

- a quiet, uncluttered homework space;
- alarm watch;
- purchased texts that can be marked with a highlighter;
- a homework assignment diary coordinated between home and school;
- study skills instruction; and
- a personally-developed date-book or scheduler.

12. For students who copy inaccurately, but need written practice to solidify learning, changes that may help include: leaving a space directly under each word, phrase or sentence, or having handouts on the desk for those who can't copy from the blackboard or take dictation accurately. For left-handed students, place the list of words at the right margin. For students whose writing is large, provide enlarged spaces for "fill in the blank" activities.

13. For students who seem to process auditory information slowly (e.g., not fully understanding questions asked, recalling needed information, or forming an appropriate answer), be patient. Allow sufficient "wait-time for the answer or provide the questions in written form."

14. Oral and written language should be taught together as much as possible. Illustrations in a book being read should be used to generate conversation, vocabulary and concepts that will relate to what is to be read. Material that is read can be translated into a verbal summary, a word web, a visual organizer, or a computer presentation.

15. For students who find reading slow and difficult, supplement the subject matter being read with video tapes., DVDs, captioned TV programs, or computer software (LDA, 2005).

It is fair to assume some students to be learning disabled. However, learning disabilities are not obviously recognized or are recognized but not dealt with. When we see a student floundering, a students who, in Levine's words, seems capable of more, we have the best indication that the problem may be an L.D. (learning disability) problem. There is much that we as classroom teachers can in fact do to improve that student's learning condition.

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2. For students with memory problems or difficulty taking notes, a fellow student might share notes; the student might tape the lesson; or the teacher might provide a copy of the lesson outline.
3. For students who read below expected levels, educational videos and films or talking books can provide the general information that cannot be acquired from the printed page.
4. For student with short term memory problems (e. g., understand math processes, but have short term memory problems that interfere with remembering math facts), a table of facts or a calculator could be provided.
5. For the student whose handwriting is slow, illegible or includes many reversed letters, a cassette recorder or a computer with word processing software could be used for written work or tests.
6. For the student who has difficulty with spelling, a "misspeller's dictionary" or computerized spell checker can help make written materials readable.
7. For students who have difficulty reading cursive, small, or crowded print, typed handouts, large print, or double spaced materials can help.
8. To develop memory and listening skills, poetry, rhymes, songs, audio-taped materials and mnemonics may improve performance.
9. To teach spelling, use a multi-sensory approach which combines saying, spelling aloud, and writing words.
10. Ways to improve vocabulary and comprehension can include a student-developed file of vocabulary words and the use of word webs and visual organizers to relate words and ideas heard or read on paper. A dictionary or thesaurus, suited to the child's learning level, is also an excellent tool for building vocabulary, spelling and reading comprehension.
11. For students who have difficulty organizing time, materials and information, a variety of approaches can be used, including:

f. response delays as the student attempts to sort out verbal confusion

3. *Classroom behaviors associated with visual, association confusions:*

- a. higher-level difficulties with if-then and the causal relationships
- b. higher-level difficulties with inferential reasoning and reading between lines
- c. irregularities regarding perception of conceptual gestalt
- d. tendencies toward being excessively attentive to non-salient/irrelevant details
- e. tendencies toward being pulled to salient details to the exclusion of other associated events

4. *Classroom behaviors associated with limited concept manipulation, inner language skills:*

- a. limited self-generation and use of strategies
- b. compromised memory styles
- c. reduced efficiency/ accuracy
- d. compromised summarization/ paraphrasing competencies
- e. restricted inferential reasoning skills
- f. tendencies toward being concrete with inordinate difficulties with abstract events
- g. questionable appreciation and use of humor
- h. restricted competencies for reading between lines
- i. limited appreciation of if-then relationships
- j. limited skill generalization from one event to another
- k. limited skill for offering alternatives
- l. limited skill at hypothesis generation
- m. limited skill at hypothesis testing
- n. restricted mathematic problem solving activities

(Martha-Sue Hoffman, 1984)

We all know the student who constantly fidgets, who does not finish his/her work, never knows what page we are on, or does not hear the assignment. It may be true in some cases that people displaying these and other behaviors are simply unfocused or even lazy; learning disabled people are often termed lazy. They are always being told to try harder. Moreover, there is little understanding of the fact that it is not the matter of having them do it differently. Anyway, the burden is on us as teachers to ensure that the classroom environment does not perpetuate learning failure.

Pedagogical Implications

Teachers can improve the learning climate for many students and most assuredly for those with a learning disability by planning tasks so that different intelligences are called upon and by balancing the involvement required of each hemisphere of the brain (Root, 1994).

Listed below are some suggested ways to aid students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) learn more effectively at home or at school. Using the possibilities must be based on the individual needs of each learner.

Information and ideas from a multidisciplinary team, including the parents and student, are important for developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that meets the unique needs of each student with learning disabilities. A carefully developed multidisciplinary approach will make classroom instruction meaningful for the student.

1. For some students who read slowly or with difficulty, a "read-along" technique in which taped texts and materials allow learning of printed materials.

called a fine motor disability.

Gross motor disabilities can cause the child to be clumsy, to stumble, to fall, to bump into things, or to have trouble with generalized physical activities like running, climbing, or swimming.

The most common form of fine motor disability shows up when the child begins to write. The problem lies in an inability to get many muscles in the dominant hand to work together as a team. Children and adolescents with this "written language" disability have slow and poor handwriting (Silver, 1990).

What are some signs that a person may have a learning disability?

Warning signs of learning disabilities in students occur as a pattern of behavior, over time. They include the following:

● *Language/Mathematics/Social Studies*

- a) Avoidance of reading and writing
- b) Difficulty of summarizing
- c) Tendency to misread information
- d) Poor reading comprehension
- e) Difficulty of understanding textbook subject area
- f) Trouble with open-ended questions
- g) Continued poor spelling
- h) Poor grasp of abstract concepts
- i) Poor skills in writing essays
- j) Poor ability to apply math skills

● *Attention/Organization*

- a) Difficulty of staying organized
- b) Trouble with test formats
- c) Slow work pace in class and in testing situations
- d) Poor note taking skills
- e) Poor ability to proofread or double check work

● *Social Behavior*

- a) Difficulty of accepting criticism
- b) Difficulty of seeking or giving feedback
- c) Problem negotiating or advocating for oneself
- d) Difficulty of resisting peer pressure
- e) Difficulty of understanding another person's perspectives (Focus Adolescent Services, 2000)

Martha-Sue Hoffman (1984) divides ways that learning problems manifest themselves in school into four categories of difficulties. Although they were written to describe native-speaking, school aged children, many of them provide helpful insights for all teachers.

Categories of Difficulty

1. *Classroom behaviors associated with word-retrieval difficulties:*

- a. an appearance of persistent verbal reticence
- b. a diminishing verbal spontaneity
- c. a tendency to raise one's hand presumably with correct answer, but ending up not knowing when actually called upon
- d. a tendency to express the wrong answer
- e. increasing difficulty in getting started, both verbally and graphically
- f. an inordinate amount of difficulty with phonics acquisition and application

2. *Classroom behaviors associated with selective attention immaturities:*

- a. inconsistent levels of task-attentiveness
- b. diminishing levels of concentration vigilance and maintenance
- c. variable levels of performance accuracy
- d. inconsistent levels of task-completeness
- e. an appearance of being forgetful when, in fact, the information is never really received or processed

which you store information that you have repeated often enough. You can retrieve this information quickly by thinking of it — you can come up with your current address and phone number quite readily, for example — or you may have to spend a little more time and effort to think or it — your mother's home address, for example.

If your child has a memory disability, it is most likely a short-term one. Like abstraction disabilities, long-term memory disabilities interferes so much with functioning that children who have them are more likely to be classified as retarded. It may take ten to fifteen repetitions for a child with this problem to retain what the average child retains in three or five repetitions. Yet the same child usually has no problem with long-term memory. Your child probably surprises you at times by coming up with details that you have forgotten about, something that happened several years ago.

A short-term memory disability can occur with information learned through what one sees — visual short-term memory disability — or with information learned through what one hears — auditory short-term memory disability. Often the two are combined. For example, you might go over a spelling list one evening with your son. He looks at it several times, listens to you, and can write down the spellings correctly from memory. He seems to have it down pat, but that's because he's concentrating on it. The next morning he has lost most or all of the words. Or a teacher may go over a math concept in class until your daughter understands it — she's concentrating on it. Yet when she comes home that night and does her homework, she has completely forgotten how to do the problems.

Output Disabilities

Information comes out of the brain either by means of words — language output — or through muscle activity, such as writing, drawing, gesturing, and so forth — motor output. A child or adolescent may have a language disability or motor disability.

● *Language Disability*

Two forms of language are used in communication, spontaneous language and demand language. You use spontaneous language in situations where you initiate whatever is said. Here you have the luxury of picking the subject and taking some time to organize your thoughts and to find the correct words before you say anything. In a demand language situation, someone else sets up a circumstance in which you must communicate. A question is put to you, for example. Now you have no time to organize your thoughts or find the right words; you have only a split second in which you must simultaneously organize, find words, and answer more or less appropriately. Children with a specific language disability usually have no difficulty with spontaneous language. They do, however, often have problems with demand language. For example, if a child comes across a demanding situation in which he or she should respond, he or she may ask you to repeat your question in order to gain more time for thinking and answering. If the child is forced to answer, the response may be so confusing or so circumstantial that is difficult to follow.

● *Motor Disability*

If a child has difficulty in using large muscle group, this is called a gross motor disability. Difficulty in performing tasks that require many muscles to work together in an integrated way is

example, "the dog" and "your dog" have very different meanings. The ability to draw general applications from specific words and to attach subtle shading to the basic meanings of words is referred to as "abstract thinking".

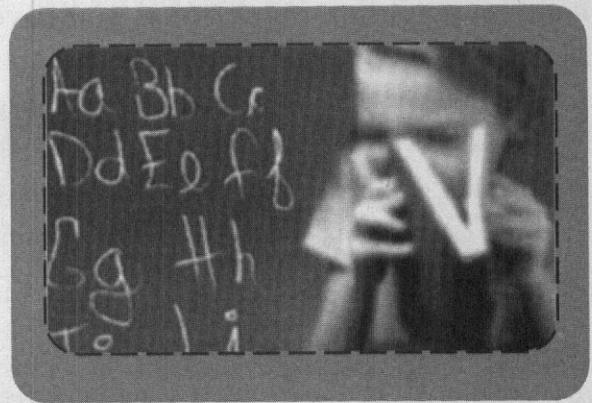
● *Sequencing Disability*

A student with such a disability might hear or read a story, but in recounting it, start in the middle, go to the beginning, then shift to the end. Eventually the whole story comes out, but the sequence of events is wrong. Or a child might see the math problem as $16-3=?$ on the blackboard, but write it as $61-3=?$

Spelling words with all of the right letters in the wrong order can also reflect this disability. Or a child may memorize a sequence—the days of the week, for example—and then be unable to use single units out of the sequence correctly. If you ask what comes after Wednesday, the child cannot answer spontaneously, but must go back over the whole list, "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday...", before she or he can answer. This may also happen with regard to the numbers or the months of the year.

● *Abstraction Disability*

Once information is recorded in the brain and laced in the right sequence, one must be able to infer meaning. Most learning disabled children have only minor difficulties in this area. Abstraction—the ability to derive the correct general meaning from a particular word or symbol—is a basic intellectual task. If the disability in this area is too great, the child is apt to be functioning at a retarded level. Some children do, however, have problems with abstraction. The teacher may be doing a language-arts exercise with a group of students. He or she reads a story about a police officer, let us say. The teacher begins a



discussion of police officers in general, asking the pupils if they know any men or women who are police officers in their neighborhoods, and if so, what do they do? A child with an abstraction disability may not be able to answer such a question. He or she can only talk about the particular officer in the story and not about law officers in general. Older students might have difficulty understanding jokes. Much of humor is based on playing on words which confuses them.

● *Memory Disability*

Short-term memory is the process by which you hold on to information as long as you are concentrating on it. For example, when you call the information operator for a long-distance number, you get a ten-digit number with an area code. Like most people, you can probably retain these numbers long enough to dial the number if you do it right away and nothing interrupts your attention. However, if someone starts talking to you in the course of dialing, you may lose the number. Or, you might go to the store with five things in mind to buy, but by the time you get there so many different impressions have intervened that you've forgotten an item or two on your list.

Long-term memory refers to the process by

and instructions into an appropriate order so that tasks can be successfully completed (pp. 1-2).

Types of Learning Disabilities

First of all let us quickly outline a simple scheme describing what the brain must do in order for learning to take place. The first step is "input, getting information into the brain, primarily from the eyes and the ears. The second step is called "integration" in which the brain needs to make sense out of the arrived information. The next step is the storage and retrieval of the information, the "memory" process. And the last step is sending some kind of message back to the nerves and muscles, its "out put" (Silver, 1990). Now let's look at each area of learning disability specifically:

Input Disabilities

Information arrives at the brain as impulses, transmitted along neurons, primarily from eyes_called "visual input" and from our ears_called "auditory input". This input process takes place in the brain. It does not pertain to visual problems such as nearsightedness or farsightedness, or to any hearing problems. This central process of seeing, or hearing, or in any other way taking in or perceiving one's environment is referred to as "perception". Thus we speak of a child who has a perceptual disability in the area of visual input as having a visual perceptual disability, and one with a disability in the area of auditory input as having an auditory perceptual disability. Some children have both kinds of perceptual disabilities, or they may have problems when both inputs are needed at the same time. For example, seeing what the teacher writes on the blackboard while listening to the explanation of what is being written.

● **Visual Perceptual Disability**

Your student may have difficulty in organizing

the position and shape of what he or she sees. Input may be perceived with letters reversed or rotated: An emight look like a 9; and E might look like a W, or a 3, or an M. The student may confuse similar looking letters because of these rotations or reversals: d, b, p, g, and q, may be confused with any one of others. The word "was" might be perceived as "saw".

● **Auditory Perceptual Disability**

As with visual perception, your student may have difficulty with auditory perception. Those who have difficulty distinguishing subtle difference in sounds will misunderstand what you are saying and respond incorrectly. Words that sound alike are often confused-"blue" and "blew", or "ball" and "bell". You may ask a child, "How are you?" He may answer, "I'm nine". He thought he heard an "old" instead of "are".. or in addition to the "are."

Some students cannot process sound input as fast as normal ones can. This is called "auditory lag." If you speak at a normal pace, the student may miss part of what you are saying. You have to speak slower, or give separate instructions, before he or she can follow you.

Integration Disability

Once the information coming into the brain is registered, it has to be understood. At least two steps are required to do this: sequencing and abstraction.

Suppose that your brain recorded the following three graphic symbols: d, o, g. No problems with visual perception. But to make sense, of the perception, you have to place the symbols in the right order, or sequence. Is it d-o-g, or g-o-d or d-g-o, or what? Then you have to infer meaning from the context in which the word is used, both a general meaning and a specific meaning. For

remove or diminish these learning barriers? What are different types of learning disabilities? In this paper "Input", "Integration", and "Output" disabilities as three different types of learning disabilities are going to be dealt with. Those who have "input" disabilities have actually problems with perception and visualization of the materials. The students having "integration" disabilities show problems about sequencing and abstracting the materials. And the learners with "output" disabilities have actually problems with language and motor disabilities. So, this paper attempts to make classroom teachers more familiar with learning disabilities as well as offering some practical techniques to classroom practitioners for working more fruitfully with learners having learning disabilities.

Key words: *input disabilities, integration disabilities, output disabilities, language disabilities*

What is learning disability?

Learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do some mathematical calculations (Public Law 1977. pp. 76-104).

This term encompasses such conditions as dyslexia, minimal brain dysfunctions, brain injury, perceptual handicaps, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, or mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Levine (1984) believes that learning disability interferes with someone's ability to store, process, or produce information. He also says that learning disabilities create a gap between a person's true capacity and his day to day production and performance. It is not obvious that a person has learning disability. What may prove this shortcoming may be academic failure or unachievement by some one who seems capable of more (Levine 1984, p.1).

According to Saltus (1991) learning disabilities might have been inherited. It seems that they are caused by a neurological malfunction or processing glitch which renders written text-deciphering, sound-symbol connections and/or the sequencing of information very difficult. A learning disability does not necessarily show less intelligence. In fact, those who have a learning disability are often very bright, even gifted people (Vail 1987). However, it is true that their short circuit or processing glitch causes them to see things differently and sometimes obscures their intelligence.

While they cannot be cured, they can be taught compensatory strategies. Dyslexia is the term that is usually used to cover a very broad range of learning disabilities which involve language processing deficits. In brief, Levine (1984) describes these dysfunctions in terms of problems relating to 1) attention; 2) language, difficulty in interpreting and / or remembering verbal messages and instructions; 3) spatial orientation, poor reading and spelling skills; 4) memory, difficulties with retrieval of presumably stored information because it is mis-stored and cannot be found spontaneously; 5) fine motor control; 6) sequencing or difficulty organizing information

Learning Disabilities



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چکیده

بسیاری از معلمان، در موقعیت‌های کلاسی همواره با چالش‌ها و مشکلاتی روبه‌رو هستند که یکی از آن‌ها، «ناتوانی‌های یادگیری» بعضی از دانش‌آموزان است. لیواین (۱۹۸۴) معتقد است، ناتوانی یادگیری، در ذخیره‌سازی، پردازش و تولید اطلاعات افراد دخالت می‌کند و باعث ایجاد شکاف بین ظرفیت واقعی شخص و تولید و اجرای وی می‌شود. هر چند که ظاهراً مشخص نیست که او دچار ناتوانی یادگیری است، اما آن‌چه که این نقیصه را می‌تواند به اثبات برساند، عدم موفقیت شخص در موقعیت‌های تحصیلی است. ناتوانی‌های یادگیری از چه منابعی نشأت می‌گیرند؟ وظیفه‌ی ما به عنوان معلم در این زمینه چیست؟ و چه قدر می‌توانیم به فردی که دچار چنین مشکلی است، کمک کنیم؟ انواع ناتوانی‌های یادگیری که در این مقاله به آن‌ها اشاره شده است عبارت‌اند از: ناتوانی‌های درون‌دادی، ناتوانی درخصوص تلفیق مطالب و ناتوانی‌های برون‌دادی.

فردی که دچار ناتوانی‌های درون‌دادی است، با دریافت داده‌ها به صورت دیداری یا شنیداری و یا هر دو، مشکل دارد. فراگیرنده‌ای که دچار ناتوانی‌های تلفیق است، معمولاً در دو حوزه‌ی توالی و انتزاعی کردن مطالب، با مشکل روبه‌روست. هم‌چنین، فردی که دچار ناتوانی‌های برون‌دادی است، مشکلاتی درخصوص ناتوانی‌های زبانی و یا ناتوانی‌های عملی دارد. هافمن (۱۹۸۴) مشکلات یادگیری فراگیران را به چهار بخش تقسیم کرده است که در ادامه‌ی مقاله به آن‌ها اشاره خواهد شد. در این مقاله، ضمن بررسی این گونه‌ی ناتوانی‌ها، چندین راهبرد برای معلمان ارائه می‌شود که می‌تواند، در ارتقای سطح یادگیری افرادی که دچار ناتوانی‌های یادگیری هستند، مفید واقع شود.

کلید واژه‌ها: ناتوانی یادگیری، ناتوانی درون‌دادی، ناتوانی تلفیق، ناتوانی برون‌دادی، ناتوانی زبانی.

Abstract

Many of us who teach EFL are faced with setting where a certain student might have a learning problem which blocks or impedes his/her progress in English. So, what is the solution? How can we