



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

May 2009

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Einstein has been often quoted as saying that insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. The gist of his point is correct. Some might suggest that we need to revise our expectations regarding the results. Others might say that we just need to reconsider our goals. But, what if both the expected standard and the goals are appropriate? You see, the issue may not be failure to achieve the desired results but rather the *approach*, which will certainly drive us nuts. Perhaps we just need to consider what the results are telling us. That way, we may be better positioned to consider our options instead of being left with only one (ineffective) thing to do over and over, while going mad.

Sometimes we find ourselves doing the same thing over and over in our classrooms and expecting different results. For example, let's say that in my classroom I give a test and many of my students absolutely "bomb." Without investing the time and energy to assess the nature of my students' outcomes, I could frustrate myself and my students by simply teaching the same thing the same way again (and possibly again), with the students "bombing" each time. At times there may be some value in repetition, but that is not my point. I only suggest that in this instance, given that not all learners respond to instruction in the same way, analyzing student errors in performance should lead us to recalibrate our instruction. This is not simply differentiation; it is using the data to inform our instructional decision-making for the benefit of all our students (and no doubt, to improve our own dispositions as well).

Occasionally organizations can find themselves doing the same things over and over and expecting different results. For example, CLD has been a relatively healthy,

vibrant organization for the past 30 years. Our membership has changed a bit, however, and the landscape of education and the field of learning disabilities have changed even more. Over the years, we have wisely utilized a particular structure and operations, as well as provided enhanced benefits to our constituents. However, the structure, operations, and benefits are still largely the same as those provided during previous years. Now, the outcomes (or results) of our operations—including membership numbers, journal subscriptions, and conference attendance—are suggesting that we must consider doing some things differently. We would be wise to pay attention to those data for the benefit of you, our members, as well as for the individuals whom we serve in the profession, in schools, and in families.

Rather than be frustrated by results that don't meet our expectations, lowering our expectations, dispensing with our goals, or just throwing our hands up in the air, we are reconsidering how CLD can best serve our members and the LD field. We are asking important questions, such as: What should our conference look like? Should we even have a conference? What information and resources do you and our constituents need? How can we best provide that information and those resources? We are in the process of recalibrating to serve you better. As we should.

I am thankful to many of you who have participated in a recent online survey, providing us with data to inform our decision-making. I am also grateful to our friends in other organizations related to the field of LD for their responses to our questions and inquiries. These data are quite valuable as we strive to be an efficient, effective resource and support to our members and constituents in education. We look forward to your continued participation in the process.

Very best regards,

**Daniel J. Boudah, PhD**  
CLD President 2008–2009



# 31st International Conference on Learning Disabilities

Dallas, TX

October 2–3, 2009

Westin Park Central Hotel • Dallas, Texas

Don't miss the 31st International Conference on Learning Disabilities hosted by the Council for Learning Disabilities. CLD celebrates 31 years of conference excellence in offering high-quality topical sessions addressing issues and evidence-based practices in the field of learning disabilities. Our theme and focus for the 31st conference is **LD Round-Up: Responsive Assessment and Instructional Practices**. An outstanding program of institute workshops, invited speakers, numerous special and break-out sessions, special events, and exhibits is planned across the 2 days. The program is certain to be of special interest to:

- Special educators
- General educators
- Teacher educators
- Speech/language clinicians
- Diagnosticians
- Administrators
- Paraeducators
- Researchers
- Consultants
- State agency personnel
- Students
- Parents

## Conference Highlights

Friday October 2nd: *Sampling of Many of Our Professional Development Institutes*

### **FULL-DAY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES:** Topics and Titles

- ☆ Vocabulary Instruction—*Anita Archer* (Portland, Oregon)
- ☆ Implementing Universal Design for Learning and Assistive Technology in RTI Models—*Dave Edyburn* (University of Wisconsin–Madison)
- ☆ Makes Sense Strategies—*Ed Ellis* (University of Alabama)

### **HALF-DAY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES:** Topics and Titles

- ☆ Preventing Mathematical Difficulties in the Early Grades: Interventions That Work!—*Diane P. Bryant, Brian R. Bryant, Jennifer Porterfield, Kathleen Hughes & Jacob Williams* (Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk & Mathematics Institute for Learning Disabilities & Difficulties, The University of Texas at Austin)
- ☆ Legal Issues for Educational Leaders—*Susan Etscheidt* (University of Northern Iowa)
- ☆ Problem-Solving Strategies—*Marjorie Montague* (University of Miami)
- ☆ Focusing Together: Promoting Self-Management Skills in the Classroom—*Joyce Rademacher & Jane Pemberton* (Texas Woman's University)
- ☆ Finding the Feathers: Response to Cyberbullying—*Julie Gartrell & Charlotte Knoche* (Concordia University)
- ☆ Responsive Secondary Reading Practices—*Marty Hougren* (Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, The University of Texas at Austin)
- ☆ Best Practices in Integrating Strategy Instruction with Content Instruction in the Inclusive Classroom—*David Scanlon* (Boston College)
- ☆ Progress Monitoring—*Pam Stecker* (Clemson University)

Saturday October 3rd: *Keynote Address and Sampling of Special Sessions, Invited Speakers, & Strands*

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS:** Response to Intervention—*Dan Reschly* (Vanderbilt University)

- SPECIAL SESSIONS:**
- Meet the Journal Editors
- Annual Research Panel: Must Reads
- Distinguished Lecture
- Outstanding Researcher Presentation
- Leadership Opportunities for Doctoral Students
- Crackerbarrel: Teacher Preparation & LD
- Master Teacher Showcase

(continued on next page)

**CONFERENCE SESSION STRANDS** (breakout/poster sessions throughout the day in each strand area and an invited speaker session)

**Strand Topic and Sample of Invited Speakers**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| ☆ Evidence-Based Practices in Reading<br><i>Patricia Mathes, Reid Lyon, David Chard, &amp; Jill Allor</i> —Panel on Responsive Reading Practices | ☆ Evidence-Based Practices in Mathematics<br><i>Paula Maccini</i>   | ☆ Evidence-Based Practices in Behavioral Interventions and Positive Behavioral Supports<br><i>Robin Lock</i>  |
| ☆ Responsive Practices in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity<br><i>Janette Klingner</i> —RTI in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Schools     | ☆ Responsive Practices in Transition: Early Childhood, Secondary, and Adult<br><i>Lyman Dukes</i> —Promoting College Access for Students with Learning Disabilities | ☆ Effective Practices in Collaboration and Inclusion<br><i>Kathy Meier, Linda Guidera, &amp; Julie Gartrell</i> —Enhancing Interventions in the School Setting Using Brain-Based Strategies |
| ☆ Current Issues, Research, and Policy in Special Education  | ☆ Evidence-Based Practices in Written Instruction   | ☆ Effective Content Area Instruction  |

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Visit the CLD website ([www.cldinternational.org](http://www.cldinternational.org)) for more comprehensive conference details, including online conference registration, hotel reservations, Dallas area information, institute workshops, conference schedule, invited speakers, and special sessions offerings.

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## Plan Ahead and Save!

Register early by **September 10th** to receive discounted early registration rates. Rates available for one day or the full conference registration.

Learn together with **Team Conference Registration** options. **Special 3 for 2 Registration Rate:** 3 individuals pay the price of 2. Pricing options for 1- and 2-day team registration are listed on the CLD website.

Enjoy our Round-up of Responsive Assessment and Instructional Practices

**See you in Dallas!**

## LD Forum Seeks Reviewers

Responsibilities include providing authors with timely, accurate, and constructive feedback on manuscripts submitted to the *Research to Practice* and *5 Ways To . . .* columns. Reviewers can expect to review no more than two manuscripts per calendar year. Interested persons should send a résumé or curriculum vita, along with a list of topics of areas of expertise, to:

**Cathy Newman Thomas, LD Forum Editor**  
([cthomas57@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:cthomas57@mail.utexas.edu))

## 2009 OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARD

### Purpose and Nature of Award

As part of an effort to encourage and recognize quality instruction, each year the Council for Learning Disabilities recognizes Outstanding Teachers from local chapters. Winners receive a certificate presented at the annual International Conference on Learning Disabilities as well as a complimentary conference registration and a stipend.

### Selection Criteria

Individual chapters develop criteria for selection of an outstanding teacher. Applicants should contact either the national CLD office or the president of their state/regional CLD chapter for application materials and criteria. Please use additional paper if needed. Attach letters of support from students, parents, teachers, administrators, and others. Include any information that highlights the contributions of this person.

### Notification Process

Application materials are reviewed by procedures determined by individual chapters. Information on award winners must include a one-page summary of accomplishments and contributions of the award winner to the field of learning disabilities. As part of the annual CLD conference, award winners will be asked to participate in a Master Teacher Showcase poster session, which is an opportunity to highlight their expertise.

To obtain the name/address of your CLD Chapter President, contact:

Mary Provost, Conference Director  
Council for Learning Disabilities  
P.O. Box 2266  
Mount Pleasant, SC 29465  
843/971-2980

**Deadline for Both Awards: Chapter deadline** to be determined by individual chapters.  
**Send nomination materials by June 1 to:** Mary Provost, Conference Director, Council for Learning Disabilities,  
P.O. Box 2266, Mount Pleasant, SC 29465; 843/971-2980



## 2009 CLD 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 winner will receive a plaque to be presented at:

**J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecture**  
*Saturday, October 3, 2009*  
31st International Conference on Learning Disabilities, Dallas, Texas.  
In addition, the paper will be considered for publication in *Learning Disability Quarterly*.

Six copies of the APA-style paper (maximum 25 pages) should be submitted to:  
Council for Learning Disabilities, 11184 Antioch Road, Box #405, Overland Park, KS 66210  
phone: 913/491-1011

**Deadline for submission of papers: Must be received by June 1, 2009**

*The winner will be notified by August 15, 2009.*

## 2009 FLOYD G. HUDSON OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

### Purpose and Nature of Award

The Floyd G. Hudson Service Award is granted by the Council for Learning Disabilities for outstanding performance and commitment to individuals with learning disabilities demonstrated by professionals who are not necessarily special education classroom teachers. One professional is selected from nominees submitted from local chapters. The winner will receive a complimentary one-year membership in CLD.

### Selection Criteria

Nominees are judged based on the following criteria:

1. Extent and quality of professional service to the LD field
2. Exemplary service to the LD field for a minimum of 5 years

### Review Process

*Nominees are submitted to the Leadership Development Committee by local chapters.* Final approval of nominations rests with the Leadership Development Committee, with assistance from the Executive Committee. The Leadership Development Committee selects the final award winner.

### Application Procedure

All nominations must include:

1. Completed application form and related materials (forms may be obtained from the national office or your regional representative)
2. Letter of nomination outlining the extent and quality of the nominee's professional contributions to the field of learning disabilities as based on letters of support from colleagues, parents, students, etc. (self-nominations are accepted)
3. Two-page vita

# AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS:

## Vote to Be Held at Annual Meeting

The Board of Trustees has undertaken the task of reviewing Bylaws, Standing Rules, and Policies to ensure that they are in line with current practices. At the October 3, 2008, Board of Trustees Meeting, the description of the duties of the Executive Director was amended, as noted here, by a majority vote. As indicated in the Bylaws, any amendment to the Bylaws adopted by Board of Trustees "shall be presented for review by the entire membership of the Council for Learning Disabilities and shall be voted on by members (present) at the next Annual Business Meeting." Therefore, the amendment presented here will be considered by the CLD membership at the next Annual Business Meeting.

Article XV Bylaws Revision Approved by Board of Trustees  
**Section 1.** The President may, ~~with the approval of the Board of Trustees,~~ appoint a salaried Executive Director for a period of time agreed on through contractual agreement, of three years whose appointment, tenure and compensation are subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. The administrative and conference responsibilities of the position may be served by more than one individual if approved by the Board of Trustees. The Council for Learning Disabilities Best Practices for the Board of Trustees shall reflect the specific administrative and conference roles and responsibilities to be fulfilled. (Additions are bold and underlined)

## COMMITTEE/CHAPTER REPORTS AND NEWS

### Research Committee Report

The Research Committee seeks faculty support in soliciting manuscript-length papers on learning disabilities from a doctoral dissertation that was completed within the last 5 years. We request your assistance in encouraging recent doctoral graduates who have completed an outstanding research study to submit their work to the Council (see the 2009 CLD Outstanding Researcher Award announcement in this issue for details). The Research Committee will select the work that is rated as most worthy of the prestigious research award.

The Research Committee announces its membership:

**Dr. Asha Jitendra**, *University of Minnesota*  
**Dr. Caroline Kethley**, *Southern Methodist University*  
**Dr. Janette Klingner**, *University of Colorado at Boulder*  
**Dr. Sylvia Linan-Thompson**, *University of Texas at Austin*

### Colorado CLD Announces Tuition Scholarships

Colorado CLD has a proud history. Founded by pioneers in the field of special education, its early members were passionate about serving persons with LD and providing professional development opportunities for educators in the field. The CCLD scholarship has been created to support the new pioneers who are completing teacher preparation programs in Colorado and entering the field at a time when the role of special education is being redefined and rewritten.

### Application Requirements

1. The scholarship is open to Colorado residents currently enrolled in teacher preparation programs in an accredited college or university in Colorado.
2. Applicants must be working towards a generalist license and have completed at least one half of their program plan of study.
3. Applicants must have an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher in their Special Education coursework.

The scholarship will be awarded to a student in a different institution of higher education each year to ensure representation throughout the state. CCLD plans to fund two candidates each calendar year. **For more information, contact Kyle Hughes** ([kyle.hughes@yahoo.com](mailto:kyle.hughes@yahoo.com)).

### Virginia CLD Plans Spring 2010 Symposium

The 2010 symposium will be held in the Norfolk/Hampton Roads area. Dates to be announced. VCLD held a successful symposium this past September in Winchester, Virginia, titled "Collaboration: Partners in Learning for Student Success." **Dr. Richard Evans** delivered the keynote address, and **Kristyn Shepherd**, VCLD's Teacher of the Year, was honored. For further information about the 2010 symposium, contact Carol Ann Cox ([cacox07@yahoo.com](mailto:cacox07@yahoo.com)).

**Visit the CLD Web Site:** <http://www.cldinternational.org>

## RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

### Mnemonics to the Rescue: Strategies for Memory and Recall

Greg Conderman, Paula Hartman, and  
Sarah Johnston-Rodriguez  
*Northern Illinois University*

Do your students confuse the steps of a math problem, forget the meaning of critical vocabulary words in their content area classes, or make careless errors on tests? Would you like them to independently decode multisyllabic words, complete writing tasks more independently, or lead their own transition meeting? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, consider infusing mnemonics into your instruction.

#### Why Teach Mnemonics?

Teachers should consider using mnemonics for several reasons. First, due to their solid research base, mnemonics are considered an effective evidence-based intervention. For decades, researchers have consistently demonstrated that mnemonics are effective for students with learning disabilities (LD) across grade levels (e.g., Lloyd, Forness, & Kavale, 1998). Similarly, mnemonics help students successfully respond to the increased demands of a rigorous academic curriculum. As students with LD access the general education curriculum, they are expected to retain more information, pass tests, and independently use effective learning strategies (Deshler & Schumaker, 2006). Mnemonics help students meet these increased academic demands. Finally, mnemonics bypass a student’s disability. Students with LD often have difficulty remembering and processing information, and they do not spontaneously use appropriate or effective memory strategies (Reid & Liemann, 2006). Mnemonics provide a memory cueing structure to accommodate these learning and processing issues, putting students in control of their own learning.

#### What Are Mnemonics?

Mnemonics are effective tools for helping students remember factual information, vocabulary words, concepts, strategy steps, processes, or procedures. A mnemonic can be a word, letter, symbol, sentence, rhyme, catch phrase, acronym, picture, song, pattern, strategy, action, story, color, association, or a combination of these. Researchers frequently describe the following five types of mnemonics for students with LD.

#### *The Keyword Method (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2007)*

In this method, students first think of a keyword or short phrase that (a) sounds like the word they need to remem-

ber, (b) is familiar, and (c) is something they can easily draw. For example, a keyword for the word “evaporation” could be “He laps a nation.” Students then relate their key word or phrase (He laps a nation) to the vocabulary word or concept (evaporation) through an interactive drawing. For example, they could draw a man running laps around a country, and his perspiration evaporates as he runs. Finally, when students need to retrieve the meaning of the vocabulary word or concept (evaporation), they think of the keyword or phrase (He laps a nation) and recall their interactive image (perspiration is drying on the man running laps), which helps them remember the definition of the word.

#### *The Pegword Method (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2007)*

This method helps students remember numbered or ordered information. Pegwords are rhyming words associated with numbers (e.g., one–bun, two–shoe, three–tree, four–door, five–hive, six–sticks, seven–heaven, eight–gate, nine–vine, and ten–hen). When students need to recall information associated with a number (e.g., New Jersey was the third state to be admitted to the Union), they associate the fact to be learned with the pegword through a visual. In this example, students could draw a picture of a new jersey (shirt) hanging on a branch of a tree. Associating tree as the pegword for three with the jersey (shirt) helps students remember that New Jersey was the third state.

#### *The Word or Sentence Method (Nagel, Schumaker, & Deshler, 1986)*

The FIRST letter mnemonic strategy uses words or sentences to help students remember information. To begin, students determine if they can form a word by arranging the first letters in the list of words to be remembered. For example, students could remember HOMES for each of the Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior). If the first letters of the words do not make a word, students insert a letter (or letters) to form a word. For example, students could use the word PIES to remember that Iowa is known for pork, eggs, and soybeans, but they need to remember that they inserted the letter i. If order is unimportant, students rearrange the first letters of the items to be remembered to form a word. For example, to remember the literary elements (Setting, Problem, Response, Outcome, and Conclusion), students could remember CROPS. Next, if students cannot make a word with items in their list, they shape a sentence by using the first letters of the items to make a sentence. For example, to remember the names of our first five presidents (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe), students can remember this sentence:

When Andy jumps, mountains move. If none of the preceding steps work, students use the last step, which is to try different combinations in which they combine two of the preceding steps to form their mnemonic. For example, they might insert a letter and shape a sentence.

### ***The Snapshot Method (Schumaker, Bulgren, Deshler, & Lenz, 1998)***

Students draw items they need to remember in a picture, and the finished drawing becomes the mnemonic. To remember four inventions of Thomas Edison, for example, students could draw a living room equipped with an electric light, phonograph, mimeograph, and dictaphone.

### ***The Story Visualization Method (Conderman, Bresnahan, & Pedersen, 2009)***

Students visualize the items in their list and integrate them in a story that they tell. The story provides the context for the mnemonic.

## **Examples of Mnemonic Strategies**

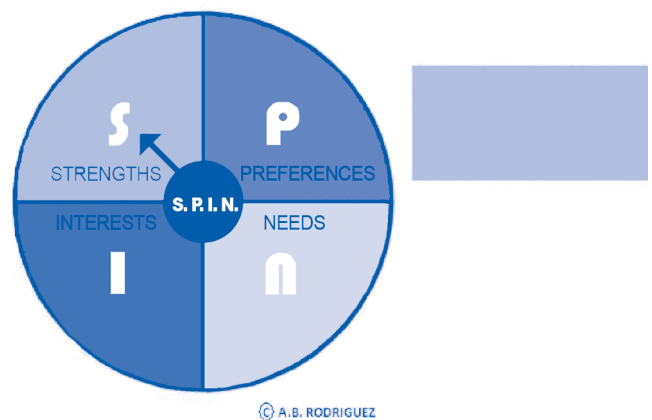
Many strategies form a mnemonic. For example, The DRAW strategy (Morin & Miller, 1998) reminds students of the steps in solving arithmetic problems. DRAW stands for *Discover the sign; Read the problem; Answer, or draw and check; and Write the answer*. Students use the mnemonic as a way of checking that they included each step when solving the problem. The DISSECT strategy (Lenz, Schumaker, Deshler, & Beals, 1984) provides a seven-step process for identifying unfamiliar multisyllabic words. Students are taught to *Discover the context; Isolate the prefix; Separate the suffix; Say the stem; Examine the stem and divide the stem into small, pronounceable word parts; Check with someone; and Try the dictionary*. The PIRATES strategy (Hughes, Schumaker, Deshler, & Mercer, 1988) helps students take tests by teaching them to *Prepare to succeed; Inspect the instructions; Read each question; Answer or abandon each question; Turn back to answer abandoned items; Estimate answers for the remaining questions; and Survey your test*. The REPORT WRITING strategy (Harris & Graham, 1996) teaches students to *Brainstorm what you know and what you want to learn; Organize your information on a web; Gather new information and revise your web; Use the web as you write; Keep planning as you write; Check the web and ask: Did you write what you wanted to?* Finally, the SPIN strategy (Johnston-Rodriguez, 2008), which stands for *Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs*, helps students organize and remember key information to share during their student-led transition meeting.

## **Instructional Tips and Guidelines**

Teachers can implement several instructional guidelines that will maximize the effectiveness of mnemonic instruction. First, use the appropriate method for the instructional purpose or task. Not all mnemonic structures work equally

well with all memory tasks. For example, the keyword method is best used with unfamiliar information, such as foreign language vocabulary words, people and their accomplishments, states and capitals, and map locations. In contrast, use the pegword method to help students remember numbered or ordered information, and introduce letter- or sentence-based mnemonics when students can form the first letters of a list into a word or acronym. Finally, use visually based mnemonics, such as the snapshot or keyword methods, when students need to remember familiar or concrete material, or when they have a learning preference for pictures or visuals (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2007).

Second, introduce mnemonics through an explicit and carefully executed instructional approach that includes teacher modeling and demonstration, the talk aloud approach, and guided and independent practice with numerous examples and non-examples. If the mnemonic includes several steps, have students memorize those steps until they become automatic (Harris & Graham, 1996). Some students like to use cue cards until they have memorized the mnemonic steps. Cue students when opportunities arise for using mnemonics (e.g., “This would be a good time to use PIRATES”); help students generalize their mnemonic strategies to new settings and situations (e.g., “What type of mnemonic would help you remember these facts about Illinois?”); and discuss when and how students applied mnemonics to various tasks (e.g., “How did you remember the steps of writing a persuasive essay?”) Finally, when possible, pair the mnemonic with a visual. To help students remember SPIN, for example, draw a spinner with the words *Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs*, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Visual mnemonic for SPIN strategy (Johnston-Rodriguez, 2008). Note. Figure 1 is from *Putting a SPIN on Transition: Authentic Strategies for Engaging Students in Constructing Their Future*, by S. Johnston-Rodriguez (2008), paper presented at the regional Division on Career Development and Transition Conference. Copyright by the artist, A. B. Rodriguez. Reprinted with permission. Thanks to Antonio B. Rodriguez.

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Mnemonics are most effective when teachers teach their students just a few mnemonics that have wide application. Rather than teach many mnemonic strategies, teachers should focus on a few strategies that students can use in multiple settings. For example, the PIRATES strategy can be used in all content area classes as well as on state and district exams, and all content area teachers can collaborate as they teach the strategies.

### Concluding Thoughts

Mnemonics are evidenced-based instructional practices that help students remember facts, processes, steps, or procedures. Their use is especially appropriate as students with LD experience the increased demands of a rigorous general education curriculum that focuses on challenging reading, writing, study skills, and memory-based tasks. Many learning strategies form a mnemonic that cue students on the essential steps or features of a task. The most common types of mnemonics are keywords, pegwords, letter or sentence acronyms, and visuals. Teachers can introduce mnemonics through an instructional sequence that includes teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. Students should also be encouraged to memorize the steps of the strategy so that those steps become automatic. Students will need teacher support in using and generalizing their mnemonic strategies to novel learning situations. Most important, students who learn to use and generalize mnemonic strategies become more independent learners.

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## LDQ Available Online

CLD members now have **free online access** to *Learning Disability Quarterly* for issues starting with Winter 2007 (Vol. 30, No. 1) and onward. **To activate your free access:**

- (1) Register with IngentaConnect ([www.ingentaconnect.com](http://www.ingentaconnect.com)).
- (2) Once you have completed the initial registration, select Personal Subscriptions.
- (3) Select *Learning Disability Quarterly* and enter your subscription number (this is your CLD membership number).
- (4) You will be notified by e-mail once your online access has been activated. For more detailed instructions, visit the CLD website ([www.cldinternational.org](http://www.cldinternational.org)) and download step-by-step directions.

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