



LEARNING DISABILITY: A CHALLENGE FOR THE EMERGING SOCIETY

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Abstract

Abstract: Education is often thought to be one of the most important accomplishments in an individual's life. It is often considered to be the means by which the person will be able to secure gainful employment and achieve success in life. Consequently, one's education is a valuable tool. However, there are varying degrees by which individuals are able to learn. Not all children can learn with the same efficiency as other children. But research shows that these children who are poor learners may have some type of disability. In fact, these children are able to learn with the proper training and accommodations. These children are referred to as having learning disabilities. The purpose of this paper is to discuss learning disabilities as a challenge.



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CONCEPT OF LEARNING DISABILITY

Learning disabilities, or learning disorders, are an umbrella term for a wide variety of learning problems. A learning disability is not a problem with intelligence or motivation. Kids with learning disabilities aren't lazy or dumb. In fact, most are just as smart as everyone else. Their brains are simply wired differently. This difference affects how they receive and process information.

Simply put, children and adults with learning disabilities see, hear, and understand things differently. This can lead to trouble with learning new information and skills, and putting them to use. The most common types of learning disabilities involve problems with reading, writing, math, reasoning, listening, and speaking.

Thus, in the early 1960s, a group of researchers, clinicians, and parents used the term *learning disabilities*. As Kirk (1963) stated:

I have used the term "learning disabilities" to describe a group of children who have disorders in the development of language, speech, reading, and associated communication skills needed for social interaction. In this group, I do not include children who have sensory handicaps such as blindness, because we have methods of managing and training the deaf and blind. I also excluded from this group children who have generalized mental retardation (pp. 2–3).

Definition of the **National Advisory Committee of Handicapped Children**, headed by S. A. Kirk (1968):

“Children with special learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc... they do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance or to environmental deprivation.”

Definition of the **National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities**(1989):

“Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic factors (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences.”

Definition of the **U.S. Office of Special Education Programs** (2002)

“The central concept of SLD (Specific Learning Disability) involves disorders of learning and cognition that are intrinsic to the individual. SLD are specific in the sense that these disorders each significantly affect a relatively narrow range of academic and performance outcomes. SLD may occur in combination with other disabling conditions, but they are not due primarily to other conditions, such as mental retardation, behavioral disturbance, lack of opportunities to learn, or primary sensory deficits.

Within Dr. Kirk's (2008) publications regarding learning disabilities, he describes classifications used for children with learning disabilities. This includes a unified classification of children with low intelligence, while they are differentiated based on a degree of learning deficit, for educational purposes. He also listed the causes he discovered to be associated with learning disabilities. These are as follows: brain injuries, physiological disturbances, hereditary factors, and cultural factors

Learning disability in reading (Dyslexia)

There are two types of learning disabilities in reading. Basic reading problems occur when there is difficulty understanding the relationship between sounds, letters and words. Reading comprehension problems occur when there is an inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs. Signs of reading difficulty include problems with:

- letter and word recognition
- understanding words and ideas
- reading speed and fluency
- general vocabulary skills

Learning disability in Maths (Dyscalculia)

Learning disabilities in math vary greatly depending on the child's other strengths and weaknesses. A child's ability to do math will be affected differently by a language learning disability, or a visual disorder or a difficulty with sequencing, memory or organization. A child with a math-based learning disorder may struggle with memorization and organization of numbers, operation signs, and number "facts" (like $5+5=10$ or $5 \times 5=25$). Children with math learning disorders might also have trouble with counting principles (such as counting by twos or counting by fives) or have difficulty telling time. **Learning disability in writing**

(Dysgraphia)

Learning disabilities in writing can involve the physical act of writing or the mental activity of comprehending and synthesizing information. Basic writing disorder refers to physical difficulty forming words and letters. Expressive writing disability indicates a struggle to organize thoughts on paper. Symptoms of a written language learning disability revolve around the act of writing. They include problems with:

- neatness and consistency of writing
- accurately copying letters and words
- spelling consistency
- writing organization and coherence

Social and Emotional skills

Learning disabilities can be extremely frustrating for children. Imagine having trouble with a skill all of your friends are tackling with ease, worrying about embarrassing yourself in front of the class, or struggling to express yourself. Things can be doubly frustrating for exceptionally bright children with learning disabilities—a scenario that's not uncommon.

Kids with learning disabilities may have trouble expressing their feelings, calming themselves down, and reading nonverbal cues from others. This can lead to difficulty in the classroom and with their peers. The good news is that, as a parent, you can have a huge impact in these areas. Social and emotional skills are the most consistent indicators of success for all children—and that includes kids with learning disorders. They outweigh everything else, including academic skills, in predicting lifelong achievement and happiness.

Learning disabilities, and their accompanying academic challenges, can lead to low self-esteem, isolation, and behavior problems, but they don't have to. You can counter these things by creating a strong support system for children with learning disabilities and helping them learn to express themselves, deal with frustration, and work through challenges. By focusing on your child's growth as a person, and not just on academic achievements, you'll help him or her learn good emotional habits that set the stage for success throughout life.

The Remedial Approach

Teaching the student with a learning disability can be described as an intervention process. The instructional activities must mediate the student's difficulties using a variety of tools and techniques. During school-based intervention, teachers attempt to reduce the student's learning difficulties and to include him or her in the normal planned curriculum as much as possible. Intervention involves determining both what the student must learn and how to teach it, on a day-to-day or lesson-by-lesson schedule. Teaching students with learning disabilities has also been called remedial teaching. When Samuel Kirk (1963) first described learning disabilities, he discussed remedial teaching as involving ten steps:

1. Discover the special needs of the child.
2. Develop annual goals and short-term objectives.
3. Analyze the tasks to be taught.
4. Begin instruction at the child's level.
5. Decide how to teach.
6. Select appropriate awards for the child.
7. Provide the opportunity for the student to experience success.
8. Give time for extended practice.

9. Provide the student with feedback.
10. Continuously measure the student's progress.

Conclusions: If individuals with learning disabilities are to receive the very best education possible and be accepted by a caring and loving community, educators must join to stop yet another "education war" that truly deters special education from being the helping profession it was created to be. Learning Disability can eliminate by removing the barriers before the society and by the awareness. Thus it can be possible for LD to survive safely and without any discrimination.

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