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"Phonemic awareness develops naturally in some people, however for many, phonemic awareness must be directly taught. Because a lack of phonemic awareness appears to be a major obstacle to learning to read, individuals with a reading disability must be provided highly structured programs that directly teach application of phonologic rules to print. The most powerful interventions that have been identified for reading disabilities to date consist of a combination of explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, explicit instruction in sound-symbol relationships (phonics), and direct and integrated instruction in text reading and comprehension."

Bridges to Practice, Guidebook 4

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Practitioners' Points

Volume 4, Issue 4

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING TO THE DYSLEXIC STUDENT

BY

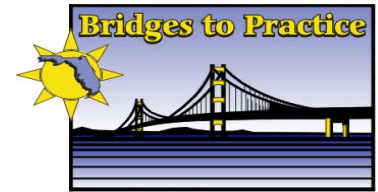
JUNE JUSTICE CRAWFORD
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY (NIFL)



June Crawford joined NIFL in March 2000 as the program director for the national Bridges to Practice program. Since then she has been involved in the adolescent and adult reading programs at NIFL through the Partnership for Reading and has recently accepted administrative assignment as the interim deputy director. She is also a reading clinician.

A natural outgrowth of the Bridges to Practice project, and focus on adults with learning disabilities (LD), has been an increased need for specific information about how to teach reading. Book 4 in the Bridges to Practice materials talks about appropriate methods for teaching adults with learning disabilities and specifically says that two methods to use are direct instruction and information processing strategies. Since reading difficulty is the predominant reason given for screening or testing for learning disabilities, and very little research is related to specific subgroups within the ABE population, a reasonable next step for the teacher interested in this area is to read about reading research and the impact on instruction.

Two reports have recently had an impact on the reading profession. For teachers of children, the *Report of the National Reading Panel, Teaching Children to Read, An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*, opened a discussion about how to teach reading and how to choose appropriate materials. The report is based on a new standard for the evaluation of reading research that was developed at the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. For those teaching adults, a follow-up publication that reviewed the research on adult reading acquisition, *Research-Based Principles for Adult Education Reading Instruction*, (Kruidenier, 2002), attempted to use the same standard, but had to make some modifications. (Note: This publication is available free through the National Institute for Literacy website at www.nifl.gov.) There is little research in this area, however, so the members of the review



Florida's Focus on
Adults with Learning Disabilities

panel had to consider the most rigorous research in adult reading that was available, and then they had to look at the K-12 literature to fill in the gaps. Their work has produced some interesting results and every teacher in adult education should be aware of these.

Though neither of these federal reports recommends a specific reading program, the results of the research reviews provide information that should be incorporated into every reading plan in every adult education classroom across America. They should, in particular, be useful to those who are teaching adults with dyslexia – whether it is a mild disability or one that is more severe. Some small portion of people with dyslexia may never learn to read, but the great majority in adult education classrooms and tutoring situations can make significant progress in reading if the instruction is appropriate.

Kruidenier's book includes the following **KEY INFORMATION** for teachers of adult learners:

- Teaching reading to adults is very similar to teaching reading to children and though the materials and subject matter may be different, the reading skills needed are the same;
- Adults and children require **explicit** and **direct instruction in word analysis**;
- Adults require **careful assessment** of reading skills so needs can be identified and instruction can be designed to meet specific individual requirements;
- **Placement test** results are not sufficient for planning reading instruction;

(Continued on page 3)

"I have worked in adult education for a number of years with students who read below the 4th grade level. Many come hoping you'll have the key to open the door to their learning. After *Bridges to Practice* training, I tried to make them understand that they learn differently from the person sitting next to them. I am not an "Equal Opportunity Employer!"- I **do** treat each student differently. I have introduced electronic dictionaries and work with students on computer programs. I have used the five basic elements of effective reading. My aides and I go over and over teaching the sounds. We use phonemic awareness and phonics to get them started in their reading. In a year's time, one of the inmates moved from a 1st to a 4th grade reading level. His four-year-old daughter came to visit him one Saturday with a book she asked him to read. He was so proud that he could read to her instead of hiding behind his illiteracy." (Karen Dunn, Okaloosa-Walton Community College)



**FLORIDA'S
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES SYMPOSIUM
MARCH 24-26, 2004**

The Palm Coast Golf Resort in Palm Coast, Florida was the location where approximately 150 practitioners - community based organizations, state agencies, district and college personnel gathered to share best practices and collaborate on how to better serve adults with disabilities.

Dr. Rochelle Kenyon, Symposium Chairperson, offered attendees an in-depth and diverse educational training experience. The Opening General Session featured keynote speaker, **Dr. Joseph Torgesen**, Executive Director of the Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University. His session, *Using Science and Common Sense to Teach All Adults to Read* was critical for all educators to hear. Other keynote speakers included **Neil Sturomski**, GEDTS/LD Consultant from Washington, DC, **June Justice Crawford**, National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) in Washington, DC and **Penelope Chambers**, Manager of Information Systems, Department of Special Education, Kennedy Krieger Institute, Baltimore, MD.



Accommodations on GED Tests for Individuals with Disabilities was presented by **Neil Sturomski** to a standing-room pre-symposium crowd. Neil reviewed requirements for both the L-15 and SA001 applications for requesting accommodations on the GED Tests. He encouraged participants to submit requests for accommodations six months ahead, if possible. He also noted that there is an appeal process should a request be denied and that correspondence should be directed to Ms. Patricia Jones at the GED Testing Service in Washington, DC .

The Opening General Session began with remarks from **Bob Wofford** from the FLDOE's Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education. Mr. Wofford addressed Florida's commitment to improving the literacy and employment skills of people with disabilities through interagency collaboration.



June Justice Crawford, LD Program Director with NIFL, facilitated conversation among conference attendees regarding the interrelationships of agencies working with people with Learning Disabilities. She directed attendees to the Learning Disabilities Collection of the NIFL LINC'S website: <http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu>.



Pene Chambers introduced participants to a variety of high and low technology aids such as **Write Outloud** and **Co-Writer**, **Text-Help** software, and **Cast-e-Reader**—all writing programs with word prediction and screen-reading capabilities, as well as **AlphaSmart**, a portable and lightweight keyboard.



Sally Smith, an instructor with Flagler County's Public Schools led a wonderful tour for symposium participants of their sheltered workshop and adult activity center in Palm Coast serving adults with developmental disabilities and senior learners.

Dr. Suzann Cornell, Educational Supervisor with Cross City Correctional Institution discussed the differing theories of emotional intelligence.



Richard Grimes and Kathleen Young, two Correctional instructors at Raiford Prison, presented strategies, materials, and teaching tips they have used successfully with inmates with LD in this maximum security prison.

Jack Humburg from Boley Centers for Behavioral HealthCare in St. Petersburg led participants in a discussion of methods and strategies for working with individuals with severe mental illness.



Davis Loux and Alice from Seeing Eye and Guide Dog, Inc. from Morristown, NJ (pictured left) along with **Patrick Clyne** and **Helen Arnold** from the Southeastern Guide Dog School in Palmetto, FL discussed how their organizations can assist anyone who wants a guide dog to help them attain mobility, dignity, and independence.

The Symposium Committee would also like to thank the following presenters who are not pictured here: **Dan Gall**, CTB McGraw-Hill, **Audra Leverton**, Gulf Coast Community College, **Iris Strunc**, Okaloosa-Walton Community College, **Sillar Smith**, **Dr. Rebekah Megerian**, and **Michelle Cole**, North Carolina Community College System for Compensatory Education Program Special Projects for Adults with Mental Retardation.



Meryl Eisenberg, Disabilities Specialist with Broward County Public Schools' Adult and Community Education Department described teaching techniques that make instructors less enabling in *Improving Thinking Strategies for People with Developmental Disabilities*. In another session, *Accommodating Adults with Disabilities: Their Rights, Our Responsibilities* – Ms. Eisenberg provided an overview of Broward County's new Adult 504 Plan as well as their electronic Adult Individualized Education Plan (AIEP).



Been all around the World Wide Web? Wish you could find a free site for your LD needs?

CHECK THIS OUT!

LINC'S Online LD Resources

The Literacy & Learning Disabilities Special Collection! - <http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu>

By **DONNA BRIAN, Ed.D. & MARGARET LINDOP**

WHAT IS IT?

A **web site** of **top quality resources** for teachers, tutors, learners, employers, or anyone interested in issues on learning disabilities.



- A **gateway** to **free**, downloadable tools and activities you can use to assess, plan, teach, learn, and accommodate an adult with LD
- A **link** to **online communication** with others about LD issues

WHAT CAN I FIND?

- **News & Research about LD**
- **Facts and Statistics about LD**
- **Information on LD issues:**

-**Understanding LD:** definitions, characteristics, living with LD, legal issues

-**Assessment:** screening, diagnosis, understanding the report, disclosure and confidentiality

-**Planning:** gathering information, making choices, finding what works, becoming a self advocate

-**Teaching & Learning:** a learning team, LD instruction, adaptation & accommodation, use of technology

- **Bridges to Practice Training:**

-**Online Discussion**

-**Free web-based resources** for teachers, learners, administrators, employers, and service providers

-**Links to LD organizations & associations**

SPECIAL FEATURES:

• **Living with LD** - Focusing on managing LD in relationships, parenting, and work. <http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/livingwithLD.html>



• ***LD at Work - Coming Soon** - Featuring information and stories about managing learning disabilities in the workplace. This section is a joint effort of the **Literacy & LD Special Collection** and **Workforce Education Special Collection**. <http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/ldatwork.html>

• **ESL/LD** - Examining issues of identification and support of ESL adults who have learning disabilities. http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/esl_ld.html

ARE THERE OTHER LINC'S SPECIAL (ONLINE) COLLECTIONS? **Yes!** **LINC'S** (Literacy Information aNd Communication System) currently has 12 Special Collections on many aspects of adult education. The links are relevant to adult



and family literacy research, policy issues, articles about practice, and project updates:

Assessment

<http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/assessment>



Correctional Education

http://www.nwlincs.org/correctional_education/home.htm

English as a Second Language

<http://literacy.net.org/esl/home.html>

Equipped for the Future

<http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff.html>

Family Literacy

<http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/FamilyLit>

Health & Literacy

<http://www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs>

Literacy & Learning Disabilities

<http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu>

Policy & Legislation

<http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/policy/policy.html>

Program Leadership and Improvement

<http://pli.cls.utk.edu>

Science & Numeracy

<http://literacy.net.org/sciencelincs>



Technology Training

<http://www.altn.org/techtraining>

Workforce Education

<http://worklink.coe.utk.edu>

Donna Brian is the content coordinator for NIFL's **LINC Workforce Education Special Collection** of resources at the Center for Literacy Studies, The University of Tennessee, where she has worked since 1998.

Margaret Lindop is the Coordinator for the NIFL's **LINC Literacy and Learning Disabilities Special Collection** at the Center for Literacy Studies, UT. She is a Bridges to Practice trainer and editor of the 2002 CLS publication, *Keys to Effective LD Teaching Practice*.

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING TO THE DYSLEXIC STUDENT

(Continued from page 1)



- There are **4 essential components** of reading that must be considered whenever a reading lesson is being taught: **alphabets, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension**;
- A **lack of phonemic awareness** (knowledge of the sounds in our language) **is common** in both children and adults with reading difficulty;
- Phonemic awareness can be taught to adults but the **instructional strategies** should teach a few specific skills (such as **blending and segmenting**) with lots of practice;

- **Word analysis skills** are essential and adults who are not good readers require a significant amount of instruction in phonics and other word analysis skills and the most effective strategies teach letter-sound correspondences in a systematic, direct, and explicit manner;



- **Computer-assisted instruction** can be effective for adults who require word recognition practice and there is some indication that this also is helpful for practice in phonemic awareness and vocabulary acquisition;

- **Vocabulary instruction** is still needed by adults but there are few studies to guide this and preliminary indications are that vocabulary taught in the context of the workplace, with many repetitions, may be most effective;



- **Fluency in reading** increases reading achievement and should be taught to adults through the use of repeated oral readings of text to improve accuracy, rate, and rhythm, with small group readings, reading with a tape player, reading with the instructor;



- **Comprehension instruction** must go beyond the literal repetition of what is written on the page;

- **Direct instruction**, as opposed to incidental instruction, is more effective in teaching comprehension strategies, and may include question answering, question asking, summary writing, comprehension monitoring, use of graphic and semantic organizers, use of story structure, and cooperative learning;



- Adults have a **need for intensity and duration in the instruction**, but each lesson should make use of multiple-strategy instruction so that all four components are addressed in each lesson;

- **Computer-assisted instruction** appears to be at least as effective as non-computer-assisted reading instruction, particularly in teaching comprehension strategies;

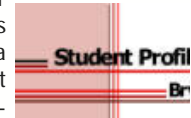


- Instructors of adults need to consider the effects of **motivation and reading self-efficacy**, or how an adult feels about being a poor reader, on reading achievement.



Many of these suggestions for teaching reading will sound familiar to those who are knowledgeable about **Bridges to Practice**. The techniques shown by the research in reading to be effective are the same techniques we attempt to model in the **Bridges** training. Assessment of reading is the key to being successful and at the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), we are attempting to help in this area, too.

The National Institute for Literacy now features reading profiles on its website. The profiles are based on the results of a research project conducted by Dr. John Strucker at Harvard University (http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/adult_ed_02.pdf) and were developed for NIFL by Dr. Rosalind Davidson. Any adult education teacher or administrator can enter a series of test scores on the website and receive a printed profile of the student with recommendations for instruction. Instead of just having a grade equivalent score in reading (example: 4.0 – fourth grade), a student profile provides a separate score for word analysis, word recognition, spelling, oral reading, and oral vocabulary. In this way, the instructor can get an overview of the student's reading needs and plan instruction accordingly. The eleven research-based profiles were developed based on scores from the *Diagnostic Assessments of Reading (DAR)*, which is constructed around graded passages or word lists for each required component.) We invite you to go to the website — http://novel.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/FT_Match_Intro.htm, take the short tutorial to see how this works – and then make use of it for your reading program.



There are several new reading research projects underway at the federal level and we will keep you updated as we get new information. In the meantime, improved instruction can make a world of difference to the adult with reading disabilities!



From "Bridges Across the Miles"
by Meryl Eisenberg, Editor,
Practitioners Points

We'd like to share some responses from Florida's practitioners and program service providers when asked what impact **Bridges to Practice** training had on their ability to provide services to people with Learning Disabilities.

"Before I took the Bridges to Practice training, I did not really believe that students had learning disabilities. I used to think they were using it as an excuse! However, as a result of this training, I pay closer attention to my students who are referred by the Office of Disability Services," said **Merlene Purkiss**, an associate professor at Miami-Dade College, Kendall Campus in Miami, FL.

"Bridges to Practice training has helped me tune into the different accommodations that are available to my clients with LD. By having the knowledge of their unique learning styles and accommodations available, I am better able to provide guidance to those attending various programs in Broward County," responded **Dale Sagotsky**, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

WHAT'S IN A LABEL?

By

Robin L. Schwarz, Lesley University
Learning Lab, Tutoring Coordinator



The labeling of learners is widely condemned by teachers, educators, parents, and learners themselves because the label so often has negative implications or is just not very accurate. Nonetheless, we all use labels sooner or later, mostly because it is convenient. **ESOL** and **LD** are examples of this. These are labels of longstanding use and we all *sort of* think we know what they mean, and so use them handily to discuss a subgroup of learners in adult education. Thinking we know what they imply, we may not question these labels—or the lack of them—even when we see evidence to contradict them in an adult learner's background.

What is *your* idea of an **ESOL** learner? To most teachers, this is someone *learning* English, not one who *speaks* English as another language. Moreover, while **ESOL** implies language needs, these learners are necessarily culturally different as well. But *without* that label, these factors may well be ignored.



And how about **LD**? When used accurately, the label is supposed to indicate significant, neurologically-based difficulty in some specific area of learning. Unhappily, the label has been misapplied to learners from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds for many years—misapplied because their symptoms of learning difficulties matched those of **LD**, but were caused by other factors.

In an adult program in the South West, I recently asked a group of teachers learning to use a commercial screening procedure designed to evaluate adults for learning problems how many **ESOL** learners were in their programs. "None," they said. But when I asked what percentage of their students had a different culture and/or language at home, the teachers replied that 90% of their learners did!

In fact, of the five case studies these teachers presented during training, three learners were Hispanic. These women began speaking English when they entered school as young children and so were not labeled as **ESOL** learners. Therefore, when they began having problems in school around 4th or 5th grade, their linguistic skills were not evaluated, but rather their academic achievement and intelligence were. All were labeled as **LD** and all dropped out of high school.



Though the screening revealed no processing or skill issues consistent with having **LD**, the trainees continued to focus on that label, dismissing the fact that these women spoke Spanish and were raised in homes with cultural values which differed from those of their trainee

teachers—and no doubt of their teachers in elementary school, too.

When these factors were insisted on during training, the teachers then reexamined their data. They realized that each learner had problems and behaviors consistent with weak language skills, such as not remembering sentences in English, or asking *English* speakers to look at them



while speaking. One teacher noted that he had ignored information showing that his case subject had better reading and writing skills in Spanish than in English. Trainees agreed that they needed to assess the women's phonological skills and language knowledge. Then the trainees began to ask themselves how much the women's culture might have played a role in their inability to deal with certain kinds of problems on their own or influenced their focus on their mothering as opposed to "marketable skills" in their training program. The teachers resolved to find out more about these questions.

A Native American who lived on a reservation was the fourth case study. Like the Hispanic women, he had been diagnosed in middle school with **LD** and dropped out of high school. Again we have to wonder about the accuracy of this diagnosis given his background because also like the women, there was no evidence in the screening that he had any **LD**. The man's deep connection to his culture was clear from the fact that when his drinking problem had gotten out of hand, he had consulted the tribal medicine man. Though the teacher doubted a second language was at work, she was encouraged to find out more about this man and to help him explore how he might tap other cultural resources to help him stay sober and finish his GED.



Only just recently, education policy makers have begun to recognize that language learning is a life-long process and that cultural orientation grows and changes but is not erased. Thus, even though a person may appear to be "proficient" in English (whatever "proficient" means), their linguistic as well as their cultural background continue to be important influences on the way they perceive and use language and experience learning. Yet, all of that influence may be missed—or dismissed-- if a learner is NOT labeled **ESOL**.



Therefore, to avoid the trap of the narrow label of **ESOL** and help us acknowledge the richness and impact of our learners' backgrounds, I suggest that adult education adopt the label "**culturally and linguistically different**" (**CLD**).

Robin Schwarz is a nationally know lecturer and author on Adult **ESOL** and Learning Disabilities. This is her third year of writing for Practitioners' Points and bringing the concerns of the English Language Learner and **LD** to our readers.

Thank you!

LOOKING BACK—A YEAR IN REVIEW

Again we are at the end of another year and want to take this opportunity to reflect on the progress made during 2003-2004. All measurable objectives for the Bridges to Practice Statewide Leadership Project have been accomplished. The training, resources, and materials focusing on Learning Disabilities reached a wide ranging group of professionals, policy-makers, volunteers, consumers, parents, advocates, community-based organizations, and activists in the field.

The new training component for this year focused on 1) Reading Disabilities/Dyslexia and Phonemic Awareness, 2) Assistive Technology, 3) Success Attributes, and 4) Strategy Instruction. In addition to the new offerings, all other content areas were provided as requested.

Enhancements this year to the Florida Bridges to Practice website included new featured links: "Bridges Across the Miles," "Facts and Statistics on Learning Disabilities," "Glossary of LD-Related Terms," and "Reading Disabilities and Dyslexia." The 5 or 10-hour web-based training continues to be accessed for an alternative to either earning inservice points, or just researching topics of interest.

Four new issues of this Practitioners' Points newsletter were printed and made available online and in paper format during every onsite training event. Numerous nationally known authors accepted invitations to write specific LD-related feature newsletter articles. Both personal comments and articles were written by consumers and practitioners. Our Editor, Meryl Eisenberg, received critical praise from national sources on the continuing excellence in this publication. It is being accessed around the country by practitioners and by Bridges to Practice trainers.

As important to the above accomplishments was the availability of free referral services to anyone in Florida needing assistance in finding resources, programs, or services that relate to Learning Disabilities. This service was accessed more than 500 times in a 9-month period. To those people that persevere in finding answers for themselves or who advocate for others, go my deepest respect. We will continue to dedicate our efforts through this project toward providing that service.

We continue to strive for significant, systemic change that is a cornerstone of the Bridges to Practice initiative nationwide. The issue of **ACCESS** to programs and services for persons with disabilities means far more than physical entry into a building or room. It means full participation in all programs and services—just as persons without disabilities—and is accomplished through awareness and the use of appropriate accommodations.

As last year, progress in awareness and identification of learning disabilities, use of learning style assessment and strategies appropriate for preferred modalities, screening to determine the existence of **LD**, and increased requests for accommodations on the GED Tests, continues to be made.

This year's Adults with Disabilities Symposium in Palm Coast again brought together approximately 150 dedicated participants. Rather than to search for one or two disability-related sessions within a conference, their goal of attending sessions that all focus on that topic was well rewarded. The excellent presentations by our own outstanding Florida practitioners and national speakers were noted as such through the evaluations. And again, our Assistive Technology Colloquium held attendees to the last moment in hopes of winning some outstanding technology products.

Thank you to Dr. Bonnie Marmor, Nancy Cordill, and Bob Wofford for supporting the needs of learners with disabilities through this project. To those of you that have accessed resources, programs, services, or training through Florida's Bridges to Practice project, your efforts have helped to positively impact the life of someone with learning disabilities. It has been my joy and privilege to be associated with this important state leadership initiative.

Rochelle Kenyon, Project Director and Trainer