
Editor's Note

Overview of Articles in This Issue

This issue of *Learning Disabilities: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, focuses specifically on the classroom and the preparation of classroom teachers. I thoroughly enjoyed editing this issue and I hope you will enjoy it also.

The first article, "Laughter Filled the Classroom: Outcomes of Professional Development in Arts Integration for Elementary Teachers in Inclusion Settings" by Koch and Thompson is a qualitative study of teachers' experiences with integrating the arts into the curriculum. Many students with learning disabilities utilize the arts as a medium to balance their academic deficits. The arts can provide multiple means of representation, action, and expression. These are often the modifications sought after by teachers in inclusion settings as a means of eliminating the academic barriers between general education students and those with learning disabilities facilitating differentiated instruction. Twenty teachers participated in a course designed to provide a workshop type experience. Pre-course and post-course surveys were collected and examined to determine the teachers' views on integrating the arts into their lesson planning and their comfort level in utilizing the arts as a modification to instruction.

Reading Recovery, developed by Marie Clay in New Zealand, and introduced to the U.S. in the early 1980s and is now widely implemented in elementary schools across the country. "The Reading Wars and Reading Recovery: What Educators, Families, and Taxpayers Should Know" by Cook, Rodes, and Lipsitz, examines the \$45 million, four-year scale-up study designed to increase the implementation of Reading Recovery in the United States. One of the goals of this study was to evaluate the long-term effects of the intervention described by the Reading Recovery authors as "highly significant." This was a large-scale study involving over 65,000 students and more than 3,700 teachers. This article is a thought-provoking and critical examination of the efficacy of Reading Recovery as a sole strategy to closing the gap and preventing reading deficits in young children.

Foreign language instruction is particularly challenging for students with learning disabilities. They are often steered away from such courses and into more technical work. The third article, "Flashcards and Guided Visual Vocabulary Practice: Experiences of Students With Learning Disabilities When Introduced to Concrete Spanish Nouns" by Tolbert, Lazarus, and Killu, examined the use of a multisensory strategy for learning Spanish vocabulary. Strategies with explicit visual components have been identified in the literature as evidence-based practices; thus the development of the GVVP or Guided Visual Vocabulary Practice intervention. Although the number of participants was small (eight), they spanned elementary, middle, and high school levels. The results were analyzed by grade level and reading challenge and suggest that this be an avenue for further research.

Much attention has been paid in the field of learning disabilities to the preparation of teachers specifically in the area of literacy. Closing the gap seemed to be the mantra of the 1990s, with many states adopting specific requirements for both pre-service and in-service teachers in the area of reading. "Early Literacy Teacher Preparation: One University's Perspective" by Berenato and Severino examines the type of instruction teachers need to have in order to be effective in teaching reading. The authors describe two key elements required to be effective: knowing the process and stages children must negotiate to learn the necessary skills and knowing how to teach and reinforce the skills to children. The five stages are described and the authors advocate that teacher preparation programs should provide theory as well as practical strategies and interventions to help struggling readers at each of the stages of development. The study included 32 dual major undergraduate students and utilized a survey developed by the researchers. The authors make the case that University experiences often do not keep pace with changing practices and the need to prepare intervention specialists capable of making sound, data driven recommendations on how to choose evidence-based practices when confronted with struggling readers.

Finally, much research has focused on early elementary students who struggle with developing strong literacy skills by grade 3. Much less research has focused on those adolescents who continue to struggle with reading into the middle and high school grades. The final article, "A Revised Embedded Planning Tool for Intensive Reading Instruction" by Wei, Lombardi, Simonsen, Coyne, Faggella-Luby, Freeman, and Kearns utilizes a single-subject, multiple baseline design to examine the use of a Tier 3 planning tool with teachers of secondary students in intensive classrooms such as special education or resource rooms. The adapted Tier Three Instructional Planning Tool (T-TIP) focuses on providing corrective

and elaborative feedback to students, a major component of evidence based practice with struggling adolescent readers. Their findings suggest that corrective and elaborative feedback was limited when teachers provide instruction for students with disabilities in resource/self-contained classrooms. The most commonly used feedback was simple verification that might not be specific to individual students' performances.

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