

Newsletter

Learning Assistance Teachers' Association

Volume 4, Number 3
Spring 1999

LATA-25 Years

Learning Assistance Issues and Concerns

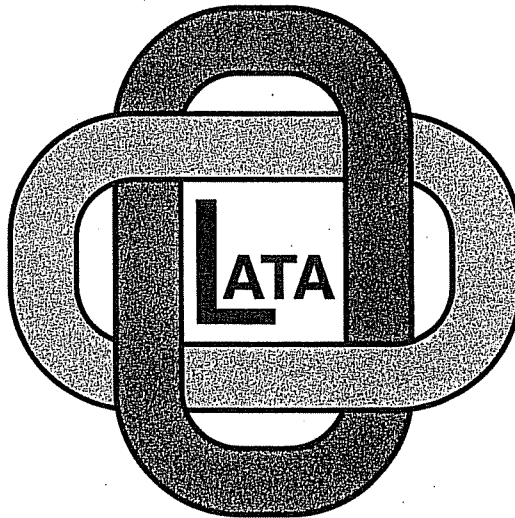
A Fruitful Endeavour

In the season of spring, we are reminded

That every seed is a promise.

As LATs, we will continue to sow

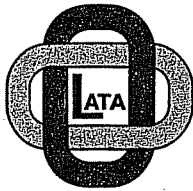
So that children can bloom where they're planted!



Linking Pupils & Learning

Rationale:

- Learning assistance is a vital link in the child's learning...
- Learning assistance links pupils' learning and their potential...
- Learning is continuous—intertwined, integrated...
- Learning is interdependent, multidimensional...
- Learning assistance completes the missing link for many pupils...



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Impact

A hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was or the sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove, but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

Anonymou

Learning Assistance Testimonials

Learning Assistance Made the Difference!

To Whom It May Concern:

I, **Daryl Francoeur**, was happy to comply with a request from Heather Mallory, my former learning assistance teacher, to compose a letter relating my feelings on the benefits of the Learning Assistance Program.

During my years in elementary school, reading and comprehension were a struggle for me. The instruction and encouragement received while in the program made a definite impact on my ability to succeed within the school system. I was able to gain skills and confidence to pursue my goals in the aviation field, including a pilot's licence, an AME certificate from Northern Lights College, and a machinist course at BCIT. Also, I am continuing to upgrade my endorsements with further courses.

It is my opinion that this one-on-one assistance can, and does, make the difference between success and failure in school and consequently in life.

Yours truly,

Daryl Francoeur

You've Got To Read This One!

Howard Eaton attended a Vancouver school until he was about ten years old. He was assessed and diagnosed as severely learning disabled.

Howard's parents were able to send him to a special school in Eastern U.S.A. He went on to get his Masters Degree in Education after attending both UBC and Boston University.

He has taught and now heads the Eaton Coull Learning Group in Vancouver. They assess students and provide tutoring services. They have also created a video, "Transitions to Post-Secondary Learning" and are in the process of making another on the transition from elementary to secondary for learning disabled students.

Howard Eaton has a story to tell, having learned how to cope with his difficulties and come out shining! He is another individual who is a testimony to the vital importance of learning assistance in the educational system for those students who have so much potential but need the help of a learning assistance teacher at strategic times in their lives to help them pull it all together!

Kites

I see "children with needs" as kites.
 You spend each day trying to get them off
 the ground.
 You run with them until you're both breath-
 less.
 They crash...they hit the rooftop...
 You patch and comfort,
 Adjust and teach,
 Call another school-based team meeting,
 "Adapt and Modify"
 Fine-tune the IEP.

You watch them lifted by the wind and
 assure them
 That some day they'll fly.
 You encourage...You model...You teach new
 strategies.

Then...

The day comes when they are airborne.
 They need more string.
 You keep letting it out.
 The kite becomes more distant.
 You cheer, you wipe a tear, you stand in awe.
 It is soaring, as it was meant to soar, free and
 alone.
 Only then, do you know that your job is
 done.

*Erma Bombeck
 (with adaptations by Marie Giesbrecht)*

Dear Reader,

Take Note...

Since this newsletter will include current issues and concerns contributed by those who are interested in the pulse of learning assistance around the province of British Columbia, a word of explanation is in order...

Issues, by their very nature, are controversial. **Not all the views expressed in this newsletter are necessarily held by the LATA editor or executive.** They are included, as written by the authors, to spawn collegial discussion. Therefore, we welcome letters and responses to any of the articles that follow, and we will include them in our next issue of *LATA Newsletter*.

LATA Editor/Executive

Don't be
afraid of op-
position.
Remember, a
kite rises
against
—not with—
the wind.

Hamilton Makie

LATA Newsletter

1999–2000 Issues

We, the LATA Executive, need your help and your contributions for the three newsletters we will publish next year.

The newsletter themes will be:

November Issue—*Testing and Assessment Tools*

Deadline for sending materials for the issue: October 15, 1999

February Issue—*Teaching Strategies / Collaboration*

Deadline for sending materials for the issue: January 15, 2000

May Issue—*Mathematics*

Deadline for sending materials for the issue: April 15, 2000

Please start gathering your best-practice materials to tell the world about! Send them in along with a short personal profile and your picture.



Editor's Comments

Marie Giesbrecht

Executive Editor, *LATA Newsletter*, SD 23
(*Rhonda Draper*, assistant to the editor)

After 25 years, learning assistance is still a strong association and thriving in B.C. This is not the case in all provinces. My daughter, also a teacher in B.C., asked me why.

As the provincial specialist association of learning assistance teachers, LATA has worked hard to raise awareness through the years regarding the learning assistance role and profile. We have consulted with the minister of education at strategic times to ensure a voice in the development of policies and materials (resource documents) that affect the children we work with in our schools.

We have been ready to meet the press when necessary. For example, when our existence was in jeopardy, I was asked by our association to make a public plea regarding the vital importance of learning assistance in the educational system. Within hours, I was in Vancouver facing a press conference:

(Setting: BCTF press conference at the BCTF building to a roomful of 30 or 40 press people hurriedly jotting the quotes and comments as multiple cameras flashed, TV cameras focussed, and microphones caught every word.)

I am an executive member of the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association of B.C. and a learning assistance teacher of 20 years in an elementary school, where I see a myriad of students on a daily basis who cannot function without the help of extra support services. For many students, learning assistance is their lifeline in learning how to learn.

Education cannot happen until the child's emotional trauma, behavioural issues, and learning difficulties are addressed. This requires extensive support through individual educational plans, school-based team meetings, consultation, and direct service. Statistics show a 59.6% increase of students with special needs in the last six years. The teacher cannot deal with each of these problem areas as well as teach the curriculum to the 30+ others in the classroom. Through my 20 years of work in learning

assistance, I have seen us having to do more and more with less and less. If children with special needs are not acknowledged and specific needs are not grappled with on a daily basis through classroom support, society will ultimately pay a dear price.

Learning assistance in schools is the life-giving umbilical cord to thousands of children and young people in this province. Cuts in this area will have disastrous results for individuals, for families, and for our schools in B.C.!

This kind of representation for learning assistance needs to continue. Speak out, for I have found that we are heard, whether locally or provincially, through the Ministry or through BCTF.

On the local scene, our LSA (local specialist association) of learning assistance teachers has made a presentation directly to the school board in our district on more than one occasion, explaining our role in the educational system and capitalizing on opportunities to represent ourselves and enhance the learning assistance profile. Our job as learning assistance teachers is to know what we have to offer and to let others know too. We have an opportunity to do this together at our upcoming and informative provincial conference, in October, in Vancouver (details in this newsletter). We must keep abreast of the latest in research and policy, pass

this on to our colleagues and parents, network, raise awareness, be active in promoting the cause, and give credibility to our job. The kids who need our help are worth it!

This issue of *LATA Newsletter* concentrates on issues and concerns relevant to our segment of the educational pie. We hope you will be inspired and enlightened as you journey through the pages.

*Marie Giesbrecht,
Editor, LATA Newsletter*

To avoid
criticism, do
nothing, say
nothing, be
nothing.

Author unknown



President's Message

Marion Hurd

LATA president, SD 02, Cranbrook, B.C.

I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee, namely Lynda Mawer, treasurer and registrar for the conference; Marie Giesbrecht, editor of the newsletter; Sharon Heinrich, secretary; and Heather Mallory and Pegg Davidson for attending to all the details that make for a highly successful conference.

On April 9, 1999, the conference was fully subscribed; 150 educators attended the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Spring Conference, in Kelowna, featuring Dr. Steve Truch. Dr. Truch presented an in-depth look at

reading. Participants were reaffirmed in their personal teaching practice and gained insights into the learning process that children go through in becoming competent readers and writers. The extensive conference handout will continue to provide information for further study and reflection as we refine our teaching approaches.

The Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Executive met on Saturday, April 10, to deal with a number of issues. We are looking forward with great anticipation to the Fall Conference, at the Richmond Inn. Details are being worked out

for Thursday, October 21, and Friday, October 22, 1999. Anita DeBoer is excited about spending two days in British Columbia working with educators on collaborative consultation. Look to this newsletter for details about registering for the conference. Hope to see you there.

Your school district will have information about the Ministry of Education's initiative to conduct a review of special education. (Ministry communication dated March 22, 1999. The executive met this news with surprise and concern as a review of learning assistance services in British Columbia was conducted in 1996-97 by Desharnais and Associates. Many of the review implications from the report (pages 85-90) were reflective of current practice and challenges and needed support from government, to help districts make changes in line with learning assistance descriptions in *Special*

Education: Policies, Procedures and Guidelines published in 1995. Levels of adequate funding for staff and students as well as the lack of resources to support effective service delivery models were two issues evident in every sampling. The report concludes, "It is hoped that the review will assist the Ministry, the other major education partners, school districts and schools in the ongoing review of provincial special education policy and guidelines and in discussing and addressing current and emerging issues in the delivery of Learning Assistance Services."

With the Agreement in Committee between BCTF and the

government in 1998, levels of staffing were established to ensure that districts were planning for learning assistance services. However, further discussion with ministry staff made it apparent that no follow-up plans were being considered after the learning assistance review report was tabled. It is clear that the other educational partners need to continue to dialogue with the government about these documented issues.

I encourage you to get involved at your local level and respond to this current special education review with the facts from the learning assistance review. Make it known that you want to see some

action from government that will assist districts in improving service-delivery models relative to the identified needs of the diversity of learners we serve.

Please get in touch with any of us on the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Executive regarding your district's service-delivery model: what is working and what is not working. This newsletter can be used as a forum to share information.

*Marion Hurd
LATA President
SD 02, Cranbrook*



1998-99 LATA Executive (left to right)

SD 20	Pegg Davidson	<i>Membership</i>
SD 57	Sharon Heinrich	<i>Secretary/Scholarship</i>
SD 22	Lynda Mawer	<i>Treasurer</i>
SD 23	Marie Giesbrecht	<i>Editor</i>
SD 70	Heather Mallory	<i>Conference</i>
SD 02	Marion Hurd	<i>President</i>

**This is the Silver Anniversary Year of
Learning Assistance in British Columbia.**

LEARNING ASSISTANCE

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Archives

**The following section is dedicated
to our history.**

**You will read articles from people
who first fielded our issues and
helped make us what we are today.
We have consolidated what we
know for possible future reference
and for your interest.**

Learning Assistance 25th Anniversary Archives Search

We opened the dusty LATA newsletters of bygone days, and the following information emerged (It is accurate, to the best of my knowledge at this time.):

TOPSA (late 1960s) became SLATA (1970s), which later became LATA (1982)

TOPSA: Teachers of Occupational Program Specialist Association

SLATA: Secondary Learning Assistance Teachers' Association

LATA: Learning Assistance Teachers' Association

Presidents of our PSA through the years:

Arthur Dieno, White Rock, was the first president of TOPSA.

This honorary LATA member and retired 22 years ago.

Frank Toporchak, Coquitlam, was president when TOPSA

became SLATA. He retired from teaching 18 years ago.

LATA Presidents

1980-1981 Peter Kosonen, *Port Coquitlam*

1981-1982 Wayne Weins, *North Vancouver*

1982-1984 Eddie Downes, *Aldergrove*

1984-1985 Joan Kurth, *Kelowna*

***Note:** Membership was 307 in 1984 and soared to 592 in 1985. Also, there were 21 members on the LATA executive!

1985-1988 Dave Lipscombe, *Surrey*

1988-1992 John Battaler, *Saanichton*

1992-1994 Jennifer Blenkinsop, *Burnaby*

1994-1995 Wendy MacDougall, *Vernon*,
and Marie Giesbrecht, *Kelowna*

1995-1996 Marie Giesbrecht, *Kelowna*

1996-1997 Larry Dixon, *Kamloops*

1997-1999 Marion Hurd, *Cranbrook*

Questions Answered:

1. What was Topsa?

Teachers of the Occupational Program formed a PSA, popularly known as Topsa.

TOPSA—Teachers of the junior secondary students qualifying for the program adapted the curriculum to the needs of the student, worked out a program suitable to the students' sporadic attendance patterns and endeavored to get the students involved in work experience during school time. Students who qualified were generally 17- and 18-year-olds who had an IQ of 65-85, couldn't meet academic requirements in the junior secondary school, and had "failed" in the educational system. Without Topsa, those students would never have had success.

SLATA—Things changed at the elementary level when continuous progress and a promotion policy took effect. This, in turn, had an impact on the needs at the secondary level. What became necessary was a "secondary learning assistance teacher" to assess the strengths, learning styles,

and levels at which the students could be successful. Often this meant making up material or selecting appropriate material for each student. The teachers who did this became the members of SLATA. They sought and had approved work experience for all students over 15.

LATA—As the need for continuity from K through 12 became evident, teachers were hired to offer assistance to those students demonstrating at risk or special needs in the elementary school. Though SLATA, members were a bit leery of being lost, once the greater numbers of elementary teachers joined their PSA, they saw the advantage of joining under one umbrella and LATA became the PSA title.

2. Why was SLATA changed to LATA?

At the 1982 SLATA AGM, a motion was made to drop the S from SLATA in the interest of expanding to serve not only the secondary learning assistance teachers but the elementary LATs as well. This was the first LATA executive we can find record of:

1981-82 EXECUTIVE

Past President (43)

Peter Kosonen,
1451 Pipeline Road,
Port Coquitlam, B.C.
V3C 3V4
H. 463-3285, S. 985-0491

President (44)

Wayne Wiens,
372 East 5th Street,
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7L 1L9
H. 980-6990, S. 985-3181

Vice President (39)

Magaret Mowatt,
6942 Marguerite Street,
Vancouver, B.C.
V6P 5G2
H. 261-3936, S. 321-6741

Secretary (36)

Sheila Morissette,
1060 West 19th Street,
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7P 1Z9
H. 988-9868, S. 588-3458

Treasurer (43)

Denny Lowry,
260 Harvard Drive,
Port Moody, B.C.
V3H 1S8
H. 939-6656

Editor (36)

Edward Downes,
2781 - 272 Street,
Aldergrove, B.C.
V0X 1A0
H. 463-3285, S. 574-7407

Assistant Editor (43)

Les Seward,
23785 - 53A Avenue, R.R. 7,
Langley, B.C.
V3A 7N6
H. 534-6601, S. 942-0267

Membership Chairman (57)

Stive Millard,
1410 Burden Street,
Prince George, B.C.
V2M 2J6
H. 564-0745, S. 962-9271

Regional Representatives

Marilyn Bowerman, (70)
R.R. 3, Stirling Arm Drive,
Port Alberni, B.C.
V9Y 7L7
H. 724-0512

Jacqueline Eccles, (39)
782 West 22nd Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Z 1Z7
H. 435-8121

William Oleski, (09)
1696 Silverwood Crescent,
Castlegar, B.C.
V1N 2M1
H. 365-6484, S. 365-7735

Eileen Cassidy, (23)
1549 Mountain Avenue,
Kelowna, B.C.
V1Y 7H7
H. 762-8171, S. 762-2805

James Solheim,
6601 Greenmount Street,
R.R. 5, Sardis, B.C.
V0X 1Y0
H. 812-2805

3. How did our title, learning assistance teachers, evolve?

As the need for the kind of service we offer began to become apparent and grow in British Columbia in the early 1970s, John Walsh and Marg Csapo sat down and decided we needed to be called something.

They discovered that there were others in North America delivering a similar service (e.g., Chapter 1 and resource room teachers in the U.S.A.).

In New England, the name learning assistance teacher was in common use. John and Marg latched onto that one, and it has been our noble title ever since!

LATA 25th Anniversary News

TOPSA

Teachers of the Occupational Program Specialist Association

More than 25 Years Ago!

by

Les Seward, Langley, B.C.

with the assistance of

Frank Toporchak, Coquitlam, B.C.

Something was happening long before LATA came on the scene!

In the early 1960s, the founders of TOPSA realized a need to serve those students who found little success in the regular junior secondary school program. A small group of students could not tolerate the academic and semi-academic curriculum.

A number of interested teachers, school trustees, ministry personnel, and parents established the Occupational Program, where courses could be more suited to the achievement level of those students. A heavy emphasis was placed on the vocational subjects (shop, home economics, etc.), a more practical English course, and other practical subjects.

Work experience during the school day also became a

possibility. Again co-operation was the key. Union personnel, The Workman's Compensation Board, and the Ministry of Education worked together with the organizers of TOPSA.

As the students progressed through junior secondary school, some of them graduated to the work force, and others continued on to senior secondary, where they found courses with which they could cope.

TOPSA was formed to standardize the program province-wide and to provide a forum for the teachers of the occupational program to share ideas. To facilitate the sharing of ideas, TOPSA offered workshops in individual districts and provincial conventions in the Lower Mainland and in a few other centers. How great it was to share ideas with a wide spectrum of enterprising teachers!

Eventually, out of TOPSA came the Secondary Learning Assistance Teachers' Association (SLATA). To help struggling students achieve academically, within the school setting, was the new goal.

Congratulations, LATA, on your 25th anniversary! We could not see this far ahead when we pushed for TOPSA so long ago. We are gratified to see that you are continuing to hold the torch for those students who need innovative and resourceful teacher-advocates.

These are the thoughts of two hard-working, now happily retired, teachers who both served on the provincial TOPSA/SLATA executive. They were instrumental in providing formal help for those students in the educational system who demonstrated special needs, back when the whole concept was just emerging!

Remembrances of LATA

by Inga Lamont
SD 09, Castlegar

I was the first learning assistance teacher in School District 09 (Castlegar) back in 1974, along with my good friend Kay Jones. The years from 1974 to 1996 were very good years for the development of a great system called LATA.

Teachers like me, from various parts of the province, got together to share information back then, and to find ways to bring the latest research, programs, suggestions, help, etc., to the whole province. It was then that the *LATA Newsletter* was born. I cannot tell you how many times I used the information, shared it with colleagues, and photocopied articles for others!

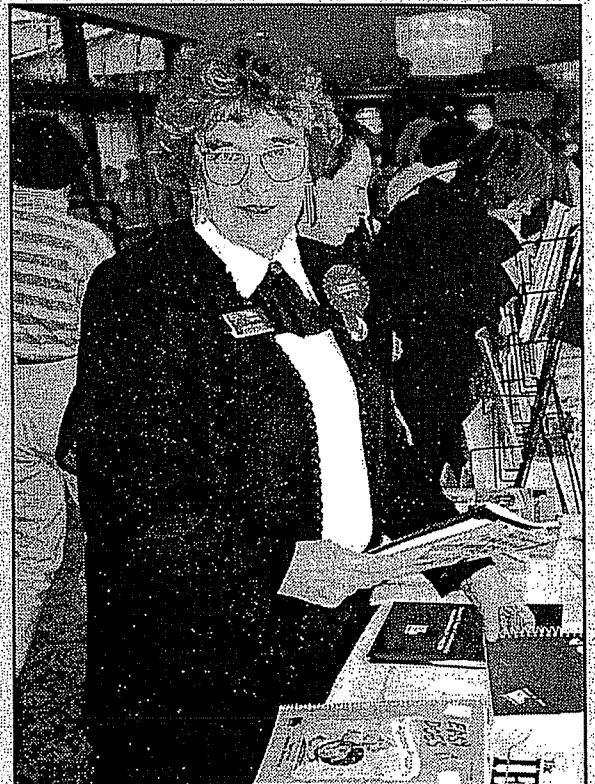
Conferences were a wonderful time to get together with other LATA people and realize that you were not the only one out there dealing with what seemed like unsolvable problems. The friends I met and worked with were, and still are, the best. During that time, I became a member of the executive of LATA. I enjoyed meeting with the executive BY PHONE ("only a one-hour conference call" we were told,

but inevitably we took more time). I treasure those contacts and the time we spent trying to get the support of the Ministry of Education, the school districts, teachers, and parents.

I retired from teaching in 1996 after spending the last nine years of my career as a special education helping teacher for my school district. The latter years were very sad as I saw

the role of the learning assistance teacher being lost because the Ministry of Education no longer funded LAs as a special category. In some schools learning assistance teachers were put back into the classroom. The theory was that a trained LA could FIX the whole class. The whole concept of learning assistance teachers seemed to disappear. Learning assistance teachers are a special breed, and my hat

Inga Lamont, Castlegar, B.C., at the publishers' table at a LATA conference. Inga is a retired learning assistance teacher and valued former LATA Executive member.



is off to all of you still serving as learning assistance teacher during the difficult times of restraint and cutbacks.

Since my retirement, I have remained active with special education and education in general. I teach a course for Selkirk College entitled "Learning Problems," which deals with all facets of problems from physical to emotional. Teachers, parents, teacher assistants, and students take the course. I also sometimes lecture at Selkirk College on reading or mathematics. I do workshops throughout the province on support for students with problems in the classroom. Each spring, I supervise University of Victoria students during their six-week practicums. This year, I am supervising seven students in two school districts in the West Kootenay district. Also, at the present time, I am investigating the creation of a web page of helpful hints and suggestions for parents dealing with various learning problems.

Happy 25th Anniversary, LATA! I feel honoured to have played a part in those years!

Happy 25th Anniversary, LATA!

by Catherine Smith
itinerant special needs resource teacher
SD 72 Campbell River, B.C.

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Executive and past executives for the successes that remain a vital force in the teaching profession. The time, energy, and commitment that these individuals have given so selflessly must be commended. I sincerely hope that the visions and creativity of LATA continue to influence the directions our education system will pursue in the coming years.

As editor of the journal for a time, I gained invaluable friendships, insights, and skills from that experience. Back then, and that is only a dozen years ago, this journal was a cottage industry—my cottage, on Quadra Island. With phone in hand, I learned to ask people if they would be so kind as to share their ideas with our teachers. I was always amazed that each person I contacted, whether professor, published speaker, or classroom teacher,

was delighted to contribute. Next, I would gather up all the materials and take it over to my mother, a retired secretary. For a minimal fee, she would set to on her typewriter and make it look cohesive; she was also a great spell checker and grammarian! The next stage was to cajole our school district resource printers to please print it for us. Gloria, Jan, Carol, and Tammy were invaluable. When it actually became too big for them to produce, Cliff stepped in and, as a professional newsman, was a life saver. From there, I hauled the 750 issues home, where my husband, my three-year-old, my six-year-old, and I stuffed and stamped each envelope. Together, we "travelled" extensively as we read each address and tried to envision the community the individual lived in, be it Fort St John, Ontario, the U. S., or England. Then off to the post office and on to the next issue.

A colleague once remarked that learning assistance teachers embody the essence of teaching. As a group, they have a reputation for supporting each child as an individual, regardless of the challenges involved. They master the abilities to co-

operate, collaborate, and communicate with a variety of children, parents, and professionals. They are on the forefront of new and exciting research as well as introducing techniques that help children learn. **Their role is invaluable.** I hope that the powers

that be never lose sight of that. Thank you for all you have given me.

Sincerely,
Catherine Smith,
Campbell River, B.C.

In the 1989 LATA newsletter, the following picture and information appeared:



"Catherine Smith, B.Ed., M.Ed., has taught a number of areas over the past 20 years but began specializing in Learning Assistance in 1976. For the last 8 years she has worked in Secondary Learning Assistance where she and her former partner, Patti Jackovich, developed a course which allows senior students to become teaching assistants in the class.

Catherine's job as editor-in-chief requires one to remain alert to current trends in education which affect the status or quality of Learning Assistance. The editor, with the consent of the executive, pursues points-of view regarding these issues, soliciting articles from experts in the field-experts ranging from parents to professors.

The LATA editor then compiles all pertinent information for the membership, has it typed, photocopied and sent to the printers. Keeping every member in touch with current trends and thoughts in the field is the prime objective of this present staff."

The job of the LATA editor 10 years later is not much different from that described above, except that now everything is put on computer disk, a hard copy printed, and all sent to the BCTF, where the PSA Services coordinator edits copy and then sends it on to a staffer in the Graphics Department, who creates the final version to be reproduced and sent to all members of the LATA provincial specialist association (PSA) by the Production Department.

LATA Exec 1989-1998

LATA Executive at the AGM, 1989-1990



L-R back row:

John Bataller, Saanichton, president
Sharon Heinrich, Prince George, North regional rep
Jennifer Blenkinsop, Burnaby, vice-president, secondary
Julia Fraser, Coquitlam, vice-president, elementary
Larry Dixon, Kamloops, Central regional rep
Erica Schubart, Port Alberni, Vancouver Island regional rep
Naga Terada, Surrey, Southwest regional rep

L-R front row:

Jan Makar, Sparwood, Southeast regional rep
Joan Lihou, Campbell River, treasurer
Carol Brain, Prince George, member at large
Dave Lipscombe, Vancouver, past president, membership

LATA Executive 1992-93



L-R back row:

Marie Giesbrecht, Kelowna
Judy Ridgeway, Cranbrook
Inga Lamont, Castlegar
Pegg Davidson, Kootenays
Wendy MacDougall, Vernon
Liz McKenzie, Prince George
Lia Grundle, Campbell River

L-R second row:

Larry Dixon, Kamloops
Kathy Eades, Terrace
Sharon Heinrich, Prince George
Daphne Squire, West Vancouver
Terri Garner, Coquitlam
Joyce Hill, West Vancouver (French immersion)

Front:

Jennifer Blenkinsop, president

LATA Executive 1995-96



L-R back row:

Kathy Eades, Terrace, Northwest regional rep

Pat Porter, Vancouver, editor

Inga Lamont, Castlegar, member at large, editorial board

Sharon Heinrich, Prince George, Northeast regional rep, scholarships

Liz McKenzie, Prince George, member at large, editorial board

Judy Ridgeway, Cranbrook, membership

Heather Mallory, Port Alberni, membership

L-R second row:

Karyl Mills, Coquitlam, treasurer

Pegg Davidson, Kootenays, Southeast regional rep

Judy An Nishi, Vancouver, Lower Mainland regional rep

Marie Giesbrecht, Kelowna, president

L-R front row:

Larry Dixon, Kamloops, vice-president

Terri Garner, Coquitlam, secretary

Joyce Hill, West Vancouver, member at large, French immersion

LATA Executive 1996-97



L-R:

Larry Dixon, Kamloops, president

Pat Porter, Vancouver, editor

Linda Mawer, Vernon, treasurer

Heather Mallory, Port Alberni, conference chairperson

Marion Hurd, Cranbrook, vice-president

Pegg Davidson, Kootenays, membership

Sharon Heinrich, Prince George, secretary, scholarship

Marie Giesbrecht, Kelowna, past president

LATA Executive 1997-98



L-R:
Marie Giesbrecht, Kelowna, past president
Pegg Davidson, Kootenays, membership
Marion Hurd, Cranbrook, president
Linda Mawer, Vernon, treasurer
Heather Mallory, Port Alberni, conference chairperson
Sharon Heinrich, Prince George, secretary, scholarship

LATA Conference 1995 at the Delta



Larry Dixon, vice-president
Pam Robbins, California, conference speaker
Marie Giesbrecht, president
Topic: Memory, Teaching, and Learning

Reflections on the Role of the Learning Assistance Teacher

by Julia Fraser

Much has changed in the learning assistance centre and the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association (LATA) since the early 1980s, when I received a letter from Candace

Solar, then president of LATA. She inquired if I was the Julie Fraser from UVic. she met in the summer of 1982. If I was and even if I wasn't, she asked if I would be the northern

geographical representative for LATA. Living in Kitimat at the time, I naively thought the north was the triangle with its three points being the Queen Charlotte Islands, Smithers, and Kitimat. I agreed, only to find that the north district included all the towns in the Cariboo through Prince George to the Yukon and NWT borders and the north and central coastal towns and villages. In all of that territory, there were only four members of LATA!

That was maybe not so surprising when I reflect on the hiring practices of the time. I began as a Grade 3 teacher. I had two years of regular classroom teaching when the current learning assistance teacher (LAT) decided her turn was over and she wished to return to the regular classroom. As patience was one of my virtues, the principal decided I was "It." It took about three weeks for them to change my mind from "ABSOLUTELY NO!" to "YES!" on the condition that I could have some training. Making me reflect on my teaching, it brought some changes in my thinking. I realized I mostly enjoyed working with students experiencing difficulty. I also discovered, when I conducted a provincial survey on LAT qualifications, that princi-

pals placed teachers nearing retirement and teachers experiencing difficulty in the regular classroom in the LA centre, so that their workload would be less. Such hiring practices were not conducive to the practice of the LAT as a specialist or of the LAT's setting long-term goals for himself/herself or for the LA centre.

Teaching practices have also changed. I inherited stacks of perceptual skill exercises so popular in the '60s. The LA centre had few regular classroom materials. No referral process was in place. One teacher wouldn't speak to me for two years when I suggested we fill out a referral form together. After that time, she willingly referred students. My style was then so different from today's practice. When a student was referred, I completed a full individual, prescriptive, diagnostic assessment. Assignments within the LA centre were in isolation from the regular classroom. A student was seen for one period and then left to cope the best he/she could in the regular classroom for the remaining four to four-and-a-half hours. As well, the regular classroom teacher was given much support in teaching the learning-difficult child.

In the mid-'80s I was hired in the North Thompson to teach a special district class of 18 severely learning disabled students in Grades 2 through 6. The students taught me much in four years. I was amazed at the capacity of the Grade 2s to absorb the math taught to older students. I realized the impact of learning strategies, particularly verbal rehearsal skills. I integrated subject material and taught in themes. The students were integrated into the regular classroom as often as possible.

The pendulum had swung. I was now hired in Coquitlam to organize a resource centre and work collaboratively with regular classroom teachers. I would work with students in the LA centre and in their regular classrooms. Support was provided to more students and teachers. A balance of in-class support and pullout instruction benefited all. Teachers realized that Band-Aids and secret tricks weren't applied in the LA centre, but that LATs applied solid, proven practices that could be taught to all students.

The current number of LATA members confirms that throughout all these changes to the operation of the learning assistance centre, LATA

supported the learning assistance teacher. LATA provides information, workshops, mentoring, and a collective voice. LATA was started and continues to be run by hardworking individuals dedicated to supporting and promoting the practice of the learning assistance teacher as a professional specialty. I thank LATA for all the support and guidance provided me over the last 20 years.

Julia Fraser was a member of the LATA Executive for a number of years, giving generously of her time and serving in various positions: as a regional representative, as a LATA chapter liaison person, and as the elementary vice-president!

Everything we have in our hands, as educators, is a tool. It can be used either to bludgeon or to build.

R. Draper

What I Can Remember of Learning Assistance 25 Years Ago

by Denis Laidlaw
SD 23

Even though a number of references in this article refer to personnel in SD 23, and the conditions surrounding LATs 25 years ago, the scenario may parallel your experience, as learning assistance evolved in the various districts around our province.

I haven't been able to dig up any old materials or publications, but I called Don Forbes, my former colleague at KLO, where I was first hired as an LAT in 1975. Don Forbes (KLO) was one of the first learning assistance teachers in the province along with Steve Carter (George Pringle). Around 1971-1972, the then NDP government (Eileen Daily), mandated that every district in the province put a learning assistance teacher in each school, both elementary and secondary. Most who were placed had little specialized training. For the most part, they were empathetic volunteers.

When I arrived on the LAT scene, Heidi Garnett was acting as the district learning assistance consultant, having acquired a master's degree in reading from the University of Western Washington, then Western Washington Teachers College. Teachers tended to use what gifts they had when working with students. Ninety-five percent of the time was spent providing direct instruction to students.

None of us knew exactly what we were supposed to be doing other than students couldn't read, write, compute, plan, organize, solve problems, etc., and we were to help. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students had few expectations because most students at the secondary level had a long history of difficulty; any improvement was celebrated as a success. I found the job challenging and very satisfying.

When I came into the district, the secondary LATs were meeting regularly with Heidi

Garnett. I think the elementary LATs were meeting separately, as well. She provided a lot of in-service education, particularly in reading. I decided to follow her lead and complete a master's degree as a reading consultant from Western Washington Teachers College.

Steve Carter, LAT from George Pringle Secondary School, was always initiating something. He suggested at one of our meetings that we start our own specialist association and host the first learning assistance conference in the province. If I remember correctly, a conference had been held the previous year in the Lower Mainland somewhere. I think he looked after the application with the BCTE and we became one of the first chapters of SLATA in the province.

Other SLATA groups may have been springing up around the province before or at the same time we were. Who knows? We were doing our own thing in Kelowna and really didn't know what was going on around the province. Steve may have said that a SLATA PSA had started up in the Lower Mainland and we should start our own chapter. For that matter, he may have also said a conference for learning assistance teachers

had been held in the Lower Mainland, so why not hold the next one? We may have been the first to host a provincial conference for LATs; if not, we were the second.

We held the conference at Mt. Boucherie, and I did a workshop on mind mapping, which I had picked up from my training with Evelyn Wood while at university. I recall that Pat Walls was the LAT at KSS. I think Eileen Cassidy succeeded Pat when he was offered a position as a district psychologist.

While I was talking with Don Forbes, he shared a concern that I have come to recognize over the years: the degree of over-regulation we have come to accept. In the beginning, student needs were recognized, referrals were made, and remediation was begun. Parents and other interested parties were contacted, when necessary. Service was immediate and efficient. Teachers directed their energies toward developing student learning strategies. We met as a small group of secondary teachers, shared our concerns and resources, and leaned on one another when necessary.

Today, process dominates service delivery. First, there is a perceived degree of difficulty.

Students are then referred, sometimes through committee, an assessment is completed, and the student categorized, which is followed by meetings with parents, teachers, and other professionals. IEPs are written, eventually the student instruction begins, and, if time permits, the student is re-tested. Students who might previously have received short-term assistance are not likely to receive support because teachers haven't the time to address students who are not perceived to be a serious enough risk. Sometimes IEPs are drawn up and the responsibility rests with the classroom teacher because time and energy are limited. The procedures designed to ensure accountability have re-directed teacher energy to the point where some students who might have received direct instruction from an LAT in the past, no longer "make the cut" - particularly, those students who are not forthright and whose parents are not proactive.

Denis Laidlaw is a charter member of Learning Assistance in SD 23 in that he began 25 years ago as an LAT and is still faithful to the cause!

Slow Dance

Have you ever watched kids on a merry-go-round,
Or listened to rain slapping the ground?

Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight,
Or gazed at the sun fading into the night?

You better slow down; don't dance so fast.
Time is short; the music won't last.

Do you run through each day on the fly?
When you ask "How are you?" do you hear the reply?

When the day is done, do you lie in your bed,
With the next hundred chores running through your head?

You better slow down; don't dance so fast.
Time is short; the music won't last.

Ever told your child, we'll do it tomorrow,
And in your haste, not see his sorrow?

Ever lost touch, let a good friendship die,
'Cause you never had time to call and say "Hi"?

You better slow down; don't dance so fast.
Time is short; the music won't last.

Anonymous

LATA Chapter News

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The following section is
dedicated to LATA
chapters around the
province of B.C.

We are waiting to
hear from you!

*We are grateful to all who take the
time to send us LATA chapter news!*

LATA Chapter News

Calling all LATA Chapters...

Where are you?

We need to find you!

How are you doing?

We can help you!

Will you write us?

We want to hear from you!

Did you know we have a great offer?

There's something in it for you!

Here's how it goes...

The Executive of LATA would like to invite presidents of local learning assistance teachers associations (LSAs) to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) at our next fall (October) conference. The executive of the provincial LATA will pay for the transportation and accommodation costs associated with attending the event. The conference and AGM are usually held on the Friday, and an executive meeting with local association presidents would be held on the Saturday. This would provide an opportunity for local associations to bring local issues to the attention of the provincial LATA and for local presidents to get an update on issues dealt with by the provincial executive.

Here is the catch: You must give us a summary of how and what your chapter is doing; in other words, how you are faring and what is going on in your LATA LSA, to be published in the next issue of *LATA Newsletter*.

Deadline date for our next issue is October 15, 1999.

Send all LATA chapter news items or information you may wish to have on becoming a chapter to:

LATA President Marion Hurd,
F: (250) 489-0600.

Anne Weins, secretary, Vancouver LATA Chapter, writes

On Wednesday, March 24, 1999, the Vancouver Chapter of LATA hosted the first of what is hoped will be a series of mini-conferences. Beverages and light refreshments were served at the Plaza 500, Cambie and 12th Avenue from 16:30. The speaker, Howard Eaton, began his presentation shortly after 17:00. His talk was entitled "The Hidden Talents Children with Learning Disabilities."

Howard Eaton attended a Vancouver school until he was about 10 years old. He was assessed and diagnosed as severely learning disabled. His parents were able to send him to a special school in the eastern U.S. He went on to get his masters degree in education, after attending both UBC and Boston University. He has taught and now heads up the Eaton Coull Learning Group in Vancouver. They assess students and provide tutoring services. They have created a video, "Transitions to Post-Secondary Learning" and are making another on the transi-

tion from elementary to secondary for LD students.

Howard spoke to us over an hour from his own experience. He made special mention of the care that needs to be taken with psycho-educational assessment results when there is scatter in the scores. His excellent presentation was applauded by all.

At 18:45, the assembled group enjoyed a sumptuous buffet dinner. Door prizes were three large baskets filled with an assortment of items in an Easter/spring motif and two of Howard Eaton's videos, "Transitions to Postsecondary."

Approximately 80 people were in attendance and the cost of the event was \$25 per person.

The Vancouver LATA Executive is planning a second such mini-conference in the fall. Brochures will be distributed once again to schools in Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster, and North

Vancouver. Anyone else wishing a brochure should contact Lizette Pappas, at Champlain Heights Elementary School, (604) 713-4766.

Nicole Roy, a Vancouver LATA member, mentioned that other LATA chapters may be interested in contacting this fascinating and informative speaker. Howard Eaton can be reached at:
Eaton Coull Learning Group, Ltd.
3541 West 16th Avenue,
Vancouver, BC V6R 3C2
(604) 734-5588 or
1-800-933-4063
F: (604) 734-5510
info@eclg.com
www.eclg.com

"Transitions to Postsecondary," a 47-minute video, is for students with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorder at the senior secondary or freshman college level. The emphasis is on self-advocacy and transition planning for students with unique learning profiles. Eight students deliver these messages in an interview format. The complete instructional curriculum includes a discussion guide, a handbook

LATA Chapter News from Vancouver

and student work guide. The video may also be used as a workshop tool when teaching staff/admin about learning disabilities or ADD, for parent education, for peer understanding, etc.



Howard Eaton, guest speaker of LD, a "phenomenal presenter," with Lizette Pappas, co-chair, Vancouver LATA Chapter.



L-R:
Lizette Pappas, co-chair
Dagmar Kafka, co-chair
Christine McGrath-Agg, Vesta Rep.

Reception Table, Vancouver LATA Mini-Conference, March 24, 1999, Plaza 500 Hotel

Raffle baskets made by Lizette and Dagmar

A lucky door-prize winner! You can bet they will come back again for our door prizes!



Learning Assistance In-Service Plan

by Clara Tees, SD 22

Many challenges surround the provision of on-going in-service education for learning assistance and support teachers:

- a) First, there is the grade range of interest to consider.
- b) Second, there is the range of services related to learning interferences; e.g., learning disabilities, low ability, mental health and other behavioural problems, attention issues...the list goes on...
- c) Third, there is the wide range of assessments used: standardized, curriculum-based, diagnostic, achievement, formal, informal, etc.
- d) Fourth, there are issues around reporting, recording and time management.
- e) Fifth, there is the range of experience, from novice to 20 years plus.
- f) Finally, there are personal interests to consider

As you can see, planning in-service education is a daunting task. Before we made any plans, we (student support services) requested input from the learning assistance teachers and from LATA, discussing needs and prioritizing so that we would not be overlapping.

Eventually, after discussion, we decided to make our primary objective:

- a) developing a clear understanding of adapting and modifying for classroom support.
- b) developing a library of resources at the intermediate and secondary level that might be helpful as hands-on ready-to-use materials for the classroom teachers in various subjects. In addition to this task, we also have, on-going at the elementary level, early intervention (identification of early literacy difficulties). We also have the usual emerging interests such as the role of emotions in learning and various on-going disorders such as ADHD and FAS.

We made a decision to have separate meetings for elementary and secondary teachers. We initially decided that each group would meet monthly. The secondary teachers preferred an after-school time. However, the secondary teachers have had difficulty meeting (we met only once). That meeting was primarily a sharing session, looking at ways to support students with reading and writing difficulties. The elementary in-service education has been very successful. The teachers have tended to follow this format: A light lunch provided for the first half hour allowing for people to arrive at various times and meet informally. Following lunch, the meeting generally opens with a series of announcements and updates related to district and ministry issues. At times, we have had an extended presentation on an assortment of subjects such as fine motor development and an FM system for children with hearing impairments.

To meet our main objective (adapting and modifying curriculum), we decided to

ask teachers to sign up for grade levels. They were then asked to work in groups to collect materials and resources that would help classroom teachers to adapt for students with learning interferences. The groups were able to access some release time to complete their tasks. The materials appear to enable students to read difficult material and complete written tasks. The materials or references could be teacher-made or commercial, such as lists of materials from such sources as Davies and Johnson. When the collections are complete, we plan to provide each school with a resource binder or kit

for each grade level. Preliminary reports are positive. Although we are hoping for June completion, we must wait and see how the groups are progressing.

A portion of the in-service day has, at times, been devoted to learning to look at a collection of assessment data to determine where the learning problems are and what the programming needs might be. The data usually includes a file summary, some standardized assessment, including the WISC achievement test, curriculum-based measurements, and family background material. After a presentation of the

data and reading time, teachers can consult in pairs or small groups and report back to the large group. By the end of the year, we will have met seven or eight times.

In the past, a series of after school meetings on various topics ranging from ADHD to Effective Behavioural Support (EBS) followed by a catered meal have been presented. The sessions have been popular with classroom teachers as well as learning assistance teachers. This year, we have sponsored one session called "Teaching Social Skills."

Service-Delivery Model

SD 05, Southeast Kootenay
by Marion Hurd
Inclusion Facilitator, SD 05

(Cranbrook schools include eight elementary schools, two junior secondary schools, and one senior secondary school)

The positions of learning assistance teacher and resource teacher are blended into a position known as student services teacher. The

amount of student services teacher time for each school is determined by the current provincial teachers' contract and the number of identified

students with special needs.

All children register at their neighbourhood school, and case management is estab-

lished through discussions by the school-based team. Itinerant positions support the schools: speech/language services, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, vision resource teacher, English as a second language teacher, district elementary counsellor, assessment counsellor, and inclusion facilitator. The percentage of teaching time for each position is also determined by identified students and the provincial teachers' agreement.

The school-based student services teachers and the itinerant teachers meet with Director of Instruction: Student Services Bonnie Spence-Vinge four times a year to review policies and procedures and address issues of concern. During the 1998-99 school term, the first meeting was held in September to review assessment procedures, confirm the IEP format, and clarify Form 1701 due in Victoria by September 30. The second meeting was held in November 1998 to review a number of district decisions affecting the service-delivery model. One issue that required attention was the need to increase understanding of the ministry's moderate and severe behaviour categories. A working committee submitted a draft proposal at the Febru-

ary 1999 meeting. Discussion, feedback, and clarification took place among the representatives from each school before the final copy will be presented to the group in April 1999.

The April meeting will also deal with all transition issues for students in the district. This will review the critical steps in the process for students entering Kindergarten in September 1999 and grade-to-grade transitions: elementary to junior secondary, junior secondary to senior secondary, and senior secondary to after-school possibilities.

This year, the school-based student services teachers from the Cranbrook elementary, junior, and senior secondary schools applied for district implementation funds to have a day to deal with the assessment and reporting of students on adapted and modified programs. The Student Services teachers from Pinewood Elementary, Brenda Maudie, Barb Heathfield, and Cathy Guido organized the day. Each school team prepared and presented to the whole group a recent journal article or a section of a current publication, Reference was also made to the ministry document "Guidelines for Student Reporting" (1994).

Each article was discussed in relation to current practice in School District 05, focussing on how it related to our needs and expectations. A variety of presentation styles encouraged sharing of the diversity of approaches as well as successes and frustrations. Each teacher left with a copy of each article. Feedback from the group indicated that it was a worthwhile first step. As a result, another day is currently in the planning stages. It will include classroom teachers and administrative officers to further develop the team approach to our work in student services.

Marion Hurd serves on the LATA provincial executive as president.

Too many people expect wonders from Democracy, when the most wonderful thing of all is just having it.

Unknown

Learning Assistance Concerns

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The following section is
dedicated to learning
assistance defined:

- a) roles
- b) issues
- c) information

A Retrospective Perspective of Special Education

by Judy Rourke, SD 22, Vernon

Dedicated to Darlene Heaney and Jo-Ann Johnson, two master learning assistance teachers moving on to play in retirement. Darlene and Jo-Ann have MADE A DIFFERENCE to many children, parents, and teachers.

Perhaps there is no better way of viewing special education in transition than by examining the way society has treated exceptionality over the years. The Koran says, "If you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there." Sometimes, even if we feel we know well enough where we are going, it is useful to look over our shoulders to see where we have come from.

Humans' treatment of children parallels social evolution. It is interesting to speculate as to how and why the special education developed. The present system has its roots in the education of the "severely handicapped" in residential schools in the late 1800s and early 1900s, where the concern was primarily custodial. Two events drastically altered education; the first was compulsory education, and the second, the development of intelligence tests. Compulsory

education forced large numbers of students into contact with an elitist school system, which maintained its elitist curriculum and where failure was inevitable. The adoption of the intelligence test provided the schools with a justification for the failure, and rather than adjust the curriculum, the system created special education.

British Columbia established the Special Education Division within the Department of Education in 1968. The Celdic report, entitled One Million Children, certainly had a major impact on initiating special education in British Columbia. In 1966, The Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders appointed a study committee to inquire into, study, and report upon the needs of children with emotional and learning disorders in Canada. The report was submitted in October 1969. In 1968, there were 744 special education

classes throughout the Province of British Columbia, organized by the local school boards. It is almost inconceivable that up until 1968, children with severe disabilities had been denied a public education. "In 1977/78 the number of Approvals = 2516. 10% of the School Population is in Special Education programs." (G. Gittens, Special Education Correspondence, Victoria, B.C. 78.02.03).

In the years ahead, special education is likely to be influenced by a variety of changes now taking place in society. One focus is the awareness of the right of the individual to be different and to pursue his/her own goals in his/her own way. We should not allow our belief in the promises of inclusion to cause us to be silent if we see faults in its application. Elbert Hubbard once said, "It does not take much strength to do things; but it requires great strength to decide on what to do."

Special education continues to be a critical issue because it is a political issue. The high cost of special education is currently on the front lines. However, it has been evident to me during my 30 years in education that wherever special education has vitality, conviction, and quality, it can be a major force in the redesigning of all education-to the end that all children will have truly equal educational opportunities.

The title learning assistance teacher came into being in the early 1970s. Previously support teachers were called

remedial teachers or teacher consultants. The move to looking at children from a psycholinguistic philosophy encouraged the beginnings of our current model of child-specific learning assistance. Dr. Samuel Kirk coined the term learning disability in 1962. The "basics" for learning assistance teachers are not subjects but individual students. I feel privileged to have been in the ranks of learning assistance teachers who have held as their motto "It is our role to find out how individual at-risk children learn and what they know." Special education teachers are constantly seek-

ing new methods and program innovations that will benefit each individual student or ease, for a particular student, the process of learning a new skill. The message that began in 1968 by special education teachers in British Columbia and continues today can be summarized in the words of Thomas Carlyle over one hundred years ago: "Let each become all that he was created capable of being, expand, if possible, to his full growth, and show himself at length in his own shape and stature, be these what they may."

A Word of Gratitude

I am here today to speak for the tardy few,
Those of us who were never meant for a desk or pew.
You see we just couldn't fit in a normal slot,
A square peg in a round hole was destined to be our lot.

A subject or a predicate was beyond our comprehension,
And this caused our teachers a lot of apprehension.
Adding and subtracting, multiplying and dividing,
We could handle in small doses while we were conniving.

We were never meant to be there at least not for very long,
For in our hearts were beating a very different song.
One of logging, farming, fishing, and construction, too,
A full twelve years in any school just would never do.

So we struggled on, often getting in the way,
Of the other students who were not there just to play.
I hope you will forgive us, you who made it to the end,
For below the surface, we always were your friends.

Continued...

We left a little early anxious to find a place,
Where we could feel an integral part of the human race.
With sweaty brow and soiled hands we toiled with a will,
Happy at last to find a task that we could fulfil.

With the maturity that only years can bring,
Comes the realization that school was no small thing.
That above all else it taught us how to get along even though
Each of us was singing a very different song.

Now that it's all behind us and careers are almost done,
It is that very friendship that has made us come
And realize that this is where it was really at,
Right back at the beginning, where we first stood up to bat.

We would be terribly remiss if we didn't take the time,
To dwell on those whose job it was to try to make us rhyme.
The teachers you see, had the loftiest of goals,
It wasn't in their plans that any of us remain as moles.

They were the greatest people though we realized it too late,
Always going far beyond the call to prepare us for a date.
It may be sports or music or a speech or test,
There is one thing for sure they really did their best.

I would like to mention names and shake every hand,
But regrettably it's too late for some. I hope they'll understand.
Please accept our gratitude as we honour you aright,
Be proud! These students are the products of **your** guiding
light.

John E. Casanave

Learning Assistance Description

Prime Function	Assist those students whom, though they have average to above average intelligence, are unable to demonstrate their ability in the classroom.
Work with students	Work with individuals/small groups of children who have specific needs or learning disabilities that are preventing them from reaching their learning potential.
Assessment and Program Planning	Assist teachers with detailed assessment, programming, and an IEP, if needed, for certain students referred to the LAT.
Consultation	Using a consultative model through the school-based team communicate necessary information and collaborate with teacher, parent, principal, and sometimes the child to problem solve.
Liaison and Co-ordination	Co-ordinate information between school, special services personnel, outside agencies, other community programs, etc.
In-Service Education	Provide in-service education to teachers on special methods, materials, programs, etc.
Back-up Services	Assist with the placement of new students, complete file summaries as needed, and gather information and materials to support classroom programs and specific students.

Learning Assistance Defined

*"Know what your job is, and do it well;
always have complete follow-through,
and then...do a little more!"*

Marie Giesbrecht

Learning assistance teachers must know what is in and refer to *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*, 1995

1. What are the qualifications required?

Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, 1995 states: Learning assistance teachers should meet, at minimum, the following qualifications: (Section D, pages 3-4)

1. Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent
2. Minimum of two years successful classroom teaching experience
3. University-level courses in:
 - a. Teaching students with special needs
 - b. Assessment/testing theory and practice
 - c. Strategies for teaching, modifying, adapting curriculum
 - d. Collaborative consultation
4. In addition, university courses are recommended in:
 - a. specific exceptionalities (ADHD, FAS, Gifted, SLD)
 - b. computer technology
 - c. meeting diverse behavioral and emotional needs

Minimum qualifications are necessary to ensure that the learning assistance teacher brings a set of skills to his/her practice that will complement the skills of partner teachers in a school.

Some districts have district policy regarding the minimum qualifications for personnel seeking employment as learning assistance teachers. For example, Prince George has added competencies in communication, assessment, management, programming, materials, and teaching.

On-going in-service education is of utmost importance for learning assistance teachers, as the students' needs continue to grow and change in complexity.

2. What is learning assistance designed to do? (Section D, pages 1-3)

Learning assistance services support classroom teachers and their students who have mild to moderate difficulties in learning and adjustment. Learning assistance services are school-

based, non-categorical resource services. The LAT must be resourceful in seeking to meet immediate short-term and longer-term student needs.

3. What qualities and personality traits must a learning assistance teacher possess? (Section D, page 3)

Teachers providing learning assistance services should possess:

- a. strong interpersonal, communication and collaborative skills
- b. expertise in a wide range of teaching and management strategies
- c. knowledge of methods for evaluating and selecting instructional materials suitable for students with a variety of special needs
- d. ability to carry out a variety of assessments, including classroom observation, administration and interpretation of norm-referenced assessment instruments to Level B, curriculum-based assessments and diagnostic teaching methods (Section H, pages 7-9, Appendix B)
- e. ability to contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of an IEP in consultation with classroom teacher, parents, students, and district and community resource personnel

Learning assistance is also a PR job, as is any specialty! I must always be aware of how I am "coming across," of what my peers are thinking, taking a "reading," searching out information, facilitating in program planning, making connections and accommodating, sensitive to the teacher's plight, trusting requests and not questioning them, trying always to be proactive. This may sound impossible, but it isn't if you are cut out to be a learning assistance teacher.

There are many aspects to the learning assistance role.

A. One is promptness (within days):

1. in assessing, testing, and getting back with results
2. in acknowledging and servicing referrals,
3. in arranging for school-based team meetings
4. in getting the SBT minutes/plans written and distributed
5. in getting on with programming for the child referred

B. Another is flexibility:

1. with teachers, students, and parents when they need changes
2. with materials when no two pupils seem to need the same
3. with scheduling when priorities suddenly, totally shift
4. with workspace, with group dynamics, with "make-shift"
5. with using the appropriate testing and assessment tools,
6. with adapting, adjusting or modifying as the need arises

Learning assistance is a vital program. There is no question in my mind about that. I see learning assistance as a heavy-duty rope, composed of many strands. The many strands make it strong. When the strands become inextricably bound together into one program, learning assistance is seen by all as a lifeline for many in our educational system.

Compiled by Marie Giesbrecht, SD 23

On Perspective

Perspective is a very important part of our lives, and who needs perspective more than teachers do?

Day in and day out, the endless grind of the classroom can drain the river of determination and creativity until it becomes a mere trickle of frustration and discouragement. But let that educator catch a renewed glimpse of the impact his or her life is having upon students and the ultimate difference it will make in their future, and the flow of new ideas will likely return in torrents.

Many things help prompt perspective: quietness, a walk in the forest, an evening beside a fireplace, camping under the stars, strains of profound music, meaningful worship, a meditation upon scripture, a leisurely drive at sunset. We begin to see more clearly as the fog lifts...and we are no longer running or confused or angry or overwhelmed or afraid.

Could such places of perspective be considered "Shelters of the Most High"? When we are there, could we be abiding in the "Shadow of the Most High"? Read Psalm 91.

*A Father's Words of Wisdom
Marvin (Dad) Johnson*

When a Student Needs Assistance

The teacher notices that a student is struggling to meet the expected learning outcomes and plans an adaptation to assist the student in class.

If the adaptation works, it should be evaluated and updated regularly.

If the adaptation doesn't work, the teacher should make a referral to access resources outside the classroom to assist in planning an appropriate intervention.

Sources of assistance within the school:

- Learning assistance or resource teacher
- School counsellor
- School-based team

Possible sources of assistance within the school district:

- Speech/language pathology services
- School psychology services
- Other consultative services (e.g., district resource teacher, behavioural consultant, and special education co-ordinator)

Possible sources of assistance within the community:

- Social services
- Child and youth committee
- Mental health
- Other community-based services

At some point, a case manager might be appointed to develop an individual education plan (IEP). The case manager could be the classroom teacher, the learning assistance teacher, the resource teacher, or other in-school professional, depending on local policies. The case manager is responsible for co-ordinating the input and developing a plan.

Charlie Naylor, BCTF researcher, compiled this useful summary of information from the Ministry of Education, Special Programs *Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*, 1995. At a glance, it helps to determine what the identification, and assessment criteria are for each special education category. The chart also includes the personnel and qualifications for conducting assessments.

Summary of Identification, Assessment, and Qualified Personnel for Each Category of Special Needs

Category	Identification	Assessment	Personnel and Qualifications for Conducting Assessment
Mild Intellectual Disability (E 3)*	-2.01 SD to -3.00 SD below norm, of intellectual and adaptive behaviour functioning and adaptive functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psycho-educational assessment will be used • Individual Level C assessment of intellectual • Instruments suggested 	Refer to Training Standards (H 9)
Moderate/Severe Intellectual disabilities (E 7)	Intellectual and adaptive behaviour functioning more than 3 SDs below norm	Individual Level C assessment of intellectual and adaptive functioning	Refer to Training Standards (H 9)
Learning Disabilities (E 11)	1988 definition of LD stated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for Severe LD outlined in E 12 	Prior to arrival in school, or progressive assessment. A psycho-educational assessment must be undertaken to determine the presence, nature, severity and educational implications of a severe learning disability (E 12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No set instrument • 4 factors to include (E 13) in process (Section C) 	Refer to Training Standards (H 9)
Gifted (li 17)	Possess demonstrated or potential abilities—evidence of exceptionally high capability	Choice within four initial components, followed by formal assessment to Level C	Grad level training for interpretation of tests; appropriate Bachelor degree for administering tests. Refer to Training Standards (H 9)
Moderate Behaviour Disorders (E 21)	4 demonstrated criteria, 3 qualifiers (disruptive, time demonstrated, no response to usual class management)	Informal 1st stage, formal 2nd stage with Level C tests. Refer to E 22 - 23.	Personnel able to give Level C tests. Refer to Training Standards (H 9)

**These numbers throughout refer to the binder Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies,*

Procedures, and Guidelines, B.C. Ministry of Education, 1995.

Category	Identification	Assessment Qualifications for Conducting Assessment	Personnel and
Severe Behaviour Disorders (E 27)	Exhibit 1 of 2 behaviours AND fit in 3 qualifiers in terms of risk, interventions, and capacity	Informal 1st stage, formal 2nd stage with Level C tests	Personnel able to give Level C tests. Refer to Training Standards (H 9)
Students With Multiple Disabilities (E 31)	Completely dependent on others at all times for all major daily living needs: feeding, toileting, mobility, and personal hygiene	Integrate range of information on range of abilities: includes medical assessments E 32 and representatives of ministries of Health and Social Services (E 32)	Not stated; governed by medical profession
Deaf/Blind (E 37)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial sight—total blindness • Moderate—profound hearing loss 	Multidisciplinary assessment: sensory, physical, social, academic, communicative information	Not stated; multi-disciplinary: as for Deaf/Hard of Hearing (E 52) and Visual Impairment (E 45)
Physical Disabilities/Chronic Health (E 41)	<p>One of the following which adversely affects education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous system impairment • Musculoskeletal condition • Chronic health impairment <p>Those receiving only regular classroom teacher and/or other funded services not eligible for designated funding (E 2)</p>	Integrate current/relevant information in 5 domains + ability to perform activities of daily living at school; medical diagnosis	Medical professionals (E42)
Visual Impairment (E 45)	Student who cannot participate with ease in everyday activity. Impairment affects learning; specific visual criteria stated	1 of 4 levels of functioning in the opinion of defined specialists	Ophthalmologist, optometrist, orthoptist or Visually Impaired Program at B.C. Children's Hospital
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Medically diagnosed hearing loss resulting in substantial hearing loss	Audiological assessment	Medical doctor or audiologist, and teacher of the deaf
Student with Autism (E 57)	As defined by American Psychiatric Association: 4 defined impairments	Integrate information in 6 domains (sensory, physical, social, communicative, academic, educational)	"Appropriately qualified professionals" 3 hospital teams named + pediatrician/psychiatrist or registered psychologist

Learning Assistance in a Junior Secondary School

by Jane Baehr, SD 23
KLO Junior Secondary School

I started my teaching career, armed with two years of teacher training from UBC, where I taught Grades 4 to 7 in a two-roomed school. I think that was where I learned about individual differences. From there I went on to experience the joys of a city school; 40 Grade 7s come to mind. Then we moved south, and I had the pleasure of teaching all the students who couldn't cope with the open area concept—25 boys and one girl. That was where I learned about behaviour. Around that time, we decided to have children of our own. I resigned from my job, pulled out my pension, and assumed I would never teach again. Two children later, I decided it would benefit everyone if I got out of the house a few days a week. I started to-what we called in those days-substitute teach.

I found myself being called frequently into special needs classes and schools. That was

where I fell in love. I became enthralled with those children and immediately went back to school to learn everything I could about teaching students with individual differences. I attended SFU; it was close to where we lived, and I could attend night classes and summer sessions.

We moved north again, and I was offered a position teaching special needs students ages five to ten. I found myself back at night school to take an advanced primary course and finally finish my degree. By then we were moving again, and we arrived in Kelowna. I was offered a position at KLO Junior Secondary School teaching mentally challenged adolescents 13 to 16. There were 15 in one class with a CEA. I went back to school nights and summers to complete a fifth year in special education. Around that time, the learning assistance position became available, and I applied for it. Ten years plus a



Jane Baehr, SD 23, a master learning assistance teacher at the junior secondary level

master's degree later, I am still the learning assistance teacher for KLO, a school of 800 students.

Administration and staff have allowed me to develop a unique program. Our school goes from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Eighty percent of my work is with the junior grades, although I do see seniors, especially those who have been on an IEP from Grade 8. I do not pull students out of classes; I go into classrooms. I see my job as supporting all students, and on that basis, I have worked very hard to make the LA room available to everyone. I keep the LA room open at noon and after school four days a week. Last semester, 500 students came to work in my room for a variety of reasons. Working in the classroom allows students to see me as someone who can help

them with curriculum and study skills.

In April, I go to visit all the Grade 7 classes in our feeder schools. I spend time with them so they will know me when they get to KLO. I speak with the teachers, and they let me know whom to watch: the learning disabled, the slow learner, the social misfit, the behaviour problem, the gifted, and the ESL. Next, I speak at the parent meetings and try to make parents feel comfortable about telling me if their child has any problems. It has been my experience that parents may not tell the receiving school pertinent information because they feel their child will be labelled. I follow this process so that no student who comes to KLO will fall between the cracks. We are a semestered school, and I want to know kids right away. In June, I sit with the counsellors and "hand timetable" students who may need special consideration. I check every Grade 8 timetable to make sure it is as balanced as possible.

In September, I meet with teachers and go through their class lists. We discuss students I have worked with in the past or any new student. I do a file check on every new student to make sure we have not missed any special instructions. During the first week of school, I make sure I visit every Grade 8 class. I talk

about our agenda and of course hand out suckers to everyone who has one. By the second week of September, I will know what classes are being taught in each block and which ones have students on my caseload in them. Each block, I will visit those classes. I may stay and help students if there is a need; if not, I will move to the next class. As the term progresses, I find I am in some classes more than I am in others. If I spot any student having particular difficulty with a concept, I will suggest he/she come to see me at lunch or after school. Because my colleagues and I have been at KLO for some time, this approach works extremely well. Teachers let me know immediately if they see learning problems. I will telephone home to parents, discuss strategies with them, and monitor the progress of the student. Because all four of us—the student, the parents, the classroom teacher and I—are involved, the student is usually more successful.

I give a Study Skills Workshop to all Grade 8 students and their parents in the third week of September and again in the second semester. I advertise the workshop every time I visit a school, speak to classes, and visit parents. Since I have been doing this for several years, many parents attend as each of their kids arrives at KLO. They tell me it is very

worthwhile for them and their child. I have presented Study Skills to PAC groups at two of our feeder schools, at our local conference, and at a literacy conference.

Two blocks each semester, I run a class we call Strategies. This term, I have 13 students from Grades 8 to 10 in one block and share a second block with a young first-year teacher who was given some LA time. In that class, we have 12 students in Grades 8 to 11. These are students who are on IEPs, either modified or adapted. During class time, they work on curriculum. Using their curriculum, I teach study strategies. The strategies include key words, memory skills like mnemonics, the writing process, organization skills, time management, test taking, and behaviour management. Because I am in their class during the day, I know what they have to do and what the teacher's expectations are. I monitor their progress very closely.

I am responsible for all testing and IEP writing in our school because I am the only fully qualified learning assistant. I meet with teachers and parents to determine the kind of plan that will be required. I have very high expectations for all the students I work with. To me, self-esteem comes from success and feeling good about what you have accom-

plished. One factor I include in our IEP is work ethic. I feel very strongly that being learning disabled does **not** mean not doing anything. If the plan is to be effective for the student, then he/she needs to work to meet the outcomes the same as any other student.

I told my strategy class about writing this article and asked them to comment on what I do at KLO. I said they could write anonymously if they wanted to. I am thrilled to enclose some of their comments.

Mrs. Baehr helps kids pass their tests and classes. She makes sure we're doing our work by talking to our teachers and calling our parents.
(Marcus)

Mrs. Baehr helps us by doing lots of things like key words. They help a lot. Thanks to her, my marks are going up.
(Satvir)

Mrs. Baehr spends her time staying in at lunch and during her breaks to help kids who are having trouble understanding their homework.
(Brent)

Mrs. Baehr is a great kind teacher everyone likes but she is also the strict, get down to work, type of teacher everyone needs. (Steven)

She helps me study and work out problems. In elementary school, my grades were C-, but now they are Bs because of her help. (Darren)

Mrs. Baehr makes sure we do our homework and makes sure we understand. She likes working with my homework because she learns at the same time. (Sylvia)

She helps kids out. She teaches every one of them strategies. She's kind. (M)

This letter particularly touched my heart as it comes from a young man with a lot of personal problems:

Mrs. Baehr has helped me in a lot of ways such as keeping me in after school or at lunch to get caught up and to phone me at home to see if I have my homework done. She has gotten me back up on my feet when I am in the dumps and helped me pull my grades up. She goes from class to class helping other kids and me and I think we all should be thankful that she would take the time to do something like that.

The 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 Rule

The LAT Formula That Works!

by Lynda Mawer, SD 22, Vernon

Learning assistance teachers frequently feel overwhelmed by the number of referrals being initiated for their services and the obvious lack of hours in a day to fulfil the expectations of colleagues, administrators, and parents. It appears that many LATs spend the bulk of their time providing direct service to students who have been referred because of various learning difficulties at the expenses of their other responsibilities. This is as a result of the number of referrals being initiated and the view that the LAT is the one who is responsible for "fixing" the student. The increase in referrals has drastically exceeded the availability of service, creating the potential for enormous stress to all educators involved. Causing further frustration is the lack of time available for the indirect service the LAT is expected to fulfil.

Alternative support systems are required to assist teachers and school districts in the provision of high quality programs to meet the unique needs of all students. Some school districts have already

acknowledged the impossibility of attempting to provide direct service to all the children with exceptional needs, and they have recognized the importance and necessity of the other roles expected of the LAT.

Based on the premise that classroom teachers are responsible for all students in their classroom, the first priority is for classroom teachers to interact directly with students to help them master academic curricula. Teachers considered experts in the classroom identify the individual needs of their students and work toward meeting those needs.

The second priority focusses on the classroom teacher's interactions with the LAT to obtain specialized information or teaching strategies that will assist the classroom teacher in meeting the needs of those students. The interactions include sharing information, materials, demonstration, and/or teaching approaches. The LAT responds to the identified needs of the classroom teacher.



Lynda Mawer
Provincial LATA Executive,
treasurer and conference registrar,
SD 22, Vernon

The third priority may centre on the LAT's becoming directly involved with the student on a supplementary short-term basis, to further assist the classroom teacher. The goal of the LAT is to facilitate knowledge, skills, and confidence to enable the classroom teacher and the exceptional student achieve success.

Implementing this model has proven to be more effective in

providing students with optimal educational opportunities in the classrooms. Where this model can break down is in the division of the LAT's time. The most effective time-management plan for the LAT schedule is that of 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 in the following areas.

Indirect service involves assessment and observation in the classroom, diagnostic teaching in classes, adapting curriculum, providing and adapting materials, team planning, modelling new programs/techniques, co-teaching, communicating information to parents (through meetings, phone calls, and personal contact), organizing home reading programs, instruction or reading buddy programs, maintaining a current awareness of support services, assisting and communicating about student needs and programs to parents, other professionals and agencies, and arranging and providing in-service education to inter-

ested teachers, teaching assistants, and parent volunteers.

Direct service includes identification, diagnostic short-term teaching (individual or small group), remedial instruction (of four to six weeks' duration; specific focus to close knowledge/skill gaps), and behavior management. The emphasis is on short-term assistance since the goal is to have the student return to the classroom setting as quickly as possible.

Assessment includes completing thorough file work-ups to determine the time span, complexity, and severity of the student's difficulty; assessment away from the classroom; and facilitating individual education plan meetings with the parents, classroom teacher, teaching assistant, and other support personnel working with the student.

It quickly becomes apparent that if an LAT is expected to deliver only direct service, the

other two equally important roles will be left unfulfilled, and the goal that all students will participate in regular classroom curriculum activities will be not be met.

The role of the LAT is to be a fully participating staff person in the school, but is not a substitute teacher. The LAT's role is primarily supportive in nature. All the students on a class list are the responsibility of the classroom teacher and the LAT is there to assist the classroom teacher cope with and provide appropriate educational experiences for the students. This can only occur when the 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 division of time is honoured and respected.

Lynda Mawer's position, this year, includes both school district psycho-educational assessments and elementary school counselling for SD 22, Vernon. She is also a member of LATA, holding the offices of treasurer and conference registrar.

The Seven Intelligences

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**It's not how smart you are
but how you are smart!**

Teaching to the Seven Intelligences

How Humans May Be Intelligent

compiled by M. Giesbrecht, LAT

We, the learning assistance teachers, must, as advocates for the children who have the intelligence but are not successful in the classroom, keep in mind not only learning styles and teaching styles but the seven intelligences as outlined below. If explaining to the child does not work, perhaps a picture will break through to the level of understanding. This provides a clue as to what could work for that child. These considerations also have implications for the adaptations and modifications that may be needed in a child's IEP.

Gardner says that the consideration of multiple intelligences is a powerful tool that can help us achieve greater educational success. If materials are taught and assessed in only one way, we reach certain kind of child but not others. The more we can match students to congenial approaches of teaching, learning, and assessing, the more likely it is that those students will achieve educational success.

1. Linguistic

reading, writing, speaking, listening, discussing in one's own or foreign languages, using various kinds of computer technology, conversationalist, debating

2. Logical/Mathematical

working with numbers and abstract patterns, timeliness and order, logical problem solving, classifying, sequencing, and solving puzzles

3. Visual/Spatial

working with images, mind mapping, visualizing, drawing, graphics, orientation of the body in space, observational skills, solving mazes and other spatial tasks

4. Musical

rhythm and melody, patterned sound, songs, rap, dance, composing, conducting, playing instruments, listening to music

5. Bodily/Kinesthetic

processing information through touch, movement, dramatics, physical co-ordination and dexterity, active sports, fine and gross motor skills

6. Intrapersonal

working alone, self-paced instruction, individualized projects, understanding one's inner world and emotions

7. Interpersonal

sharing, co-operating, teaching, interviewing, relating to other people, group projects, multicultural activities, role-playing, working collaboratively, understanding how to communicate

8. Naturalist

(added by Howard Gardner, more recently)

recognizes patterns in nature, has mastery of taxonomy, understands about different species / plants, sees deeply into the nature of living things,

Source of Information:

Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences, by Howard Gardner, New York: Basic Books

1. Are Students Smarter Than We Think?

Too often we, as teachers, in whatever role we have in the school, depend too heavily on the WISC-III results for assessing students' intelligence. Current theories and writings on intelligence convey ideas and evidence that "students are smarter than we think." (Morris, 1992)

Howard Gardner, a Harvard University psychologist, believes that IQ is more than language and logic. He suggests we look at ourselves and students as having multiple intelligences. (Gardner, 1983) These intelligences exist as domains of expertise and reflect students' underlying intellectual abilities. We can thus teach students better if we realize that we have linguistic/verbal

learners, logical/mathematical learners, visual/spatial learners, bodily/kinesthetic learners, musical/rhythmic learners, social/interpersonal learners, and private/intrapersonal learners.

Erica Schubert, Port Alberni, and Kelly Murphy, Ucluelet, B.C., both learning assistance teachers, have developed a "Self-Assessment of Competence" form, based on Gardner's posits regarding how ability should be evaluated. These two IATs were planning to use this self-assessment in the secondary school. You might find this a useful assessment tool to use in combination with the Personal Planning IRP.

SELF ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE

Directions: It is now known that we all possess several different kinds or domains of "intelligence". (H. Gardner, Domains of Intelligence, 1983). Following the descriptions of each type of intelligence, plot on the graph (0-10) how you would rate yourself in each of these areas of competence.

NAME _____ GRADE _____ DATE _____

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR ABILITIES!

DOMAINS OF INTELLIGENCE

	AVERAGE										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Musical											
2. Bodily Kinesthetic											
3. Spatial 3D											
4. Spatial 2D											
5. Logical/Mathematical											
6. Listening											
7. Speaking											
8. Reading											
9. Writing											
10. Intrapersonal											
11. Interpersonal											

ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE AND ABILITY SELF-REPORT

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. MUSICAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play an instrument • collect music • tap out rhythms • remember melodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “need” to have music playing • sing songs to self • can tell “off key” notes |
| 2. BODILY
KINESTHETIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like to play sports • twitch, fidget a lot • can mimic gestures, behaviours, mannerisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like scary rides • “feel” things at a gut level • swim, hike, surf, and/or skateboard |
| 3. SPATIAL 3D | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like to rearrange space • can make “contraptions” • like woodworking, carving, sewing, or doing “stained glass” work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can manipulate, arrange objects easily • love(d) to play with Lego, building blocks, etc. |
| 4. SPATIAL 2D | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • artistic • like movies, slides • daydream in images • can draw/copy accurately | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like jigsaws, mazes • easily read maps, charts, diagrams • “see” images when thinking |
| 5. LOGICAL
MATHEMATICAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do arithmetic problems in head • like puzzles • enjoy computers • love chess, checkers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoy questions of philosophy • can reason things out • can devise experiments to test an hypothesis or theory |
| 6. LISTENING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate/enjoy rhyme • “hear” to learn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good memory for names, places, dates • good at taking notes from lectures |
| 7. SPEAKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can spin tales • can verbalize to learn study • can tell jokes, stories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • love to talk, comfortable presenting ideas, thoughts |
| 8. READING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read in spare time • do crosswords puzzles, Scrabble • can predict meaning of unknown words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoy playing with words, riddles, etc. • good visual memory for words • enjoy books, stories |
| 9. WRITING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like to keep a journal, write notes, letters, poetry, stories • spell words easily and accurately | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can write paragraphs and essays when needed • take notes to learn & remember |
| 10. INTRAPERSONAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal hobbies, interests • deep sense of self-confidence • strong willed, strong opinions • strong sense of self, style, and behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like to study independently • may be a loner • live in private, inner world |
| 11. INTERPERSONAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have many good friends • “street smart” • family peace maker • like to co-operate/ work together on projects, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socialize at work, home, school • like group games • like to do volunteer work • a “joiner” (part of “the gang/team) • feel empathy for others |

2. How Humans Learn

“The true art of memory is the art of attention.”

Samuel Johnson

As learning assistance teachers, we must be cognizant of the way the human brain works to bring about learning and remembering.

Sensory Memory

Research shows that anything that captures students' attention and gets their minds engaged emotionally has the potential to produce learning. If there is no attention and no engagement, there can be no learning.

We take in information through our five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The receptors in the brain hold the information within a sensory memory for about three-quarters of a second before forgetting or processing and sending on. Whether or not the information is sent on to short-term memory depends on a number of factors:

- Degree of interest
- Degree of stimulation or emotional focus
- Emotional state of the individual
- Number of senses involved
- Nutrition and time of day
- Peer and teacher acceptance etc.
- Prior knowledge

Many ADHD students have a hard time filtering out what is important and sending just one thing into sensory memory. Often the ADHD child will hold both hands over the ears or eyes, indicating to the teacher or parent that the sensory memory is on overload and having a hard time.

Short-Term Memory

Once short-term memory gets the information, it holds onto it for 3 to 18 seconds (20 seconds maximum) before the information is forgotten or sent on to long-term memory. Sending information to long-term memory depends on:

Chunking

- Degree of motivation, emotions involved
- Interest in subject, etc.
- Mnemonics
- Number of senses involved
- Prior experience
- Shape/color/action (We tend to pay attention to these.)

Long-Term Memory

Rehearsal is essential to transfer information from short-term to long-term memory. There are two types of rehearsal: rote (repetition) and elaborative (giving meaning). The more rehearsal strategies we have, the deeper and richer the learning. Once information is in the long-term memory, we either “use it or lose it!”

Some rehearsal strategies follow:

- Acting out a process: role-playing
- Creating a model or story
- Graphic organizers, quick writes, split-page note-taking, interactive notebooks
- Mnemonics, chanting a rap, developing a song, poem, skit
- Reciprocal teaching, creating questions
- Think/Pair/Share, etc.
- Visualizing events/sequence

Rehearsal strategies develop with age, but they can be taught at an earlier age. Left to natural developmental progression:

1. Prior to seven years of age, little rehearsal is evident
2. Seven to ten years of age, rehearsal is usually repetition of stimuli
3. Beyond ten years of age, more elaborative rehearsal is noticeable.

There are two types of long-term memory:

1. Declarative

- a. Semantic, where we store our general knowledge: facts, names, concepts
- b. Episodic, where we store episodes from our past: specific events, when they happened, where they happened

2. Procedural Memory

These are skills that have reached the point of "automaticity": driving a car, typing and keyboarding, decoding, computing, etc.

The human brain has three physiological layers. Each is geared toward separate functions but interacts with the others:

1. **Brain stem** regulates basic life support systems, keeps our heart beating and lungs breathing, governs instinctive behaviors
2. **Limbic system** surrounds the brain stem, is the primary centre of emotion, houses the hippocampus, which deals with storage of information in long-term memory
3. **Neocortex** surrounds the limbic system, houses most of the neurons in the human central nervous system, and is the part of the brain that makes language, writing, and computing possible; decision making, foresight, hindsight and judgement originate in the neocortex

Emotions drive attention, which, in turn, drives learning. Emotion and cognition cannot be separated. Memory is impossible without emotional content. The material we teach must have meaning for the students.

Under stress, our responses are more automatic and limited, with less capacity for rational and creative thought. When we are embarrassed, humiliated, ridiculed, or feeling threatened, there is a decrease in the ability to learn. A non-threatening environment is essential for the neocortex to operate most efficiently.

All information processing in the brain consists of neurons "talking" to one another. The axons are the senders of information, and the dendrites are the receivers of information. The action inside the cell is electrical, and the action between cells is chemical. The synapse is the new connection of networking that happens when new learning takes place. The more solid the learning, the stronger the synapse, so that forgetting does not so easily occur.

It has been said that much of what we're doing in schools isn't brain compatible. Schools are typically verbal and auditory oriented. Any new information we teach needs to be taught more effectively by using visuals, games, music, stories, and kinesthetic activities. We need to spend less time teaching new information, which creates new memory networks. We need to spend more time helping students learn to use the information they already have, in new situations through discussions and debates, role plays, games, analogies, and problem solving. This consolidates memory networks and plans for success in the real world.

Source of Information:

A Mind of Three Minds: The Triune Brain,
by Paul MacLean

*Why does it behoove us, as teachers, to know and regard the seven intelligences?
Read the following poem:*

About School

He always wanted to say things
But no one understood.
He always wanted to explain things,
But no one cared...
So he drew.
Sometimes he would just draw and it wasn't anything.
He wanted to carve it in stone or write it in the sky.
He would lie out on the grass and look up in the sky,
And it would be only him and the sky...
And the things inside him that needed saying.
It was after that, that he drew the picture.
He kept it under his pillow and he let no one see it.
It was a beautiful picture,
And he would look at it every night and think about it.
When it was dark and his eyes were closed, he could still see it,
And it was all of him, and he loved it.

When he started school he brought it with him
Not to show anyone, but just to have it with him, like a friend.
It was funny about school.
He sat in a square, brown desk like all the other square brown desks,
And he thought it should be red.
His room was a square brown room like all the other square brown rooms,
And it was tight and close and stiff.
He hated to hold the pencil and the chalk with his arm stiff
And his feet flat on the floor, stiff, with the teacher watching...watching.
Then he had to write numbers and they weren't anything.
They were worse than the letters
That would be something, if you put them together.
And the numbers were tight and square,
And he hated the whole thing.
The teacher came and spoke to him.
She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys.
He said he didn't like ties and she said it didn't matter.
After that they drew. He drew all yellow
Because it was the way he felt about the morning.
It was beautiful.
The teacher came and smiled at him,

Continued...

"What's that?" she said.
"Why don't you draw something like Ken's drawing?
Isn't his picture beautiful?"
It was all questions.

After that his mother bought him a tie,
And he always drew airplanes and rocket ships like everyone else.
He threw the old picture away, and when he lay out looking at the sky,
It was big and blue and all of everything,
But he wasn't anymore.
He was square inside...and brown,
And his hands and his brain felt stiff,
The thing inside didn't need saying anymore.
It had stopped pushing.
It was crushed.
Stiff.
But now he was like everyone else.

Author Unknown

The child's basic thinking skills develop only by interaction. Therefore the teacher must have a lot of interaction with pupils. The more emotionally involved a child becomes in a learning experience, the deeper the impressions are (include the auditory, visual, tactile, kinesthetic, as well as the five senses in getting the concept across). Talk about the child's environment. Understanding and development must begin at the child's home base—from what the child is familiar with. This is true for reading, language development, and even in learning to spell a word.

Elgin Brown

Emotional Intelligence and the Children in Our Care

by Judy Rourke, SD 22, Vernon

Teachers have a vision that the children in their care will develop into confident, competent, and caring adults. The development of emotional intelligence plays a critical role in this process. It has been the missing piece for many children with learning difficulties. It can matter more than IQ.

In 1990, Peter Salovey, a Yale psychologist, examined how a person can bring intelligence to emotions. In doing so, he categorizes emotional abilities into five main domains:

- Knowing one's emotions
- Managing one's emotions
- Motivating oneself
- Recognizing emotions in others
- Handling relationships

In 1995, Jack Block, of the University of California, assessed the personality and behavioural correlates of high IQ independent of emotional intelligence, and emotional intelligence apart from IQ. Those with a high IQ, independent of emotional intelligence were "adept in the realm of the mind, but inept in

the personal world," according to Block. Those with emotional intelligence, independent of IQ, tended to be "socially poised"—outgoing, positive about self, and comfortable alone and with others.

The costs of emotional illiteracy are alarming:

As many as one in five children have psychological difficulties that impair their lives in some way, reports Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*. Anxiety is the most common problem in children under age 11, afflicting 10% with phobias serious enough to interfere with normal life. In addition, binge drinking among boys climbs during the teenage years to a rate of 20% by age 20.

A widely cited "Index of Social Health" showed that in 1994, four of the six major problems concerning children under age 18 (child abuse, teenage suicide, drug abuse, and high school dropout rate) worsened. The teen suicide rate was 95% higher in 1994 than in 1970,

according to a New York Times article on the report.

The presence of at least one caring person—someone who conveys an attitude of compassion, who understands that no matter how bad a child's behaviour, the child is doing the best he or she can given his or her experience—provides support for healthy development and the learning of emotional intelligence. Werner and Smith's (1998) study found that the most frequently encountered positive role model in the lives of resilient children—those children who were able to develop emotional intelligence against all odds—was a favorite teacher who was not just an instructor for academic skills, but also a positive model to help children "know thyself." Awareness of one's own feelings as they occur is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence.

Wentzel's research in 1993 suggests that children's social interactions and behaviours in the classroom are stronger predictors of their grades, than are standardized test scores. Interventions designed to develop positive social behavior at school have frequently resulted in higher levels of academic achievement; whereas interventions designed to improve academic achievement do not always lead to corresponding

improvements in classroom social behaviours.

The creation of educational environments that foster peer acceptance among all children regardless of their differences, has become a significant concern to educators interested in nurturing the development of the whole child. The socialization of children (development of emotional intelligence) has traditionally been seen as the primary responsibility of parents and family. In today's changing society, schools are faced with increasing demands to provide children not only

with academic resources, but also with opportunities that promote emotional intelligence. The boundaries between social and academic problems can often become blurred, and failure to address social adjustment difficulties may seriously impede academic progress and educational success. Rather than let children develop as they may, today's educators will need to make explicit attempts to develop children socially as well as academically.

Every person has both cognitive and emotional

intelligences—but, of the two, emotional intelligence contributes far more of the qualities that make us more fully human. Emotional intelligence is a different way of being smart. It is not fixed at birth. It can be nurtured and strengthened in all of us.

Aristotle provided us with the challenge of addressing emotional intelligence when he said: "Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—this is not easy."

Attitude

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it, and so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitudes.

Charles Swindoll

Student Profile Study

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**Anyone can count the seeds
in an apple, but who can
count the apples in a seed?**

Student Profile Study

Future Remarkable Individuals

Howard Eaton, from the Eaton Coull Learning Group, granted permission to LATA to print the following profiles of students with learning difficulties. Testing measures are given, followed by possible strategies (adaptations/modifications) that would enable the child to cope and eventually become 'a remarkable individual' in the educational system:

Profile 1, The Borderline IQ Sean, Grade 4

Sean attends school in B.C. Sean was tested in Grade 2. His Full Scale IQ score on the WISC-III was within the Borderline Range (8%). He was re-tested in Grade 4, and the following is an outline of his IQ subtest scores. His reading, writing, and math skills were three years below grade level. However, he had this remarkable ability to listen to a poem or song and remember it exactly. His teacher said, "Sean has an excellent auditory memory and can recall a story or poem once he hears it."

WISC-III

Arithmetic	9%
Block design	5%
Coding	1%
Comprehension	37%
(Digit span)	50%
Information	1%

Object assembly	75%
Picture arrangement	50%
Picture completion	5%
Similarities	75%
(Symbol search)	9%
Vocabulary	9%

Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability—Revised

Auditory processing	90%
Long-term (rote) memory	28%
Short-term memory	82%
Visual processing	41%
Visual processing speed	1%

Other Vocabulary Measures Peabody Picture Vocabulary

Test-Revised	27%
Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test	73%
Comprehensive Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Test	32%

Visual-Motor Integration Skills, Beery

	53%
Detroit Test of Learning Aptitudes—Design Reproduction	9%
(Visual Memory Stressed)	

Strategies:

1. Recognize talent—"islands of competence."
2. Tell Sean how he learns best and why.
3. Sean learns best through his auditory channels—listening and speaking.

4. Sean can show his knowledge best through auditor channels—speaking.
5. All forms of visual learning must be supported by auditory information. For example, if working on math calculations or equations, he must verbalize what he is doing. If a teacher is introducing a new concept, it must be supported by verbal examples.
6. Change the form of examination (i.e., give Sean oral exams or quizzes; scribe his answers).
7. Because of slow reading rate, all books must be put on tape so that he can have access to the information and vocabulary. He was given the Gray Oral Reading Test orally, and it was found that he could comprehend reading passages at the Grade 5 level.
8. If using visual supports to learning, reduce the complexity of the information.
9. Provide him with ways to show his knowledge and abilities to other students. Sean enjoys public speaking/presentations.

Profile 2, The Girl Who Can't Write Cecily, Grade 7

Cecily started school in a French Immersion program. By the end of Kindergarten, she was transferred out because of the difficulties she was experiencing. She worked slowly and needed lots of encouragement. In Grade 4, she started to experience severe depression. She was unable to keep up with her peers. She felt stupid. Unfortunately, her teacher demanded that she write in cursive, no matter how long it took. As well, the teacher refused to print on the board so that Cecily could read the writing. She also could not finish quizzes or tests on time. She was tested in Grade 6. Her reading scores were within the Average range. However, her reading rate was at the 1%, math skills 20%, and writing skills 21%. The following is a list of her scores:

WISC-III	
Arithmetic	9%
Block design	37%
Coding	5%
Comprehension	84%
(Digit span)	16%
Information	95%
Object assembly	75%
Picture arrangement	95%
Picture completion	63%
Similarities	95%
(Symbol search)	16%
Vocabulary	98%

Test of Nonverbal Intelligence— 2nd Edition	91%, Superior
SS 120	

Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability—Revised

Auditory processing	55%
Comprehension— knowledge	99%
Long-term (rote) memory	37%
Short-term memory	34%
Visual processing	99%
Visual processing speed	17%

Other Vocabulary Measures

Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test	99%
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised	94%

Visual-Motor Integration Skills, Beery

27%

Writing Sample:

The brav cave men wer hunting woley mamit. Sone thay fand sune. They throw rocks and spers. Sone the loocked liki porkupins after afuw awers a mamith came dawn they skindit and rumvd the tusks. The cave pepel had a grat feest that night and the mamths sperrit drifted of into th night like smok fome a fire into the starry night. The next day the cave pepel modut sper hads and uther things for the next hunt.

Strategies

1. Recognize her talents on a weekly basis—"islands of competence."

2. Tell Cecily how she learns best and why.
3. Teach her how to touch-type—use a laptop or computer in school for written work.
4. Provide books on tape because of her slow reading rate.
5. Provide extended time on all quizzes and examinations.
6. Provide a reader for quizzes and examinations.
7. Scribe her answers to questions.
8. Provide opportunities to show her knowledge other non-traditional ways.
9. Do not focus on her spelling or writing mechanics when grading her work.

Profile 3, The ESL Student Mark, Grade 11

Mark was referred by a friend from the University of British Columbia. He moved from Hong Kong to Vancouver with his family when he was in the primary grades. He started elementary school in Vancouver. However, he struggled with speaking, reading, spelling, and writing. He found that most of his friends were progressing in English. His family began to wonder if he was smart enough to learn. One uncle said, "He is like a piece of rotten wood with worms in it. There is nothing inside." Mark continued to struggle in school. He was placed in ESL

classrooms. In high school, he is taking modified courses without LAT support. Often his teachers write in his report the following comment: "Has met the minimum standard to pass this course but is likely to experience difficulty in subsequent courses." Mark was tested last year. The results of his testing are as follows:

Test of Nonverbal Intelligence—

3rd Ed. IQ 112 76%

WISC—III

Arithmetic	37%
Block design	50%
Coding	91%
Comprehension	75%
(Digit span)	25%
Information	63%
Object assembly	63%
Picture arrangement	84%
Picture completion	50%
Similarities	63%
(Symbol search)	84%
Vocabulary	16%

Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Ability—Revised

Auditory processing	2%
Comprehension—	
knowledge	15%

Long-term (rote)	
memory	29%
Short-term memory	1%
Visual processing	89%
Visual processing speed	68%

Other Vocabulary Measures

Peabody Picture Vocabulary	
Test—Revised	3%
Comprehensive Receptive	

and Expressive
Vocabulary Test 10%

Visual-Motor Integration Skills—Beery 53%

Writing Sample:

The year 2030 were earth has been distaided of human populations and nucearl fustion. The time has come that people are now inoving to space for living and seaking for new things.

One day a kid call Andrew he has discover a speacil plant that it could change all the dead soil back to original the ground that's what earth has. So he took this plant back to his home and did a experiment with it. Later a week after he saw food has grown and dead soil has come hack to it's original. So he went to meet a profacer of earth science and the profacer were call Dr. EZ. Dr. EZ had took a look at the plant and he said this were a planit that were came from the earth. He start to ask a group of people to dig up these plant could change all the grounds back to what earth was. After Dr.EZ has planted this plant on the ground it has change the hole planet back to what earth was. So people were admazed that earth is back but on a other planet. Andrew has become a founder of the new earth that people could life happy. So I think exploring is very important because you never now what you found out that could he very important to human and you self.

Strategies:

1. He must develop an understanding of his learning profile and begin to self-advocate for himself. He requires significant accommodations in order to take part in the regular education curriculum (i.e., book on tape, scribe, extended time on examinations, use of an electronic dictionary). These accommodations need to be in place until he has improved his basic skills in reading, writing, and spelling.
2. Intensive phonetic tutoring to learn the sound/symbol structure of the English language. This includes testing the 44 phonemes of the language, syllable division rules, and the six kinds of syllables in the English language. This is due to his significantly weak auditory processing (sound analysis) ability.
3. In order to increase his vocabulary knowledge and awareness of the English language he requires instruction in Latin and Greek prefixes, root words and suffixes. There are programs for students with learning disabilities that focus on teaching Latin and Greek prefixes, root words, and suffixes.

4. He requires instruction in the grammar/syntax of the English language. He must review the basics of grammar and then move into more complex aspects.

Howard Eaton, Ed.M., is an educational consultant, and a learning disabilities specialist, a conference/workshop presenter, and one who has walked his talk, inasmuch as he, too, has had to

cope with learning disabilities. Further information about the Eaton Coull Learning Group can be found at www.eclg.com

A Little at a Time

by John Erskine, author of
Private Life of Helen of Troy, My Life in Music, etc.

I must have been about 14 then, and I dismissed the incident with the easy carelessness of youth. But the words Carl Walter spoke that day came back to me years later, and ever since have been of inestimable value.

Carl Walter was my piano teacher. During one of my lessons, he asked how much practicing I was doing. I said three or four hours a day.

"Do you practise in long stretches, an hour at a time?"

"I try to."

"Well, don't!" he exclaimed. "When you grow up, time won't come in long stretches. Practise in minutes, whenever you can find them—five or ten before school, after lunch, between chores. Spread the practice through the day, and piano playing will become a part of your life."

When I was teaching at university, I wanted to write, but recitations, theme reading, and committee meetings filled my days and evenings. For two years, I got practically nothing down on paper, and my excuse was

that I had no time. Then I recalled what Carl Walter had said.

During the next week, I conducted an experiment. Whenever I had five unoccupied minutes, I sat down and wrote a hundred words or so. To my astonishment, at the end of the week, I had a sizable manuscript ready for revision.

Later on, I wrote novels by the same piecemeal method. Though my teaching schedule had become heavier than ever, in every day there were idle moments that could be caught and put to use. I even took up piano playing again, finding that the small intervals of the day provided sufficient time for both writing and piano practice.

There is an important trick in this time-using formula: you must get into your work quickly. If you have but five minutes for writing, you can't afford to waste four chewing your pencil. You must make your mental preparations beforehand, and concentrate on your task almost instantly when the time comes.

To Carl Walter I owe the discovery that even very short periods of time add up to all the useful hours I need, if I plunge in without delay.

IEP

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The IEP is an action plan. It is a game plan devised by the team in a huddle—it decides what to do to win.

**Ask yourself:
How lean, simple, and efficient can the process be while still guaranteeing that all the essential components are there?**

Dr. Dave Carter

Keeping the E in IEP

No document is more helpful or potentially more destructive than the IEP (individualized education plan). In my 26 years in special education, I have seen the IEP move from being an innovation to a stumbling block—from being the jewel in the crown of special education to being a lead weight.

All learning assistance teachers know the key elements of an IEP. At the minimum, the IEP states in clear terms where a child is, where that child is supposed to be going, what will be done to get there, who needs to help with the trip, what equipment is needed, and how we will check to see if we have arrived.

An IEP should never be judged as a stand-alone document. Far too often, we look at an IEP (or an IEP meeting) and judge it to be good by itself. An IEP is a useless waste of time, no matter how detailed and articulate it is, if it does not guide a good program. If the purpose of the IEP is to impress those involved in its development or to look good in a file, but without improving a child's education, it has hurt the child. It has hurt the child because it has sucked up valuable time and led to artifi-

cially heightened expectations (especially for parents).

The IEP is an action plan. It is the game plan devised by the team in a huddle; it decides what to do to win. The most effective learning assistance teachers I know pay a lot of attention to IEP development as a process. They have toyed with pieces of paper or perhaps computer templates to find efficiency. They are always worried about not taking inordinate time away from actually working with children. They spend less time worrying about who else to invite to the IEP meeting and spend considerable time deciding who really needs to be there. Some of their IEP teams are large, and the documents detailed. Most of their teams are small, and the documents brief, succinct, and in places even "generic." "Hmm... let's see we need, me, the parents, the child (?), the classroom teacher...now, do I really need the custodian and the groundskeeper too?"

Here are some starting questions for anyone writing an IEP:

- How lean, simple, and efficient can the process and the documents be while still guaranteeing that all the



Dr. Dave Carter is director of Student Support Services for SD 23 (Central Okanagan). He has taught for a number of universities including the University of B.C., the University of Victoria, Trinity Western, and San Diego State. He was program co-ordinator for the joint Okanagan University College-University of Victoria elementary teacher education program. He has taught Grades 6, 7, and 8, and been an LAT and a school psychologist. He earned his doctorate in educational psychology and special education from UBC. He and his wife Sharon, live in Kelowna with their four children.

essential components are there?

- Is this document a reflection of joint planning and commitment to move a child forward?
- Am I doing this so that something looks great in a file and to impress some director, or am I truly ensuring that I am keeping the "E" in IEP?

Remember, E in IEP stands for educational and not excessive.

You may find the following IEP forms useful

Marie Giesbrecht
LATA Editor
SD 23

Two of the forms that follow (IEP and IBP) are short, quick, and to the point for program adaptations/modifications that are not extensive. The third, more comprehensive, form you may wish to use when more detail is required. The accompanying checklists are completed by the teacher prior to the school-based team meeting. The information from the checklists is then a starting point at the SBT meeting. The IEP form is on disk, and information can be typed into the appropriate spot as decisions are made at the SBT meeting.

The advantage with this IEP form is that there is room to check off goals being met and a space for "Summary of Student's Progress." This quick update can serve as the LAT report card insert when report card time rolls around.

Ministry News Regarding IEPs

Susan Kennedy, co-ordinator of Special Programs Branch, Ministry of Education, has indicated that a project is under way in the branch to provide generic IEP formats electronically on the Internet. The intention is to make LAT planning time more efficient and decrease the "mountain of paper work" for LATs.

School-Based Individual Education Plan (IEP) Adapted/Modified

Date: _____ Student: _____ Grade: _____

Birthdate: _____ Teacher: _____

School-Based Team Members Involved:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour Intervention | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Principal | <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychologist | <input type="checkbox"/> Physio Occup. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LAT | <input type="checkbox"/> Sp. & Lang. Pathologist | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counsellor | <input type="checkbox"/> Resource Teacher | |

Reason for IEP: _____

Goal: _____

Plan: Please check off appropriate strategies:

- Increase amount of time given to complete assignments
- Reduce quantity of work
- Use a calculator, number fact grids, manipulatives, computer
- Provide photocopy of information (normally students' responsibility to copy)
- Provide tutor, scribe, peer support, or taped materials
- Home support program School-Home communication program
- LAT Intervention: _____
- Other Strategies: _____

(Modified IEP—Student not meeting Learning Outcomes in specific subjects—no letter grades on report card
Adapted IEP—Student meeting Learning Outcomes but needs adjustments—gets letter grades on report card)

Parent Acknowledgement of IEP: _____ IEP Review Date: _____

Comments: _____

School-Based Individual Behavioural Plan (IBP)

Date: _____ Student: _____ Grade: _____

Birthdate: _____ Teacher: _____

School-Based Team Members Involved:

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Counsellor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> LAT	

Target Behaviors: _____

What We Will Do: _____

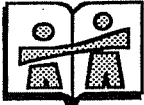
Goal: _____

Plan: Sequence of Steps in Response to Misbehavior:

1. **Warning: identify specific behaviour**
2. **Ask "What should you be doing?" Ask for compliance**
3. **Remove to a new 'personal space' in the classroom**
4. **Ask for intervention by school administration**
5. **Next steps taken at discretion of administration**

Parent Acknowledgement of IBP: _____ IBP Review Date: _____

Comments: _____



"Together We Learn"

SCHOOL DISTRICT #

Individual Education Plan

Date:

Date of Initial I.E.P.:

Student Data	School Based Team Members
Student Name: Birthdate: Grade: School: Previous School: Home Address: Home Phone:	Teacher: Parents/Guardians: Learning Assistance Teacher: Principal: Student Support Services 1. 2. 3.

Background Information

Medical Information (relevant to school programs)	Ability/Achievement Testing

Adapted / Modified
School-Based I.E.P.

Planning Information

Student's Strengths	Student's Needs

IEP Planning Information

			Needs – Work Habits
✓			<i>Needs – Work Habits</i>
			• to increase listening skills
			• to increase attention span
			• to improve ability to focus during instructional time
			• to increase independence and begin tasks quickly
			• to increase time on task
			• to strengthen organizational skills
			• to arrive at school punctually
			• to come in from play time at recess and lunch more punctually
			• to participate more actively in classroom activities
			• to develop greater fluency when expressing needs or ideas
			• to develop greater confidence when speaking to the class
			• to have close supervision
			• to become more concerned about quality of work
			• to slow down and put more effort into assignments
			• to be personally motivated to complete school work
			• to complete homework as assigned
			• to seek help when necessary to clarify understanding of instructions
			• to seek help when necessary to clarify understanding of new concepts
			• to use the Homework Book consistently

			Needs – Social & Behaviour
✓			<i>Needs – Social & Behaviour</i>
			• to tell the truth when recounting incidents of misbehaviour
			• to display a more positive attitude
			• to make better decisions in following the lead of others
			• to establish friendships and interact more with peers
			• to interact more appropriately with peers
			• to develop age appropriate social skills
			• to learn to acknowledge mistakes and make a plan to fix them
			• to learn to foresee consequences of own actions
			• to stop swearing
			• to control hands and feet when near others
			• to learn to express anger appropriately
			• to accept help from others more willingly
			• to feel safe at school
			• to develop greater self-esteem and confidence
			• to show greater respect for others
			• to share materials and equipment in the classroom
			• to play with others more safely
			• to decrease dangerous playground behaviour
			• to decrease aggressive playground behaviour
			• to increase cooperative attitude in the classroom
			• to increase oral responses in class
			• to improve social interactions skills
			• to learn to follow classroom and school guidelines
			• to work more independently
			• to participate appropriately in group activities

		Adaptations
✓		<i>Adaptations</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• classroom tutorials before or after school• pre-reading materials before lesson at school/home• include different test formats (eg. multiple choice, fill in the blank,....)• provision of parallel reading material• provision of oral reading time in class• provision of a story or novel study guide• individual conference/peer support to review/edit/check work• assigning work in smaller chunks• visual presentation of new concepts, use of concrete examples/materials• fewer assigned tasks/questions in subject areas when needed• choice provided for assignment format• provide extra time to process information and respond• provide and advance organizer (eg. note taking template, story map,....) for lessons• use of a separate setting for tests/open book tests/practice tests/more frequent tests & quizzes• establish and review classroom routines regularly• use of daily/weekly/monthly recognition to reinforce improved behaviour, attitude or accomplishments• use of praise and encouragement and frequent feedback in class• repetition, review and reteaching of concepts• classroom calendar to assist student in knowing the 'shape of the day'• use of simple directions (one step at a time, clarify and monitor)• work assigned in smaller amounts or blocks of time• increase the amount of time given to complete assignments/tests• reduce the quantity of work/no homework• use the spell checker on the computer when doing selected written work• provide photocopy of information that normally would be the student's responsibility to copy• handwriting/printing guide charts on the student's desk providing models of correct letter formation• individual review of classroom Criteria for assignment to ensure understanding of expectations• ongoing review of the mechanics of writing strategies (capitals, punctuation, spelling)• use of a computer to increase written output• provision of sight word lists, theme/unit vocabulary charts in the classroom• use of a scribe during tests, accept oral answers to tests• limited/no homework expectations• selective/preferential seating in the classroom (back of room/front of room) to increase attention• regular school--->home communication program (telephone, Homework Book, note at the end of the day)• regular home support program (speech, guided reading, Math facts, Spelling words....)• small group instruction whenever possible• one-on-one assistance during Math class• one on-one assistance during Language Arts lessons• peer reader/parent tutor/buddy reading during school day• Learning Assistance provided for - minutes/ - times per week.• notes for Novel Study/Social Studies/Science photocopied• visual presentation of materials whenever possible• use of calculator/fact grid/cue cards to check answers• use of manipulative materials when adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing• guiding questions will be asked to increase amount written• provision of a personal dictionary (PCS dictionary or other format)• adapt the Learning Outcomes at Grade level in the area of• chunking long term assignments into smaller parts with due dates

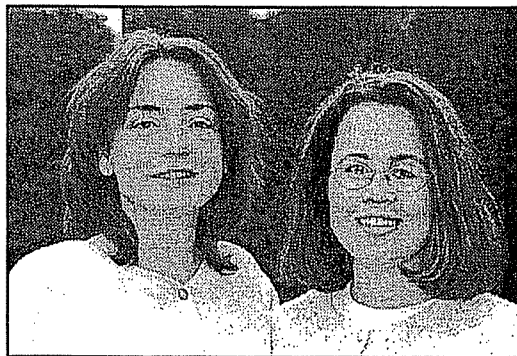
Using the IEP, Adapted or Modified, Within the Classroom

With the increasing number of students in the classroom on IEPs, requiring adaptations and/or modifications, and with the rise of classroom criteria-based assessment, these two teachers have found a way to accommodate all students with ease and efficiency yet challenge each to his/her highest potential.

The following is an example of how to adapt and modify using a criteria-based approach. It is an article about an assignment structured around a performance scale. It can be used for any subject where reading is a part of the assignment. Any activity can be substituted for what is currently recorded under each letter grade, allowing for flexibility.

Regular Program? Adapted? Modified? A Criteria-Based Approach

There are many factors in society today that have resulted in the placement of a wide range of students in the classroom. We handle these challenges in many ways. Some



Mrs. Draper (right) is an intermediate classroom teacher, French, and Music specialist in SD 23. Ms. Arlt did her seven-week practicum in Mrs. Draper's classroom last spring. Ms. Arlt has recently completed her Bachelor of Education Degree while continuing to volunteer three times a week in Mrs. Draper's classroom. The two have been developing units and materials together.

students need an adapted program. Others need a modified program. What is the difference, and how can this be implemented?

The following are samples of a general language arts assignment that has been both adapted and modified. By comparing the three samples of this assignment, one can see the differences. A criteria-based approach is an effective tool in administering the three different programs in your classroom.

**Assignment A—
The Regular Assignment**
Assignment A is for those on the regular program. The expectations of the given assignment are clearly outlined at the top of the assignment. Those expectations must be met, no matter what letter grade the student sets as a goal. This means that even when you give a C letter grade, the student has handed in quality work. The important eighth step of having an adult check the student's work before moving on to the next portion of the assignment must not be overlooked. Our students must have an adult's initials on each assignment before moving on to the next. Before we initial, we point out any sentence, punctuation, or neatness problems. Most of the time, the first assignment becomes a rough copy because of the number of errors discovered. This is fine with the student as they understand that the expectations must be met even for a C. For some students, it is all they can do to redo the assignment to get it error free by the due date. They then can be proud of the

work that it took to get a C. For others, they are able to rewrite their good copy and move on to the C+ or the B categories following the same series of expectations and steps. (We have included the Title Page criteria for the C+ level of the assignment).

The final portion of the assignment is the exciting part. To get an A, the student must go beyond the criteria, creating his/her own representation of the story to be presented in front of the class. This has become a successful enrichment component for those who are ready for the challenge. We have had students make dioramas, dress up as a character and express a scene in character, make mobiles depicting characters and settings, make clay creations, etc., all on their own, and many achieve far beyond what we would have demanded. Each of these assignments must be accompanied with a write up explaining what they chose to do and why. This has become a much-anticipated culminating activity to the assignment.

Assignment B—

The Adapted Assignment

An adapted program, by definition, uses the same learning outcomes and materials as the regular program. The difference is that the program is tailored to accommodate the child's specific needs. For

example, a child may need a scribe, an extended due date, or a reduced amount of assigned work.

The adaptations we have used in our example are for someone who needs a reduced amount of work and a peer reader. This is evident in the Criteria section of Assignment B. As you assess the specific needs of the child in your classroom, you may use different adaptations, and your criteria will reflect this. As you can see, the expectations at the top of the assignment remain the same, and for an adapted program they should.

As you can see, our adapted assignment allows for an A or a B. You may choose to cap your adapted assignments at a C, C+, or C-. You may also want to structure the levels according to satisfactory, good, and excellent. There are varying opinions on assigning letter grades for an adapted program.

Assignment C—

The Modified Assignment

A modified program, by definition, uses different learning outcomes and may use different materials as the regular program. For example, a child may read a simpler version of the story that reflects the same theme. The student may not be able to read at all, and would have someone read to him or her.

Each student on a modified program has specific needs which prevent him or her from meeting the grade level outcomes, but there are many cases when a criteria based assignment is helpful to the student as well as the CEA, teacher and/or parent involved with the student.

The modifications that we have used in our assignment are structured for a student who needs a peer reader. He or she also succeeds at representing his or her knowledge through pictures. The way this student's assignments will look is determined by his or her needs and abilities.

As with every modified program, the outcomes are different than those on the regular or adapted program. Further, you can see there are no letter grades assigned at the modified level.

Evaluation

Initially, it may seem like too much work to prepare performance based criteria for various assignments, but the workload is decreased considerably when it comes time to mark. The assignment page becomes the evaluation page. A quick glance at the assignment tells the marker what level the student has attempted to achieve. Another quick glance tells the marker whether or not the level has

Continued on page 8.

Assignment "A"

Language Arts Assignment

Name: _____

Read _____

Date: _____

EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Check each one as completed
- All answers will be in **complete sentences**.
- All answers will be **handwritten**.
- All answers will have **correct spelling and capitalization**.
- All work will be **neat and legible**.
- Work will be handed in **on time**.
- Each activity will have the **student's name and the date** on the top right hand corner.
- Students will **work on their own** until they need their work checked.
- Students will have one assignment **checked by an adult** before they go on to the next one.
 - Parent's note: Be sure their work matches all criteria listed.
- Students will clip their work in the **LA duotang** in the order presented below.

CRITERIA

- ✓ Check each one as completed

C

The student has:

- Read the story and successfully completed the questions at the end of the story on page _____

C+

The student has:

- Read the story and successfully completed the questions at the end of the story
- Completed a detailed and colourful title page (see back of this page).

B

The student has:

- Read the story and successfully completed the questions at the end of the story.
- Completed a title page according to criteria,
- Completed assignments A and B.

A

The Student has:

- Read the story, successfully completed the questions at the end of the story.
- Completed a title page according to criteria.
- Completed assignments A and B **and**
- Gone beyond the criteria by creating a project, which demonstrates a scene, character, or idea from the story.
This can be done using any materials and should be presented to the teacher and class on the due date of the assignment.

Assignment "A" Part II

Title Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

<input type="checkbox"/> I have used a guide sheet to make my printing straight
<input type="checkbox"/> My Title is big and coloured with a dark colour
<input type="checkbox"/> My first and last names are on the bottom right corner
<input type="checkbox"/> My grade is on the bottom right corner
<input type="checkbox"/> My teacher's name is on the bottom right corner
<input type="checkbox"/> There is a border around my work
<input type="checkbox"/> My work is colourful and detailed
<input type="checkbox"/> My work reflects the assignment's theme

Assignment "B"

Language Arts Assignment for Adapted IEP

Name: _____

Read _____

Date: _____

EXPECTATIONS

- Each as completed
- All answers will be in **complete sentences**.
- All answers will be **handwritten**.
- All answers will have **correct spelling and capitalization**.
- All work will be **neat and legible**.
- Work will be handed in **on time**.
- Each activity will have the **student's name and the date** on the top right hand corner.
- Students will **work on their own** until they need their work checked.
- Students will have one assignment **checked by an adult** before they go on to the next one.
 - Parent's note: Be sure their work matches all criteria listed.
- Students will clip their work in the **LA duotang** in the order presented below.

CRITERIA

- The assignments you have completed

C

The student has:

- Successfully read the story with a partner.

C+

The student has:

- Successfully read the story with a partner.
- Completed 3 of the questions at the end of the story on page _____ .

B or A

The Student has:

- Successfully read the story with a partner.
- Completed 3 of the questions at the end of the story on page _____ .
- Completed a detailed and colourful title page (title page criteria).

Assignment "C"

Part I

Language Arts Assignment

Modified IEP

Name: _____

Date: _____

With an assigned partner read _____

Expectations

- I have completed my assignment by the due date,
which is _____
- I have done my best work.

Assignment Criteria

Satisfactory

- Someone has read the story with me.
* Reading helper please sign _____
- My work is signed by an adult.

Good

- I have read the story with a partner.
- I have drawn 3 things that happened in the story.

Excellent

- I have read the story with a partner.
- I have drawn 3 things that happened in the story.
- I have written a sentence about each picture.

Assignment "C" Part II

Story Pictures

Name: _____

Date: _____

Picture #1

Picture #2

Picture #3

been achieved successfully. A simple stroke of the highlighter identifies the level the student has achieved.

The Benefits

What prompted this criteria-based approach to assignments was the desire to see quality work at every level of achievement. Too often, we have received either a minimum of work done in poor and messy sentences or the

complete gamut of assignments handed in, again in poor form. This performance scale approach, with a clear set of expectations and assignments requiring an adult's signature before considered complete has dramatically raised the quality of work handed in by each student, whatever his/her needs may be. As the students gain competency, the amount of work increases. Whatever the students' workload, the expectations stay the same.

This has taken the pressure off the teacher, the students, and the parents because there is a common understanding of what it takes to achieve a specific goal.

Special thanks to our teacher-librarian, Jan MacCrimmon, who has inspired this approach, resulting in a dramatic increase in the quality of student work in my classroom.

Is It Adaptation or Modification?

A little mnemonic to help you and your fellow teachers remember the difference:

Adaptation means:

A little bit of change to the program

Modification means:

Much **M**ore change to the program

Phonemic Awareness

Contents

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Research says instruction in phonemic awareness is critical to the acquisition of reading and spelling skills.

Beware of confusing *phonemic awareness* with *phonics*.

FAST FACTS

ABOUT PHONEMIC AWARENESS

COMPILED BY JANE KOBERSTEIN AND CARRIE KEEN

What is phonemic awareness?

Phonemic awareness is an understanding about sounds in spoken language, as opposed to written language (print)

It is strongly related to success in reading and spelling acquisition.

What can we do at home?

Games and activities that promote phonemic awareness at home are an excellent way to help children acquire reading and spelling skills. Always keep the following levels in mind:

Level 1: Rhyming activities, syllable counting, similarity/oddity tasks, word play, alliteration, letter recognition, letter-sound recognition

Level 2: blending the beginning of words with the ends of words (phoneme blending), syllable-splitting, Elkonin Boxes, word stretching

Level 3: identifying beginning, middle and end sounds, identifying where a sound is heard in a word, spelling (phonics)

Level 4: counting the number of phonemes in a word, identifying individual sounds in a word

Level 5: changing beginning, middle and end sounds, omitting beginning, middle and end sounds, matching letters to sounds.

Isn't this just phonics?

Phonemic awareness is NOT phonics! Children are phonemically aware when they:

- Listen to their teacher say the sounds "b," "a," and "t," and say, "That's 'BAT'!"
- Tell their teacher that the sounds in the word *dog* are "d," "aw," and "g."
- Can tell you that if you take the last sound off *cart*, you get *car*.

Phonics is knowing the relationship between sounds and specific letters (or groups of letters). Children demonstrate phonics knowledge when they tell you which letter makes the first sound in *bat*, or that the letter *o* in *dog* says "aw."

PHONEMIC AWARENESS RESEARCH

COMPILED BY JANE KOBERSTEIN AND CARRIE KEEN

Research Today

Research today is supporting the idea that instruction in phonemic awareness is critical to the acquisition of reading skills. Children need to be able to distinguish sound elements in words so they can spell words and attach the right letter to the sound.

Virginia Mann (1998), states, "Readers cannot interpret letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs unless they make some type of mapping between written language and spoken language."

Lynn M. Geizheiser and Diane M. Wood (1998) state: "Phonological awareness, the attention to the sounds of language, facilitates reading acquisition. It appears to be an essential precursor to the ability to map graphemes to phonemes, which in turn is an important requisite to reading (Vellutino, 1991)."

Other respected researchers have similar findings. **Marilyn Jager Adams** (1990), in her book, *Beginning To Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*, reviews current ideas on the most important skills for early reading acquisition. She begins with a review of the importance of mental age, IQ, perceptual skills, and learning styles, as well as different instructional styles in beginning reading. However, at the conclusion of the summary, she takes a hard look at letter knowledge and phonemic awareness. Regarding letter knowledge and phonemic awareness, she states, "On the other hand,

knowledge of letters and phonemic awareness have been found to bear a strong and direct relationship to success and ease of reading acquisition, both seem to do so regardless of the instructional approach through which reading is taught. And, it seems further that some special magic lies in the linking of these two basic skills."

Hallie Kay Yopp (1992), in the article "Developing Phonemic Awareness in Young Children," published in *The Reading Teacher*, concluded with the statement, "Phonemic awareness is strongly related to success in beginning reading and can be developed in children as early as their preschool years through a variety of stimulating language activities. These activities, however, are not intended to replace children's interactions with meaningful language and print."

Priscilla L. Griffith and Mary W. Olson (1992), also had an article in *The Reading Teacher*. In the conclusion of their article, called "Phonemic Awareness Helps Beginning Readers Break the Code," they declare: "to gain phonemic awareness is to become conscious of the basic sounds of speech. In learning to read and write an alphabetic language, phonemic awareness is critical, since our system of writing maps letters to phonemes. Extensive research has indicated the importance of phonemic awareness as prerequisite for understanding the alphabetic principle, namely that the letters stand for the sounds spoken in words."

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Jane Koberstein
SD 75, Mission
District special education teacher

In addition to working as a district special education teacher, Jane is attending Simon Fraser University in the new graduate program, Curriculum & Instruction-Reading and Learning Disabilities. She has taught both elementary and secondary school—16 years as a learning assistance teacher. Jane says, "I am willing to present at workshops or conferences on the topic of phonemic awareness."

Her e-mail address is
jane.koberstein@sd75.mission.bc.ca

ELEMENTS OF PHONEMIC AWARENESS

COMPILED BY JANE KOBERSTEIN

LEVEL ONE, RHYTHM AND RHYME

- Hearing and identifying similar word patterns (sound matching).
- Listening for and detecting spoken syllables (syllable counting).

ACTIVITIES FOR LEVEL ONE

Alphabet tile activities.
Letter recognition activities.
Letter-sound recognition activities.
Rhyming activities.
Similarity and oddity tasks.
Syllable counting activities.
Word play and alliteration activities.

LEVEL TWO, PARTS OF A WORD

- Identifying onsets and rimes (syllable splitting).
- Blending individual sounds to form a word (phoneme blending).

ACTIVITIES FOR LEVEL TWO

Elkonin Box activities.
Phoneme blending activities, onset and rime.
Stretching word games.
Syllable splitting activities.

LEVEL THREE, SEQUENCE OF SOUNDS

- Identifying where a given sound is heard in a word (approximation).
- Identifying beginning, middle, and ending sounds in a word (phoneme isolation).

ACTIVITIES FOR LEVEL THREE

Elkonin Box activities.
Sound repetition.
Spelling through phonics activities.

LEVEL FOUR, SEPARATION OF SOUNDS

- Counting the number of phonemes in a word (phoneme counting)
- Identifying individual sounds in a word (phoneme segmentation).

ACTIVITIES FOR LEVEL FOUR

- Elkonin Box activities.
- Phoneme counting activities.
- Phoneme manipulation activities (identifying).
- Phoneme segmentation activities.

LEVEL FIVE, MANIPULATION OF SOUNDS

- Substituting beginning, middle, and ending sounds of a word (phoneme counting).
- Omitting beginning, middle, and ending sounds of a word (phoneme deletion).

ACTIVITIES FOR LEVEL FIVE

- Matching letters to sounds.
- Phoneme blending activities.
- Phoneme manipulation activities (deletion and substitution).

From:

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Integration vs. Mainstreaming

compiled by Marie Giesbrecht, SD 23

What is the difference between integration and mainstreaming?

Integration is not mainstreaming. Mainstreaming refers to a concept that was very popular in special education a few years ago. Its premise was that special needs students would do better if placed in the "mainstream of education." It was essentially a

"total concept" where special children were immersed in regular education, often without appropriate support. The belief was that good things about the regular system would somehow "rub off" onto those students. Eventually, the realization set in that this was

not working as had been theoretically envisioned and a more realistic and powerful concept evolved—integration

Unlike mainstreaming, integration is a process that examines each case individually, recognizes student strengths and weaknesses, plans for required support systems, provides for experiences in the regular school system, and communicates/consults with all involved personnel. Integration also builds in periodic reviews of the student's placement in order to monitor and adapt when and where necessary.

There are essentially two levels of service offered to augment

and support the work of the regular classroom teacher.

Level One

School-Based Services initiated by the School-Based Team

A referral is usually made to the Learning Assistance Teacher and the learning is dealt with at the school level. Those called into a school-based team meeting for collaborative consultation may be the teacher, parents, learning assistance teacher, and an administrator. They discuss the concern and as a team, decide what will be needed by way of adapting or modifying the curriculum for the student to realize his/her highest potential and have a measure of success in his/her grade.

Level Two

District-Based Services initiated by the School-Based Team

As a result of the school-based team decision, support personnel from outside the building may be called in to further support the child's education. Some examples of services and personnel are school psychologist for psychometric and other assessment, counselor, severe behaviour, severe learning disabilities, personnel dealing with mentally challenged (sometimes called resource teachers), hospital homebound, speech and language pathologist, vision, hard-of-hearing, gifted, and

personal care attendants.

Most students with special needs who are integrated will need an IEP (individualized education plan). This allows the child, with appropriate adaptations and modifications to his/her program to integrate into the regular system. Such students require the measure of integration that is commensurate with their abilities, combined with strong support from Special Services.

Does integration take its toll on the educational system?

Today's teacher continues to face the same endless bombardment of demands to serve an ever-increasing variety of students with special needs. There are increased class sizes, with new curriculum introduced and implemented steadily. In-service education and professional development are constant expectations and meetings are a steady source of pressure. New programs, Lions Quest, Child Abuse Prevention, Safety and Accident Prevention, Bullying Prevention, are all acceptable and accepted additions to the "core." Adding to all this, the special educator is now asking the classroom teacher to facilitate the education of a child with special needs, which always entails more meetings and additional programming. The school day is

still only five hours long, and human energy has definite limits.

Does integration hold advantages for the child and peers?

Most parents of children with special needs say they are pleased that the school system provides for and accommodates them in the system. They believe their child is getting a more realistic view of the world and society. Most peers are accepting of children who learn differently from them unless the negative behaviours or demands upon their teacher's time interfere with their learning.

Why are there more children with special needs in the system nowadays?

1. Special education is no longer a separate system, where students are sent away from regular classes, but it is a support service, part of our regular education.
2. Improved assessment has made possible more accurate identification of exceptional children and more accurate diagnosis of their needs and capabilities.

3. Societal change, including a dramatic increase in divorce rates, the Young Offenders Act, and increases in immigration, have contributed to increasing numbers of students in some special education categories.
4. Medical advances have increased survival rates; consequently more medically fragile students are in the system.
5. Efforts of Terry Fox, Steve Fonyo, Rick Hansen, and others have successfully increased public awareness of the capabilities of the physically challenged.
6. Fetal alcohol syndrome has taken its toll, and we have no means of ascertaining its impact in the classroom.
7. Lack of parental involvement—working long hours to meet bills and less time to get involved in the child's schoolwork and spend time communicating/supporting.
8. Lack of the "small town"/village neighbourhood environment, where community holds people accountable. This is the age of anonymity and isolation in upbringing.
9. Maslow's hierarchy basic needs too often not met; therefore children arrive unable to concentrate on higher levels of thinking.
10. Expectation of universal schooling, where everyone gets an education—those with special needs included; whereas in the past those would have apprenticed in practical trades or stayed "back on the farm."

Quotable:

Our task is to provide an education for the kind of kids we have, not the kind of kids we used to have or want to have or the kid who exists in our dreams.



Teachers' Assistants

Contents

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The current role of the TA working in special education evolved as a result of the ministry's goals of mainstreaming/integration/inclusion.

The TA's mandate is to assist teachers to facilitate the inclusion of students with special needs.

Working with Teachers' Assistants

Assistants are hired to perform special duties in the classroom. Although all professional decisions are your responsibility, the paraprofessional should be treated as a partner on the educational team. Invite your assistant to sit in on any conferences that are pertinent. Hold meetings for sharing information and decision-making purposes.

When the roles are defined and clarified, the teachers' assistant can then decide how to approach the assigned responsibilities. For students to achieve maximum benefits, you will need to build a climate of trust and give encouragement and support to the teacher assistant.

A teacher's assistant must always work under the direction of the principal or a teacher.

The teacher's role is to manage the classroom.

Teachers must retain responsibility for diagnosing learning needs, for selecting appropriate educational programs, for implementing educational programs and for assessing educational results.

The assistant's role is to carry out the work that has been planned and developed by the teacher, either with an individual student or a small group.

If you have any questions or concerns about working with classroom assistants, contact your staff rep and/or your local president.

Teacher Assistant (TA)

The Learning Assistance Teachers' Association thanks the Special Education Association for permission to print the following timely and informative article, which appeared in Crosscurrents, Winter 1999.

CLARIFICATION OF ROLES:

**TEACHERS WORKING WITH TAs
TAs WORKING WITH STUDENTS**

Teacher in this document refers to all classroom teachers, special education teachers, learning assistance teachers, and other non-enrolling teachers

1. School Act Definition

Section 18 of the School

Act specifies that:

(1) A board may employ persons other than teachers to assist teachers in carrying out their responsibilities and duties under this Act and the regulations.

(2) Persons employed under subsection (1) shall work under the general supervision of a teacher or administrative officer.

2. Special Education Policy, Procedures and Guidelines

The following excerpts are taken from the *Ministry of Education Manual of Policies Procedures and Guidelines for Special Education Services*:

"The teacher responsible for a student with special needs is responsible for designing, supervising and assessing the educational program for that student."

(B.7)

"Teachers are expected to design programs for students with special needs. Teacher assistants play a key role in many programs for students with special needs, performing functions which range from personal care to assisting the teacher with instructional programs. Under the supervision of a teacher they may play a key role in implementing the program.

"While teacher assistants may assist in the collection of data for the purpose of evaluating student progress, the teachers are responsible for evaluating and reporting on the progress of the student to parents." (B.8)

3. Role of the Teacher

The teacher's role in working with TAs assigned to the school is to direct the TA who assists in facilitating the inclusion of

students with special needs. The teacher's prime focus is to encourage the student with special needs to become a more independent learner or member of the classroom/school/community. Teachers have the responsibility for designing, implementing and evaluating the entire educational program; TAs assist teachers in this responsibility.

The following are the teachers' responsibilities in directing the work of the TA:

- 1) monitor that the TA has the appropriate information and skills necessary to carry out assigned duties
- 2) initiate discussion with the TA to develop a positive working relationship and clear communication procedures
- 3) schedule TA's work day and meeting times
- 4) inform the TA of the classroom management structure, discipline plan, expectations of the students, etc.
- 5) arrange for resources required for TA to complete assigned tasks
- 6) arrange for a workplace for the TA, in or out of classrooms as appropriate
- 7) model/teach techniques to TAs to use in instructional and behavioural assistance
- 8) provide direction to the TA in the use of specific techniques, strategies, appropriate language, etc.
- 9) include the TA in the IEP process
- 10) inform the TA of their tasks related to the implementation of the IEP

11) ask the TA for input during the teacher's assessment and reporting process (Teachers must not direct the TA to evaluate or report student progress)

12) direct the TA regarding the purpose of, the content and the format of home/school/communication

13) refrain from directing TAs to assume professional duties that are the responsibility of teachers

4. Roles of TAs Who Assist Teachers Who Are Instructing Students with Special Needs

The current roles of the TA working in special education evolved as a result of the ministry's goals of mainstreaming/integration/inclusion.

The special education TA's mandate is to assist teachers to facilitate the inclusion of students with special needs. The prime focus of the TA is to encourage the student to become a more independent learner or member of the classroom/school community. With the agreement and direction of teachers, the TA's role may involve working with students in the class other than the student(s) with special needs.

TAs must not assume at any time the direct instructional responsibility for providing educational programs to students or groups. However, TAs may assist in providing educational programs to students or groups of students. TAs must not perform any of the duties of teachers, except under the direction of teachers. In all instructional matters, teachers have decision-making responsibilities. TAs must respect those decisions and support the resulting instructional program. TAs do not decide which concepts/content are to be taught or which strategies are to be used.

Nevertheless, TAs are encouraged to bring suggestions to teachers for their consideration.

When employment of special education personnel is being considered in order to provide support to students with special needs, it is appropriate to consider employing a TA rather than a teacher when the following services must be provided:

- 1) paramedical care
- 2) personal care
- 3) individual supervision for safety (safety of student or of others)
- 4) sign language interpretation
- 5) Braille assistance
- 6) reading/scribing
- 7) audiotaping books
- 8) physical assistance
- 9) mobility assistance
- 10) repeated practice of specified skills (not to be confused with presentation of new material)
- 11) life skills not included in the ministry's prescribed learning outcomes
- 12) assistance with the use of technology
- 13) carrying out a child specific physio/occupational therapy program which has been collaboratively developed by teachers and other professional staff
- 14) carrying out a specific sign language development or augmentative communication program which has been

collaboratively developed by teachers and other professional staff

- 15) carrying out a specific behaviour management/behaviour change program, including the supervision of time-out which has been developed by teachers and/or other professional staff
- 16) facilitating social integration
- 17) carrying out related, highly modified activities that parallel class assignments
- 18) providing appropriate experiences in the community, e.g., recreation, life skills and job training

5. Additional tasks for TAs Supporting Students with Special Needs.

It is appropriate that TAs hired to support students with special needs be 100% involved in activities which support students' educational programs. Therefore, special education TAs should not be assigned routine classroom/school maintenance tasks. Schools may wish to hire non-teaching personnel to carry out basic clerical and maintenance duties such as photocopying, preparing bulletin board displays, and filing. Such personnel should not be employed as special education TAs and should be paid out of funds other than special education funds.

TAs must not be used as alternatives for lowering class size, for resolving class composition issues or as substitutes for teachers. The tasks listed below are an acknowledgement that other duties are being assigned to TAs. These other duties are of an instructional nature. Therefore, it is paramount that a TA should never be assigned primary responsibility for any of these duties.

Once again, it needs to be clearly articulated that the TA in this, and in other circumstances, assists and works under the direction of a teacher.

Instructional/assessment support:

- 1) observing and recording behaviours and academic performance
- 2) scoring of objective tests and assignments
- 3) providing input for evaluation and reporting (TAs must not be responsible for assigning grades or evaluating student progress, oral or written. Reporting of student progress is the responsibility of teachers.)
- 4) providing specific assistance during testing
- 5) providing input into the development of the IEP
- 6) assisting students in completing assignments—individual or small group
- 7) accompanying classes on field trips
- 8) implementing the adaptations and modifications as specified in a student's IEP
- 9) assisting with drill and practice of basic skills
- 10) listening to students read
- 11) helping students select library books
- 12) making instructional games and materials
- 13) locating complementary learning materials

- 14) providing input to teachers regarding daily and short-term plans
- 15) informing teachers of student learning difficulties and requests for assistance
- 16) completing objective daily records
- 17) operating audio-visual and other supportive equipment
- 18) entering information in the home/school communication book when specifically directed by a teacher and signed by the teacher or administrator
- 19) participating in child specific teams or parent meetings when requested to attend. (TAs must not be assigned to attend a meeting in lieu of a teacher.)
- 20) assisting in skill demonstrations
- 21) behaviour management support:
 - reinforcing appropriate behaviour
 - checking that students complete tasks
 - supporting development of peer relationships

6. "Supervision" of the TA.

The TA is supervised in regard to the employment relationship (e.g., evaluation reports, discipline) by an administrative officer, not the teacher with whom the TA works. Teachers do, however, provide clear direction to the TA related to the daily work of the TA, including specific feedback regarding areas of strength and areas in need of improvement.

7. Conflict resolution

In carrying out the complex work of supporting the learning of students with special needs, disagreements and conflict may arise. Initial efforts should be made between the teacher and the TA to resolve differences.

Union locals representing teachers and those representing TAs should have in place a protocol on conflict resolution in cases of conflict between teachers and TAs. The BCTF and CUPE should develop a model for assisting locals in developing a conflict resolution protocol and support for resolving differences between their members.

Ratified by Special Education Association Executive, September 1998.

Prepared for SEA by Janice Reiswig, Marilyn Miller, and Helen Middleditch

My Thoughts on the Role of Teacher Assistant

by Erica Watson, SD 70

My name is Erica Watson, and I have been a teacher assistant with School District 70, Alberni, for nine years. I graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1981 with a Bachelor of Recreation Education Degree, specializing in children's programming. I worked part-time and full-time for the Port Alberni Parks and Recreation Department from 1977 to 1989. During that time I began to raise a family, and have three children, now ages 6 to 14. From 1990 to 1997, I worked in an "inner-city" elementary school as a behaviour aide and as a personal attendant. From 1997 to present, I have been fortunate to have a teacher assistant position in a rural elementary school where my two youngest children attend.

I enjoy working as a teacher assistant mostly because I love to work with children. My background and experience in related fields has given me the necessary skills to step easily into the role of teacher assistant. As well, I have discovered that being a parent not only helps me to understand children better, but my working

relationship with the children and teachers has also helped me become a better parent.

There are many different types of teacher assistant's, ranging from those who work with elementary aged children, to those who work with junior or senior high school students. To generalize, there are classroom aides, library assistants, and personal attendants whose qualifications vary depending upon the students they work with. Some teacher assistant positions require extensive qualifications including sign language, nursing or sign language, nursing or second language skills. Perhaps the most essential element needed for a teacher assistant to do their job effectively, is a positive, co-operative relationship between the teacher assistant and the classroom teacher.

Any teacher assistant who has worked in an elementary school is familiar with children who misbehave and are disruptive in the classroom. These children make it difficult for a teacher to do his or her job, forcing the teacher to spend a great deal of time and energy

trying to maintain order. A teacher assistant can provide "crowd control" to help create a sense of balance and harmony in the classroom so the teacher can get on with teaching those students who are prepared to learn.

General misbehaviour of children is not difficult to control for an experienced teacher assistant. However, the child who shows no concern for others, is rude and disrespectful to adults and other children, is the one who causes most concern. This is the most distressing of all behaviours, as it is the child who has no respect for others who is most likely going to grow up having trouble in his or her later years, relating poorly to other individuals for the rest of life. These are the children that cause the most frustration for teachers and classroom aides, for it is unlikely that we will ever touch their minds or hearts and make a huge difference in their lives.

On a more positive note, being a teacher assistant can make a

tremendous difference to the learning of most children. Extra help in the classroom means that all children are given the opportunity to understand a new concept or topic. A teacher assistant is that extra 'big person' in the school who can help a child who is feeling lost, alone or confused. Knowing that we've touched their lives in a positive way is the ultimate reward.

From the TA's Perspective

by Angela Truss, SD 23



Angela Truss recently completed her TA (CEA) training. She looks forward with anticipation to the challenges and rewards of working with children.

A teacher affects eternity: he [she] can never tell where his [her] influence stops.

Henry Brooks Adams

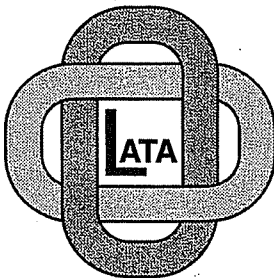
I've just completed my training at Summit Career College to become a TA or a CEA (certified educational assistant) as we are called in our district. The training was riveting. I was impressed with the high level of academics taught as well as the in-depth study on many disabilities.

I have learned how to think creatively about ways children learn and how to inspire them to learn when they don't believe they can. This has been a thrilling part of the course for me, for I come from a heritage rich in teachers. I'll find it very rewarding to glean their expertise and think of ways I can put across the topic the classroom teacher is teaching, on a "one-on-one" with a child who needs extra

help and encouragement. I have been told by a CEA who has been on the job for a year that versatility is one of the most important characteristics to possess: "Go with the flow" and adapt to whatever schedule the moment or day may bring! I'm ready for that, too.

I envision a rewarding future in education, where I can become an invaluable assistant to the classroom teacher, working as a team, to see each child realize his/her potential and help all to see themselves as successful students.

I'm grateful for the training I received, specifically on exceptional children—what to expect with specific learning and physical disabilities, behaviour disorders/behaviour



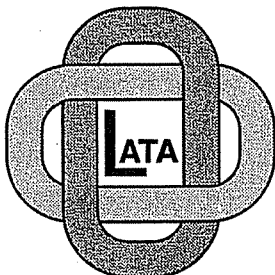
modification, specific learning styles and especially the in-depth training in interpersonal communication skills crucial in this field of "people work."

Now, on the threshold of my practicum as a TA and a new career, I'm proud to be a TA (CEA), and I look forward to a rewarding, rich career.

**When you
meet a
challenge:**

- 1. Calm down**
- 2. Take little steps (out of the problem)**
- 3. Persevere (keep going)**

*Dean Urness
Rhonda Draper*



Perseverance

*The contest lasts for moments,
Though the training's taken years.*

*It wasn't the winning alone that
Was worth the work and the tears.*

*The applause will be forgotten,
The prize will be misplaced,*

*But the long hard hours of practice,
Will never be a waste.*

*For in trying to win,
You build a skill.*

*You learn that winning,
Depends on will.*

*You never grow by how much you win,
You only grow by how much you put in.*

*So any new challenge
You've just begun,*

*Put forth your best,
And you've already won.*

by W.A. Clennan

STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEM: A Positive Behaviour Approach That Works

by Caprice Desjardins, M.Ed., SD 23

Last fall, my attention was drawn to an article in *The Vancouver Sun* by Lori Culbert, which outlined a "new discipline system" being used in several B.C. schools. After reading the article, I realized that the "Effective Behaviour Support" program described by Culbert was very similar to the "Student Success System" developed by the administration, staff, and parents of Glenrosa Elementary in Westbank, B. C. The Ministry of Education's November/December issue of *BC Education News* stated: "Educators are concerned that problem student behaviour is increasing in frequency and intensity. The Effective Behaviour Support (EBS) initiative arose from their desire to find proactive and preventative approaches to this issue." p.8

Around the same time, without any knowledge of EBS, the Student Success System (SSS) at Glenrosa Elementary was



Caprice Desjardins, learning assistance teacher, SD 23, an innovative, enthusiastic expert in the field.

being developed out of a staff/administration initiative to make a GOOD school even BETTER with its whole premise being to "set students up for success," both socially and academically. The SSS philosophy as developed by Glenrosa staff, students, and parents states:

The Student Success System is a positive, proactive and preventative approach which

sets students up for social and academic success by providing opportunities for students to learn, practice, and apply specific skills which enable them to demonstrate appropriate behaviour and accept responsibility for their social and academic progress.

The SSS foundation was laid in the early '90s, when principal Gordon Greffen, (recently retired) introduced the "Quality Schools" philosophy to the school community, placing a heavy emphasis on restitution as a means of correcting unacceptable behaviour. This approach, combined with former vice-principal, Richard Knight's, knowledge of a behaviour system which was being used in Colville, Washington, set the foundation upon which the SSS developed. In its early stages, much of Colville's behaviour curriculum was adopted as a means of piloting the SSS program.

BEHAVIOUR CURRICULUM

SSS is similar to EBS in its method of supporting acceptable behaviour by teaching appropriate social skills the same way academic skills are taught. Teachers base their classroom behaviour curriculum on seasonal changes, student needs, and themes of the month. The monthly theme is emphasized throughout the school so specific target behaviours can be taught, rehearsed, practised, and tested. The teachers use current resources like Personal Planning Instructional Resource Package, Lions Quest, Second Step, and Library books as instructional guides.

After students receive instruction targeting specific behaviours and skills, they are given opportunities to reinforce the skills taught. They may include role-playing activities, viewing a video, response writing, work sheets, co-operative group work, or art activities.

Appropriate behaviour is recognized by staff and volunteers through the use of theme board certificates, which are shaped to reflect the theme of the month (e.g., September: apples, October: leaves, November: poppies). The certificates are posted on the school's "Tree of Success" theme board, and students' names are entered into a draw

every Friday for a prize. The prizes, donated by local merchants, are collected by students in our Leadership Club. The club also participates in the school-wide behaviour curriculum.

Monthly celebration assemblies are held to reinforce the theme of the month and the target behaviours. Students from the Leadership Club are often called upon to role-play appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour at the assemblies. In addition to monthly themes, every class in the school has a set of classroom beliefs, which are; developed by the class and teacher, written positively, posted in each classroom, and reflect the Quality School philosophy and Code of Conduct.

SUCCESS TEAM

The SSS program is driven by the school's Success Team, which consists of administration, learning assistance teacher, ten parent/community volunteers, and two teacher reps. This team meets every Friday morning to discuss what's going well, what needs further attention, and possible ways of improving the system. In addition to this, the staff meets every Monday at recess to discuss issues that need addressing and to establish the focus for the week (hallway behaviour, politeness, playing safely).

The vice-principal keeps the noon-hour supervisors informed of the focus of the week so they, too, can reinforce the appropriate skills. The volunteers circulate through classrooms helping students and teachers as required by teachers. Their approach is positive, proactive, and preventative; it is designed to help students socially and academically before frustration sets in and a problem develops. Under the direction of the classroom teacher, learning assistance teacher, and/or an administrator, volunteers assist students in various settings.

The settings include the regular classrooms, group instructions rooms, wet areas, hallways, library, or in the Success Room. Their focus at all times is geared toward setting students up for success and helping them feel good about themselves and their choices.

"Time in for Success" (TIFS) sheets are completed by supervisors whenever a student's behaviour conflicts with the Code of Conduct. In response to each TIFS sheet, students are presented with a three-part follow-up:

1. Restitution (students are expected to "make things right" or correct the problem to the best of their ability)
2. Learning experience (an adult discusses the situa-

tion with the student and, if necessary, students are given behaviour packages to complete in order to learn the desired behaviour)

3. Consequence (if the infraction warrants, a logical consequence, directly related to the infraction, is given to the student).

STUDENT TRACKING

Student behaviour is then tracked on computer by the learning assistance teacher and vice principal so repeat offenders can be dealt with through escalating logical consequences and the reoccurring behaviours, common to many students, can be addressed by the whole staff. Teachers receive monthly copies of their students' behaviours and individual

student printouts are also available for team meetings whenever necessary. This information is of considerable value to the learning assistance teacher who chairs the school based team meetings. Computer records of inappropriate behaviour frequency and intensity have been most useful in identifying students who require on-going support by a volunteer teacher advisor, the school counsellor, or, in more serious cases, a certified educational assistant (CEA).

The school's record keeping has indicated that the number of suspensions has decreased significantly, the number of in-school suspensions is reduced considerably and the number of students exhibiting inappropriate behaviour is greatly reduced since the implementa-

tion of the SSS two years ago. Fewer and fewer students require adult intervention and the climate in the school is very positive. As quoted from Glenrosa's new vice-principal, Ross Dumontet, "the current success system boasts a significant reduction in the number of students visiting the office and a school-wide atmosphere of 'positivity' and co-operation." As you can probably imagine, Glenrosa Elementary School is very proud of its Student Success System.

For further information, contact
Caprice Desjardins, M.Ed.
Glenrosa Elementary
School, SD 23
LAT and SSS co-ordinator,
(250) 768-5181
F: (250) 768-1060

Learning Assistance and Student Support Services

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The following section is dedicated to Student Support Services and the role its staff play in assisting the Learning Assistance Program and children with special needs in the school.

Defining a Learning Disability

by Carol Rohrlack

The term *learning disability* is an umbrella concept that includes many types of learning problems without identifying the specific learning difficulty. A learning disability is not a single condition but rather a class of related, and in some instances overlapping, conditions. (Keogh 1994). The type and degree of learning disability varies with each learner and is as individual and unique as each person's fingerprints. It is therefore very difficult to develop one definition to explain these learning differences.

A commonality among individuals with learning disabilities does exist. Such learners all appear to experience difficulty with one or more of the following types of academic learning: the acquisition of speech including receptive or expressive language or listening skills; the development of literacy skills, including reading, writing, and/or spelling; the development of mathematical skills, including math reasoning and/or math calculation skills; and the development of motor skills or psychosocial skills or the development of thinking



Carol Rohrlack, SD 23, Kelowna, severe learning disabilities itinerant teacher and learning disabilities program co-ordinator

and reasoning skills. The small words and/or are key in the understanding of learning disabilities because the learner generally experiences difficulty in some but not in all types of learning.

In addition to the academic achievement problems, the learning difficulties experienced by the student are presumed to be a result of central-nervous-system dysfunction. A central-nervous-system dysfunction generally refers to the uneven development of one or more of the basic cognitive processes including memory,

attention, visual or auditory perception, visual motor organization, comprehension and/or processing speed.

Definitions of learning disabilities generally contain an exclusionary clause. A student is not considered to have a learning disability if the learning difficulties are primarily related to other causes such as visual or hearing impairment; emotional disturbances, mental retardation, or economic, environmental or cultural differences.

In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education has chosen to use the definition of learning disabilities developed in 1981 by the National Joint Committee on learning disabilities:

"learning disabilities" is a general 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 a life span. Problems in self-

regulatory behaviors, social perception and social interaction may exist with a learning disability but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (e.g., cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not a result of those conditions or influences."

In School District 23, we have tried to clarify the definition of learning disabilities by combining the definition with the ministry criteria for identifying and funding severe learning disabilities. The checklist at the end of this article helps in our assessment process by outlining the conditions stated in the definition. Although the checklist is used to identify "severe learning disabilities," the same criteria also applies to mild and moderate learning disabilities. The difference between mild, moderate, and severe is a difference of magnitude. Mild to moderate learning disabilities continue to reflect a

discrepancy for the learner between academic achievement and learning potential; however, the discrepancy would be less than two standard deviations when a student is assessed using norm-referenced tests.

We all realize that the definition of *learning disabilities* is confusing and elusive. The boundaries that define *learning disabilities* often appear loose and abstract. However, these different types of learners really do exist, and it is important to take the time to recognize, support, and accommodate them. Because their particular learning style doesn't work to their advantage within the regular academic classroom, they appear less than adequate learners. Their learning styles often hide or disguise other talents and abilities. As I continue to know and work with these students, I'm mindful of other learning-disabled individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the quality of our lives and advancement of our society. People such as Leonardo DiVinci, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill and Thomas Edison are all considered to have been learning disabled. As educators in special

education we are always excited to discover these creative, unique, and innovative types of learners and to help them acquire the skills that will allow them to make the best use of their talents. Being a teacher working with students who have learning disabilities is a little like being a geologist who discovers those trace minerals that indicate that diamonds may be close by!

Carol Robrlack learning disabilities program co-ordinator, School District 23, Kelowna

No chance, no destiny, no fate, can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul.

Author Unknown

**For the purposes of this document, the term learning disability includes conditions described as dyslexia, dyscalculia, or dysgraphia, and may include students with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD).*

MINISTRY CRITERIA FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF A SEVERE LEARNING DISABILITY

To be eligible for support students must have 1, 2, 3, & 4

1. Severe difficulties in the acquisition of basic academic skills following classroom-based remediation, curricular adaptations and LA support.
- In the early years, persistent difficulties in the acquisition of pre-academic skills.
 - In the later primary years, persistent difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.
 - In Grades 3-12, a discrepancy of two standard deviations between estimated learning potential and academic achievement as measured by "norm referenced" assessment material.

And

2. A significant weakness in one or more of the following cognitive processes relative to overall intellectual functioning.
- Attention
 - Auditory processing
 - Comprehension
 - Memory
 - Processing speed
 - Visual perception
 - Visual processing
 - Visual spatial organization
 - Visual-motor organization

And

3. Additional services directed at addressing the learning disability. (e.g., classroom adaptations and/or LA support)

And

4. A current school-based IEP (individualized educational plan)

Students may also have

5. Problems related to
- Self Regulatory Behaviour
 - Social Interaction
 - Social Perception

Note: 5 without 1 and 2 does not constitute a learning disability.

Remarkable Individuals with Hidden Learning Disabilities

Hans Christian Andersen, Danish writer of children's stories *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates*, *The Ugly Duckling*, etc.
"You will never become a writer! Your verses will rot in a bookseller's attic, and you will end your days in a madhouse," were Rector Meislings' words to Andersen. Danish expert Axel Rosendal, who studied the writer, says there is no question about Andersen's dyslexic characteristics: his nightmarish difficulties in school, his life-long inability to spell and to write his native language accurately, and his habit of dictating his stories to a scribe.

Harry Belafonte, singer, actor.

"I grew up in a school system where nobody understood the meaning of learning disorder. In the West Indies, I was constantly being physically abused because the whipping of students was permitted."

Agatha Christie, English mystery writer.

"I myself was always recognized...as the 'slow one' of the family. It was quite true, and I knew it and accepted it."

Winston Churchill, prime minister of England.

"I was, on the whole, considerably discouraged by my school days. It was not pleasant to feel oneself so completely outclassed and left behind at the beginning of the race."

Tom Cruise, actor.

"I had to train myself to focus my attention. I became very visual and learned how to create mental images in order to comprehend what I read."

Fred Curry, Navy pilot, entrepreneur, and CEO of Greyhound Lines.

"Beyond perseverance, as a child I learned to think in picture images rather than words. Then once the images are set, I put together the words that describe the pictures."

Greg Louganis, two-time Olympic gold medalist.

"Dylexia! That was me; that was my problem! You can't imagine what a relief it is for an eighteen-year-old to learn that he is not mentally retarded."

Charles Schwab, Investment Brokerage Founder.

"I couldn't read. I just scraped by. My solution back then was to read classic comic books because I could figure them out from the context of the pictures. Now I listen to books on tape."

Roger W. Wilkins, Head of the Pulitzer Prize Board.

"My problem was reading very slowly. My parents said, 'Take as long as you need. As long as you're going to read, just keep at it. We didn't know about learning disabilities then.'"

Henry Winkler, Actor, director, producer.

"As a child I was called stupid and lazy. On the SAT I got 159 out of 800 in math. My parents had no idea that I had a learning disability."

William Butler Yeats, Irish Poet and Dramatist. Biographer A. Norman Jeffares writes, "Willie was sent to lessons in spelling and grammar ... but he never learned to spell; to the end of his life he produced highly idiosyncratic versions of words."

Source of Information:

From Dyslexia in Adults: Taking Charge of Your Life, Kathleen Nosek, Taylor Publishing Company, Dallas, Texas, www.taylorpub.com

General Tips for Teachers of Students with Learning Disabilities

- After giving directions, have the student repeat them aloud.
- Allow short answers to questions.
- Allow students to take tests using different formats. Allow more time for tests.
- Ask a student what he/she needs in terms of adaptations or what works for him/her.
- Be aware of personal and student leaning styles.
- Be honest but liberal with praise.
- Be organized and consistent. Maintain an organized classroom with predictable schedules.
- Be specific, consistent and systematic in expectations and actions.
- Change the volume and tone of your voice to emphasize important points in the lesson.
- Emphasize quality of ideas and perseverance in written work rather than initial attention to spelling and handwriting errors.
- Give clear and concrete directions.
- Help the student to think through steps completing a task. Use questions such as the following as a guide: "How much time do I have to complete a task? What materials will I need? Who can I ask for help?"
- If homework is important to your program, keep in mind that too much can overwhelm the student with learning disabilities.
- Immediately after teaching an important concept, check for recall and understanding by asking, "What did I say?"
- Learn all you can about learning disabilities.
- Let the student know you are interested.
- Maintain a warm and supportive emotional climate.
- Modify grades and report cards to reflect

Continued

the individual student's level of improvement. Provide emotional support to help ease the frustration of a learning disability.

- Preface all remarks with a title or the main idea of the lesson.
- Provide a focus on important points during a lesson. Say, for example, "Listen carefully," or "This is important."
- Read orally to the class in order to provide pacing and ensure better understanding.
- Reduce the amount of printed or written work.
- Seat students near the front of the room so that distractions are behind them, or use

carrels to cut down on distractions.

- Set concrete standards. Work on one area at a time.
- Stress all language areas.
- Teach study skills.
- Teach the student to organize materials and assignments. Use lists to establish work priorities.
- Vary presentations so that both written and visual components are included.

*Adapted from Winzer, 1993;
Henley, Ramsay, Algozzine, 1993*

Persistence

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not. Nothing is more common than successful men with talent.

Education will not. The world is full of educated derelicts.

Genius will not. Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

—Calvin Coolidge

Helpful Strategy

When teaching pupils to read or spell "big" words, look at the word in meaningful chunks, working your way from back to front. That way, the student hangs on to the end and middle while working toward the beginning of the word; e.g., extension (say, tion—tension—extension). It works even better if the student points to the parts and each part is said and spelled aloud two or three times before moving on to the next part.

—Elgin Brown

QUESTIONS OFTEN ASKED RE THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

The following information should be helpful to the learning assistance teacher and all educators in clarifying the role of the school psychologist and in realizing the wealth of information that can be gleaned from the assessments given and reports written on the child assessed.

WISC III

Psycho-Educational Assessment: What Each Subtest Measures

by Cheryl Dewar, school psychologist, SD 23

Verbal Subtests

Information

The information subtest is a measure of general cultural knowledge and acquired facts. Long-term memory is necessary to answer many items. The Information subtest reflects one's exposure to the environment, schooling, and available information.

Similarities

The Similarities subtest is a measure of abstract, logical thinking and reasoning. Concept formation is also required. Two similar but different objects or concepts are presented, and the student is asked to tell how they are alike or the same.

Arithmetic

The Arithmetic subtest is a measure of numeracy accu-

racy, reasoning, and mental arithmetic ability. A precise answer, concentration, and attention are required.

Vocabulary

The Vocabulary subtest is a measure of the student's verbal fluency, word knowledge, and word usage. The student's performance on this subtest is closely related to his or her verbal experiences and environment. The subtest is also closely related to educational experiences.

Comprehension

The Comprehension subtest measures the student's common sense, social knowledge, practical judgement in social situations, and level of social maturation, along with the extent of development of his or her moral conscience.

Digit Span

The supplementary Digit Span subtest is a measure of short-term auditory memory and attention. Performance on Digits forward requires memory and organization, but performance on Digits Backward requires reorganization as well.

Performance Subtests

Picture Completion

The Picture Completion subtest measures a student's ability to recognize familiar items and to identify missing parts. The student's task is to separate essential from nonessential parts from the whole. It is necessary to observe each item closely and concentrate on picture detail. The Picture Completion subtest partially measures attention to the environment.

Coding

The Coding subtest measures visual-motor dexterity, associative nonverbal learning, and nonverbal short-term memory. Fine-motor dexterity, speed, accuracy, and ability to manipulate a pencil contribute to task success; perceptual organization is also important. The Coding subtest requires rapid learning, memorizing, copying, and/or substituting marks in appropriate forms or under boxed numbers.

Picture Arrangement

The Picture Arrangement subtest measures the student's ability to interpret actions and events as illustrated by pictures, to recognize the sequence of those actions and events in a story, and to arrange the pictures in the proper sequence to tell the story. Also involved are perception, visual comprehension, and the ability to plan ahead.

Block Design

The Block Design subtest measures an individual's ability to analyze and synthesize an abstract design and then reproduce that design from colored plastic blocks. Spatial analysis, visual-motor coordination, dexterity, and nonverbal concept formation are involved. The child must also use logic and reasoning to successfully complete the items.

Object Assembly

The Object Assembly subtest measures the child's ability to visualize the component parts of a concrete object and reassemble these parts into a whole. Task completion requires perception, assembly skills, dexterity, and visual-motor co-ordination. The child must be able to visualize the relationship of fragmented parts to a whole. Visual closure

is also involved. In some instances, the child may not visualize the whole object until he or she has put together some of the parts.

Mazes

The Mazes subtest is a supplementary subtest and measures planning ability, perceptual organization, visual-motor coordination, and self-control.

*Additional information gathered on
the role of the school psychologist*

Referral to the School Psychologist

What does a school psychologist do?

A school psychologist applies skills and knowledge from two disciplines, education and psychology, to assess students' learning needs in order to assist with educational planning.

A thorough knowledge of normal childhood development, extensive training in the technical aspects of assessment procedures, knowledge of the school system and curriculum, and supervised experience in the diagnosis of educational needs enable the school psychologist to combine psycho-educational assessment, systematic observation, interviews, file reviews and consultations to assist parents, teachers, and students (as appropriate) in planning appropriate educational programs.

In addition, the school psychologist uses these techniques to identify students who qualify as "students with special needs," as defined by the Ministry of Education. Those students then have access to individualized educational programs.

While registered psychologists diagnose and treat mental disorders, school psychologists diagnose and recommend strategies to meet learning needs. Since educational recommendations are an integral part of this function, a thorough knowledge of educational programs and instructional strategies is essential.

Commonly, school psychologists are asked to determine whether a child's learning difficulties are due to an intellectual disability, a learning disability, social emotional/behavioural factors, or to a combination of factors.

When is it appropriate to involve a school psychologist?

Most commonly, teachers involve school psychologists in their educational planning when they have questions about an individual child's learning. The child may seem to be somewhat inconsistent in his or her performance levels, may seem to find some types of activities easier than others, may be able to perform well at some times and have considerable difficulty with a very similar task at another time, and/or may experience considerable difficulty in acquiring new skills or in retaining knowledge or skills (either globally or in specific areas).

The school psychologist will address questions such as the following:

- Does Ellen have a learning disability that is interfering with her ability to progress academically?
- Does Mary qualify for special education services?
- Is Mary's underachievement due to laziness, as was suggested by her mother?
- Is there some reason that Jim doesn't do as he is told?
- Which instructional method is most likely to help Susie?
- Why is Johnny having a great deal of difficulty learning to read, even though he seems to be very bright?
- Why is Ken unable to learn this concept in math?

Referring for psycho-educational assessments

Usually, the school psychologist can confer with the teacher about general learning concerns without complex referral procedures. Often she will be able to ask a series of questions to clarify your concerns, to assist with general suggestions prior to initiating a referral for assessment, and help determine the need for specific psycho-educational intervention.

Written parental consent is required before a child can be referred for a psycho-educational assessment. As part of obtaining "informed consent," it is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the reason for the referral, the assessment process, and how the information that is gathered in the process will be used and shared.

Since students and parents have both moral and legal rights to privacy, information gathered to initiate the referral as well as that which is gathered in the assessment process and the results must be appropriately secured to ensure confidentiality.

School districts develop specific policies and procedures to deal with psycho-educational assessments. The school-based team assists the teacher in accessing these services.

General Procedures

1. Data and observations from pre-referral interventions are collected and summarized. This includes a summary of learning assistance activities, strategies employed and the relative success of each type of intervention, results of vision and hearing screening. Observations are presented objectively, without evaluation or interpretation.

- 2 School and health history are summarized.

Information to provide help to the school psychologist to help you and the student

At the time a referral is initiated, the parent and the classroom teacher are the key sources of information necessary to ensure appropriate assessment to clarify the student's learning needs.

A clear referral question can be the key to efficient assessment. To compose this question, ask yourself "What do I want to find out about this child?"

A second factor involves sharing what you know about the child, especially those factors that led to your question. This information is generally most helpful when evaluation is avoided and objective assessments stating specific observations are reported.

In situations where a learning disability may be a factor, evaluations of relative strengths and weakness will also be valuable. Consideration of levels of enjoyment and apparent motivation, as well as actual achievement is helpful.

Information about the student's social/emotional, physical, and artistic/aesthetic development, is desirable, in addition to that dealing with intellectual development.

It will also be important to identify other individuals who are working with the child being referred: speech and language specialist, First Nations support worker, vision or hearing specialist, occupational and/or physiotherapist, counsellor and to indicate whether English is the child's and parent's first language (and if not, who, if anyone, is providing ESL support).

The psycho-educational assessment

When the school psychologist receives a referral for a psycho-educational assessment, he/she reviews the file of information provided by the school and the parents (developmental, social, and/or health history).

Assessment procedures are chosen according to the referral question and the information provided.

Direct intervention usually occurs at the school and may include:

- direct consultation with school personnel
- observation of the student in the learning environment
- one-to-one administration of specialized tests of intellectual function, adaptive behaviour, language development, perceptual function, achievement, and /or behaviour
- review of school assessment and evaluations

All available information is used in interpreting any testing results. Cultural and/or language factors, health issues, and social factors (family stress, etc.) can significantly effect assessment validity and must be given careful consideration. The school psychologist must also be aware of the appropriateness of testing conditions in terms of physical environment (ventilation, light, quiet), rapport, and timing. Administering an assessment during a time when the rest of the class is participating in some special activity or when the child is experiencing personal stress might not produce optimum results.

Understanding the psycho-educational report

The psycho-educational report usually contains a number of sections. Given normal demands upon a teacher's time, there may be a temptation to skip to the summary and/or recommendations and not read the introduction or main body of the report. Doing so reduces the utility of the report.

By reading the background history and introduction, the teacher is able to see whether the factors reviewed by the school psychologist are consistent with his/her knowledge of the child. Helpful new information may be presented or some inconsistency may prompt the teacher to contact the school psychologist to clarify the situation and to determine whether the inconsistency might affect the validity of the results. Educators and parents have an important role in ensuring that the permanent record of assessment information is accurate.

A review of the assessment procedures and tests that were used will indicate how the school psychologist gathered the information to be used in diagnosing the student's learning needs.

The observations about the child's behaviour and approach to the assessment process will help to determine whether his/her performance was consistent with that observed in the classroom.

Understanding assessment results can present varying degrees of challenge, depending upon the chosen method of reporting.

What the scores mean

Considerable caution should be employed if test results are reported as grade equivalent scores. Although on the surface this type of score would be the easiest to understand, it

is this apparent simplicity that is the source of difficulty. Most people tend to assume that a grade equivalent score tells the grade level at which the child is achieving. This may be appropriate when inventories closely tied to curriculum are being used to measure student achievement. However, grade equivalent scores on standardized tests do not bear any direct relationship to curriculum or instructional levels. Rather, they merely indicate the grade level of the average child who obtained the same raw score.

Similarly, age-equivalent scores indicate the age of the average child attaining the same raw score. Since this does not imply curriculum implications it may be less misleading than grade-equivalent scores.

Standard scores are generally considered to be a less confusing method of reporting performance. These scores are relative to a normal distribution (bell curve) and can be effectively interpreted only when the mean and standard deviation are known. The standard error of measurement must also be considered to allow for some of the limitations of the testing process. This is why it is not appropriate to assume that a child whose IQ is 123 is any more intelligent than one whose IQ is 120. Even if both children were assessed using the same test, the standard error of measurement tells us that we could not be confident that there was any difference in ability levels.

One of the most common tests of ability used by school psychologists is the Wechsler Intelligence Test for Children, Third Edition (the WISC-III). Because it has a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 we know that two thirds of all children in the norm group had scores between 85 and 115, (in the average range). The Stanford Binet IV (SB IV) another common tool for assessing ability levels, also has a mean of 100, but its

standard deviation is 16. Therefore, if we accept that a gifted child scores two standard deviations above the mean, the lowest score in the gifted range would be 130 if the WISC-III were used, but 132 if the SB-IV was employed.

Percentiles can be readily understood without knowledge of the specific test employed. For simplicity sake, consider that the exact test was administered to one hundred children of the same age as the child in question (sometimes grade comparisons are made instead). The percentile score tells how many students scored at the same level or lower than this child did. It may be helpful to think of it terms of the number of children, out of one hundred who would experience as much or more difficulty with the task. For example, a score at the fifth percentile indicates that only five children out of one hundred experience as much difficulty as the individual being considered.

One factor that is important to remember when working with percentiles, however, is that differences among scores that are close to the mean are much less than differences among scores that are farther from the mean. In other words there is a much greater difference between scores at the fifth and fifteenth percentiles than there is between scores at the 95th and 105th percentiles. (This is because percentiles cannot be adjusted to allow for a normal distribution, with most scores clustered around the mean and fewer at the extremes, as standard scores are. This statistical adjustment of standard scores to create equal score differences, wherever they are located in the range is the primary reason for the popularity of standard scores.)

Raw scores (the actual number correct) will not generally be reported because they have very little meaning without reference to a norm group.

Percentiles and standard scores are not intended to measure student growth. In fact, when these scores remain stable over time, it may be assumed that the student is demonstrating an appropriate rate of growth.

The conclusions drawn by the school psychologist result from the interpretation of test scores, informal assessment measures, observations, and the review of all information that is available. (Factors that might effect assessment validity are considered in the interpretation of test scores.)

There may be an indication of some type of *processing disorder*. Attention, perception, discrimination, organization, association, and/or memory disorders may be identified. When this is the case, the child can be expected to experience difficulty with some types of tasks, even though there is no difficulty with vision or hearing or basic intelligence.

The terminology

Confusion can sometimes occur because some terms used by school psychologists may have general meanings that would not be appropriate in the specialized context of the psycho-educational report. This is especially true of terms applying to social, emotional, and behavioural factors that indicate the application of specific criteria when used by the school psychologist. For example when many people use the term *hyperactive*, they merely mean extremely active. When the school psychologist uses the same term, he/she means that the specific set of characteristics laid out for the diagnosis have been met (No doubt, the individual under consideration will also be extremely active).

Some additional terms and phrases used in psycho-educational reports may need clarification:

Conduct disorder

A behavioural disorder involving the violation of the rights of others and/or major societal rules. The term applies to specific levels of aggression, destruction, deceitfulness, theft and violations of rules that significantly impairs social, academic or occupational functioning. Specific criteria, outlined in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition* (DSM-IV) must be met for specification of severity levels.

Oppositional defiant disorder

A significant pattern of negative, hostile, defiant behaviour that impairs social, academic, or occupational functioning. The specific criteria outlined in DSM-IV will have been met.

Dyslexia

A severe learning disability in which the ability to learn to read is dramatically impaired. Although often believed to be associated with letter reversals and transpositions, this disability does not always include difficulties with orientation and/or sequencing. Neither do difficulties with either or both of these factors necessarily result in dyslexia.

Dyscalculia

A serious learning disability in which the ability to calculate and apply mathematical functions is significantly impaired.

Dysgraphia

A serious learning disability in which the ability to write is dramatically impaired.

Figure/ground difficulties

In the **visual** realm this indicates that the child experiences difficulty distinguishing foreground from background in order to accurately "see" what is on the page. The eyes probably function appropriately but the neurological system is not efficient

when it interprets the information delivered through the visual system. As a result, the individual is unable to "see what is directly in front of them." Such students require uncluttered working materials and can be greatly disadvantaged by decorations on printed materials.

In the **auditory** realm, this indicates that the child will often be able to "hear" what is being said, even though he does not have a hearing loss, due to effect of other sounds in the environment. The interfering sounds do not need to be louder than the speaker is, especially when they are closer. Something as simple as shuffling feet, turning pages or whisper voices can make it difficult for the individual to hear all that is being said. This student may be accused of failing to pay attention, day dreaming, and/or not listening.

Mental disability

Intellectual function that is sufficiently limited to impair the individual's ability to learn, to reason, and to function socially.

Using the psycho-educational report for developing an IEP

The Background Information section of the Psycho-educational report may contribute the *history* section of the IEP. It will need to be integrated with information from a variety of other sources.

Assessment results are a key component used to identify learning strengths and needs to formulate long term goals as well as specific goals and objectives. This information, combined with your knowledge of the child and that provided by the parent, is used to present a comprehensive picture for programming planning. It is important to note that the psycho-educational report may present a picture of an ideal program that could be designed for the child. The IEP team will have to consider recommenda-

tions in terms of practical realities—the resources, human, material and time—that are realistically available. The availability of expertise to implement some suggested strategies may be a concern. Since the IEP

represents a commitment to provide the program outlined it is vital that the recommendations, however ideal, be dealt with realistically.

Author Unknown

Speech/Language Pathologist

We're Here To Work with You!

by Lynda Gant, S/LP, SD 23

It is amazing the speed at which we are able to speak and listen (let alone read and write, which are alternative forms of comprehension and expression) given all the processes involved. Stop and think about this:

1. Each time the student **speaks**, the following processes must trigger:
 - a selecting of appropriate motor sequence to form the sounds and words
 - a selecting of grammatical structures
 - a selecting of ideas or concepts
 - a selecting of words
 - long-term memory (for words, grammatical structures, social knowledge of situations, etc.)
2. Each time the student **listens** he/she is dependent on:
 - hearing acuity and central auditory processing
 - long-term memory to access one's knowledge about language
 - short-term memory to recall what has just been said
 - social knowledge, logic, etc.
 - understanding of grammar and word markers such as gender, suffixes/prefixes, etc.
 - understanding word meanings and relationships between words

3. Are you aware of the **scope of services** that the speech/language pathologist in your district is able to offer? As an integral part of the school based team, the **speech/language pathologist may provide the following services:**

- adapting and creating materials
- coaching students in the classroom
- consultation with parents and community service providers
- co-operative curriculum planning
- demonstration of specific strategies in the classroom
- program planning for specific students
- small-group or individual skill training
- team lesson presentations
- workshops for teachers, parents and certified education assistants (TAs)

4. **Possible communication skills that may be addressed are:**

- appropriate use of voice
- articulation
- fluent speech
- social language skills
- understanding and using oral and written language
 - * grammar and sentence structure
 - * vocabulary and concepts
- use of augmentative and alternative communication

5. How does one recognize a student with language difficulties?

Speech and/or language difficulties can significantly affect academic and career success. Recognizing these difficulties is the first step to overcoming them.

A language learning difficulty is a problem comprehending or expressing language. Comprehension and expression are complex, simultaneous and integrated processes occurring with incredible speed in the typical language learner. These processes are subject to breakdowns in many areas.

The following are red flags:

- brief verbalizations or lack of verbal interactions
- delayed acquisition of basic concepts (time, space, colours, numbers, letters, categories)
- delayed acquisition of syntactic structures (grammar)
- delayed articulation development (multiple errors, sound reversals, etc.)
- difficulties analyzing and synthesizing information
- difficulties organizing what to say
- difficulties with reading, spelling, math word problems
- sequencing problems
- word-finding problems

6. What can be done to help the language impaired child?

- Adjust vocabulary, length, grammatical/conceptual complexity
- Allow students a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge (oral, written, drawings, etc.)

- Consult with the speech-language pathologist for an intervention program or strategies
- Encourage the student to practice a self-questioning strategy: "who, what, when, where, why?"
- Explain explicitly the purpose of the assignment, clarify the method and criteria for the evaluation
- Help develop skills in asking for clarification and repair of communication breakdowns
- Model verbal and written responses to help the student with word-retrieval and organizing information
- Paraphrase information to check his/her comprehension
- Pre-teach concepts and main points, assist the student to activate prior knowledge
- Use group responding to increase active participation in listening (written, oral response, gestural responding)
- Use multimodalities (e.g., key visuals, manipulatives, written directions as well as verbal ones, etc.)
- Use outlines, graphic organizers, for visual supports

Effective communication empowers a person to think, learn, interact, and realize academic and personal potential, so call an S/LP at times when "something just doesn't seem right" in the student's communication abilities.

Sources of information:

SD 23 Speech and Language Program brochure and an article from the School Affairs Committee, BCASLPA

Learning Assistance and Ongoing Issues

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The following section is set aside to put you in touch with current and somewhat contentious issues that you may wish to address as a pro-active learning assistance teacher

Working with the “Unqualified LAT”

Gerry Petretta
LAT nine years
President of COLATA

The “job description” of a learning assistance teacher has expanded over the years as we have become more aware of students’ individual needs in ESL, Gifted, LD, ADD/ADHD, or FAS/E, as well as new research in remedial teaching styles, testing, etc. Demands on our time have grown as a result, but more significant is the need to expand our knowledge and expertise in these and many more areas. It has changed from working with students for short periods of remediation to often dealing with students with learning difficulties long-term.

In many school districts, the person with the most LAT time within a school has the qualifications as outlined by the Ministry of Education in the *Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*.

Additional LATs do not necessarily have to have these qualifications, and in some cases, some do not even have an interest in holding the position. Such decisions are made, not in the best interest of the students, but because

they are convenient for timetabling or because learning assistance is seen as an “easier” job” (whoever got that idea?) or perhaps as a “fill-in” to bring a person up to his/her full-time standing. In some schools, several people hold a block or two or more of the LAT time but do not have the qualifications for the position.

Supporting unqualified teachers placed in LAT assignments puts an incredible burden on the main LAT, who now bolsters others while handling a caseload of his/her own: assessing, creating IEPs attending school-based meetings, meeting with parents, determining student services and to what extent that will be provided, scheduling, programming and consulting with parents, teachers, Student Support personnel and students. Besides juggling service to their own students, they must now also be finding time to help their colleagues with their caseload—several more balls for the juggling act. These LATs find their lunch hours, hours before and after

school sopped up with meetings, as the school day is dedicated to meeting student needs. Providing direction, guidance, and training to other(s) plus spending countless hours taking up the slack can be a killer.

In the words of one LAT, “It becomes annoying and frustrating to see that students aren’t getting what they need as the LAT program in the school diminishes. The teachers in the school suffer because of the shortage of full service, and ultimately, sadly, the students lose out.

We don’t want to lose qualified people, and we want to encourage unqualified teachers in LAT positions to get the required courses, as well as to attend workshops designed to help look for the “magic” to help the LAT’s students.

It is the direction of the ministry that individuals holding learning assistance positions must be qualified, and for those individuals to provide quality program to students the school. All school districts must be committed to achieving this standard by hiring qualified LATs and facilitating and by helping those currently assigned to the positions without the qualifications to become qualified. This would be achieved by school districts’ providing appropriate in-service opportunities

encouraging the taking of courses that would develop the specialized skills needed for a learning assistance teacher, regardless of the time assigned to the position.

To help turn this around, we, as learning assistance teachers can:

- Become aware of workshops and university level courses. Share this information with other LATs, and administrative personnel. Encourage unqualified LATs to take these courses.
- Discuss with the director of human resources, the impact upon the program when unqualified personnel are hired for an LAT position. Encourage him/her to hire qualified people for all LAT positions, whether full or part-time.
- Discuss with the directors of instruction at the elementary, middle school, and secondary school levels, the impact upon the program and upon the qualified and teacher. Encourage them to speak with the school level administrators regarding the need to fill part-time assignments with individuals who are interested in the LAT position and who are willing to take the necessary coursework to become fully capable of delivering the LAT program.
- Encourage your local university to offer neces-

sary LAT courses. Find a list of willing participants and use it to indicate the need for such courses.

- Encourage yourself to continue pushing for the change. You are the best advocate for the students our programs serve.

Qualifications for Learning Assistance Teachers

From *Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*, Section D, Page 3, Effective Date: 95.06:

Teachers providing learning assistance services should possess:

- strong interpersonal, communication and collaborative skills;
- expertise in a wide range of teaching and management strategies;
- knowledge of methods for evaluating and selecting instructional materials suitable for students with a variety of special needs;
- ability to carry out a variety of assessments, including classroom observation, administration and interpretation of norm-referenced assessment instruments to Level B (see Section H7:Appendix B), curriculum-based assessment and diagnostic teaching methods; and
- ability to contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of an IEP in consultation with classroom teacher(s) par-

ents, students and district and community resource personnel.

Learning assistance teachers should meet, at minimum, the following qualifications:

- a Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent.
- a minimum of two years of successful classroom teaching experience.
- university-level courses in the following areas:
- introductory survey course in teaching students with special needs;
- assessment/testing theory and practice;
- strategies for teaching modifying and adapting the curriculum to meet the diverse individual needs of students; and
- collaborative consultation.

In addition, university courses in the following areas are recommended:

- meeting the needs of students with specific exceptionalities (e.g. learning disabilities, AD/HD, FAS/FAE, gifted);
- computer technology for the classroom; and
- meeting the diverse behavioral and emotional needs of students.

In-service training should include opportunities to develop further expertise in these and related areas.

To Go Where No One Has Gone Before...

by Dr. Ron Rubadeau,
superintendent, SD 23

(Formerly, director of Student Support Services
for a number of years in SD 23)



Before there were kids, a house, and a retirement savings plan, I had my first real job, as a remedial reading teacher. We were a rare breed then, and I occupied my time with bottom group of intermediate boys who didn't like school and reading much but loved all things NHL and silly jokes. They taught me hockey, I taught 'em readin', and we all laughed at mindless puns.

A few years into my career, the ministry coined the phrase *learning assistance*, and my working life took the first of many subtle turns. The district emphasis went from intermediate to primary grades and from phonics toward whole language. The new directions were okay with me, as I had been schooled in change, and I regarded the post of remedial reading teacher as a pioneering division of education, where creativity was of more importance than ground previously trod.

In the decades since then, the province has gone from special schools to neighbourhood education outlets, and from remedial reading classes to programs of phonemic awareness. But in addition to the metamorphosis that overtook our methodology, learning assistance programs have also experienced a theoretical reformation, as practitioners have begun to abandon clinicized models of service delivery in favour of something more dynamic and environmental. Further, the philosophy underpinning learning assistance has also shifted, as progressively less evidence is available to support the notion that the wide variety of remedial education "disabilities" are necessarily related to any objective condition that a kid may present. And, the belief that learning assistance support is a rational or co-ordinated system that serves the interest of kids is becoming more suspect, as many suggest that the support

may be more focussed on the interests of schools, parents, teachers, and support staff than on kids.

If so much has changed so far even in this field dedicated to change, what is the future of learning assistance? We've known all along that diagnostic criteria for learning assistance teachers' services imprecise, and as a result, the number needing assistance in a district is ever expanding. The phenomenon leaves an observer with the impression that "all kids are special" or that the average kid is as rare as common sense.

Faced with a mismatch between our ability to cure problems and our insatiable appetite for identification, decision-makers are re-examining the delivery model through the lens of cost/benefit analysis. "Bang for the buck" and "greatest good for the least cost" are leading us a rationalized approach in

which proof of student improvement must go hand in hand with the colour of the bottom line.

But if we are driven by new financial and accountability masters, isn't it right to ask if we are devoting our limited resources to the right target? In most districts in B.C., schools are spending more money on remediation in the second six years of a child's education than they spend on the first six years. Unfortunately there is very little credible evidence that would suggest that either society or the victim of our attention will benefit from the huge expenditures on middle and secondary school LAT, behavioural support, severe learning disabilities programs, and rehab efforts in comparison to the same support provided at an early age. Furthermore, early intervention that's truly effective begins, not at age six, but years before, when language is being developed, when motor skills are emerging, and when personalities are establishing attitudes toward self and others. We mustn't shift our priorities so far that we throw away inconvenient adolescents, but we must become more aggressive at fixing what we can at an early age and accommodating what we can't care later on. I know it's an easy line to preach but tough to effect with a 200-pound adolescent

with a bad attitude terrorizing the school.

Down the block from my house is the regional hospital. It's packed with seniors looking for solutions to their endless list of health issues. Doctors can do much but are frustrated that they will never be able to keep up with treating mom and dad, nor get the bucks or the staff needed to help the onslaught of baby boomers coming their way. What they know is what we intuitively know: There isn't enough money in the world to cure a problem once it starts. It takes \$150,000 to perform a heart bypass but just a little education to change a lifestyle and prevent the necessity for surgery. Just like the health system, we are in danger of a collapse if the big dollars keep being applied to trying to fix the difficult versus trying to find the pennies for prevention.

Years ago there was an advertisement on TV: "Pay me now, or pay me later." We can spend a little now to fix a little problem or a lot later to address a more serious issue. Either way we're going to pay. Since it's going to cost us no matter what we do, let's spend it up front, and put our limited budgets into something that will pay off with a bang big enough to reverberate for a lifetime.

Public education doesn't have to start at age 4.8. Not so long ago, there wasn't kindergarten, and school started at age 5.8. The School Act got changed when educators and parents were convinced that earlier was better. The bucks needed to make it work are already in the system, just a little misplaced. Public elementary schools will soon have the space to accommodate class sizes of 18, but by trading a little class size for something far more powerful, dynamic, and cost effective in the bigger scheme of things, it may be possible to simultaneously improve the learning ability of kids and the environment in which teachers teach by providing preschool for ages 2.8 to 4.8.

I started by saying that remedial reading and learning assistance appealed to me because they were the frontier. They still are. Because they are on the edge, it will be the LATs and all who think like them who will pioneer the next revolution of education; one that places kids in school early to inoculate them with an educational serum that won't permit the disease of failure to read and write. This is a legacy worth working for and one that will clearly place learning assistance in the forefront of educational change for another quarter century.

Re: Integration

Special Education Changes

(Taken from *Teacher* article written by Larry Kuehn)

"The needs of the whole class, not just the student with special needs, are to be taken into account in placements."

The headline read "Ministerial Order Changes Policy on Education of Students with Special Needs."

What was this change?

The integration of students with special needs into regular classes was mandated by a ministerial order in 1989. That order has been replaced by one that changes some elements of the special needs policy of the province.

The description of the affected student has changed. The 1989 order talked about the educational needs of a "handicapped student."

The 1995 version talks about a "student with special needs" and defines that as meaning "a student who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioral nature, has a learning disability, or has exceptional gifts or talents."

The substance of the order has changed as well. Under the 1989 order, a student could be placed outside a regular class only if the educational needs of the "handicapped student" indicate the student should not be integrated.

Under the 1995 order, the needs of "other students" are taken into account in placing a student outside a regular class. In other words, if a student with special needs is disrupting the education of other students in the class, the disruptive student can be removed to another placement.

The new ministerial order (M397/95) says:

"A board must provide a student with special needs with an educational program in a classroom where that student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs, unless the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational program for the student with special needs should be provided otherwise."

Sometimes Integration Doesn't Work

Dear Minister

Thursday, October 9th, I, the mother of a Grade 2 teacher in B.C., had the pleasure of spending the day in her classroom. This is an annual event for me to which I look forward with much pleasure. This time I was so totally devastated by what I saw that I feel compelled to write this letter to you and to send a copy to our Premier.

I witnessed a teacher who is trying to give her all to her Grade 2 students, to prepare them for Grade 3 in a pleasant, happy, welcoming atmosphere. The students respond well to her and seem to enjoy their time in the classroom. However, the school system will be losing this teacher if your department keeps ignoring what is happening in this situation.

In her classroom of 24 children, there are children who need special attention, such as a little girl who is just learning the English language. With this, the teacher can cope. However, in the same classroom there is a 7-year-old child, I who is in a wheelchair and who has, I believe, the mentality of a 6-month-old baby. She makes a lot of strange noises that disrupt the classroom learning experience and she requires constant attention. It is my belief that she cannot benefit in any way from being present in the classroom. She has a full-time aide who just recently has been assigned a second child. This child is capable, I think, of benefiting from instruction. However, the aide can only devote time to the second child when the 7-year-old is quiet.

I feel that this situation is making a farce of our school system. Her presence in the classroom and the resulting demands placed on the teacher are affecting the learning experience of 23 other students, not to mention the stress level of the teacher. These other children need help now, as they will intimately have to make it on their own in this world.

The child in question will always be looked after because she can never make it on her own.

I have no objection to this child having proper care and nurturing but not in a classroom where academic standards are expected to be met.

I have talked to many other people about this situation and have found none who was not in total agreement with me. We are dissatisfied with what is happening in our education system and we believe that money directed to education should not be spent on babysitting in a classroom. Please seriously re-examine what total integration is doing to classroom atmosphere and give some consideration to the majority—the teachers and the regular students.

Yours truly,
Stella Davies



Dear Stella Davies:

The Honourable Paul Ramsey, Minister of Education, Skills and Training has asked me to reply directly to your letter expressing your concerns about the integration of children with severe needs in regular classes. I appreciate your desire to have the best possible learning environment for your daughter and her classmates.

Integration of children with special needs in classrooms with their age and grade peers is policy in this Province. Most children with even the most severe needs can benefit from opportunities for participation, friendship, and interaction with other children. Students without disabilities can benefit from interacting with people who have disabilities, as well.

The goal of the placement should be to meet the educational needs of the particular student and the other students in the class. The emphasis on educating students with special needs in neighbourhood school classrooms does not preclude the appropriate use of resource rooms, self-contained classes, community-based training, or other specialized settings. Most schools and school district in consultation with parents are making difficult decisions about how to best support individual students with special needs, and Kelowna is no exception.

I suggest that you direct your concerns to the classroom teacher and principal of your daughter's school.

Yours sincerely,
Shirley R. McBride
Director
Special Programs Branch

Ministry of Education,
Skills and Training

SPECIAL PROGRAMS BRANCH

Mailing Address
PO Box 9165 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9H4

(250) 356-2333
F: (250) 356-7631
TDD/TTY: (250) 356-6632

Sometimes Integration Does Work...

Integration

(Thoughts expressed in a speech by a Grade 5 student)

Today I would like to tell you about the benefits we all receive from 'integrating' children. 'Integration' is placing special needs children in a classroom where they live and learn with other children their own age. Everyday contact with special needs kids changes our ideas.

Everybody is their own person with individual differences. We look different and learn different but that doesn't mean we feel different. Special needs kids make us more aware of our differences. This helps us accept people for what they are, rather than what we want them to be. This also helps the teachers become more aware of individual differences in all students. Special needs kids also help us develop social skills such as leadership. When we help special needs kids with a skill we become better at that skill ourselves. The important thing to remember when living with these kids is that our similarities are more important than our differences!

Ashleigh Clark

Brief History of Education Bargaining in B.C. as Related to Learning Assistance Teachers

by Peggy Salaberry, COTA Office
and French Immersion Kindergarten (part time), SD 23

In the beginning, nothing happened for a very long time. It all really started with the 1530 form of the 97-98 school year. As is often the case when history unfolds, no one actually knew that anything out of the ordinary was happening, or about to happen.

The 1530 form is filled out by administrators for the ministry. It asks for information on staffing—how many teachers are doing what jobs: classroom teachers, counsellors, special education teachers and the like, including of course, LATs. In completing the forms, administrators counted up the number of people in their schools doing the jobs, wrote it down, and sent their form off to their respective board offices to be reviewed and passed onto the ministry. People generally filled out the forms as they always had done and they figured, reasonably enough, that that would be that, because it had always been so.

In the following summer, a provincial contract was signed between the government of B.C. and the B.C. Teachers' Federation. The agreement contained clauses that were the stuff of history; for the first time, the positions of some non-enrolling teachers were protected by ratios set down in the contract. The ratio applied in two ways: First, a provincial minimum was set at one LAT for every 504 students. Second, another stipulation was applied to the districts that already met the minimum criteria, and it was based on the 1530 form. If a district met the minimum, it would be required to maintain the level of service the board had stated to exist on its 1530 form of the 97-98 school year. That was the base line, the point at which the reckoning would start. The agreement was all signed and agreed to by the provincial government, as the employer, and our bargaining agent, the BCTE. (It was not accepted by BCPSEA, nor did the trustees ratify it later on. However, it was law.)

But those 1530 forms held the seeds of great consternation. In innocence or not, the forms were not all created equal. Some administrators adhered strictly to the instructions that the staff persons carrying out the positions described by members of the bargaining unit; others just put down everyone in their school was doing that job. When it came time to make the official count, some districts would actually end up with fewer people than they said they had, and not enough to meet the base line set down in the contract.

The government had promised that it would provide necessary funding for additional teachers that would be required by the new contract. If a district failed to meet the provincial minimum, dollars would be given to hire the teachers necessary to bring the district into compliance. Additional money would not be given to districts that had overstated the number of teachers in the non-enrolling

jobs. The ratios had to be met, as the contract stipulated, with members of the bargaining agent. Administrators could certainly fill those positions, but they would not be counted toward the ratio. In the months following the signing of the agreement, districts not in compliance took one of three courses of action regarding learning assistance teacher/student ratios. Some hastened to comply with the new language. Others waited for a while to see if it looked as if they were going to be made to go with the new language, and when arbitration appeared the only alternative, they complied with the language. One dis-

trict, Central Okanagan, has opted to go to arbitration.

So that is the story of the protection of ratios for learning assistance teachers, of the 1530 form, and why some administrative officers had to change job descriptions, along with a short rundown on how things stand now.

A last clarification that may be helpful to understanding how all this applies for all non-enrolling teachers, including LATs, is that these ratios are applied by district. In other words, each district has the right to its own discretion in assigning a certain amount of LAT time to a particular school

or program. It's not a straight, simple application of the ratio, such that a school with 550 kids automatically is given that portion of LAT time relative to the district ratio. The board is entitled to distribute the teachers as it thinks best.

It's reasonably safe to assume that no party to the contract, not the government, not the boards, not the teachers' association deliberately set out to cause a great deal of upset regarding this section of the agreement. We have to keep remembering that the gain, especially for teachers and students, is significant enough to establish it in no uncertain terms.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training Special Programs Branch 1996-97

This is background information for you to read regarding the "Survey: Learning Assistance Service." It was undertaken by Desbarnais and Associates as mandated by the ministry.

Rationale: for the Survey Conducted in 1996-97

Why is the data being collected?

- The Minister of Education, Skills and Training announced that a review of learning assistance services would be conducted in this school year.

- The review is intended to determine and describe the current role of learning assistance in the delivery of special education support services.
- The review is also expected to examine the impact of IEP requirements on students' educational programs, parent participation and teachers' workloads.
- Information must be collected in order to provide answers to such key questions as:
 1. In the sampled schools, what are current school district policies regarding the delivery of learning assistance services?
 2. Which students receive learning assistance services?
 3. What is the nature of the learning assistance services currently provided in schools?
 4. How are learning assistance services documented and how is information about student progress conveyed?
 5. What is known about the efficacy of learning assistance services?

Why is this data collection process important?

- The information derived from the survey will be central in informing the overall learning assistance services review.
- The sample data collected will greatly assist the educational partners in discussing and addressing current and emerging issues about the nature of learning assistance services.
- It will provide key information that will allow the ministry and districts to inform discussions and decisions related to the formulation of policy and special program guidelines.
- It will provide a vehicle for school districts to better understand and refine the nature of district practices related to the delivery of learning assistance services.
- There is a need for a more recent "snapshot" of learning assistance services since this has not been undertaken for a period of several years.
- Since there is little or no research available on this type of service that appears to be unique in North America, such a review will yield valuable information to the larger special education community.
- The review will assist the Ministry's Special Programs Branch in the ongoing review of provincial special education policy and guidelines and will help districts through the provision of information on "best practices" in the delivery of learning assistance services.

Article D.1 – Appendix A: Learning Assistance Staffing Ratios

				Minimum ratio 1:504					
School District	1997-98 Learning Assistance Teachers	1997-98 Final Funded FTE Students	1997-98 Ratio	Year 1 1998-99 Ratio	Year 2 1999-00 Ratio	Year 3 2000-01 Ratio	New Tchrs. Added in Year 1	New Tchrs. Added in Year 3	
5	SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY	18.94	7,494.1	396	396	396	396	0.000	0.000
6	ROCKY MOUNTAIN	12.91	4,700.6	364	364	364	364	0.000	0.000
8	KOOTENAY LAKE	13.22	6,602.9	499	499	499	499	0.000	0.000
10	ARROW LAKES	1.32	856.9	649	619	619	504	0.064	0.316
19	REVELSTOKE	3.36	1,640.7	489	419	489	419	0.000	0.000
20	KOOTENAY-COLUMBIA	12.20	5,926.7	486	486	486	486	0.000	0.000
22	VERNON	22.04	9,966.6	452	452	452	452	0.000	0.000
23	CENTRAL OKANAGAN	52.17	22,115.7	424	424	424	424	0.000	0.000
27	CARIBOD-CHILCOTIN	20.16	8,719.1	432	432	432	432	0.000	0.000
28	QUESNEL	12.59	5,509.8	438	438	438	438	0.000	0.000
33	CHILLIWACK	26.56	10,699.2	403	403	403	403	0.000	0.000
34	ABBOTSFORD	31.76	17,999.3	567	567	567	504	0.000	3.951
35	LANGLEY	24.98	19,655.3	787	619	619	504	6.773	7.245
36	SURREY	97.33	55,004.1	565	565	565	504	0.000	11.810
37	DELTA	43.72	17,866.3	409	409	409	409	0.000	0.000
38	RICHMOND	47.94	23,956.5	500	500	500	500	0.000	0.000
39	VANCOUVER	73.54	58,891.5	801	619	619	504	21.600	21.708
40	NEW WESTMINSTER	15.00	5,797.9	387	387	387	387	0.000	0.000
41	BURNABY	28.60	23,840.5	834	619	619	504	9.915	8.788
42	MAPLE RIDGE-PITT MEADOWS	30.80	14,219.4	462	462	462	462	0.000	0.000
43	COQUITLAM	73.00	31,404.5	430	430	430	430	0.000	0.000
44	NORTH VANCOUVER	29.31	18,046.5	616	616	616	504	0.000	6.495
45	WEST VANCOUVER	12.11	6,419.6	530	530	530	504	0.000	0.631
46	SUNSHINE COAST	10.10	4,507.1	446	446	446	446	0.000	0.000
47	POWELL RIVER	5.90	3,321.9	563	563	563	504	0.000	0.691
48	HOWE SOUND	11.32	4,490.5	397	397	397	397	0.000	0.000
49	CENTRAL COAST	1.70	414.6	244	244	244	244	0.000	0.000
50	HAIDA GWAI/QUEEN CHARLOTTE	1.27	1,037.1	817	619	619	504	0.405	0.382
51	BOUNDARY	3.38	2,245.1	665	619	619	504	0.252	0.828
52	PRINCE RUPERT	9.84	3,893.7	396	396	396	396	0.000	0.000
53	OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN	7.22	3,334.9	462	462	462	462	0.000	0.000
54	BULKLEY VALLEY	8.05	3,122.2	388	388	388	388	0.000	0.000
57	PRINCE GEORGE	48.27	19,486.9	404	404	404	404	0.000	0.000
58	NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN	9.09	2,993.9	329	329	329	329	0.000	0.000
59	PEACE RIVER SOUTH	8.86	5,678.1	641	619	619	504	0.316	2.093
60	PEACE RIVER NORTH	10.71	5,535.4	517	517	517	504	0.000	0.275
61	GREATER VICTORIA	33.40	22,718.4	680	619	619	504	3.306	8.374
62	SOOKE	7.60	8,838.1	1,163	619	619	504	6.678	3.258
63	SAANICH	8.85	8,479.3	958	619	619	504	4.848	3.126
64	GULF ISLANDS	3.42	1,742.8	509	509	509	504	0.000	0.037
67	OKANAGAN SKAHA	15.45	7,889.6	511	511	511	504	0.000	0.204
68	NANAIMO-LADYSMITH	30.11	16,796.5	558	558	558	504	0.000	3.213
69	QUALICUM	10.20	5,340.1	518	518	518	504	0.000	0.295
70	ALBERNI	13.61	5,822.9	428	428	428	428	0.000	0.000
71	COMOX VALLEY	18.55	10,000.7	544	544	544	504	0.000	1.471
72	CAMPBELL RIVER	16.02	7,798.7	447	487	487	487	0.000	0.000
73	KAMLOOPS/THOMPSON	44.48	17,671.7	397	397	397	397	0.000	0.000
74	GOLD TRAIL	6.82	2,520.3	369	369	369	369	0.000	0.000
75	MISSION	16.03	7,217.4	450	450	450	450	0.000	0.000
78	FRASER-CASCADE	5.93	2,470.4	417	417	417	417	0.000	0.000
79	COWICHAN VALLEY	20.87	10,803.6	518	518	518	504	0.000	0.563
81	FORT NELSON	2.40	1,214.6	506	506	506	504	0.000	0.010
82	COAST MOUNTAINS	17.38	7,772.0	447	447	447	447	0.000	0.000
83	NORTH OKANAGAN-SHUSWAP	26.38	8,807.7	334	334	334	334	0.000	0.000
84	VANCOUVER ISLAND WEST	1.60	859.3	537	537	537	504	0.000	0.105
85	VANCOUVER ISLAND NORTH	6.37	2,864.8	450	450	450	450	0.000	0.000
87	STIKINE	0.00	384.2	NA	619	619	504	0.621	0.142
91	NECHAKO LAKES	8.01	6,142.6	767	619	619	504	1.913	2.264
92	NISGA'A	0.7	605.5	766	619	619	504	0.188	0.223
99	PROVINCE	1,153.62	603,974.1	524	499	499	465	57	88
<i>Using expected teacher salary of 55,236:</i>							\$3,141,768		

Response of the Ministry of Education to the Learning Assistance Survey 1998-99

by Susan Kennedy, Ministry of Education Special Programs Branch

Teachers, parents, and other interested individuals frequently ask questions about Learning Assistance and the Ministry of Education in the following areas: ministry policy and guidelines, ministry funding to school districts for learning assistance, and the findings of the recent review of learning assistance services.

Learning assistance and the School Act

Under the School Act, school boards are responsible for educational programs:

...a board must make available an educational program to all persons of school age resident in its district who enroll in schools in the district.. a board is responsible for evaluating all of the educational programs and services provided by the board... (Section 75)

As with all educational programs, school boards have the authority to plan and deliver learning assistance.

Learning assistance and ministry guidelines

The ministry outlines suggestions for learning assistance services in *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*:

Learning assistance services are school-based, non-categorical resource services designed to support classroom teachers and their students who have mild to moderate

difficulties in learning and adjustment. Learning assistance provides a coordinated and integrated set of support services which include school-based consultation, collaborative planning and co-ordination with the school based team, and instruction. It also includes assessment and evaluation to Level B (See ministry manual Section H7: Appendix B for information on qualifications of personnel carrying out assignments.)

Each school should establish procedures for teachers, students and parents to access learning assistance services. The school should also decide the focus for learning assistance services considering the nature of the needs and range of other school-based supports. Teachers assigned to learning assistance should have classroom experience and training specific to students with special needs.

The ministry guidelines suggest the skills and knowledge that learning assistance teachers should have and suggest qualifications include the following:

- a minimum of two years of successful classroom teaching experience
- university level introductory survey courses in teaching students with special needs and courses in assessment theory and practice strategies for teaching, modifying and adapting the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of students, and collaborative cons.

tation.

- courses in meeting the needs of students with specific exceptionalities such as learning disabilities, AD/HD, and gifted; using computer technology for the classroom; and meeting the diverse behavioural and emotional needs of students.

(*Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*, pp. D1-D4, contains the complete text of the ministry guidelines for learning assistance.)

Ministry of Education activities related to learning assistance

To support districts in providing learning assistance services, the Ministry of Education has undertaken several activities. The policy and procedures were revised in 1994-95 through a major public consultation in the province.

The resource handbooks distributed to all schools can be helpful tools in the work of learning assistance teachers as they collaborate with classroom teachers. The handbooks are also posted on the Special Education Website: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/btm>

- *Awareness of Chronic Health Conditions, Volume I and II*
- *Gifted Education: A Resource Guide for Teachers*
- *Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs: A Resource Guide to Support Teachers*
- *Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Teachers*
- *Students with Learning and Behavioural Differences: A Resource Guide for Teachers*
- *Teaching Students with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource Guide for Teachers*
- *Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects: A Resource Guide for Teachers*

Following the publication of the IEP document in 1995, the ministry's Special Programs Branch

provided training for teachers who would then have the capacity to do in-service sessions on IEP development in schools or districts.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education initiated a review of learning assistance services in public schools in British Columbia. The review was planned by a steering committee of education partners including representation from LATA and carried out by an independent education contractor. The entire report on the study was distributed to each school district and for a limited time placed on the Special Education Website. A summary of the findings of the review were published in the fall 1998 issue of *LATA Newsletter* (volume 4, number 1). The article describes the key issues that emerged from the surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted during the review.

Given the findings of the review, the ministry revised The Individual Education Plan Order first introduced in 1995. The requirement for an IEP for students with special needs who receive more than 15 hours of instruction (by other than the regular classroom teacher) was changed in 1998 to more than 25 hours. Since ministerial orders have the force of law, this means that IEPs are now required for all students with special needs receiving learning assistance that is over 25 hours per school year.

School districts or schools may elect to use the information in the review to help them examine their own practices. As the review has shown, practices across the province vary widely in caseloads, types of students served, and other variables such as learning assistance teacher training and effectiveness of planning processes to meet individual student needs. It is to be hoped that the information in the review report will support district efforts.

Ministry Funding of Learning Assistance

School districts receive supplementary funding for learning assistance as part of the annual special education targeted grant. Learning

Assistance funding is based on the number of pupils enrolled in the school district and the number of schools. The formula for the I 998-99 school year that is contained in the budget instructions to districts shows this formula:

\$132 for each full time student in the district
\$6916 for each Type 3 school; if the school has less than 100 students, this rate is prorated based on an enrolment of 100. (Type 3 schools are public schools. Independent schools have a different funding formula for special education.)

In the school year 1998-99, the ministry provided over \$81 million dollars to school

districts for learning assistance. Currently, school districts are required to show how they have planned to spend and then how they actually spent their targeted grants through their budget submissions to the Ministry.

When students with special needs have been assessed and identified in one of the categories for special education supplemental funding, they must be receiving additional services on a regular basis other than learning assistance. This is described in the Special Education Manual and in the instructions for 1701 form for student data collection, which goes to each school every school year.

*Schools will
successfully nurture
children to the
extent that they
nurture the
development of
teachers.*

Sarnson, 1992

Team To Review Special Education in B.C.

Ministry of Education
March 22, 1999

Vancouver—How well B.C. schools are addressing the needs of children with special needs will be examined by a provincial review, Education Minister Paul Ramsey announced today.

"We've been working with the existing special education policy for approximately five years now. It is time to take a look at how well our schools are integrating children into the classroom, and to see if there are ways to improve," Ramsey said.

"This review will look at everything from how we deliver service to students to how special education is funded and will report to me by the end of this year with recommendations.

Ramsey said the review will be co-chaired by Linda Siegel, who holds the Dorothy Lam Chair in Special Education at the University of B.C., and Paul Pallan, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, Policy and Programs, who is responsible for special education within the ministry.

The review team will solicit submissions from educators, parents and the public on how special education in B.C. schools can be improved.

The team will examine the following:

- how special education policy is being implemented
- how resources are being used, and if they're being spent effectively
- how effective existing programs are for students with special needs, and how those programs can be improved
- what accountability system exists for special education
- what, if any, barriers to improvement exist.

"We spend more than \$400 million annually to support our special education students," Ramsey said. "This is an important area, and one where we want to be sure we're doing the best job we can."

The review team will begin its work on April 15 and will accept submissions until June 30. Submissions will be posted on a ministry website over the summer, with regional meetings to be held with those who submit briefs in the fall 1999. The team's final report is due to the minister by December 31. Members of the public wishing to get more information to make submissions should call 1-800-784-0055.

For information, contact:

Ministry of Education
Communications Branch
(250) 356-5963

Sandy Martin
Communications Branch
Ministry of Education
(250) 356-7810
F: (250) 356-5945
sandra.martin@gems7.gov.bc.ca

Special Education "Teacher in a Box"

by Larry Kuehn, director, BCTF Research and Technology

This is the 10th anniversary of the adoption of integration of students with special needs as the official policy of British Columbia schools, flowing from the introduction of the School Act in 1989. The "new" guidelines on how integration is supposed to be carried out are now not so new, having been in place for about five years. It is time to take stock, to see what is working well and what needs some fixing.

The BCTF's Annual General Meeting adopted a motion calling for such a review. At about the same time, the deputy minister announced that the ministry would conduct a special education review. However, rather than being done by a committee that includes teachers, the job has been assigned to a UBC professor, Linda Siegel, and Associate Deputy Minister Paul Pallan.

Siegel has conducted a number of special education studies in B.C. including looking at issues of ESL students with special needs. Pallan chaired the committee that developed the current special education guidelines.



Larry Kuehn (centre), guest presenter from BCTF, at our LATA Executive meeting in 1995, informing us on the implications of integration. The following article indicates that the issue is still of concern in 1999.

The terms of reference given the review team include:

- How special education policy is being implemented
- How resources are being used and if they're being spent effectively
- How effective existing programs are for students with special needs, and how those programs can be improved
- What accountability system exists for special education
- What, if any, barriers to improvement exist

The BCTF Annual Meeting identified some issues that are of particular concern, to teachers, and that it wants on the agenda for the review:

- Consideration of student with needs, but who do not meet existing designation criteria. Should these students have their need met through learning assistance, or should they receive designated funding?
- Adequacy of resources, funding and programs.

If you read this newsletter then put it aside without

taking some action to get your views heard, you will probably have missed your chance. The process adopted calls for anyone interested to get their views into the review team by the end of June. Those who have made submissions will then have an opportunity to talk with the review team after school starts again in the fall.

The BCTF is inviting members to have their views heard. Several options are open to you:

- Work with your local in developing a brief that outlines your views.
- Respond to survey questions from the BCTF that will help to guide development of a BCTF brief.
- Urge your PSA and your local specialist association, if one is organized, to get your views to the local and the BCTE

You should also watch for the impact of another policy change recently announced by the ministry. Starting in September of 1999, each student who is designated as high incidence for funding purposes will have to be identified on Form 1701. That is the form that is used as the basis for accounting to the ministry for how many students with special needs will be funded. Currently, boards are only required to indicate the number of high incidence students in each school, not the names of each.

Implications of this new level of identification are mixed. It will be much harder for administrators or boards to hide the information on funding from teachers or the public. However, it may lead to a view of funding that ties it directly to each student rather than providing funding for programs that meet needs on a broad basis.

If these issues haven't gotten you alert yet, consider this. A high-tech company has produced software "that acts as an electronic remedial reading

teacher." The person installing the software in an Ontario school calls it "a special education teacher in a box."

It is perhaps indicative that the announcement was carried on the business pages of *The Financial Post*, not on education publication. Further, it was funded by the Ontario government, whose former minister of education expressed the hope that one day most teachers could be replaced by computer technology.

The Ministry of Education
is taking a look at
**Special Education Needs
in the Province of B.C.**

**News from the
Ministry of Education
Program Standards &
Education Resources Branch
(conversation with Elaine McNeary)**

Background...

In July 1997, a report entitled "Addressing Student Differences: Next Steps" was distributed to schools for information. This report contained a series of recommendations prepared by a working group that was formed by the ministry. The report focused on the estimated 20% of students who are not successful in school. It dealt specifically with students in the 'have not been and may not ever be

identified as having a special need' but who for one reason or another are not acquiring important literacy skills and are performing poorly in school. These are the students that learning assistance teachers are often working with. The ministry is acting on a number of recommendations in the report.

Latest information is that "Addressing Student Differences" is on hold until the ministry can produce a booklet of performance standards in reading/writing for Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, numeracy, citizenship, and social responsibility for Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. Following that, the ministry intends to pursue "Addressing Student Differences" recommendations. For updated information, fax Elaine McNear, (250) 356-2316.

Victoria investigates special education spending in district

by Mike O'Keeffe
staff reporter,
Alberni Valley Times

The Ministry of Education wants to know how money for special education is being spent in School District 70.

A research team will embark on a tour of the province on April 15 and report back to the ministry by Dec. 15. Local officials have plenty to tell the government, but Schools Superintendent. Harry Janzen

isn't sure what their submission will be.

"I don't have an opinion yet," he said. "We need to see the (team's) terms of reference."

Mr. Janzen said he will consult support staff and other District employees in preparation for the review. School trustees have been calling for increases

in special-needs funding. But Mr. Janzen said the team isn't harbinger of new funding.

"I don't think they're looking at how special education is being funded," he said. "They're looking at how it is being offered. We've already made our wishes for more funding known through the B.C. School Trustees Association."

Special education is a growing concern in District 70, which has a disproportionate number of special-needs students. A steady decline in enrolment has led to reduced overall funding for programs.

The review team will ask teachers, parents, and the public how the ministry can improve special education in B.C. The government, which spends \$400 million annually on special needs, wants to know: how special education is being implemented; how resources are being used, and if they're being spent effectively; how effective existing programs are for students with special needs, and how those programs can be improved; what accountability systems exist for special education; and what, if any, barriers to improvement exist.

Did you know?

News from Anita Chapman, BCTF



NEWS
FLASH

Accreditation

Have you been involved in the workload of accreditation at your school this year?

BCTF's view is that they realize schools must be involved in goal setting and school evaluation is an important activity but the present accreditation is too onerous. BCTF is developing a school self-evaluation plan as an alternative to school accreditation. They hope to negotiate with the ministry so that the schools that pilot this plan will be exempt from school accreditation by the ministry. Watch for further information on this...

Guidelines for Student Reporting K-12

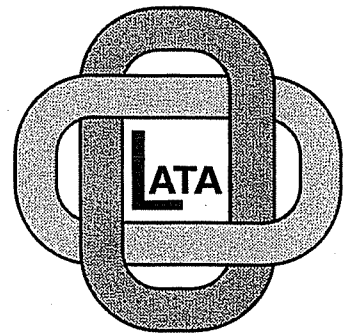
This September '94 education plan document in the section entitled "Reports for Students with Special Needs" states that "Where a professional support person other than the classroom teacher is responsible for providing some portion of the stu-

dent's educational program (e.g., speech pathologist, orientation and mobility instructors etc.), those persons should provide written reports on the student's progress for inclusion with the report of the classroom teacher."

PLAP Changes

Re. PLAP testing recently administered May 3-7, 1999 which most of the students in Grades 4-7 took in reading, writing, numeracy, and problem solving.

Unlike May 1998, there will be no individual student results and no school by school results. There will be a provincial report and district results. BCTF is lobbying hard for changes to PLAP that would make the whole process more meaningful and useful.



Resources

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More than 75 resource documents are available from the ministry. These excellent and informational booklets can be ordered for a nominal fee (many around the \$2-\$3 mark). These should be on the shelves of every LAT in the province!

**A partial list follows, but for a complete "List of Resource Documents,"
fax (250) 952-4442.**

Ministry of Education

Resource Guides—How To Order

The September /October 1995 issue of *B. C. Education News* released the following information: "With assistance from several teachers in B. C. and Alberta, the Special Education Branch has developed a variety of resource materials to help classroom teachers understand and work with students who have special needs." Following are descriptions of the guides:

- a. **Awareness of Chronic Health Conditions: What the Teacher Needs To Know (1995)**
Information includes definitions, recognition signs, classroom strategies, and contacts for more information. Conditions include: allergies, Asperger's disorder, asthma, attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, autism, cerebral palsy, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, diabetes, Down's syndrome, epilepsy, fetal alcohol syndrome effects, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, and Tourette's syndrome.
Order from catalogue #RB0057
- b. **Gifted Students: A Resource Guide To Support Classroom Teachers (1995)**
Topics include programming, identifying, developing a student profile, gifted learners in the classroom and strategies such as:
 - Content-acceleration, telescoping, compacting, independent study, tiered assignments, learning centres and curricular models
 - Process-higher level thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and developing research skills
 - Products—representing knowledge and reaching the audience
 - Learning environment—physical, social, emotional, study of famous people, bibliotherapy, and grouping for instructionAppendices include programming options, teacher planning guide, IEP forms and samples, brilliant behaviours, and class assessment.
Order from catalogue #RB0050
- c. **Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf Students: A Resource Guide To Support Classroom Teachers (1994)**
Topics include preparing to teach students who are hard-of-hearing or deaf, sample questions to a parents/guardians during the first interview, student interviews, tip sheet for classroom adaptation, communication tip sheets, student tip sheet and trouble shooting tip sheets for equipment.
Order from Catalogue #RB0053
- d. **Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs: A Resource Guide To Support Classroom Teachers (1996)**
Topics include all facets of the IEP process: development, the IEP meeting, writing, implementing, and reviewing the IEP. Also discusses reports for students with special needs. Appendices include transition planning and sample forms and IEP examples.
Order from catalogue #RB0058
- e. **Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: A Resource Guide To Support Classroom Teachers**
Order from catalogue #RB0059.
- f. **Students with Visual Impairments: A Resource Guide To Support Classroom Teachers (1994)**
Topics include assessment of vision, educational implications, needs of students, expectations, sample questions to ask the parents/guardians, functional vision, student interviews, orientation

and mobility, safety and environment and teaching tips-planning, assessment, print and Braille.

Order from catalogue #RB0047

g. Students with Intellectual Disabilities: Resource Guide To Support Classroom Teachers (1995)

This resource guide contains practical suggestions for classroom teachers and includes information about:

- the nature of intellectual disabilities
- preparing to teach students and sources of support
- involvement in transitions and changes that will occur K-12 and beyond
- tips for teachers covering a wide range of topics
- case studies, and
- resources and references

Order from catalogue #RB0060

h. Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioural Differences: A Resource Guide for Teachers (1996)

Designed to support teachers as they strive to help students with learning and behavioural difficulties succeed in the classroom. The introduction features information on in-class intervention, referrals, and communication with parents. Academic considerations for both elementary and secondary and behavioural considerations are also included.

Order from catalogue #RB0063

The latest releases

i. Teaching Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder:

A Resource Guide for Teachers

Provides teachers with an understanding of the needs of students with AD/HD. The guide contains common characteristics of students with this disorder and suggested strategies to support them in school. Included are case studies and examples of plans to provide support for students in both elementary and secondary settings.

Order # RB0070

**j. Responding to Critical Incidents:
A Resource Guide for Schools**

Intended to assist schools in developing protocols for responding to critical incidents. It focuses on proactive plans to deal with the traumatic after-effects of a critical incident which affect some or all members of a school community. It includes steps to be taken and materials to help school staff understand and carry out their support functions after a crisis.

Order # RB0071

k. Adapted Workspaces for Students with Special Needs: A Resource Guide for Planning

Provides planning advice to ensure that desks, chairs, and other furniture for students with physical needs enhance the learning and participation of the student. A good guide for collaboration among various therapeutic and educational specialists responsible for workspaces.

Order # RB0073

**l. Awareness of Chronic Health Conditions:
what the Teacher
Needs to Know—Part 2**

Like Part 1 of this series, Part 2 is a document to support teachers in understanding and management of chronic health conditions. Includes definitions, recognition signs, classroom strategies, and contacts for more information. Conditions include AIDS, Cancer, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Eating Disorders, Rett Syndrome, Traumatic Brain Injury, Williams Syndrome.

Order #RB0072

**m. ESL Learners: Guide for Specialist Teachers
Order #RB0075**

n. Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs

Order #RB0061

On-line Documents

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs.htm

- Awareness of Chronic Health Conditions
- Gifted Education: A Resource Guide for Teachers
- Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs
- Parent's Guide to Individual Education Planning Teaching
- A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines
- Responding To Critical Incidents: A Resource Guide for Schools
- Review of Learning Assistance Services Report, 1997, by Desharnais & Associates
- Students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource Guide for Teachers
- Students with Hearing Loss: A Resource Guide To Support Classroom Teachers
- Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Teachers
- Students with Visual Impairments
- Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects: A Resource Guide for Teachers
- Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioural Differences: A Resource Guide for Teachers

Last update: September 1998

Novels-on-Tape

by **Brewood Enterprises Ltd.**
30 - 31450 Spur Avenue
Abbotsford, BC
V2T 5M3
Phone/Fax: (604) 852-1803

These novels on tape were originally first made in the early 1980s at the request of learning assistance teachers who needed this format for children they were working with. Brewood Enterprises has since added to its list of resources and has had some of the

original books re-read onto tape. Brewood has various readers working to make this endeavour an on-going valuable resource for teachers.

By phoning or faxing for the list of novels on tape, you will receive the list of over 150 titles for Grades 4 to 12. Many of the common novels used in most school districts have been recorded onto audio cassette. Sets of cassettes may be purchased in binders for easy storage.

Great current events resources for LAT students and/or whole class: newspaper and activity sheets

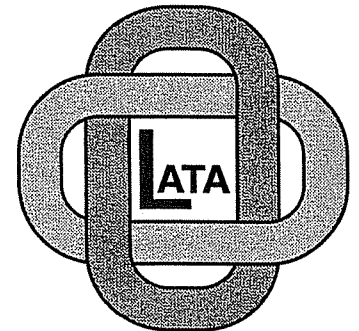
LesPlan

Educational Services Ltd.
638 Lambie Drive
Victoria, BC
V8Z 2L8
(250) 881-1964
F: (250) 881-1978

Another great current affairs resource especially for those students who need a simplified reading level newspaper and accompanying activity sheet for students published monthly

The Westcoast Reader

Capilano college
2055 Purcell way
North Vancouver, BC
V7J 3H5
(604) 984-1756
F: (604) 984-1718
ynoormoh@capcollege.bc.ca



Adapted/Modified Materials

Charlie Naylor, at the BCTF, has undertaken a monumental task in identifying hundreds of adapted and modified materials for elementary and secondary levels that can be used in the classroom with the students who need their program or specific subject areas adapted or modified to succeed. So why reinvent the wheel and spend countless of your precious hours developing what has already been done by some task-oriented colleague before you?

There are two ways to access this material:

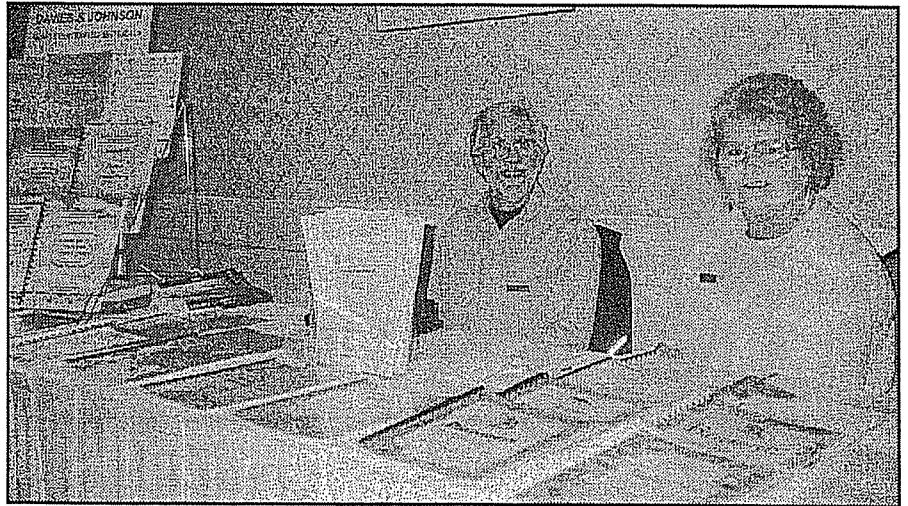
1. Search electronically:
www.bctf.bc.ca
 - a. Go to the database on the BCTF home page
 - b. Click on "Search"
 - c. BCTF Database Search—and you will get the listing of materials available

2. Now if you are the computer-shy or suspicious type, you may purchase the 80-page Catalogue of Modified & Adapted Materials, for \$6 from the BCTF Lesson Aids Service. Ask for Resource LA 9912. If you wish to speak directly to Charlie Naylor, you may phone him at 871-2254 or phone the

1-800 number at BCTF and ask for local 2254. He will gladly answer any of your questions.

adapted or modified materials to the BCTF Database, Charlie Naylor would welcome your call.

If you want to add your own



Book Publishers Display of Excellent Materials for LATs and Resource Rooms

Order a catalogue from Adapted and Modified Materials, Davies and Johnson Associates Ltd., 1157 Videl Street, White Rock, BC V4B 3T4, (604) 531-6742, F: (604) 531-6792, rdavies@direct.ca

If you tell me who your heroes are, I can tell you how you will turn out. Having right heroes will take you right through life.

Yogi Bera

Resources

Suggested by: Heather Mallory, LAT, Sproat Elementary School, SD 70, Port Alberni

The Art of Facilitation: How To Create Group Synergy, by Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor
Published by: Fisher Books, 1992, Tuscon, AZ.
Available from Training Associates
(604) 732-4552
F: (604) 738-4080
Appropriate for teachers teaching any grade level. Price: \$26

This excellent, easy-to-read book, provides access to the source of group empowerment and shows how to create this with ease. The book is in four parts:
Part 1 draws on the co-operative beliefs and values underlying facilitation and examines in depth the art of intervention, which is the working mode of the facilitator.

Part 2 is a toolkit of facilitative designs and processes, including a facilitation training program.

Part 3 provides a personal perspective on facilitation through four interviews, one with each of the three authors and the fourth with John Heron, a leading facilitator with whom all the authors have studied.

Part 4 provides some additional resources.

Secondary Resource

Transitions to Post-Secondary, a 47-minute video, is for students with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorder at the senior secondary levels. The emphasis is on self-advocacy and transition planning for students with unique learning profiles. Eight students deliver these messages in an interview format. The complete instructional curriculum includes a discussion guide, a handbook and student work guide. Although intended for a student audience, it is equally valuable for instructors, administrators,

parents, and other individuals who play a significant role in the life of a student with a learning disability and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Eaton Coull Learning Group, Ltd.
3541 West 16th Avenue,
Vancouver, BC
V6R 3C2
(604) 734-5588 or 1-800-933-4063
F: (604) 734-5510
info@eclg.com
www.eclg.com

Language Arts & Mathematics Handbooks for Parents (K-7)

Author: Dr. Alan Taylor,
Phone: (604) 434-6315
Fax: (604) 434-7830
Co-Authors: Louise Corless & Lynn Popoff,

Helping your child to greater success in language arts & mathematics with games and family activities linked to learning outcomes, steps for tutoring, relevant applications to everyday life, problem solving & test taking, sample questions & answers for each outcome, suggestions to encourage readers and writers etc.

Fax or phone the author for more details

LATA Spring Conference

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LATA conferences are too good to miss! Once again this was proven true.

Registration requests far exceeded the registration limit!

A word of caution for the future:

Register early!

Reflections from our LATA Spring Conference

"An In-Depth Look at Reading" was the theme of LATA's 1999 Spring Conference held, once again, at the Grand Hotel on the shores of the beautiful Lake Okanagan, in Kelowna, B.C.

Dr. Steve Truch, Ph.D., director of The Reading Foundation, in Calgary, Alberta, was well received by an audience of over 150 classroom and learning assistance teachers.

Some of his statements follow:

"In the last five years, I have come to believe that we have missed something essential and that we are very much closer to establishing what that 'something' is... Five years ago, I came across a research article by Bradley and Bryant that changed the picture for me most dramatically... Their work showed, for the first time, that the 'phonics' difficulties many people have (and which are now clearly symptoms in my mind) start at a more basic pre-phonics level. The study led me to many more studies, all of which were consistent with Bradley and



Dr. Steve Truch, with attendees at the conference: (L-R): Sharon Walls, Leslie MacKay, and Jody Lien.

Bryant's basic finding. That started me on a world-wide search to find programs and techniques that taught what I call 'phonemic processing'."

Dr. Truch's 68-page handout included many helpful exercises, assessment tools and background information surrounding his topic. A sampling of the handout follows, as well as a few pictures that capture the spirit of the captivating day together:

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Two decades of research have now document that phonological awareness is an extremely important pre-reading skill. Children with the skill are more likely to learn to read, and spell, with ease. We no longer have to wait for student failure to begin our remediation—we can begin training the skill in regular classrooms, as an integral part of the daily curriculum.

Part I—Awareness of Rhyme

1. *"Who has a name that rhymes with...?"*
2. *Odd Word Out*
Students sit in groups of three and each is given a picture of an item and the group has to figure out whose picture does not belong: e.g., SUN-GUN-CUP.

Teacher first demonstrates the task orally without pictures.

3. *"A Hunting We Will Go"*
Teacher sings song and holds up pictures of the animals and has students guess the rhyming word. (Teacher first shows the pictures and has students name them to make sure they are recognizable). Students are divided into two groups—boys and girls with one group saying the name of the animal and the other group doing the second part: e.g., "We'll catch a FOX and put him in a... BOX."
4. *Koosb-Ball Toss*
This is a rhyming word generation exercise, which is harder than just rhyme recognition and prediction. Teacher first demonstrates with a student who can do it. Teacher says a word and throws the ball to any student, student establishes eye contact with another student, comes up with a rhyming word and then throws the ball to that student, and so forth.

Part II—Awareness of Syllables

1. *Duck-Duck-Goose*
Teach the task by first naming the pictures, then clapping the syllables, and counting them out. For example, one-two-three-four Le-o-nar-do, with the entire group. Use some indication for the number of syllables in the word, for example, a card that has coloured stickers corresponding to the number of syllables in the word.

Students sit in a circle and the child who is "it" taps the heads of children lightly and says one syllable at a time. When student wants someone to run after him/her, he/she says the entire word. For example, SU-PER-MAN; SU-PER-MAN; SU-PER-MAN, SUPERMAN! and the child tapped last has to get up and run to catch "it."

2. *"If You're Happy and You Know It..."*
Based on the song "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands...stomp your feet...shout it out...do all three." During this

activity, the students will say the word *happy* as they clap and stomp. Other words can be substituted on a daily basis. The class can be divided into sections to allow for more individual attention.

Part III—Awareness of Phonemes

1. *Odd Word Out*
Children are seated in small groups, and each is given a picture. They have to determine which picture in their group does not belong, i.e., which word starts with a different sound. Teacher teaches the task first with the pictures of VACUUM CLEANER, FIRE, and FAN. (Sounds that are difficult to discriminate were chosen on purpose).

Children then work within their group to find the odd word. The students with the odd word come up to the front of the class and are arranged by teacher in a specific order to a word" (but only with pictures at this stage of the game). For this example, the odd sounds might be /s/, /t/, /o/, and /p/ (using pictures for sun, turtle, octopus and penny). Students are arranged to "spell out" the words STOP, SPOT, POT, POTS, TOP, TOPS. As a follow-up activity, each group has a chance to guess a new arrangement. Letter choice would change depending on sounds the class is learning. For example, this class would do this activity after they knew their consonants and were working on short vowels.

2. *Duck-Duck-Goose with Phonemes*
The teacher uses words with some challenging sounds that the students cannot yet represent in writing. For example, the diphthong /ou/, as in the word COUCH or a consonant blend as in the word CLOCK. The number of phonemes in the word is indicated with a card that has the corresponding number of stickers on it. The task can be individualized to a degree by giving the more advanced student a challenging word and a weaker student a CVC

word with an easier vowel.

3. *"Who Stole the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?"*
This familiar game is played with a "small" variation, students say the name of the student by deleting the first sound (which is not that easy to do with names that start with a vowel sound).

In preparation for the game, the teacher demonstrates deleting a first sound in a name.

What is your name?

Joey.

O-wee?

No, Joey.

O-wee!

No, Joey.

What am I leaving out if I say "O-wee"?

The "J."

What sound does the "J" make?

(Students initially will say what letter was deleted. The focus is, however, on the sound that is being deleted and not the letter name).

Have a cookie jar with cookies in it, and before passing the jar, tell children that after they have their turn, they can take a cookie. Having a hand drum adds a rhythmic quality to the activity.

4. *Willoughby Wallaby Wee*

In this delightful song, the first sound of a student's name is substituted with a /w/. For example, JUSTIN becomes WUSTIN; DANNY becomes WANNY; JENNIFER becomes WENNIIFER. For names that begin with a vowel, add a /w/ at the beginning. For example, ANN becomes WANN and ELLEN becomes WELLEN.

Have a stuffed elephant for the students to pass on as they sing the words "Willoughby... an elephant sat on me." Use a kazoo for a musical "interlude."

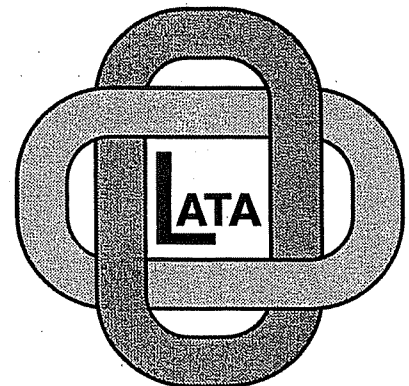
5. *"The Blob"*

This activity is the most advanced. It requires students to first identify the first sound in their name and then blend it with another name that remains constant. For example, if the teacher is always ANN then Mary will become MANN, and Robert will become RANN. For children whose names start with a vowel, the teacher will have to have a name that starts with a consonant.

Source: Dr. Oma Lenchner
Stem Center for Language and Learning
81 West Canal Street
Winooski, VT 05404
(802) 655-2332

*The reasonable man
adapts to the world. The
unreasonable man adapts
the world to him.
Therefore, all progress
depends on the
unreasonable man.*

Geo. Bernard Shaw



Guidelines for Training Phonological Awareness in the Classroom

1. Be aware of the sequence of development of phonological awareness
word-rhyme-syllable-phoneme
recognition versus production
types of sounds
type of operation
2. Be aware of student's developmental level in terms of task demands.
3. Focus initially on sounds, without actually using letters.
4. Design your activity to meet different levels in the classroom.
5. Design the activity so that a maximal number of students are involved at any one time.
6. Incorporate rhythm, music and physical activity into your exercise.
7. Design the activity so that there is closure.
8. Use familiar activities/songs.
9. Determine a clear and simple turn-taking procedure.
10. Use few words when giving instructions and model the activity rather than speak about it.
11. Use visual stimuli as much as possible rather than just relying on listening skills.
12. Show the number of syllables (or phonemes) when doing segmentation tasks.
13. Carefully choose the words you use for exercise.
14. Emphasize letter sounds, rather than letter names (when letters are used).
15. Make sure you are having fun!

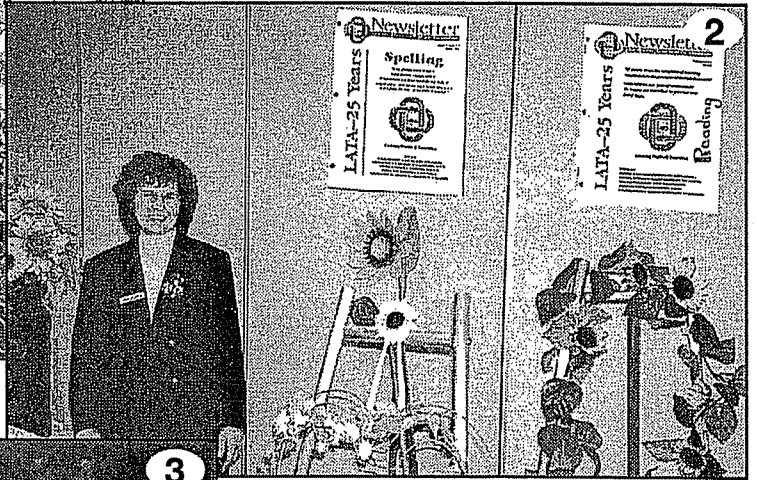
PHONEMIC PROCESSING

Hierarchy of Difficulty from Least to Most Difficult (Yopp)

Poorer
indicators

1. Rhyme—Recognition of whether or not two words rhyme.
2. Auditory discrimination (Wepman)—Determines whether or not the child can recognize that two words fine contrasts are the same or different.
3. Phonemic Blending (Roswell-Chall)—blending sounds into words:
 - a. Two-phoneme words; e.g., /a/-/t/
 - b. Three- or four-phoneme words, two parts; e.g., st-ep, f-at
 - c. Three- or four-phoneme words, three parts; e.g., c-a-t, d-e-s-k
4. Sound Isolation—child is given a word (e.g., *Jack*) and asked to state the *sound* it begins with. (Final, medial, end positions.)
5. Phoneme Counting (Lieberman)—Child is given one-, two-, or three-segment utterances and asked to rap with a pencil.
6. Phoneme Segmentation (Yopp-Singer)—Child is given a word and asked to break it apart into phonemes; e.g., old.
7. Phoneme Segmentation (Goldstein); e.g., d-o-g, ow-l. Examiner says the word in a segmented fashion. Places a checker in a as he says each phoneme. Then asked: "What word do you get when you say d-o-g together?"

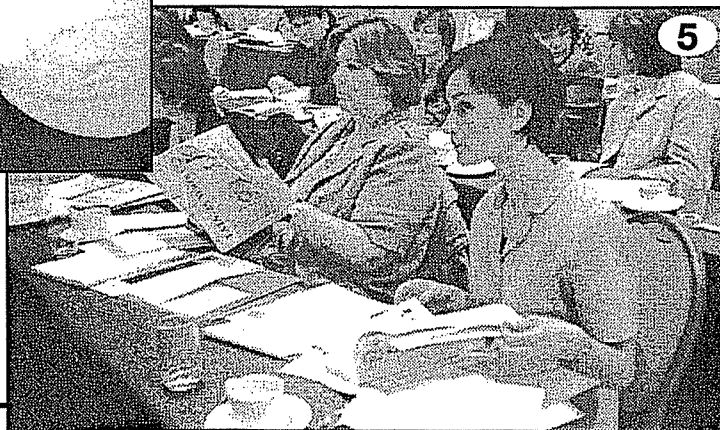
Then child is given the word (and pictures) and asked to segment using and checkers.
8. Phoneme Deletion (Rosner's TAAS); e.g., Say cow. Now say it without the /k/ sound.
9. Phoneme Deletion (Bruce's Word Analysis Test)—30 words. Child is asked what word is left if /t/ is taken away from the middle of the word *stand*.



1. Sharon Heinrich and Marion Hurd, ready for the registrants to arrive. It was a sunny day, with sunflowers galore...

2. The *LATA Newsletter* table created great interest for many.

3. A popular publishers table at the LATA Conference was "Learn-a-Lot Publications." Jan McDonald (right) has developed unique and intriguingly effective workbooks and dynamic board games with many reproducible activities. Fax (604) 527-7784.



4 & 5. Many were seen thumbing the *LATA newsletters* at the conference.

Reminder



Heather Mallory, SD 70, LATA
Executive Conference Chairperson



Next LATA Conference

October 21 & 22, 1999

SPEAKER: Dr. Anita DeBoer

- TOPIC** Working Together—Tools for Collaborative Teaching A practical two-day intensive workshop designed to assist teachers in planning for effective collaborative teaching. Dr. DeBoer will discuss how to design and deliver effective instruction through collaborative teaching. She will present tools that enable teachers to develop units of instruction, assess performance, present effective lessons, utilize strategies for enhanced learning, and modify curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The goal will be to move from a mindset of how do we fix the students so that they will fit in the class to how do we fix (adapt) the class so that all students can experience high levels of success.
- AUDIENCE** Regular and special education teachers for K-12
- The “how-to” for implementing appropriate programming for all students within the regular classroom settings is a pertinent topic to all teachers.
- LOCATION** Richmond inn, Richmond, B.C.
- LIMIT** 250—Register early as this is a popular conference!
- REGISTRAR** Lynda Mawer
8614 Foster Road
Vernon, BC V1H 1C9
- BROCHURES** Fax: (250) 558-1065

Take Note, All Learning Assistance Teachers in B.C.

To: Superintendents of Schools
Directors of Instruction: Special Education
and all Learning Assistance Teachers.

From: Marion Hurd, president, Learning Assistance Teachers' Association of B.C. (LATA)

Re: Professional Development Opportunity
Collaborative Consultation with Anita DeBoer

Date: April 1999 (Letter sent out in April)

Anita DeBoer will be the guest presenter at the two-day Fall LATA Conference, on Thursday, October 21 and Friday, October 22, 1999 (which is the province-wide Pro-D day). The conference will be held at the Richmond Inn in Richmond, B. C.

Anita is a speaker, an author, and a professional development facilitator/teacher in the areas of collaboration, consultation, co-teaching, communication skills, coaching, conflict management, change, and effective instructional practices.

During this practical two-day intensive workshop, regular and special education teachers (K-12) will learn the how-tos for implementing appropriate programming for all students within the regular classroom setting. Dr. DeBoer will discuss how to design and deliver effective instruction through collaborative teaching. She will present tools that enable teachers to develop units of instruction, assess performance, present effective lessons, utilize strategies for enhanced learning and modify curriculum, instruction and assessment. The goal will be to move from a mindset of How do we fix the students so that they will fit in the class? to How do we fix (adapt) the class so that all students can experience high levels of success?

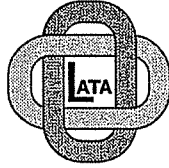
As the diversity of students with unique needs increases, the most frequently asked question by teachers is, "How do we/I adapt the curriculum, instruction and evaluation for all students in the classroom?"

The LATA Executive would like to encourage a team of a regular classroom teacher and a Learning Assistance Teacher to attend the conference and take some ideas back to their district about collaborative teaching. Hopefully, teams will be committed to pursuing and implementing creative options for better meeting the needs of all students within the general education classroom setting.

The conference can accommodate 250 participants, and pre-registration is required. The brochures will be out to districts by the first week of May 1999. The registrar is Lynda Mawer, fax (250) 558-1065.

The LATA Executive hopes that districts will be able to access implementation funds or offer funding categories to assist participants to attend this timely conference.

LATA Fall Conference Registration Form



Learning Assistance Teachers' Association

Fall Conference 1999

WORKING TOGETHER

Strategies and Tools for Collaborative Teaching

with **Dr. Anita DeBoer**

speaker, author, consultant
Florida

October 21-22, 1999
Thursday and Friday

Richmond
Richmond Inn Hotel

*Presented by the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association of the BCTF
and the Ministry of Education*

Overview of the Conference

The question today is not, "Should we collaborate with our colleagues?" but rather, "How do we collaborate to achieve success for ALL students in our classes?" Our success with collaborative teaching is based upon two critical areas: (1) our collaborative (human relationships) skills, tools, and strategies, and (2) our teaching skills, tools, and strategies. This conference will focus primarily on the former.

Objectives of the Conference

Participants in this conference will be able to:

1. Explain and employ three basic structures for collaborating effectively.
2. Identify the essential elements for successful collaboration.
3. Describe and use strategies for facilitating colleagues (and supporting ourselves) when changing from the old way (working in isolation) to a new way of delivering services to students.
4. Develop and use strategies for building trust with colleagues.
5. Use and self-evaluate communication skills when collaborating with colleagues.
6. Develop and use strategies for collegial problem solving.
7. Develop and use strategies for evaluating their collaborative efforts.

Register before September 15, and **SAVE MONEY**

Conference Fee:

Limited pre-registration only!

BCTF Members

\$195 Postmarked on or before September 15, 1999

\$235 Postmarked after September 15, 1999

Non-BCTF Members

\$225 Postmarked on or before September 15, 1999

\$265 Postmarked after September 15, 1999

Hotel Accommodation

The Richmond Inn

7551 Westminster Hwy., Richmond

1-800-663-0299

F: (604) 278-1062

Single/Double: \$99

Parking not included

Request the LATA Conference rate

**No registration at the door.
No registration without payment.**

Send this form with payment to:

Lynda Mawer
8614 Foster Road
Vernon, BC
V1H 1C9

LATA Fall Conference 1999 Registration Form

Limited Pre-Registration

Register early to ensure a place!

- No registration at the door
- No registration without payment
- No post-dated cheques and no faxed registration
- Enclose cheque or money order payable to LATA
- Refunds subject to a \$50 cancellation fee
- Confirmation of registration will be faxed to you
- Receipts will be issued at the conference
- Register early, as registration is limited
- For program information, fax (250) 558-1065

SIN _____

(Required by BCTF to process membership)

Name _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ Postal code _____

SD _____ School _____

School fax (_____) _____

Home phone (_____) _____

Introducing

Dr. Anita DeBoer

Anita DeBoer is a speaker, an author, and a professional development facilitator/teacher in the areas of effective instructional practices, collaboration, consultation, co-teaching, conflict management, communication skills, coaching, and change. Anita travels extensively throughout North America and overseas teaching and studying in these areas. She is a former university professor, consulting teacher, general education teacher, special education teacher (students with learning disabilities, behavioural disabilities).

Dr. DeBoer has written a book, a precursor to *Working Together*, entitled *The Art of Consulting*, authored several articles related to collaboration, co-produced videos on collaborative problem solving and collaborative teaching, and is currently co-authoring a book on strategies and tools for collaborative teaching. Anita has developed many tools that make collaborative efforts more efficient and effective for teachers.

Anita lives in Florida, and her interests include writing, speaking, politics, art, flower gardening, downhill skiing, inline skating, her husband, Gerry, and her daughter, Carolyn.



Sharon Heinrich

SD 57 Prince George
LATA Secretary and
Scholarship

General

1. Copies of document should be sent, NOT originals.
2. Three scholarships of \$500 each are available each year. Scholarships/Innovation Grants will be awarded only once to an applicant. They are non-renewable.
3. Acceptance would include permission to publicize the award and in the case of the grant, an article is to be presented in the *LATA Newsletter/Journal*.
4. Applicant may attend accredited university/institution of his/her choice.
5. Granting of the scholarship award will be contingent upon acceptance into and completion of designated course(s). Receipt of course(s) registration must be presented. Granting of the Innovation Award will be contingent upon completion of project.
6. Applications should be addressed to Sharon Heinrich (see application) and must be received on or before June 16, 1999.

Criteria for Awarding This Scholarship/Innovation Grant

1. All applicants for Scholarship/Innovation Award must complete this form.
2. British Columbia residents only will be considered for this award.
3. First priority will be given to LATA members, with length and activity of service as contingent factors. These members would include:
 - a) Currently practising learning assistance teachers
 - b) Classroom teachers preparing for integration and inclusion, and
 - c) Graduate and undergraduate students preparing to enter the learning assistance field.
4. Preference will be given to those taking learning assistance and appropriate special education courses for credit (see ministry guidelines), then summer learning assistance and appropriate special education institutes or workshops. Innovation projects should slant toward accommodating LA students in the regular classroom or LA room.
5. Demonstrated financial need will be a consideration.

Please photocopy this information and the application for anyone who might be interested.

LATA Scholarship/Innovation Grant Application Form

Last name _____

First name _____

Address _____

Postal code _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

LATA member since _____

LATA activity _____

Currently practising LA teacher? _____ School district no. _____

School _____

Currently practising teacher? _____ School district no. _____

School _____

Currently a student enrolled at _____

I will attend (university/institution) _____

Course/institute/workshop name(s) _____

Innovation name and format _____

Please list the names of two persons who would be willing to support your application and attach letters from both. (A LATA member and a supervisor would be appreciated.)

Name _____

Position _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Position _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please attach a **one-page outline** providing information that supports your application. Include a statement of your beliefs regarding students with learning difficulties, your experience, other activities, educational objectives, and financial need.

Upon completion, please forward application and documents to:

Sharon Heinrich, Scholarship/Innovation Chair
865 Reid Crescent, Prince George, BC V2M 3W6

On or before June 16, 1999.



Pegg Davidson
LATA membership
chairperson, SD 20

Please pass on to a colleague the membership form at the back of this newsletter. By becoming a member of the Learning Assistance Teachers' Association, one will receive the newsletter plus many other great benefits.

When teaching pupils to read or spell "big" words, look at the word in meaningful chunks, working your way from back to front. That way the student hangs on to the end and middle while working towards the beginning of the word eg. extension (say tion, tension, extension). It works even better if the student points to the parts and each part is said and spelled aloud two or three times before moving on to the next part.

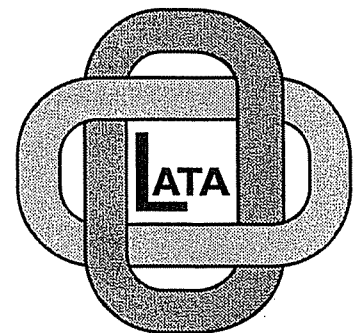
Elgin Brown



Did You Know?

\$ Pro-D Funds Available!

Did you know that each chapter (LSA) can apply to the B.C. LATA for funding for workshops? Each LSA may apply for Pro-D funds once a year and will receive \$100 plus \$15 per B.C. LATA member in the chapter, to a cap of \$500. The money will be forwarded to your chapter after an article about the workshop is submitted to the newsletter. To apply, get in touch with Lynda Mawer, LATA treasurer.



LEARNING ASSISTANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/FAX	SERVING YOU AS
Pegg Davidson	Box 490 Marysville, BC V0B 1Z0	S (250) 427-2283 SF (250) 427-5301	Membership Chairperson
Marie Giesbrecht	400 Poplar Point Dr. Kelowna, BC V1Y 1Y1	S (250) 763-2603 SF (250) 763-0461	Publications Editor
Sharon Heinrich	865 Reid Crescent Prince George, BC V2M 3W6	S (250) 962-6966 SF (250) 962-2633	Scholarship Chairperson/ Secretary
Marion Hurd	55-1401 Willowbrook Cranbrook, BC V1C 6H2	S (250) 489-4391 SF (250) 489-0600	President
Heather Mallory	S 343 C1 RR3 Port Alberni, BC V9Y 7L7	S (250) 723-3862 SF (250) 723-1641	Conference Chairperson
Lynda Mawer	8614 Foster Road Vernon, BC V1H 1C9	HF (250) 558-1065	Treasurer

NEW MATERIALS

You have probably discovered resource books, teaching kits, tests, teaching strategies, and remedial techniques that you have shared with students, other teachers, and parents, or that you simply feel you could not have lived without. Take a moment to fill out and send in the form below so that we can share your marvellous discoveries with others in the network. Also take a few minutes to tell how and why the material is valuable to you. Please help us out. Thanks!

I recommend _____

Author _____

Publisher _____

Publisher's address _____

Date _____ Appropriate grade levels _____ Cost _____

Please explain the usefulness/content _____

Shared by _____ Position _____

School _____ District _____

Please mail to: M. Giesbrecht, Editor, Bankhead Elementary School, 1280 Wilson Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 6Y1