



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

November 2009

President's Message

Hello,

I hope many of you were able to enjoy the outstanding conference in Dallas last October. A very warm thanks to all who attended, presented, and worked to make this a successful conference! The workshops and sessions were excellent, and the collegiality experienced over the two days was memorable. A special appreciation goes to the Local Arrangements Committee, co-chaired by Joyce Rademacher and Jane Pemberton, for their hard work. Plans are already underway for next year's conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Don't miss the opportunity to submit a proposal. You can find information about submitting proposals in this newsletter.

Have you checked out the Members Only part of the CLD website? You'll find a number of resources, including Infosheets, Research Initiatives, and online access to CLD's journals. We'd like to hear any suggestions you have about refining this area of the website to better meet

your professional needs. Send suggestions to CLD's executive director, Linda Nease (lineaseclld@aol.com), or to CLD's web editor, David Majsterek (majstere@cwu.edu).

CLD will continue to update members about organizational news, upcoming resource additions, and member benefits as we address initiatives and ideas at the October Board of Trustees and annual business meetings. Stay tuned. We remain committed to supporting professionals who make a difference in the lives of individuals with LD through our publications, conferences, resources, and advocacy. I look forward to reporting our progress in spring.



With warmest regards,

Christina Curran, CLD President 2009–2010

Committee/Chapter Reports and News

Communications & Research Committees Joint Report: CLD InfoSheets

InfoSheets provide CLD members with concise information about specific issues related to learning disabilities. There is no charge for members to download the InfoSheets from the CLD website and copy them for use in their classes or for other educational purposes. Currently available InfoSheets cover the following topics. (Additional InfoSheets are being prepared, and updates to some of the current InfoSheets are in progress.)

- Asperger Syndrome
- Assistive Technology
- College Opportunities
- Diverse Learners
- Mathematics Disabilities
- Quantitative and Qualitative Research
- Reading Comprehension
- Reading Comprehension Instruction for English Language Learners w/ LD
- Reading Fluency
- Reading Vocabulary
- Reading Word Identification
- Transition

Virginia Chapter News: Spring 2010 Symposium — Call for Proposals and Registration Information

Virginia CLD's Spring 2010 Symposium, "Successful Teaching for a New Decade," will be held in Norfolk, Virginia. To submit a proposal for this upcoming symposium,

or to register to attend, email Carol Ann Cox (cacox07@yahoo.com) or visit VCLD's website (<http://www.vclld.org/index.htm>).

(continued on page 8)



2010 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**32nd International Conference on Learning Disabilities
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
October 8th & 9th, 2010**

Practices for Promoting Positive Change: Meeting the Needs of Struggling Learners

The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) invites proposals from the full range of professionals who serve individuals with learning disabilities, including classroom teachers, administrators, speech-language pathologists, diagnosticians, researchers, higher education teacher preparation faculty, consultants, and others.

PROPOSAL TOPICS AND STRANDS

Presentations are invited for:

Effective Practices in Collaboration and Inclusion

Focus is on models of effective collaboration for students with special learning needs. Presentations should emphasize research and best practices in collaboration, inclusion, and co-teaching to support students who have LD, are at risk, or have other special learning needs.

Evidence-Based Practices in Literacy

Focus is on evidence-based practices to support students who are struggling to read and write at all grade levels. This strand highlights the use of assessment measures to diagnose reading and writing disabilities and inform responsive instructional decision making for struggling learners. Emphasis should be on practices that align with state standards and evaluations. Presentations that address technology to support assessment and instruction are also encouraged.

Evidence-Based Practices in Mathematics

Focus is on evidence-based practices for supporting students who are struggling with mathematics at all grade levels. This strand highlights the use of assessment measures to diagnose mathematics disabilities and inform instructional decision making for struggling learners. Presentations should emphasize the use of practices that align with state standards and evaluations. Presentations that address technology to support assessment and instruction are also encouraged.

Effective Content Area Instruction (Science and Social Studies)

Focus is on evidence-based practices and instructional accommodations that teach elementary, middle, and high school students how to effectively learn concepts in content areas (science and social studies) in general education classrooms. Presentations that address technology to support universal design and access are also encouraged.

Evidence-Based Practices in Behavior Interventions and Positive Behavioral Supports

Focus is on planning, implementation, and evaluation of effective schoolwide, classroom, and/or individual student behavioral techniques. Presentations should highlight behavioral or social skills interventions that support students who have LD, are at risk, or have other special learning needs.

Responsive Practices in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Focus is on responsive and effective practices to support the education of students with LD from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Presentations may also address response-to-intervention

(RTI) and assessment practices that are effective for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Evidence-Based Practices in Transition

Focus is on transitions throughout the lifespan. Includes topics such as families, self-advocacy, futures planning, postsecondary education, and interagency collaboration. Presentations that address the unique needs of secondary and college-age students with LD are encouraged.

Nonverbal LD and ASD

Focus is on effective practices to support the education of students with nonverbal LD and autism spectrum disorder. Presentations may also focus on issues related to assessment and identification.

Current Issues, Research, and Policy in Special Education

Focus is on current research, issues, and policy in special education and LD nationally and internationally. This includes current issues in assessment and identification of individuals with LD, including RTI, and the preparation and support of education professionals, including mentoring and induction programs for beginning teachers.

Current Issues in School Administration

Focus is on practices for administrators that relate to the effective delivery of services to students with LD, including how evidence-based practices for students with LD can be aligned with school-wide initiatives for all students.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

1. Complete the proposal form. All information must be typewritten.
2. Speakers may be listed as a lead presenter once only. All presenters must register for the conference.
3. Complete the FINAL CHECK to ensure that all requested information is included.
4. Mail proposals to CLD by **Monday, February 1, 2010** (no faxes, please). Also, email an electronic version of your proposal to: mcpovost@bellsouth.net. **In the body of the email**, please provide the title; 50-word abstract; and all presenters' names, affiliations, and affiliation city/state (no attachment). See final check for details.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Program Committee, including the Program Chair, the appropriate Strand Chair, and others knowledgeable about the topic, will review proposals. Only complete proposals will be considered. All proposals must have supporting literature. The Program Committee is seeking presentations that are unique and innovative. Preference will be given to proposals providing sound empirical or theoretical support for the topic. A broad array of topics that are appropriate for the LD field and that encourage a variety of presentation formats will be selected. The Session Leader will be advised by email of the Program Committee's decision by the end of May 2010.



PROPOSAL FORM

32nd International Conference on Learning Disabilities
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, October 8th & 9th, 2010
(Due Monday, February 1, 2010)

Please type information

TITLE OF PROPOSAL (10 words or less):

ABSTRACT (50 words or less):

STRAND (Check the strand that best describes your proposal)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Effective Practices in Collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive Practices in Cultural and Linguistic Diversity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence-Based Practices in Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence-Based Practices in Transition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence-Based Practices in Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal LD and ASD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Effective Content Area Instruction (Science and Social Studies) | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Issues, Research, and Policy in Special Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence-Based Practices in Behavior Interventions and Positive Behavioral Supports | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Issues in School Administration |

PRESENTATION FORMAT PREFERENCE (select one)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roundtable Discussion (1-hr. session) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mini-Workshop (2-hr. session) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Presentation (1-hr. session) | Would you be willing to accept another format? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panel Discussion ___ 1-hr. or ___ 2-hr. session | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: specify _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poster Session (1-hr. session) | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

AUDIOVISUAL

Audiovisual equipment will be arranged with the hotel or an outside vendor. After a contract is negotiated, CLD will inform speakers as to what equipment will be available and if there will be any associated fees. Please indicate your preference for equipment below to assist us in negotiating a contract that meets your needs.

_____ Overhead projector _____ LCD projector _____ Projection screen (standard)

Do you need wireless Internet access for your presentation? Yes No



PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION (Attach a description of your proposal: 250–300 words)

1. Research: should include brief explanation of the research and results. When appropriate, include a classroom application component.
2. Instructional/behavioral practices & programs: should describe the procedures/programs and materials and include supporting literature and/or research.
3. Assessment practices: should describe the measures and their use for identification or instructional decision-making purposes.

CONTACT INFORMATION (Please use address where we can reach you year round.)

Session Leader _____
 University/School/Company Representing (if applicable) _____
 University/School/Company Location _____ City/state _____
 Title _____
 Year-Round Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (____) _____ e-mail _____
 (CLD will communicate with the session leader primarily through email).

Session Presenters _____
 University/School/Company Representing (if applicable) _____
 University/School/Company Location _____ City/state _____
 Title _____
 Year-Round Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (____) _____ e-mail _____
 (Attach separate sheet for additional session participant names)

PLEASE NOTE: ALL PRESENTERS MUST REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE.

If this proposal is accepted, I agree to make the presentation at the assigned time. ***I UNDERSTAND THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT EXEMPT ME FROM PAYING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION.*** I further understand that I might be responsible for fees associated with Internet access and audiovisual equipment, other than standard overhead projector and screen.

 Signature of the Session Leader _____
Date

FINAL CHECK

Incomplete proposals or proposals that do not follow the instructions will be returned to the Session Leader. Please double-check the contents of your proposal.

- ✓ 3 copies of the completed Proposal ✓ 3 copies of the 250–300 word proposal description
- ✓ Mail (please do not fax) hard copies of the proposal by **February 1, 2010**, to:
Conference Director
Council for Learning Disabilities
PO Box 2266
Mount Pleasant, SC 29465
- ✓ Email an electronic version of the proposal by **February 1, 2010**, to mcprovost@bellsouth.net. In the body of the email, please provide the title; 50-word abstract; and all presenters' names, affiliations, and affiliation city/state.

YOU CAN DOWNLOAD FORMS FROM THE CLD WEBSITE: www.cldinternational.org

Research to Practice

LD Forum introduces a two-part series on Response to Intervention (RtI). This first article provides information on and definitions of RtI, with a focus on students with LD. The second article, to be published this spring, will focus on research-to-practice recommendations for RtI for students with LD. Thanks to Mary Little for tackling this important, still developing, complex, and controversial topic.

RtI and SLD: Connections and Considerations

Mary Little

University of Central Florida

Among numerous revisions to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Response to Intervention (RtI) will have a direct and long-lasting impact on education and services for students with specific learning disabilities (SLD). In the 2004 IDEA reauthorization, retitled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, two major constructs were highlighted: identification of students with SLD and early intervention service delivery. Many educators, researchers, and policy makers are exploring implementation of these constructs as they relate to (a) data and processes for more effective, accurate, and earlier identification of students with SLD, and (b) a systematic way to ensure that students who are experiencing educational difficulties receive more timely and effective instruction (Gresham, 2001; Learning Disabilities Roundtable, 2005). This article explores the issues and opportunities surrounding identification of students with SLD relative to instruction and interventions within the RtI process.

Legislation

For more than 30 years, identifying a student suspected of having an SLD included a formalized assessment process (U.S. Department of Education, 1977) using as a primary criterion a severe discrepancy between intelligence and achievement aptitude (Kavale, 2002). During that time, the population of students with LD grew at an unprecedented rate (about 200% since 1975), causing concerns related to overidentification and inconsistency (Ahearn, 2003; Johnson, Mellard, & Byrd, 2006). To address these long-standing concerns, legislators have made several important recent changes to the law that affect the education of all students, including students with disabilities (SWD).

No Child Left Behind

In 2002, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the intent of which was to hold school districts accountable for the learning of all students. *Accountability* includes measures of student participation and student achievement to ensure that every subgroup of chil-

dren, including SWD, improves with each successive year. Toward that end, NCLB requires a system of accountability that measures whether schools and districts are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) tied to student proficiency levels across various subgroups, including SWD, on state assessments. States are required to develop educational programs, promote classroom use of research-based instructional practices, and provide resources to support teachers and administrators to meet the goals for student learning measured by this accountability system. NCLB promotes prevention models, requires research-based instruction as the core curriculum, and includes provisions for increasingly explicit and intensive instruction for students who do not respond to initial instruction. Because NCLB focuses on prevention, the least intrusive instructional methods necessary to improve student learning within the general education classroom are used first.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

IDEA 2004 not only retained the focus on access to the general education curriculum but also introduced several changes intended to align IDEA with NCLB's major provisions. An important focus on initial instruction and accommodations within the general education curriculum strengthens alignment with and access to the general education curriculum for SWD. This is especially important not only because students with LD receive most of their instruction in general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2008) but also because they often are not achieving at the same rates as other students (Learning Disabilities Roundtable, 2005). The mandated accountability measures within NCLB explicitly focus on the participation and achievement of SWD and other subcategories of students (e.g., English language learners [ELL]) as part of the AYP measures for each school and district. Therefore, the achievement gap (Abbott, Walton, Tapia, & Greenwood, 1999) that continues to widen as SWD, including SLD, progress through school (D. Fuchs & Deshler, 2007) is now an accountability measure for school improvement and funding within federal and state education systems. Instruction and interventions to assure achievement by all students must be incorporated into the educational system.

The Response to Intervention (RtI) Model

RtI is a proactive, systematic, data-based method for identifying, defining, and resolving students' academic or behavioral difficulties. RtI relies on instructional problem solving by teams of educators with diverse expertise (e.g., classroom teachers, school psychologists, special education teachers, instructional coaches). These teams develop dynamic instructional plans to address academic or behav-

ioral concerns regarding students (D. Fuchs, Deshler, & Reshly, 2004; Mellard, 2004). The teams review current student assessment data to plan instruction and interventions (e.g., intensity, dosage, accommodations), and regularly measure student progress. If improvement does not occur, strategies, accommodations, and/or increased dosage are intensified. This problem-solving process continues through multiple tiers or phases (three or four) until the identified academic and/or behavioral needs of the student are met (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Mellard, 2004).

The RtI process is often depicted as a three-tier model with increasingly more intense instruction and interventions (see Figure 1). Tier 1, the foundation, consists of evidence-based core instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices, and supports designed for all students in the general curriculum. At Tier 2, supplemental instruction and interventions are provided in addition and in alignment with effective core instruction for those students for whom data suggest that additional support is warranted. Within Tier 3, intensive instructional interventions, in addition to/ in alignment with effective core instruction, are provided to individual students. The goal is to increase each student's progress rate. Data collected throughout each of these tiers measure the efficacy of the instruction and interventions.

The RtI process may also be used as part of the referral process for students who may be considered for additional program services through special education, Title I, or ESL programs. Special education programs thus become part of an integrated service delivery system. Special education services are determined by the student's rate of RtI related to the gap between the student's achievement and the curriculum benchmark. As a result, special education

eligibility decisions may be based on student responses to classroom instruction and interventions related to the core curriculum. IDEA 2004 mandates/permits use of the RtI process as one component of the evaluation procedure for determining eligibility of students with SLD:

When determining whether a child has a specific learning disability... local educational agency shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability... may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures (P.L. 108-446 614(b)(6)(A, B).

Potential Benefits, Issues and Concerns

As RtI is implemented in classrooms throughout the United States, debate among competing viewpoints continues (Batsche, Kavale, & Kovaleski, 2006). Relative to the definition, core principles, and implementation components of RtI, many components are described as "effective teaching" for closing the achievement gap (Abbott et al., 1999). Potential benefits to using RtI include (a) obtaining student data relevant to instruction and standards (Tilly, Grimes, & Reschly, 1993); (b) promoting shared responsibility and collaboration between general and special education (D. Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; L. S. Fuchs, Fuchs, & Speece, 2002); (c) reducing the number of students referred for special education (Torgesen et al., 2001); and (d) moving from a "wait to fail" approach of ability-achievement discrepancy to a problem-solving approach related to curricular standards (Lyon et al., 2001).

While RtI has promising benefits, several implementation issues raise concerns. One is the initial emphasis in Tier 1 on the group rather than the individual student. A distinctive feature of special education is its design: meeting the unique needs of individual children rather than employing a "one-size-fits-all" approach to instruction (Johns, 2003). A second issue is that the RtI focus to date has been almost exclusively on reading achievement, with the SLD construct essentially morphed into a reading disability (Kavale, Kauffman, Bachmeier, & LeFever, 2008). Although the greatest percentage of students identified with SLD have deficits in reading, a large proportion of these students have deficiencies in other areas. By definition, specific learning disabilities can affect quantitative knowledge (math calculation, reasoning), reading and writing (basic reading, comprehension, written expression), and crystallized intelligence (general information, oral expression, lexical knowledge, listening comprehension; Flanagan, Ortiz, Alfonso, & Mascolo, 2002). Third, IDEA 2004's current provisions state that up to 15% of funds may be allocated for *early intervention services*, often in conjunction with implementation of RtI (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008), which can be a cause of concern among service providers. Given that full funding of IDEA has not been achieved, the impact of the 2004 revised funding provisions that permit

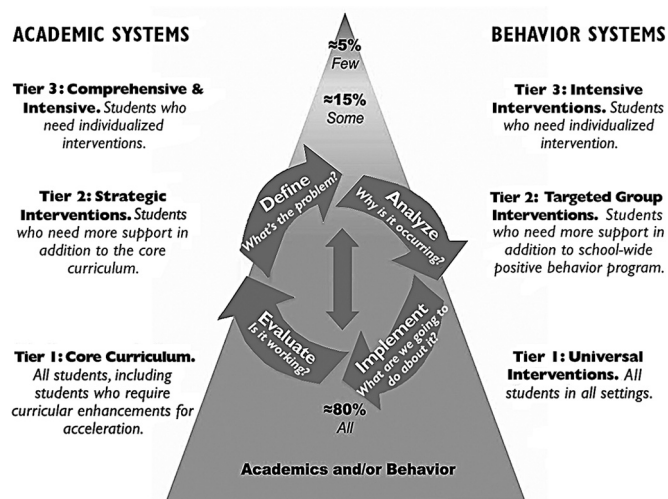


Figure 1. Three-tiered model of school supports incorporating the problem-solving process. Note: From *State-wide Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI) Implementation Plan* (p. 5), by Florida Department of Education, July 2008. Reprinted with permission.

a reallocation of funds to general education to support RtI has not yet occurred. Last and most important, although the construct of “specific learning disabilities” that has identified and assured services for students with SLD does need to be re-examined (Kavale et al., 2008), caution should be taken so that necessary services for students with SLD are not diminished by the use of RtI models (Kavale, 2005). With the current confluence of issues—including concerns related to technically adequate assessment instruments (Kavale et al., 2008), the many cognitive and academic areas in which students may have a learning disability (Flanagan et al., 2002), and diversion of IDEA funds to early intervention services—continued discussion among educators, parents, policy makers, and members of professional organizations needs to focus on identification and subsequent services to students with SLD within RtI models.

Implementation Realities and Responsibilities

Ultimately, the RtI process can serve to meet the eligibility guidelines outlined in IDEA 2004 by “addressing the what, the how well, the why, with the goal of meeting with unique needs of individual students with SLD” (Mather & Kaufman, 2006, p. 751). Debate related to the definition and policies of determining eligibility of students with SLD does continue, but clearly, continued research is needed because “it is untrue and misleading to claim that we currently have a necessary knowledge base to guide the implementation of RtI” (D. Fuchs & Deshler, 2007, p. 129).

While debates and research continue at the state and national levels, teachers of students with disabilities and SLD within schools and classrooms have important knowledge and skills useful to the RtI process (see sidebar).

Final Thoughts

Recent changes in legislation resulted from previous concerns related to misdiagnosis, over- and under-representation of SLD, costs and time needed for assessment, and the “wait-to-fail” aspects of previous aptitude/achievement discrepancy processes for determining eligibility for students with SLD. To address these concerns, the current policy and practice emphasis is a systematic process to ensure success for all students, with a related focus on changing the definitions, procedures, and processes for identifying students with SLD. As a result, proactive and instructional problem-solving based on student data, and the use of research-based instructional practices by classroom teachers, were instituted and can serve as the catalyst for educational reform. Teachers and other educators are cognizant of many core concepts necessary for implementation of RtI. However, the question now looming is “How will RtI be implemented to ensure quality services for all students, including students with SLD?” Ultimately, the complexities of RtI implementation, with the potential for educational systems change, necessitates continued research, common understandings, and partnerships among educa-

Considerations for Teachers

- 📌 Be aware of current policies and revisions to policies and practices for identification of SLD from the state department of education, local education agencies, and the school district
- 📌 Collaborate with colleagues in general education in regards to instruction; interventions; assessment practices; classroom accommodations; accountability; and current prereferral policies, procedures, and practices
- 📌 Participate in school-wide educational teams (e.g., school improvement team, literacy team, data team) to learn about accountability policies and practices for all students, while sharing specific information related to students with disabilities, including students with LD
- 📌 Collect multiple sources of assessment data (e.g., formative, norm-referenced, observations, interviews) in a timely fashion to ensure proactive problem-solving and instructional planning for students’ experiencing difficulty
- 📌 Conduct research and provide research-based professional development and products to address identified instructional and behavioral concerns
- 📌 Disseminate and model methods of differentiated instruction, use of instructional technology (including assistive technology and universal design for learning), and accommodations for general education classrooms to address documented individual and group needs

tors, researchers, and policy makers to ensure that high quality intervention services and identification practices for students with SLD are achieved.

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(Chapter/Committee News, continued from page 1)

Colorado Chapter News: A Full Year of Professional Development Activities

Math on the “Planes” has been expanded to a year-long opportunity for Colorado educators. In November, the kickoff will include a day-long training session covering best practices for screening, data dialog, and progress monitoring. Dr. Bradley Witzel will be the keynote speaker for the February conference, and the focus will be on explicit and

systematic instruction. The final offering will be a week-long “Math Boot Camp” designed to provide a deeper understanding of content. For more information, contact Kyle Hughes (kyle.hughes@yahoo.com) or visit Colorado CLD’s website (<http://cocld.org/index.html>).

Call for LDQ Editorship Applications

CLD is now inviting applications for the position of editor of *Learning Disability Quarterly* (LDQ). This position is a 3-year appointment and will begin July 1, 2010. Applicants must be members of the Council for Learning Disabilities. For information regarding additional qualifications, the application procedure, and where to send an application, please go to CLD’s website (<http://www.cldinternational.org>).

Application and supporting materials must be received by **December 31, 2009**.

LD Forum Editor Contact Information: Cathy Thomas (thomascat@missouri.edu)