



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

June 2011

President's Message

Greetings! This is my final newsletter article to you as CLD president. As I reflect on this year, I appreciate the honor it has been to serve as President. I have had the privilege of working with many talented and committed people to promote CLD's mission and vision of furthering "evidence-based teaching, collaboration, research, leadership, and advocacy . . . to improve the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities and others who experience challenges in learning."

This year we have accomplished several significant activities. The Board of Trustees developed a long-range planning document to guide our efforts in the areas of finances, membership, conferences, and governance over the next several years. In October 2010, we had a successful conference in Myrtle Beach, with close to 300 participants. We continue to contribute to the knowledge base and advocacy in the field through our stellar publications (*Learning Disability Quarterly* [LDQ], *LD Forum*) and participation in the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. It is my hope that you participated in our membership survey, which will provide us with valuable information on how to meet your needs more effectively. Please see the Annual Report for fiscal year 2010–2011, which will be available on the CLD website in July, for additional accomplishments this year.

As to the future, you will see a new look to our annual conference. An **Ad Hoc Conference Restructuring Committee** was appointed to examine CLD's conference structure and opportunities. As a result, at our 2011 Conference in Austin, Texas, you will experience

- more in-depth evidence-based, practitioner-oriented workshops;
- opportunities for researchers to discuss their work and learn more from one another about approaches to research design and related statistics; and
- dissemination of the latest policy information that affects individuals with LD and those who work with them.

We are initiating a **Leadership Academy** to promote the leadership development of our members. Leadership Academy members will have the opportunity to network with and receive mentoring from some of the most highly regarded leaders in the LD field. Our new database will be functional soon, and we are taking steps to ensure that LDQ's articles are more visible and more widely available.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and contributions of Board of Trustees (BOT) members who will be completing their term of service on June 30th. Many thanks and much appreciation is extended to these individuals: **Silvana Watson**, Diversity Chair; **Dodi Hodges**, Standards and Ethics Chair; **Brian Bryant**, Conference Committee Chair; **Cathy Thomas**, *LD Forum* Editor; and **Chris Curran**, Past President. Also, a big welcome goes to our newly elected Vice-President, **Silvana Watson**, and Treasurer, **Sarah Semon**. Cathy Thomas has been reappointed to serve another term as the *LD Forum* Editor. I strongly encourage you to consider sharing your expertise and advocacy with us. If you would like to get involved in one of our Standing Committees, please contact CLD's Executive Director, **Linda Nease** (lneasecl@aol.com) with your questions or interests.



In closing, I would personally like to thank the CLD BOT for their support during my term as president, as well as other CLD members who have made me feel a part of this important organization. I am so thankful for your encouragement, assistance, and guidance over the years!

Warmest regards,

Cari Dunn

2010–2011 CLD President

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Evidence-Based Strategies to Support English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities

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English Language Learners (ELLs), including students who are limited English proficient (LEP), are one of the fastest growing populations in U.S. schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), 20.3% of students speak a language other than English at home. Students who are classified as ELL or LEP require specific supports in English language acquisition and literacy.

Furthermore, ELLs who are identified as having a learning disability (LD) frequently struggle in school. Although finding effective strategies for instructing ELLs has become an important line of research, a limited number of research studies have examined effective reading strategies for ELLs with LD (Gersten & Baker, 2000; Klinger, Artiles, & Méndez Barletta, 2006; Saenz, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005). Identifying ways to help these students in the classroom is critical to ensuring academic achievement. This article will (a) present information regarding the implications of ELL status on the identification of LD and (b) provide resources on evidence-based literacy practices to support ELL learners with LD.

Implications of English Learning on the Identification of Learning Disabilities

The identification of an ELL as having a learning disability (ELL/LD) can be very difficult. According to the exclusionary clause in

the IDEA definition of LD, children who have learning problems “that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation; or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage” would not qualify as having a learning disability. Therefore, the assessment team must determine if second language acquisition can be ruled out as a determining factor for the child’s learning difficulties (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004). Due to a limited number of available assessment tools that have been normed with ELLs (Klinger & Edwards, 2006), current practices may not be appropriate for determining eligibility for students at various stages and proficiencies in learning English. Understanding second language acquisition is an important part of the eligibility process; therefore, when assessing an ELL for special education, eligibility teams must include a member who understands second language acquisition.

The identification of ELL/LD is a complex, multifaceted process. When ELLs are referred for an LD evaluation, many considerations need to be taken into account (Klinger & Edwards, 2006). These include (a) English language proficiency, (b) the length of time the student has been in an English instructional environment, (c) the degree to which English is used in the home, (d) assessment practices (e.g., school pre-referral procedures, team member qualifications, available instruments), (e) level of acculturation, and (f) history of instruction in the primary language.

There are several useful theories of second language acquisition, and understanding them is vital to the identification process. For example, Cummins’ (1981) ideas regarding *Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills* (BICS) and *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP), and Krashen’s (1987) *Theory of Second Language Acquisition* can help professionals better understand the process of learning a second language. When educators understand typical and atypical second language learning, they can introduce appropriate educational strategies that incorporate research-based practices for ELL children (see Table 1 for additional readings and resources on this topic). When assessing for

TABLE 1. Web Resources to Support ELL/LD Students

Site Title	URL
Understanding Second Language Acquisition	
Cummins BICS/CALP	http://www.everythingsl.net/inservices/bics_calp.php
Krashen’s Theory of Second Language Acquisition	http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html
ELL Instructional Resources	
Classwide Peer Tutoring	http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/pals26/chalcycle.htm
Curriculum-Based Measurement	http://interventioncentral.com
DIBELS	http://dibels.uoregon.edu
EasyCBM	http://www.easycbm.com
Jigsaw	http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/strats/jigsaw/
Student Talk	http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/intera.html
Think-Pair-Share	http://www.readingquest.org/strat/tps.html
Vocabulary Instruction	http://www.readingrockets.org/blog/30098
Wordsift	http://www.wordsift.com

LD in ELL learners, schools should conduct assessments in the primary language. ELL/LD students will demonstrate difficulties in processing both languages. However, a discrepancy in the primary language does not automatically indicate a learning disability. Teams must consider additional factors that may affect students' scores (e.g., years of formal education in each language, language of instruction, oral language skills in primary language).

Implementing Evidence-Based Instruction

When selecting school-wide curricular or classroom learning materials, educators should do so with ELLs in mind (Gollnick & Chin, 2009). However, regardless of the chosen language arts curriculum, several strategies—such as *frequent progress monitoring*, *direct vocabulary instruction*, *student talk*, and *classwide peer tutoring*—should be implemented with ELL/LDs to facilitate literacy development.

Monitor Progress

Progress monitoring is an evidence-based practice that assesses student progress and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction (L. Fuchs & Fuchs, 2002). *Curriculum-based measurement (CBM)* is an effective tool for monitoring how students are progressing in basic skills. Frequent, brief assessments of a specific skill, such as reading fluency, are recorded on a graph, and performance is compared to expected performance. Figure 1 shows an example for recording reading fluency. Two research-based fluency measures—*Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)*; Good & Kaminski, 2002) and *EasyCBM* (Alonzo, Glasgow, Tindal, Ulmer, & Yovanoff, 2010)—may be of interest to teachers; these measures are available free in PDF format online (see Table 1). Teachers may also monitor Spanish literacy skills with DIBELS. Teachers who are monitoring students taught in bilingual environments should include Spanish oral reading fluency.

Monitoring the progress of all students in a class may seem overwhelming, but it can be managed. Teachers should conduct progress monitoring for students who display the most need once a week; all students do not need to be monitored on the same day, however. Testing 30 students a week sounds unmanageable, but testing 6 students a day seems more manageable. After determining baseline data (data gathered prior to intervention to help identify student needs), teachers should set long-term goals for students that move them toward grade-level expectations. Teach-

ers then graph each data point and make instructional decisions based on a particular student's progress (see Figure 1). While research supports using CBM for ELL/LD students, it is not simply the task of conducting CBM that benefits students; when teachers make instructional decisions using CBM, their students receive more appropriate instruction and therefore improve their skills (L. S. Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984).

Direct Vocabulary Instruction

ELL/LD students likely will not learn new vocabulary incidentally. Direct instruction of vocabulary thus is very important (Bursuck & Damer, 2010; Gersten et al., 2007). When introducing new text, the teacher should identify words that will need to be directly taught, keeping in mind there may be less obvious words or phrases the student may not know. For example, a student may need help with figurative language, such as idioms and colloquial phrases.

Cognates. Cognates can be a useful tool when introducing vocabulary to students. *Cognates* are words that have similar sound and meaning in two languages (e.g., family/*familia*). If the student knows the word in the primary language, he or she can use this knowledge to acquire vocabulary in English. False cognates (e.g., library = *biblioteca*, bookstore = *liberia*) may need special attention. Teachers should not assume that students know academic language (e.g., science terms) in their primary language (Cummins, 1981). Draper Rodriguez and Higgins (2005) provided several suggestions for teaching more abstract concepts to ELL students, including use of gestures and manipulatives.

Technology. Technology can provide useful ways to introduce vocabulary to students and create opportunities for meaningful discussions. For example, many websites, such as WordSift (see Table 1), provide ideas for teaching new vocabulary words and concepts (Roman, Wientjes, Thompson, & Hakuta, 2009). WordSift allows teachers to input text, which is then analyzed to determine the frequency of vocabulary present in the passage and the students' familiarity with the selected vocabulary. A graphic organizer or word web is generated, along with images associated with the vocabulary from the selected text.

Student Talk

Typically, teachers do the majority of talking in classrooms (Marshall, 2000). For students who are learning English, however, opportunities to speak in English are essential. These students *must* be given ample wait time before they are required to respond. Think-Pair-Share (TPS; Robertson, 2006; see Table 1) is one approach that stresses the importance of allowing students an opportunity to reflect in silence and listen, rather than sharing thoughts quickly. TPS is a strategy that allows teachers to give students the opportunity to think and discuss topics with peers before talking in front of the whole class. TPS implementation involves teachers giving students a thought-provoking question and an allotted amount of time to think about the answer, students then pairing off and discussing the topic to decide on a response, and finally, pairs sharing their answers with the class.

For students to acquire English, they must be given opportunities to speak and write in it. Collaborative activities, such as the *Jigsaw strategy* (Aronson, 1978, 2000; see Table 1), allow students to communicate or share expertise they have learned on a specific topic with their classmates in an engaging and interactive

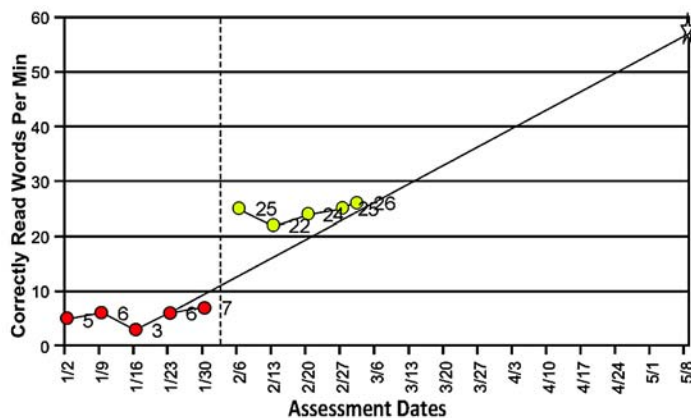


FIGURE 1. Sample CBM Progress Monitoring Graph

manner. Jigsaw is a good strategy to use when a large amount of material needs to be covered. The teacher assigns each student to a home group. From each home group, the students are then each assigned to a different expert group. The expert groups are responsible for becoming the experts on the portion of the material they are assigned. After the expert groups have completed their study of the material, the students return to their home group to teach the other students in their group about their assigned topic as well as learn about the other areas from members of their home group. The Jigsaw strategy provides students with time to prepare materials, conduct research, and master the content information before they work with a larger group in the development of a final product.

Classwide Peer Tutoring

Classwide peer tutoring (CWPT) is a teaching strategy based on reciprocal peer tutoring (Greenwood, Arreaga-Mayer, Utley, Gavin, & Terry, 2001). CWPT has been shown to be effective with students who are ELLs (Saenz et al., 2005) and students who have LD (D. Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1997). When implementing a CWPT model in the classroom, the teacher first dedicates time within the schedule for tutoring sessions and establishes a monitoring or point system to encourage, motivate, and track student performance. Next, the teacher presents the content to be learned by all students and models the process and procedures that tutors and tutees are to follow during the tutoring session. This includes describing the format in which the content will be presented by students to their peers, as well as a plan to address error correction. Students are then paired based on skill and ability to practice and work together; the teacher should change the peer grouping or pairs frequently. The teacher encourages active and reciprocal roles and communication from all students.

One benefit of CWPT is that students are given many opportunities to respond. This is especially important for ELL/LD learners (Arreaga-Mayer, 1998; Gersten & Baker, 2000), who need many opportunities to practice English. Peers are often able to provide primary language support, and this activity is socially reinforcing for both students.

Summary

More research and professional development needs to be conducted to investigate and provide effective strategies for instructing ELL/LD learners. The evidence-based methods described here are teacher friendly and can help these students achieve literacy success across school settings.

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FOR THE

33rd International Conference on Learning Disabilities

OCTOBER 27TH & 28TH, 2011

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How Researchers Develop and Practitioners Implement Evidence-Based Interventions

This year, the conference provides:

- ★ **2- and 3-hour sessions**, longer than the typical 1-hour sessions, to allow for in-depth learning about evidence-based research on instructional strategies.
- ★ **Researchers & practitioners from throughout the country** will attend and present.
- ★ **Crackerbarrel sessions** will allow for interactive discussions on Response to Intervention and a number of other timely topics.

Monica Lambert, CLD's President-Elect and Program Chair, has put together an outstanding program in the areas of learning disability research, policy, and evidence-based intervention, and **Judy Voress** and **Diane Pedrotty Bryant, Local Arrangements Chairs**, are working with the Local Arrangements Committee members to ensure that **TEXAS HOSPITALITY** will be in full swing throughout your visit.

Highlights include:

- ★ **Dr. Margo Mastropieri, Keynote Speaker** and recipient of CLD's prestigious J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer Award
- ★ **Sessions for Administrators**
- ★ **Meet the Editors**
- ★ **Special Thursday evening sessions**
- ★ **CLD's Must Reads**

Early Bird registration begins **June 15, 2011**.

Be sure to make your reservations at the conference hotel by **September 25, 2011**:

Hilton Austin

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Y'ALL COME!

Look for more information on the CLD website **AND** check out CLD's Facebook and Twitter pages for updates!



Committee/Chapter Reports and News

Chapter News

California CLD once again collaborated with other organizations to host the **6th annual General Education/Special Education Collaborative: “Autism, Inclusion and Evidence-Based Practices,”** which was held April 29th and 30th in Brea, California. The program was equal to past conferences, with amazing speakers and a strong focus that benefited the community members, families, educators, and other professionals in attendance. Preconference workshops offering specialized training, including a SIM workshop by **Dr. Beth Lasky** (California State University Northridge), occurred prior to the formal opening of the conference. **Jan Weiner** (California State University Fullerton) provided the keynote speech, “What Is Evidence-Based Best Practice? Determining Best Outcomes for Adult Transition Students,” followed by a panel discussion by young adults with disabilities. Saturday’s keynote sessions featured **Dr. Laura Hall** (San Diego State University), speaking on “Using Evidence-Based Practices to Challenge the Quiet Learner with ASD”; **Dr. Jan Blacher** (University of California Riverside), discussing “Making School Days Happy Days: Student–Teacher Relationships In Autism”; and **Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson** (UCLA), providing information on PEERS, a parent-assisted social skills intervention for teens that she co-developed. PEERS was recently featured in *People* magazine, *USA Today*, and *US News and World Report*. On Saturday afternoon participants had the chance to select from a variety of breakout sessions, including presentations by book authors such as **Juda Carter** (*Keep it Positive: A New Approach to Successful Parenting*) and **Jennifer McIlwee Myers** (*How to Teach Life Skills to Kids with Autism or Asperger’s*).

— Dr. Belinda Dunnick Karge
(bkarge@fullerton.edu)

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Colorado CLD is honored to award its **2011 Tuition Scholarship** to **Angela Lane**. Angela will receive \$1,500 and a 1-year student membership to CLD. Angela has been in the field of education for 16 years. She first worked as a preschool teacher in a private school before spending 2 years as a special education paraprofessional. After obtaining her degree in elementary education, she began teaching at Summit Elementary School in the Woodland Park School District. Angela is currently completing coursework for a master’s degree in special education at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. As the parent of a student with special needs, Angela truly understands what it means to be an effective teacher for students with learning disabilities. She notes, “Having the background knowledge and an understanding of the daily struggles that a child with a learning disability must face each day is the foundation of effective instruction and intervention.” According to Eric Owens, Summit Elementary School principal,

Ms. Lane is recognized by her peers as a leader both within her grade level and throughout the building due to her knowledge and understanding of instructional strategies and the ability to work equally effectively with students and peers. She has the ability to identify student academic, behavioral, and emotional needs and adapt and develop her instruction to most effectively meet those needs.

We congratulate Angela on her award.

— Patty Meek (jpmEEKIS@comcast.net)

Election Results

Congratulations to **Silvana Watson**, our new **Vice President**. Silvana is an associate professor at Old Dominion University in Virginia and was instrumental in establishing CLD’s Diversity Committee, for which she has served as chair for the past 6 years. **Sarah Semon**, an assistant professor at the University of Northern Illinois, will be our incoming **Secretary**. She has served CLD as interim secretary prior to the election, and CLD will benefit greatly from Sarah’s technology skills and contributions. Sincere thanks to **Karen Smith**, Assistant Vice President for Graduate Studies & Research at the University of Texas–Permian Basin, for her service as **Treasurer**. **Steve Chamberlain**, associate professor at the University of Texas–Brownsville, will complete Karen’s term as **Treasurer**. Finally, **Cathy Newman Thomas** has been reappointed for a second term as **LD Forum Editor**.

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CLD Information Central

CLD Mission, Vision, & Goals

Mission Statement: The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) is an international organization that promotes evidence-based teaching, collaboration, research, leadership, and advocacy. CLD is composed of professionals who represent diverse disciplines and are committed to enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities and others who experience challenges in learning.

Vision Statement: Our vision is to include all educators, researchers, administrators, and support personnel to improve the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities and others who experience challenges in learning.

External Goals

1. Promote the use and monitoring of evidence-based interventions for individuals with learning disabilities (LD) and others who experience challenges in learning.
2. Foster collaborative networks with and among professionals who serve individuals with LD and others who experience challenges in learning.
3. Expand our audience to educators, researchers, administrators, and support personnel.
4. Promote high-quality research of importance to individuals with LD and persons who experience challenges in learning.
5. Support leadership development among professionals who serve individuals with LD and others who experience challenges in learning.
6. Advocate for an educational system that respects, supports, and values individual differences.

Internal Goals

1. Ensure efficient, accountable, responsive governance to achieve the CLD mission.
2. Mentor future CLD leaders.
3. Maintain sound fiscal planning and practice.
4. Recruit and retain CLD members.
5. Increase the diversity of our organization.

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- CLD members have free online access to *Learning Disability Quarterly* for issues starting Winter 2007 (Vol. 30, No. 1). To activate your free access, register with IngentaConnect (<http://www.ingentaconnect.com>). Once initial registration is complete, select Personal Subscriptions. Select *Learning Disability Quarterly* and enter your subscription number (your CLD membership number). You will be notified by e-mail once your online access has been activated. For downloadable step-by-step instructions, visit the CLD website. With your free online access, you can receive e-mail alerts and RSS feeds for new issues, interlink between articles to track down other relevant articles, search for topics of interest, and more.

Infosheets

Infosheets provide concise, current information about topics of interest to those in the field of learning disabilities. Current Infosheets are available for viewing and download at

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Learning Disability Quarterly

The flagship publication of CLD, LDQ is a nationally ranked journal. Author guidelines may be accessed at:

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Intervention in School and Clinic

ISC, a nationally ranked journal with a historical affiliation to CLD, posts author guidelines at:

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LD Forum

The official newsletter of CLD, *LD Forum* accepts manuscripts for its **Research to Practice** and **5 Ways to...** columns. Author guidelines are available at:

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