Chapter 5
Understanding Students with Learning Disabilities
Defining Learning Disabilities

• **IDEA definition**
  Specific learning disability

• **Two criteria for classification**
  – Inclusionary standard
  – Exclusionary standard
## Describing the Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Achievement Characteristics</th>
<th>Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Reading</td>
<td>- Friendships</td>
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<td>- Dyslexia</td>
<td>- Anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Written Language</td>
<td>- Mental Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Memory</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Executive functioning</td>
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<td>- Metacognition</td>
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Determining the Causes

• Neurological mechanisms
  – Brain abnormalities found

• Genetics
  – Strong evidence

• Environmental causes
  – Teratogens
Determining A Learning Disability: The Discrepancy Model

- **Intelligence Tests**
  - Bell curve (See Figure 5.1)
  - WISC-IV
- **Achievement Tests**
  - WIAT-II
- **The discrepancy model compared two norm-referenced test scores:**
  - Aptitude-achievement
  - Intracognitive
  - Intra-achievement

- States each had different criteria
- Criticisms of the IQ-Achievement discrepancy
Determining A Learning Disability: Response-to-Intervention Process

A problem-solving approach that involves multiple tiers of increasingly intense, research-based interventions matched to student’s needs.
Determining A Learning Disability: Psychological Processing Model

Cognitive and neuropsychological assessment that identifies strengths and weaknesses in psychological processing. Looks at:

- Executive functioning
- Processing speed
- Short-term memory
- Working memory
Explicit, Intensive, and/or Supportive Instruction

• *Explicit instruction* involves the systematic teaching of critical skills that enable the student to be more successful in mastering a subject.

• *Intensive instruction* involves a higher frequency of instructional opportunities than is typically provided in general education classrooms.

• *Supportive instruction* involves more precise scaffolding in order to sequence skills and provide more precise prompts to use necessary learning strategies.
Determining the Nature of Specifically Designed Instruction and Services

- Achievement tests vs. Intervention and instruction

- Phonological processing
  - Sound system of language
Partnering for Special Education and Related Services

- Include the child with a disability in planning

- Student involvement can take many different forms:
  - Self-directed IEP
  - Self-Advocacy Strategy
  - Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction
Determining Supplementary Aids and Services

Curriculum Mapping

• Educators collect information about each teacher’s curriculum, using the school calendar as an organizer.

• They then can determine what they are teaching, and identify where students can receive instruction on content from the general curriculum.
Planning for Universal Design for Learning

• Advance Organizers
• Graphic Organizers
  – Lesson organizers
  – Chapter survey routines
  – Unit organizers
  – Course organizers
Planning for Other Educational Needs

Transition Success Skills for College (in priority order)

- Understanding their disability
- Understanding their strengths and limitations
- Learning to succeed despite their disability and what accommodations facilitate learning
- Setting goals and learning how to access resources
- Problem-solving skills
- Self-management skills
- Forming relationships with university personnel, peers, and mentors
Effective Instructional Strategies: Early Childhood Students

Embedded Learning Opportunities (ELO)
- Practiced in context of daily activities
- Can be used in inclusive environments
- Capitalizes on child’s interest and motivation
- Is available to parents, teachers, therapists, and peers
- Is compatible with a wide range of curricular models
Effective Instructional Strategies: Elementary and Middle School Students

Differentiated Instruction
- Provide visual or graphic organizer
- Incorporate models, demonstrations, or role play
- Using teacher presentation cues to emphasize key points
- Scaffolding key concepts
- Involving students by implementing every-pupil response techniques or incorporating manipulatives for students to use
Effective Instructional Strategies: Secondary and Transition Students

Learning Strategies
• Assess how well a student can perform the skill
• Point out the benefit of using learning strategies
• Explain specifically what students will be able to accomplish once they know the skill
• Types of Learning Strategies
  – Acquiring information
  – Storing information and remembering
Measuring Students’ Progress

- **Curriculum-Based Measurement**
  - Chart a student’s progress in the general curriculum
  - Brief timed samples or probes of academic material directly from curriculum
  - Probes given under standardized conditions
  - Scored on speed or fluency or accuracy
  - Can be given repeatedly since quick and easy to score

- Progress for other educational needs such as social skills are measured using rating scales or sociometrics