

## Beattie – Learning Disabilities Continued Part 2 - Transcript

In class Tuesday we introduced learning disabilities and looked at a couple of different activities that are consistent and representative of someone with a learning disability and we talked about the components and definitions of some of the characteristics of learning disabilities.

(See General Characteristics slide) The first couple of characteristics are similar to the definitional stuff, but we will go over them anyway. Whenever there are characteristics of any disability, usually not all the characters are appropriate nor apply in all people in that particular area or category. These first two, however, are generally always there as far as the area of learning disabilities are concerned.

There is always a discrepancy between ability and achievement like we talked about on Tuesday. And once again it is very difficult to have a learning disability if there is no academic difficulty or academic learning disability. There must be a learning difficulty or academic difficulty with the material when considering a learning disability. Therefore the first two are almost always present.

I think the language barrier is always there too, but research shows that only 80-90% of kids with LD show signs of a language disorder. Has anyone thought of an academic task that does not involve language?

Kids with LD often times exhibit poor motor skills. It can be very difficult to identify kids as LD when they are young because there are not a whole lot of academics going on. However, one of the early characteristics of LD in children is poor motor skills. This can be either gross motor skills like running and jumping and/or fine motor skills like writing and that sort of thing.

We talk about and looked at some examples of this thing called processing and students difficulty with it. And that is simply defined by kids having difficulty recognizing, discriminating, and/or interpreting data. This difficulty can cause kids to not be able to function appropriately and effectively in class.

Social/emotional difficulties are also something that occurs with people with LD. Many times these people will have limited friendships and don't know how to act and react to certain circumstances. These are the kids that don't understand what a secret is and go tell someone because they can't comprehend the meaning of a secret. Because of this and many other reason many times these kids end up with very few strong relationships. The impact that this stuff can have is great as I has expressed before. There are many days I sit here at work and I wonder what I am doing there because the permeating thing that I think about is that I have a learning disability in reading and I look at my colleagues and recognize how well read how well spoken they are and I wonder "Is this suppose to feel like this?" There are some days I wonder if the University of Florida is gonna call me and revoke my diploma because they feel I don't deserve it. Basically I feel under qualified to be doing what I do and judge myself accordingly to those around me and that affects a lot about me socially and emotionally. So please be aware of these types of things when dealing with kids these emotional issues can be very dramatic to kids.

One of the most vivid memories I have of working with kids was an occurrence of a high school student with LD who was confused about why he didn't have any friends anymore. He said for an extended period of time he had a lot of friends and then as soon as he got into an accident and lost his car all of sudden he didn't have friends. He couldn't connect that his car was the only reason these people wanted to be his friend and transport them around and as soon as he lost that he then lost those relationships. So definitely the social/emotional difficulties can be real.

Folks with LD just don't remember stuff. Short term, long term, in many circumstances it can be both. They will forget assignment, appointments, and many other things. This can be a significant factor.

We will talk about ADHD stuff in a while, but kids with LD will often portray attention difficulties. They are not always severe enough to be considered ADHD but they will have some sort of difficulty focusing their attention in addition to some of these other characteristics.

Those characteristics that we just looked at are the most commonly cited but there are some additional things that are of some interest.

(See additional characteristics slide) Discussing slides.

Inter-individual differences is like how I compare myself to you all. What my academic abilities are, are different than what yours are. Intra-individual differences mean that maybe if this dotted line is average, then my math skills are up here and my reading is down here. Those differences within me make up my intra-individual differences.

One of the things that often distinguishes students with LD from students who are misdiagnosed is the consistency of those strengths and weaknesses. Like if a kid has that profile where math is always a going to be an area of strength and reading will be more difficult.

Yesterday I was working with some kids on SAT prep and we were going over some math things. We were doing circles and triangles and all that kind of stuff and one of the boys said he didn't understand it. He said he hated geometry and never understood it. He made A's and B's in everything except geometry. To me geometry is more language than it is math. It's reading with numbers and stuff in there. So the consistency usually exists.

Alright some things that would be really helpful for you to do. Everyone in this room will have some exposure to kids with LD because most of their academic time will be spent in the general classroom setting. If they understand math, they will be in traditional math classes. If they get reading the only time they may not be in general classes is during that math class. So everyone will be involved with this population.

(See teacher to do slide) Discussing slides.

The more multi-sensory a lesson is the better it will be. Don't just talk. Don't just put stuff on the screen. Do both.

Many teachers have a problem with this and I don't understand it. Accept a variety of responses such as audiotape, or cd, rather than a paper. Think about the purpose of the paper. You're testing to see what they have learned. If you have a kid that has a written expression disorder and you ask them to write a paper you're not gonna find out what that kid knows. However, if you let them provide their answer auditorily on a tape or cd you will find out a heck of a lot more.

Kids need to know what they are doing correctly and incorrectly. So provide that to them. If they continue to do what is incorrect, they will get really good at something that isn't acceptable. I try not to talk much about my golf game. I suck at golf. And the reason I suck is because I slice the ball, which is not a good thing to do. Because I am not correcting my skill I am becoming very good at not being good at golf. I don't have much direct and frequent feedback on my golf game because the people I play with don't have a clue either. So I should get lessons so someone can teach me the correct way to do things. But because I am not getting the feedback I need I will never improve my golf game. You need to tell these kids exactly what to do and to practice it. Without that, I won't cure my slice; and these kids won't understand what they are doing wrong. Direct and frequent feedback is crucial.

Practice is a key. Kids with LD need lots of practice. They have to learn how and why. When the how and why is established, they then need to go and practice it.

Another thing that is commonly recommended for kids with LD is extended time on tests, etc. It's usually a really simple thing to implement but for some reason many people are hesitant to do it. If the class lasts for an hour or 90 minutes the kid may need two hours to finish. So the kid works in the 90 minute block then comes back later to finish the test. This tends to be overused and sometimes it doesn't work at all, but there are circumstances where it does work.

Preferential seating can help. When we talked earlier this semester about kids with hearing impairment we discussed how preferential seating needs to be used appropriately. So make sure the seating is appropriate and that kids gain an advantage from that.

Guided notes, graphic organizers, advance organizers are all help for kids with LD. It enables them to follow along and understand what is going on in the classroom in a relatively simple way.

(See diagnostic and statistical manual slide)

Real quickly we will introduce these elements of ADHD. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM IV) is like the bible of identification of disorders. In the DSM IV they list the specific criteria for identifying someone with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD). There are three broad areas that are involved in ADHD.

The first is inattention or inattentiveness. We'll look at nine types of behavior that signify ADHD. A person must portray six of these types of behavior over a period of six months to be considered ADHD. It's important to note that it's not just one or two things and it's not just over a day or two. It has to be several things that are occurring over an extended period of time.

The first criterion under attentiveness is when the person does not exhibit close attention to the task and/or exhibits careless errors. So when kids make sign errors in math, such as using a subtract sign instead of an addition sign would be a good example.

Folks with ADHD will exhibit trouble sustaining their attention. They'll be with you for a minute and then they are gone.

They may also not seem to listen. Why don't they seem to listen? They can't focus. If they can't focus and you ask them to repeat what you just said and they can't answer it may be that they are focusing on something else.

Similar to that these people generally don't follow instructions and consequently don't complete their work.

These kids can have poor organization. I'm sure there are many of you who are internally organized. You just have a sense of what it means to be organized. I envy you all. My wife is like that and that's the only thing I hate about her. But it's just because you all have no idea what it is like to not have a clue. Without that routine or without a structure I couldn't even tell you what day it is.

These are also folks that avoid activities requiring sustained mental effort. It can hurt them to do that. Kids are typically unsuccessful in doing that. So it can be frustrating.

Similarly to everything so far, folks with ADHD tend to lose things a whole lot. Couple of times this semester students have asked if they can hand in things early and my response is, "If you want to you can, but there is a really good chance that I will lose it because it isn't in a pile with all the others."

These are people who are easily distracted. There are all kinds of t-shirts today that focus on the distracting nature of ADHD. You know, the "look there's a cow..." shirts. You've seen them.

The last criterion in attentiveness is forgetfulness. I forget meetings and stuff very often. It fits with this inattentive piece of ADHD.

So six of more of these criteria over a period of six or more months could possibly signify that a person is ADHD.

The next two parts are put together. Hyperactivity/Impulsivity. Under hyperactivity we have these six types of behavior.

(See hyperactivity/impulsivity slide)

Ok, I should have mentioned this when we looked at the first nine. As you go through these, you'll say, "That's me. I want meds." But be aware we all do these things at some point in times. The consistency is important.

What does running and climbing inappropriately mean? It doesn't mean running strangely. It means they are running and climbing when they aren't supposed to be.

Driven by a motor simply means they are like the energizer bunny. Always on the go always talking.

(See hyperactivity/impulsivity slide)

You'll be able to tell early with these things because, yes, many kids will portray all these activities. These kids will also have problems standing in line. Sometimes these kids will annoy you but don't strangle them. It's a natural reaction, but don't do it.