

Beattie – Learning Disabilities - Transcript

Lets go ahead and talk about learning disabilities. This is an area that is near in dear to my heart. It's what I majored in with my Doctoral program and also I am an adult with a learning disability. So many times I know what these kids are going through as far as this disability is concerned. We'll talk about that in more detail as we go through.

(See learning disabilities slide) The North Carolina definition as you see is incredibly long. Don't copy it. I'll explain the key points in red. Intrinsic means it is inside of these kids, it's isn't caused by something else. (Reads definition on slide.) The important stuff is the stuff in red and we will discuss that.

(See IDEA definition/criteria slides) The criteria for the existence of the learning disability (LD) are listed here on this slide. We talked about language and its importance last time. We talked also about receptive and expressive language. Kids with LD generally have some sort of language difficulty. There are no academic activities that I can think of that doesn't involve language. If anyone in here can identify an academic activity that doesn't involve language I give you an A for the semester and not make you turn in anything else. You're not going to though. Basically everything involving academics has a relation to language. There is a thread that exists between language and the identification of a learning disability in kids. If you think you've got something you can talk to me after class and we'll see that you are wrong.

Because a student has a learning disability in one of those things doesn't necessarily mean there is a learning disability in all those areas.

If you remember when we talked about behavior disorders, we said that kids with behavior disorders have difficulty in school caused by their behavior disorder. Kids with learning difficulties have trouble with school as well caused by their learning disability itself not something else or some other disability. These disabilities can be caused by difficulty processing information or possible neurological involvement, which we will discuss further in a little while. In many cases kids with LD have worse behavior problems than kids with behavior disabilities. However, those behavior problem are caused by the LD. The key is that learning disabilities are not caused by other disabilities.

We talked about the behavior piece. Kids with LD generally have average or above average IQ scores. We'll look at that phenomenon later. It's really hard to factor out the kids with a low socioeconomic background. Kids coming from low SES background enter school behind and end up just running a race to attempt to keep up with the pace of their classes. This can't be cause of LD but it's impossible to rule that out as a potential factor.

Don't worry about the next definition or criteria.

(See components of the definition of LD slide)

A discrepancy exists between the student's ability and academic achieve. IQ tests are given to kids to test their ability. The academic achieve test are standardized tests and focus on reading

writing and math. For there to be a discrepancy there must be a difference in the student's ability and academic achieve by at least one standard deviation of 15 points. So if a kid has an IQ score of 100 the student must have at no more than an 85 on the academic achievement test to be considered LD. At low levels of IQ this discrepancy doesn't always seem apparent so these tests are used for kids who have an average or above average IQ. Parents will not understand this and ask you questions about it all the time.

The second component is known as the exclusion component. It is the part of the definition that says a LD may not be caused by anything else.

The third one is language and academics. We've gone over the point that language and academics and links. Now this can be verbal or written language.

Now we're going to do an activity that might explain and show a little bit what it is like to have a LD. It will be a round robin kind of storytelling activity. I'm going to give you a topic then randomly pick people to give me a sentence about the topic. In addition the sentence must be an extension of the previous sentence... So as you can see these types of LD can be very difficult barrier. Many kids will even shut down because of this and become embarrassed. Kids with LD get caught in this everyday and can be very frustrating. Maybe the best example would be if you took a foreign language. If you aren't fluent, then likelihood of you volunteering and saying something is very small.

There more technologically advanced we become as a society the more these neurological issue become apparent. There's something going on neurologically that's causing these individuals to no be able to do what they need to.

When I was very young I was in an incubator, maybe 6 months old, and somehow they oxygen line was pulled out. For a period of time I was without air. Fortunately, my mother discovered that I was blue at one point and decided that wasn't a good thing and fixed the oxygen line. Then 10 or 15 years ago I had something done called brain mapping. They hooked up to a set of electrodes, which were hooked to a computer that displayed a projection of my brain activity. The bright colors were high activity and the dull colors were low brain activity. The left side of my brain (which is responsible for language) was very grey. I am math oriented and that side was all bright. So the neurological damage done to my brain was on the left side or left hemisphere.

Some research has shown that over time the one functioning side can take over the responsibilities of both sides of the brain. I think that's what I have done. I filter language in a mathematical sense. Just know the significance of the neurological damage.

We have talked about the processing piece of individuals. Remember our talk last time about receptive and expressive language and the middle ground between the two being processing. Processing is when we take in information and use it in some way to formulate a response of some sort. What happens with kids with LD is that there is usually a processing disorder or a processing delay.

Here are two examples: A teacher asks a student, "Who was the first president of the US?" And you would say? George Washington. You process the answer. Kids with LD have to process the question first. "Who" meaning a person. "Was" meaning past tense. "The first" meaning before anyone else. "President" well that must be the person in charge of our country. Then after all of that the kids hand goes up and answers the question. Unfortunately the class may have moved on in the discussion and might be on Abraham Lincoln now. Many times the kids will be judged as not paying attention. When the fact is they just have a processing delay that is keeping them from keeping up the class.

Last thing that happens with kids with LD in the classroom is a teacher will give an assignment then keep moving on and discuss something else. Meanwhile the kid is sitting there trying to figure out what the assignment is and then the teacher asks this kid a question and again he isn't with the class because he is focusing on what was said about the assignment. Many times these kids have no idea why they are getting in trouble. They are doing exactly what they think is correct. Unfortunately what they think and what is going on doesn't necessarily match.

The sixth component is what I call uneven patterns of development. I said earlier that kids with LD tend to have areas of difficult along with areas of strength. When I took the GRE I scored a 780 of 800 on the math and 420 of 800 on the verbal. That's a huge difference and that's the kind of thing that happens with kids with LD. This can sometimes make teachers crazy, they don't understand why kids understand some subjects so well and don't understand others.

The last component is that there is a need ofr special ed service to function in the normal limits of the classroom.