Calendar

Oct. 24-25, 2003
Northeast Regional Update, Westbrook, Connecticut, Alice Henley, henley@ctserc.org

Nov. 21-22, 2003
West Virginia Update Holiday Inn, Bridgeport, West Virginia, Ron Wolf, wolf@marshall.edu All SIM PDs welcome

Jan. 23-24, 2004
West Regional Update Las Vegas, Nevada, Barbara Millikan, Barbara_Millikan@ beavton.k12.or.us or Susan Miller, millersp@unlv.edu

Jan. 28-30, 2004
Florida Update, St. Augustine, Margie Ringler, projcentral@ mail.ucf.edu

March 4-6, 2004
Southeast Regional Update, Charleston, South Carolina Jerri Neduchal, neduchj@ocps.k12.fl.us

March 17-19, 2004
St. John Island Update, Maho Bay, Virgin Islands Ed Pieper, piepere@ hotmail.com or Vicki Cotsworth, cotswoldfarm@ hotmail.com

March 21-23, 2004
Midwest Region in Iowa Update, Sioux City, Jeanne Lichty, jlichty@aea12.k12.ia.us

Factors for success for students with LD

Excerpts from Don Deshler's keynote address, "A Time for Modern-Day Pioneers," given during LDA's 40th anniversary celebration.

Just as 40 years ago we were faced with large and seemingly insurmountable problems, so too today, we face our own set of extremely complex and challenging problems. We face difficult issues, such as *Who are we going to serve? Do students with learning disabilities indeed evidence characteristics that are unique from those of other low-achieving students? Under what conditions should services be provided? Is there a unique set of skills that learning disability teachers must possess? Given that our time for instruction is limited, what instructional practices make the biggest difference?*

The Right Path

As a field, we have shifted a great deal of our time from providing direct services to students to spending an increased amount of time on collaboration and co-teaching. This has raised another set of questions, including *Has this been a wise trade off? What standards should we use to determine whether we are using an effective, inclusive teaching practice? Do we have good answers in response to the growing number of critics who look at our field and ask questions about the outcomes we achieve or fail to achieve and who raise difficult questions about the costs of what we do?*

Each of these questions is very difficult to answer and each requires very careful thought, serious study, and critical debate and analysis. If there is anything that our field cannot bear at this time, it is surface-level, politically correct responses. Our overall outcomes in terms of success on major indicators, be they dropouts, number of graduates, or achievement results on state exams, are less than I think any of us would want. I would like to invite you to stand back from the work that we are doing and

ask some questions about where we are today. What are our priorities? What is our overall direction? There is no doubt that we are all busy, but are we busy doing the right things? More specifically, are we teaching the right things to the right students under the right conditions? In short, are we on the right path?

The bar has gone up and the context within which we need to carve out solutions that make a difference for students with disabilities is markedly different from what it used to be. I would like to suggest three factors as being foundational to our success as a field.

Factors for Success

Regardless of the role that we play—mom, dad, teacher, administrator, researcher, or teacher-trainer—I would go almost so far as to say that these factors are non-negotiables. The question of what factors are central to bringing about the most dramatic changes in the performance of students with learning disabilities is critical for each of us to come to grips with. The instructional time available to us is so limited—and the gap between a student's actual and their expected performance level is so great—that our instruction must be so well-designed and effectively delivered that students make accelerated gains. We *cannot* afford to make only one unit of gain for an equivalent unit of time spent in instruction (such as one month of achievement growth for every month of time in instruction). At that rate, students will never catch up! Creating an instructional dynamic that ensures dramatic growth is an enormous instructional and organizational challenge.

Factor 1. We must do all that we can to use the practices that have been shown to make a difference in the outcomes of students with

learning disabilities. We clearly are at a different point in 2003 than we were 40 years ago when Dr. Kirk came up with the label "learning disabilities." A significant amount of work has been done in classrooms. Master teachers and master clinicians have carved out some very innovative, significant solutions that make a difference in the lives of students. And researchers have validated many of the things that masters in the classrooms and clinics were doing.

In the process, a very significant story has unfolded almost imperceptibly. This story has been told in the literature over the past three or four years in several meta-analyses of intervention work involving students with learning disabilities. These meta-analyses—completed by some of the leading scholars in our field (for example, Baker, Chard, Elbaum, Fuchs, Gersten, Swanson, Vaughn, Williams)—are available in the areas of reading comprehension, written expression, grouping, self-concept, and higher-order thinking. From these have emerged some very significant and common threads that point to things that make a huge difference in the education of students with learning disabilities. This is one of the big success stories in our field. We have made some solid progress during the past several years, but then there is the "rest of the story," as Paul Harvey would say.

First of all, the good news. In one of the meta-analyses, Lee Swanson (1999) and his colleagues found two major intervention practices that produced large outcomes. One is direct instruction. The other is learning strategy instruction. Of particular interest was the work of the teachers who were applying those kinds of interventions. These teachers
- broke learning into small steps
- administered probes
- supplied regular quality feedback
- used diagrams, graphics, and pictures to augment what they were saying in words
- provided ample independent, well-designed, intensive practice
- modeled instructional practices that they wanted students to follow
- provided prompts of strategies to use

- engaged students in process type questions such as *How is that strategy working? Where else might you apply it?*

Something else that seems to make a real difference is the practice of scaffolding. That is, starting out with some heavy teacher-mediated instruction and moving along the continuum to more student-mediated instruction. The effect when those kinds of instructional practices are used is most encouraging: They move students into a range where they can hold their own, where they can compete at grade level. In other words, we can teach students how to learn.

But here is some sobering news. In 1995, Naomi Zigmond and her colleague, Jan Baker, studied inclusive teaching practices and went into a variety of general education classrooms that had been nominated as being places where quality teaching was going on with students with learning disabilities. Here is what Baker and Zigmond concluded as a result of their study: "We saw very little specially designed instruction delivered uniquely to a student with learning disabilities. We saw almost no specific, directed, individualized, intensive remedial instruction of students who were clearly deficient academically and struggling."

The issue that I am raising here is not one of "inclusion" or "not inclusion"; the issue is what kinds of instructional conditions must be in place to enable students to make significant gains?

Let me share with you a snapshot of some data that researchers at KU-CRL recently collected in several high schools.

First, we found that very few students with learning disabilities are placed in rigorous courses in high schools. Only 21 percent of students with learning disabilities are placed in rigorous mainline classes. Most of them are in lower track classes.

Second, we did a study in general education classes in high school to see what teaching practices general education teachers were using. Specifically, we wanted to know whether the kinds of instructional behaviors that made the

biggest difference in the gains of students were used frequently. We found that behaviors such as modeling, elaborated feedback, prompts, and the use of graphics were used very sparingly.

The most sobering news, however, was the following. When we did a similar observational study in special education classrooms, we found that the graphs of what was occurring in general education and what was occurring in special education were virtually the same. In other words, the very factors that have emerged in the literature as making the biggest difference for students with learning disabilities are not being embraced in the field.

So again, the issue of effectiveness is not where students are taught but the instructional conditions under which they are taught. We need to ensure that the right kind of instructional conditions are in place so that the instruction we are offering on targeted skill deficit areas and strategy deficit areas will be sufficiently intensive so that we can engage in the kind of modeling, feedback, and mediated practice that is needed. In the absence of that, students may survive where they are placed but chances are they will not succeed. In the absence of these factors, we must remember that the real gains fall off dramatically as shown in study after study after study. It is critical that we stop ignoring those findings.

Factor 2. We must insist that our practices be guided by good science. I have two big concerns:

1. The insistence in some quarters that the only research of value is research that involves pure experimental designs with random assignment. This insistence runs the risk of ignoring some of the unique realities of conducting research with populations that evidence the large amounts of heterogeneity that students with disabilities evidence.

2. What constitutes *research based* is much more than statistical significance. You can take a child from reading 20 percent of the words correctly to reading 40 percent of the words—that's a 100 percent increase!

If your sample size is sufficient, you can publish your results in a journal because you have demonstrated statistical significance. Nevertheless, the reality is the child still has an "F." The intervention does not pass the test of social significance. Social significance is related to such questions as *Does it make a difference in how children are perceived by others, how they feel about themselves, and how well they can perform on age or grade-level tasks?*

Other things that we need to consider when discussing research-based issues: Is the practice palatable and doable for teachers? Do we get commensurate gains if we apply the intervention within a general education classroom? We need to get commensurate gains for high-, average-, and low-achieving students. If not, teachers will drop the practice the moment high-achieving students start to get bored with it. In addition, we need to ensure that the practice can be delivered at scale and sustained over time.

I would like to say a few words related to this on the broad array of issues surrounding the determination of learning disabilities or certifying students as being eligible for special education services. The ultimate solution will have to be both a technical and social one.

The technical aspect relates to the attributes of the procedure(s) used to make a determination of learning disability. For years, we have used IQ-achievement discrepancy measures. As we have sought for ways to refine the outcomes of IQ-achievement discrepancy procedures, we have tried different formulas or cut-scores. All of these attempts have been efforts to improve the technical part of the identification process.

There is an equally important social dimension to this dynamic. That is, LD determination decisions are strongly influenced by our biases and values; the context within which we work impacts the decisions we make. Look at the variance in the number of students from one state to another who are classified as having a learning disability.

In light of the complexity and broad

Newly Certified Professional Developers 2003 (As of August 1)

Learning Strategies

Florida: Cathy Freytag, Melissa Hayes, Alice Horton, Joyce Mooneyham, Cynthia Pelosi, Janis Slattery, Denise Stevenson, Maria Warren

Georgia: Jane Basler

Illinois: Kathy Simon

Iowa: Pamela Fields, Jay Gjerstad, Sue Powers, Donna Shaw, Kathleen Walech, Maryjo Williams

Kentucky: Lauren Pohl

Louisiana: Rachel Dugas

Maryland: Donna Fava, Lisa Sligh

Michigan: Ardena Duren, Suzanne Finney, Paula Hoffman, Kris Hull, Mary Pollock, Rita Reimbold, Deb Streu, Margie Wood, Kelli-Ann Woodruff

Minnesota: Amy Mahlke, Norma Sciara

Missouri: Alice Bowers, Gary Brent Grimes, Karen Rosso, Gail Wulff

Virginia: Cynthia Alexander, Bonnie Cowdery, Ellen Hill, Niki Lachica, Susan Leggett, Tia McCauley, Sven Ostenfeld, Mindy Panzer, Shirley Turner, Kristin Weyman

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Texas: Ruby Lynch-Arroyo, Edi Brannon, Jay Dea Brownfield, Liz Gaidry, Mary Lou Parker, Victoria Ricketts, Lee Schwartz, Pamela Stephens, Odessa Wood

Virginia: Nancy Baker

array of factors surrounding LD determination, I would challenge all of us to demand the same level of rigor and evidence for a new paradigm of learning disability determination as that now being demanded of evidence in intervention research.

There is no question that the current system needs to be fixed. We need to find a way to get services to children earlier—before the third and fourth grade. However, we must be careful and judicious in our search for alternatives. The Office of Special Education Programs has funded a large research initiative to study the many issues surrounding LD identification. This research project, operated jointly by Vanderbilt University and the University of Kansas is called the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD). New policy directions should be guided by the findings of research being conducted by NRCLD and other researchers. There is too much at stake to make major policy decisions in the absence of solid research evidence.

Factor 3. We must use research-based practices in our work with students with learning disabilities. However, that in itself is not sufficient. Learning is first and foremost a visceral, emotional, affective experience. We have all had the experience of failing at something and felt how that has torn at us and distracted our attention. CRL's professional development network prepares all who come for professional development to use the same set of instructional materials. You would theoretically suppose that everyone gets the same kind of results. Not so. Some participants stand out as stars. They get extraordinary results.

What is different in these teachers that had the same kinds of professional development, the same instructional manuals, etc.? You would probably predict, as I did, that they had better administrators. They had better circumstances. They had easier students to teach. But those factors don't seem to be what differentiates these teachers. Among the things that appear to characterize those teachers who get extraor-

dinary results with students are the following.

First of all, they had a very clear vision of what they were about. They had very lofty goals, but they also had a very clear vision of who they were, what their role was as a teacher, what they were trying to accomplish, and what they could accomplish.

A clear vision enhances our ability to see beyond our present reality to create and invent what does not exist. When we have limited vision, we react to what is urgent, to other people's priorities. If we have a clear vision about what the students with whom we are working can accomplish and we remain true to that vision, it can be very powerful.

Second, we found that these successful teachers had a very strong sense of self-efficacy. They believed they made a difference. They believed that putting in extra time planning and preparing made a difference. They saw themselves as having control.

Third, these teachers recognized that many students, especially older ones, tend to be disconnected and in a process of disconnecting themselves in a significant way from anything to do with school. Teachers who were most successful were the ones who recognized the vital roles played by hope and by being known, valued, and counted as a person.

References

Baker, J., & Zigmond, N. (1995). The meaning and practice of inclusion for students with learning disabilities: Themes and implications form the five cases. *Journal of Special Education, 29*(2), 163-180.

Swanson, H.L. (1999). Instructional components that predict treatment outcomes for students with learning disabilities: Support for a combined strategy and direct instruction model. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 14,* 129-140.

Important! If you were not listed in StrateDirectory last year or if you need to correct or change directory information, complete this form and return it to CRL by November 1 to be included in the 2004 StrateDirectory. If you were listed in last year's directory and you do not need to change any information, you do not need to complete this form.

2003-2004 SIM Directory Information Form

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Title of Position _____

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_____high school teacher
_____junior high school teacher
_____middle school teacher
_____elementary teacher
_____administrator
_____post-secondary teacher of students with learning disabilities
_____general education teacher
_____special education teacher
_____independent professional developer
_____other _____

Check the category or categories that best describe the school districts in which you are the most comfortable or experienced in providing professional development:
_____inner city
_____suburban
_____rural
_____other _____

Indicate the student populations with which you are most familiar:

_____ESL   _____TMR
_____EMR   _____At Risk
_____LD   _____General Education
_____ADD   _____Adults
_____BD   _____Other

Check the strategies and routines in which you feel that you are an expert and are willing to advise others.

_____1.   Collaborative Problem Solving
_____2.   Concept Mastery Routine
_____3.   Self-Advocacy
_____4.   Error-Monitoring
_____5.   FIRST-Letter Mnemonic
_____6.   Lesson Organizer Routine
_____7.   LINCS
_____8.   Math Strategies
_____9.   Paragraph Writing
_____10. Paraphrasing
_____11. Progress Program
_____12. SCORE
_____13. Sentence Writing
_____14. SLANT
_____15. Social Skills
_____16. Teamwork
_____17. Test-Taking
_____18. Visual Imagery
_____19. Word Identification
_____20. Concept Anchoring Routine
_____21. Unit Organizer Routine
_____22. Self-Questioning
_____23. Assignment Completion

_____24. Concept Comparison
_____25. Surface Counseling
_____26. Paired Associates
_____27. Clarifying Routine
_____28. Survey Routine
_____29. Theme Writing
_____30. Course Organizer Routine
_____31. Framing Routine
_____32. Recall Enhancement Routine
_____33. Quality Assignment Routine
_____34. InSPECT
_____35. THINK
_____36. LEARN
_____37. BUILD
_____38. Strategic Tutoring
_____39. Talking Together
_____40. Following Instructions Together
_____41. Vocabulary LINCing Routine
_____42. Question Exploration Routine
_____43. Possible Selves
_____44. Organizing Together
_____45. Taking Notes Together
_____Other _____

What are your main areas of interest related to SIM?

About how many teachers do you train annually?
(KU-CRL may use this information for writing grants.)

Comments/Questions:

In memory: Jacob Bertucci

Excerpts from memories Ginger Williams shared during Jacob's memorial service September 4. Jacob, a SIM Professional Developer from Los Angeles, was killed in an automobile accident August 15.

Our friend, our brother, our teacher! Jacob Bertucci loved life. He had a spirit of gentleness and kindness, always giving his love to others. Love and friendship came easily to him. He was a unique and special person. You noticed him when he walked into a room. He had presence. Jacob found his gift of giving and sharing through education. He loved teaching others, being a resource to others. I remember the joy many of us shared with him when he completed his Ph.D. He was so proud to follow in his father's and his sister's footsteps as an educator! Last summer, Jacob hosted a weeklong training of Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) professional developers at his Strategic Tutoring office. We all got to see the meticulous, organized side of Jacob . I know he had every publication, videotape, or training material ever produced by the University of Kansas—displayed, of course, neatly and masterfully.

While there, we also saw the playful, fun-loving side of Jacob. On nearby shelves you'd see his toys—cars, planes, dinosaurs, things that moved. And his mother's collections of miniature castles and plates commemorating each president. And all the latest technology. And the crates of special sodas he bought. All this was for the kids who came to his office to learn with him and Wilma and Aaron and others. The deep feelings shared in writing by his students and the fact that so many of them and their parents are here offer a clear testament to Jacob's ability to empower, instruct, and lead...

I remember the first time Jacob spoke at the Special Education Division Leadership Team. You could have heard a pin drop. Jacob had synthesized a long article we all had to read and beautifully and clearly presented it to us, offering all of us something more to think about. People listened to Jacob. Last summer at the SIM conference, Don Deshler asked Jacob to sit at the head table as a commentator for the keynote speaker. Jacob's comments were, of course, brilliant. Jacob really knew his stuff...

Not only was Jacob clever and witty, but oh, how he could laugh! What an infectious giggle he had. His earthy and real humor brought us all cheer and joy! At the office, we always got a kick out of Jacob's various foods he would bring in for lunch. It was either feast or famine! One day it would be meatloaf with mashed potatoes and gravy; the next day it would be the Zone Diet that he had delivered to his home...

Last fall, we began to notice that Jacob couldn't be satisfied with his usual favorite foods. We all thought he was having indigestion. But it turned out sadly to be lymphoma. What a shock to all of us! He called the times of his treatments "The Dark Days." During that whole nine months, he showed amazing resilience and quiet courage. He was focused and open more than ever to his feelings. He re-thought his priorities! He modeled such strength and determination along with his optimism. There never was a question about his beating the bad guys during that whole time! When he was able to return to us in the spring, the outpouring of love and support that had been given him by all his co-workers touched him so that he wrote personal and thoughtful and individual notes of love and appreciation to each of us...

We celebrated, too, when he was selected to be a Least Restrictive Environment Specialist. He was thrilled that he would be able to work with the District E staff on the wonderful Implementation Plan that had been developed there and especially working again with district kids. But again, sadly, his time was cut short there.

A senseless tragedy, none of us had him long enough by our sides.

Carnegie grant

CRL recently received a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to work with them in identifying promising high school reform models. Mike Hock and Don Deshler will take the lead on "A Study of Successful Reform Models in Urban Schools: Identifying Factors that Lead to Sustained Improvement in Literacy Outcomes for At-Risk Adolescents." All of CRL's Institute for Effective Instruction research staff will be involved in the project.

CRL success story on KnowledgeLoom.org

A virtual spotlight shines on a SIM success story, as a result of national attention focused on the Strategic Instruction Model as encompassing "best practices" in addressing adolescent literacy issues. The Knowledge Loom: What Works in Teaching and Learning, a Web site developed and maintained by the Education Alliance at Brown University, has added the story of SIM in use at Muskegon High School in Michigan to its "Adolescent Literacy in the Content Areas" spotlight.

To take a look at how SIM addresses several best practices in adolescent literacy education, visit **knowledgeloom.org**. From the "Spotlight Library" page, click on "Adolescent Literacy in the Content Areas." Then select "Investigate."

The SIM-Muskegon story is connected to several of the best practices listed under *Key Component B: Strategies* and *Key Component D: Organizational Support*.

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