2014–2015 CLD Board of Trustees 9

Editor's Note: This column provides readers with immediate access to evidence-based strategies on current topics that can easily be transferred from the pages of LD Forum into effective teaching practice in CLD members' classrooms. Authors who would like to submit a column are encouraged to contact the editor in advance to discuss ideas. Author guidelines are available on CLD's website.

5 Ways To ...

Inform Students with Learning Disabilities About Cyberbullying

Maria B. Peterson

Texas A&M University—San Antonio

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In the changing landscape of today's schools, technology is beginning to take center stage as a method for teaching and instruction, access to classroom materials, assignment completion, and communication. While most public schools now have access to high-speed Internet, the use of technology extends beyond the classroom walls, where up to 95% of adolescents have direct access (Lenhart et al., 2011). As access increases among the nation's youth, new and evolving risks also emerge (Burrow-Sanchez, Call, & Zheng, 2011).

One such risk is online victimization, often referred to as *cyberbullying*, an aggressive behavior that is repeatedly and intentionally carried out—using electronic forms of contact—against a defenseless victim (Menesini et al., 2012; P. K. Smith & Slonje, 2010). Cyberbullying has an increased potential to reach a large audience, provides anonymity to the bully, has a decreased level of direct feedback between the bully and the victim, has decreased time and space limits (Slonje & Smith, 2008), and has lower levels of supervision (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

While some scholars have argued that cyberbullying is an extension of victimization, this victimization through electronic means can have additional consequences due to today's "connected" society. For example, up to 80% of the nation's youth have and maintain a social networking profile (e.g., Facebook; Lenhart et al., 2011), which is designed to foster communication with peers and other personal connections. These sites may also be used, however, to "threaten or harm other students" (Roberto, Eden, Savage, Ramos-Salazar, & Deiss, 2014, p. 98). More specifically, cyberbullying is more subtle and covert than traditional bullying; this aggressive, intentional act is carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend him- or herself (Grigg, 2010), and it can be perpetrated faster and in more environments (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011). Cyberbullying primarily involves calling the victim names, posing threats, spreading rumors, sharing the victim's private information, and employing social isolation and exclusion.

While cyberbullying is a potential risk for anyone who has Internet access, maintains a social networking profile, and/or has Internet capabilities, students with learning disabilities (LD) may be at an escalated risk of victimization due to characteristics associated with their disability. For ex-

ample, Whitney, Smith, and Thompson (1994) noted, "Often just being different in a noticeable way can be a risk factor for being a victim" (p. 213). It could be argued that this noticeable difference is more than a physical difference, and it can be extended to differences in online or electronic interactions. Recent studies involving the traditional bully-victim dynamic indicate that students with disabilities experience higher levels of direct (e.g., physical, verbal) and indirect (e.g., social exclusion) victimization than their peers without disabilities (see Rose, Monda-Amaya, & Espelage, 2011, for additional information). More specifically, Sabornie (1994) determined that students with LD were 3.5 times more likely to experience victimization than their peers without disabilities. Rose, Espelage, Aragon, and Elliot (2011) suggested that students with disabilities were twice as likely to experience "high levels" of victimization when compared to their same-age nondisabled peers.

Despite the constant evolution of technology and the recent attention given to cyberbullying, no study to date has explored the phenomenon of cyberbullying among students with LD. Traditional bullying literature would suggest that these students are potentially at escalated risk for electronic victimization: Their abilities to deal with challenges they experience in academic situations, social interactions, and behavioral functioning may not be as equitable as those of their nondisabled peers (D. S. Smith & Nagle, 1995). This assumption is grounded in two basic components in the existing literature that overlap with online contexts. First, students with LD may struggle with social skills and social relationships, and thus experience higher levels of peer rejection (Kuhne & Wiener, 2000; Pavri & Luftig, 2000). Second, students with disabilities, including those with LD, may maintain below-average communication skills (McLaughlin, Byers, & Vaughn, 2010), which may extend to online contexts.

The following five suggestions provide a framework of techniques that can be used to teach students with LD about cyberbullying. Educators may find these resources beneficial as they work to support students in effective ways to create awareness about cyberbullying as well as systematically address online safety. They can be used to teach students how to independently and effectively safeguard themselves against the detrimental effects associated with cyberbullying.

(continued on page 3)

1 Build a Knowledge Base. Students with LD must have a baseline of common understanding that explicitly defines cyberbullying. Most important, students with LD must know how to recognize when they have experienced online victimization and how they can effectively and efficiently prevent further occurrences. Hinduja and Patchin (2012) offered 10 tips for teens to further their cyberbullying knowledge base: (1) Educate yourself, (2) Protect your password, (3) Keep photos PG, (4) Never open an unidentified or unsolicited message, (5) Log out of online accounts, (6) Pause before you post, (7) Raise awareness, (8) Set up privacy controls, (9) “Google” yourself, and (10) Don’t be a cyberbully. While building a knowledge base is a critical component of preventing cyberbullying, many students are left to independently navigate these strategies. Given the importance of explicit instruction, especially for students with LD, having lesson plans and discussions regarding cyberbullying is critical, especially as schools begin to implement activities that are grounded in technology use. These lessons can be integrated into any subject area and/or assignment. Berson, Berson, and Ferron (2002) identified ongoing discussions by parents, caregivers, or teachers with students about appropriate online interactions to be of utmost importance. Table 1 offers online resources that could be used to support the development of students’ cyberbullying knowledge base.

2 Create a Safety Plan. Strategies can be identified and written directly into the IEP to help stop or prevent cyberbullying; when possible, students should be involved in making decisions about which strategies to implement (Hartas & Lindsay, 2011). Strategies and

goals within the IEP could focus on (1) identifying and building on opportunities that increase the possibility of positive social interactions with wide peer groups in social and online contexts, (2) identifying and practicing strategies and responses that keep the student safe in online environments and cyberbullying situations, and (3) identifying an adult in the school to whom the child can go for assistance and advice (Holmquist, 2011).

Disability-based harassment may be a violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, regardless of the school or district’s anti-bullying policy (see Rose, Swearer, & Espelage, 2012, for additional information). While these violations typically refer to bullying or harassment within the school, educational stakeholders must be aware of the overlap between online and offline contexts. Consequently, students with LD who have had incidents within the bullying dynamic, whether online or offline, should have safety provisions in place within their 504 plan or IEP to systematically support the amelioration of victimization as well as prevent potential detrimental outcomes.

3 Promote Positive Social Interaction Support. How children read and assimilate within their social environment may be the dominant factor that shapes their selection of responses. A host of negative or inappropriate behaviors have been attributed to students with LD, including a lack of skills in initiating and sustaining positive relationships (Kuhne & Wiener, 2000; Pavri & Luftig, 2000). Therefore, unskilled responses may reflect the role that is played within the social milieu (Bryan, Burstein, & Ergul, 2004). Evidence suggests that this is true for traditional social interactions, and an argument can be made that online

Table 1. Online Cyberbullying Resources for Educators and Students

Title	Internet Address
Cyberbullying Research Center	http://cyberbullying.us
Education and Outreach: Bullying/Cyberbullying	http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/bullying-cyberbullying/
iKeepSafe Cyberbullying Resources	http://www.ikeepSAFE.org/educators/more/cyberbullying-resources/
NASP Resources: Cybersmart! Cyberbullying Awareness Curriculum	http://www.nasponline.org/resources/cyberbullying/
National Crime and Prevention Council (Cyberbullying)	http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying
Stopbullying.gov	http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/

(continued on page 4)

(5 Ways To, continued from page 3)

experiences are extensions of these environments. More specifically, today's youth are learning to engage in social interactions that are extended by online interactions, and these social norms govern their overall social acceptance, on- and offline (Gies, 2008; Tynes, Rose, & Williams, 2010). Elkskin (1994) suggested focusing on sequential modification, introducing contingencies, training with several examples, training across settings, and mediating training generalizations. These strategies can be conducted through the use of role-play, social stories, peer focus groups, and student mentorships, which can be embedded into lessons and assignments across subject areas. Given the evidence that suggests that students with LD often struggle with social skills and communication (Rose, Monda-Amaya, & Espelage, 2011), these approaches should address the overlap between the online and offline environments.

4 Construct Peer Support Systems. Developing a network of peers who embody trust and stability for students with LD is imperative to effectively preventing and creating awareness about cyberbullying. Mutual peer support systems should contain individuals with LD and nondisabled peers who (a) have had previous or similar experiences, (b) recognize the strengths of self and others, and (c) are able to involve interdependence among the group in online and offline environments. Peer support groups should also produce sensitivity based on empathetic insight that has accessible communication and support within the group (Keyes, 2011). For example, Rose, Espelage, Monda-Amaya, Shogren, and Aragon (2013) found that lack of peer social support was the strongest predictor of school-based bullying, victimization, fighting, and anger among students with LD and their nondisabled peers. More specifically, higher levels of peer social support predicted lower levels of involvement within the bullying dynamic more than than feelings of school belonging, teacher and school social support, and family social support. While these results were grounded in an offline context, it can be argued that a strong peer support system serves as a universal support and will provide students with LD an outlet to discuss online experiences, safety, and problematic interactions. Therefore, teachers and educational stakeholders should take measures to foster stronger peer relationships.

5 Practice Explicit Classroom Instruction. Explicit classroom guidance has the potential to modify the climate of an entire school, including the awareness and prevention of cyberbullying. For example, schools that model inclusive practices and place equal emphasis on academic achievement and social and emotional development maintain a stronger sense of belonging for students with and without disabilities (Johnson, 2009; Nipedal, Nesdale, & Killen, 2010). In turn, a stronger sense of belonging has been associated with lower levels of bullying involvement (Espelage, Hong, Rao, & Low, 2013). However, educational stakeholders must actively address the climate of the school by supporting students' functional needs, reinforcing prosocial behaviors, and fostering a sense of community. Conceivably, this stronger sense of community will encompass online and offline contexts. The prevention of undesirable behaviors (e.g., cyberbullying) involves limiting the factors that encourage these behaviors while teaching students appropriate prosocial interaction skills (Spivak & Prothrow-Stith, 2001). These whole-group classroom discussions, if done properly and consistently, may greatly encourage a climate of connectedness and belonging while decreasing online/offline victimization. Rose and Monda-Amaya (2012) argued that educational stakeholders can use strategies such as creating a highly structured classroom that clearly defines bullying, establishes a protocol for reporting, and specifically outlines procedures for responding to the reported incident. Similar to other strategies, these guidelines were grounded in offline victimization but can be extended to online contexts by establishing a similar protocol. Most important, all students must be aware of the selected protocol and be active stakeholders in the procedure. School counselors can work with teachers to provide tangible experiences and problem-solving techniques to increase their efficacy in instruction delivery (Colvin, 2004).

Although students with disabilities may face a higher risk of experiencing victimization, there are many approaches to teach students with LD to avoid, prevent, and reduce cyberbullying. Teachers must provide consistent, relevant social opportunities that are directly related to online safety and etiquette. They can be embedded within all grade and/or subject areas and can be built upon throughout the school year. The five suggestions outlined here serve as a preliminary guide to inform students with LD how to deal with such

(continued on page 5)

(5 Ways To, continued from page 4)

situations by recognizing cyberbullying, serving as active stakeholders in their safety plan, engaging in socially appropriate interactions, increasing a positive peer base, and becoming active members in their learning communities. Educators can use these five approaches to facilitate the development of beneficial strategies for students with LD as well as provide a roadmap for them to use beyond school boundaries.

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Welcome New LD Forum Editor

I would like to introduce readers to the new editor of *LD Forum*, **Dr. Joe Morgan**, who begins his tenure with this issue. Obviously, finding an editor who could maintain the standards established by the previous editor, Dr. Cathy Thomas, was a task the Communication Committee approached with considerable care. I am sure readers will find the results of our search very satisfactory.

Joe holds the rank of assistant professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has several publications and serves as a reviewer for various professional journals. Joe's experience in the public schools and with the editorial process will serve him well as he works with authors to provide practical, research-based strategies and techniques that address the needs of students with LD.

Joe is also an active member of CLD, currently serving as the Technology Committee Co-chair and as the Social Media coordinator. His familiarity with the workings of CLD will aid him in providing CLD members with relevant information about the organization's current activities and directions.

On behalf of the CLD Board of Trustees, we welcome Joe and look forward to the issues of *LD Forum* prepared under his leadership.

Judy Voress

Communications Committee Chair

From the LD Forum Editor



I am honored and excited to be working on my first issue as editor of *LD Forum*. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve the Council for Learning Disabilities, and I am so grateful. I want to first thank Dr. Cathy Newman Thomas, the previous editor, for her leadership and guidance in the direction of the newsletter and for her

mentoring and support while we transition roles. She has set the standard for excellence, and I look forward to continuing to work with her in the future.

As you have probably read, I am an assistant professor of special education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. My research areas focus on methods of providing access to the general education curriculum for students with LD and emotional/behavioral disorders, social-emotional learning of

students with disabilities, and the achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students in urban environments. I firmly believe there is so much opportunity in the field of special education, particularly as it relates to students with LD, and I cannot wait to work with you all to disseminate information about evidence-based practices for meeting their needs.

I very much look forward to partnering with the Board of Trustees and all members of CLD on this new venture, and to working with **Ms. Jacquelyn Chovanes**, the incoming assistant editor. I encourage you to consider translating the research you are doing to practice and to submit your ideas to the *LD Forum* so that we can continue to encourage and inspire teachers and practitioners to implement techniques that we know work for students with LD. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (ldforum@unlv.nevada.edu).

Onward,

Joseph John Morgan

Incoming Editor

Chapter News

Texas Chapter

A New Chapter Begins. In May 2014, Texas A&M University San Antonio began the first Student Council for Learning Disabilities Chapter. The CLD Board of Trustees awarded them SCLD status on June 3, 2014. A&M San Antonio students eagerly anticipate becoming part of this chapter. **Kristen Dorwald-Gill**, the new chapter president, hopes to lay the foundation for an active group. Some of the goals for this upcoming year include increasing membership and developing undergraduate and graduate Teacher of the Year awards. Officers: **Patty Hernandez**, vice-president; **Sarah Sanchez**, secretary; **Erica Reyna**, treasurer; and **Ester Venzor**, parliamentarian. Dr. Adrian Sorrell and Dr. Theresa Garfield Dorel are co-faculty advisors.

2014–2015 Texas CLD Executive Board. The Texas Chapter of CLD (TCLD) also welcomes a new Executive Board for the 2014–2015 academic year. **Theresa Garfield Dorel** will serve as president, **Maria B. Peterson** as vice-president, **Heather Haynes-Smith** as treasurer, and **Ambre Fairfield** as secretary. Anyone interested in serving on TCLD committees or in leadership roles is welcome to contact Theresa (tdorel@tamusa.tamus.edu).



CALLS FOR NOMINATIONS

Vice President & Secretary

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees is seeking nominations for two important CLD officers: vice president and secretary. The **vice president** serves a one-year term in this position and automatically succeeds to the positions of president-elect, president, and past-president. The vice president serves as the program chair for the annual conference and in the president's place and with his or her authority in case of the absence or disability of the president and president-elect. The vice president assists in work on the plan of operation and the annual CLD budget.

The CLD **secretary** serves a two-year term. The secretary is a member of the Executive Committee and is responsible for the preparation, maintenance, and distribution of records of the Annual Business, Board of Trustees, and Special and Executive Committee meetings, including all reports filed. For more information on the duties and responsibilities of these positions, please refer to the CLD Bylaws (available at www.cldinternational.org).

Nominations may be hand delivered at the CLD conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, until the Annual Business Meeting, to be held at 4:00 pm on Thursday, October 2, 2014. **Petitions submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than Wednesday, September 3, 2014**, and addressed to Dr. Silvana Watson, 1616 East Ocean View, Unit D, Norfolk, VA 23503. Petitions **submitted via e-mail** must be submitted to Dr. Silvana Watson (swatson@odu.edu) by **Monday, September 29, 2014**. To be considered, all nominations must be received at these times. Nominees must consent to the nomination to stand for election, and nominations must include at least five signatures from current members of CLD and be accompanied by a biographical sketch that offers evidence of the candidate's qualifications. The nomination packet and additional information are available at the CLD website (www.cldinternational.org).

(President's Message, continued from page 1)

University of Miami and previously served CLD as Membership chair. We are excited that she is joining the EC. Welcome!

Let me conclude by encouraging you to attend this year's conference in Philadelphia on October 2nd and 3rd. Those of you who have attended past conferences know this is a great opportunity to network with one another and to forge profes-

2014 Outstanding Researcher Award

To promote and recognize research, CLD 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 submission must not be under consideration for, or the recipient of, another award. The award recipient will receive a plaque and a \$500 honorarium to be presented at the 2015 International Conference on Learning Disabilities. Because the paper will be considered for publication in *Learning Disability Quarterly*, it cannot be simultaneously submitted to or already published in another journal.

One electronic copy of the APA-style paper (max. 35 pages in length) should be submitted by the author to: Dr. Deborah K. Reed, CLD Research Committee Chair (dkreed@fcr.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 35-page limit includes the title page, abstract, main document, and references. It does not include tables and figures. Submissions that exceed the page limit will not be reviewed.

Deadline for submission of papers: May 1, 2015

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

sional learning communities. For those of you who haven't, I hope you will make this the first of many conferences you attend. I think you will find it to your liking.

Looking forward to a great year for CLD!

Steve Chamberlain
2014–2015 CLD President

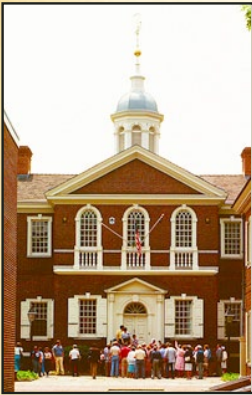


36th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities

October 2 & 3, 2014

Sonesta Hotel & Resort

*Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania*



2014 J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished
Lecturer and Keynote Speaker

Dr. Naomi Zigmond

University of Pittsburgh

*“Learning Disabilities: Past,
Present, Future”*



- More than 125 concurrent sessions and interactive papers on research, interventions, teacher preparation, and policy
- Network and collaborate with researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners who work with individuals with learning disabilities
- Recognition of Teachers of the Year, Outstanding Researcher, Floyd G. Hudson Outstanding Service awardee
- Serve as a sponsor of the CLD Conference to promote your organization’s products and services or recruit students; for more information, see http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/CLD2014SponsorshipPacket_Rev1.pdf
- Register for the conference and reserve your room at the Sonesta Hotel: Visit the CLD conference webpage today (<https://members.cldinternational.org/civcrm/event/info?reset=1&id=6>)
- Enjoy historic Philadelphia!



- Follow @CLDIntl
- “Like” the Council for Learning Disabilities on Facebook
 - Watch for registration and hotel reservations:
www.cldinternational.org

BRING IN NEW MEMBERS, Receive Hotel Accommodations for 2014 CLD Conference October 2 & 3

*Sonesta Hotel & Resort
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

OFFICIAL RULES

- **Duration:** October 24, 2013, to September 15, 2014
- Refer **5** full new members: receive **1 free night’s** accommodations for the 2014 CLD conference
- Refer **10** full new members: receive **2 free nights’** accommodations for the 2014 CLD conference

RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

- Full membership
- Never been a member of CLD before **OR**
- Have not been a member of CLD since 2010

THE NEW MEMBER MUST:

- Fill in the “**Referred by**” box on the membership form

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA:

- Retired and student membership rates are **not** eligible for participation

**The free nights can only be used in conjunction with the 2014 CLD conference dates, October 2 & 3, 2014.*

No other dates are eligible for this incentive.

**For more information go to:
www.cldinternational.org**

The CLD organization is not responsible or liable for any errors made through the use of technology or lack of correct information made available to the membership committee. Only new member applicants can notify the membership committee regarding who referred them. **IF** you refer someone and he or she joins, please make sure the person has filled in the “Referred by” box on the application form.

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