1974

Accommodating the Child with Specific Learning Disabilities

Wanda M. Harrison  
Central Washington University

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EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE
Graduate School

Final Examination of
Wanda Harrison
B.A., Central Washington State College, 1971
for the degree
Master of Education

Committee in Charge
Dr. Alan Bergstrom
Dr. Robert Carlton     Dr. Franklin Carlson
Courses Included in Graduate Study

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Please note: This student’s biographical information has been redacted due to privacy concerns.
ACCOMMODATING THE CHILD WITH
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES

A Creative Project
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Wanda M. Harrison
April, 1974
It is the purpose of this project to provide the classroom teacher with selected suggestions and activities that may be implemented in the regular classroom. These suggestions may not only help the disabled learner in his academic learning, but improve his self-image as well.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This writer wishes to express her appreciation to Dr. Alan Bergstrom, Dr. Robert Carlton, and Dr. Franklin Carlson who read and contributed constructive suggestions throughout the writing of this paper.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Academic failure has often become a way of life for children with specific learning disabilities. The pain and humiliation of failure becomes so familiar that soon such children begin to consider themselves hopelessly "dumb". At this point the child is likely to stop trying to learn. Failure feeds upon itself. Therefore it is important that the disabled learner be given assignments in which he can be successful. Nothing will start a child back to work quicker than success. Immediate knowledge of success must be available to him, for nothing is as rewarding as the realization that he can learn like other students. The first thing a teacher must do is somehow help him break feeling or believing that he is a failure. Until his wounded ego is healed, it is most difficult to get him to take an interest in learning.

The learning disabilities problem will not go away or solve itself. Children with such problems must attend school for ten or twelve years. They are forced to remain in school no matter how little they learn, no matter how discouraged they become, no matter what the extent of their academic failures. They cannot keep up in the regular classroom and as a result of continuing dissatisfying experiences in school,
other problems develop with these children. Discipline, lack of interest, and inability to adjust socially are common problems of children with learning disabilities. They can benefit and profit from an education. They can learn, but they can derive little value from programs designed for average and superior children.

It is the intent of this project to provide the classroom teacher with selected suggestions and activities she may be able to implement in a regular classroom. These suggestions may not only help the disabled learner in his academic learning, but improve his self-image as well.
Chapter 2

IDENTIFYING THE CHILD

A child with specific learning disabilities can be classified into one of four types: (a) the slow learner, (b) the emotionally disturbed child, (c) the culturally deprived child, and (d) the disabled learner.

The slow learner is a child who is willing but just can't advance as far or as fast as other youngsters. The slow learner or the borderline mentally retarded child in the regular grade is usually a low achiever, but not all of the low achievers in a class can properly be classified as slow learners. Some slow achievers are normal or above in intelligence and are more properly called disabled learners. Their difficulties may be the result of emotional problems, poor health or nutrition, sensory impairment, brain damage, cultural deprivation, poor motor or visual coordination, or perceptual handicaps of various kinds. These pupils often do rather well in some subjects but poorly in others. If a teacher has disabled learners in a classroom with true slow learners, care must be taken to evaluate and to teach them according to their particular needs.

In their first annual report the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children determined the definition of learning disability:
A learning disability refers to one or more significant deficits in essential learning processes requiring special educational techniques for its remediation. Children with learning disabilities generally demonstrate a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement in one or more areas, such as spoken, reading, or written language, mathematics, and spatial orientation. The learning disability referred to is not primarily the result of sensorymotor, intellectual, or emotional handicap, or lack of opportunity to learn. Deficits are to be defined in terms of accepted diagnostic procedures in education and psychology. Essential learning processes are those currently referred to in behavioral science as perception, integration, and expression, either verbal or nonverbal. Special education techniques for remediation require educational planning based on the diagnostic procedures and findings [15:119-120].

Children with learning disabilities confront almost all teachers. In the average community where the school has children from all cultural, social, and economic levels, a class of thirty unselected children can be expected to contain four or five students with learning disabilities. To help these students the teacher must first identify them, have them psychologically evaluated by the school psychologist, and with this information as a guide, plan a program which will build the child's self-image and help him successfully begin performing up to the limits of his capacity.

The most obvious characteristic of children with learning disabilities is an inability to keep up with the rest of the class in rate of learning. They grasp new skills and concepts more slowly than is expected for children in general.

Children with learning disabilities cannot be identified simply by observation. Their physical characteristics are about average in development and appearance.
These children are tall and short, fat and thin, athletic and nonathletic in much the same proportions as the total population. It is probable that there is a higher incidence of illness and disability, and their motor skills and coordination are probably also somewhat inferior. By some educators they are considered problems, truants, inattentive and lazy. These behaviors developed in the child to compensate for their lack of successful achievement.

Below is a list of the ten most frequently cited characteristics of children with learning disabilities as given by James J. McCarthy.

1. Hyperactivity
2. Perceptual-Motor Impairments
3. Emotional Ability
4. General Orientation Defects
5. Disorders of Attention (short attention span, distractibility)
6. Impulsivity
7. Disorders of Memory and Thinking
8. Specific Learning Disabilities in Reading, Arithmetic, Writing, and Spelling
9. Disorders of Speech and Hearing
10. Equivocal Neurological Signs

This list of characteristics is helpful in identifying the child with learning disabilities. Within a regular classroom, a number of children may show some of these characteristics. The child with learning disabilities, the educationally handicapped, and emotionally and socially maladjusted...
children are usually deviate in their behavior. Unless adequate diagnose is provided to determine the cause of deviant behavior and its manifestation in the characteristic of each child, the treatment tends to be a reaction to overt, aggressive behavior by the child that includes punitive action of some sort. Diagnosis is essential to determining the nature of the problem in order to prescribe appropriate measures that must be taken to alleviate it.
The following information may be obtained from cumulative records and can be used in diagnosing the disabled learner: (a) a consistent pattern of inability to perform at grade placement, (b) intelligence tests, (c) achievement test results which show a competence level below that expected for children of similar intelligence. If the above information is found in the cumulative records, probability is that the problem is one of learning disability. When a test or tests do not agree with other information, the reason must be identified. Whenever a case arises that cannot be diagnosed on the basis of available information the school psychologist, who has the training and skills, may make the diagnosis. In planning a curriculum that will provide the kinds of educational experiences which will be of greatest value to the child, it is absolutely necessary that the curriculum be based on effective diagnosis.

James J. McCarthy feels there are three areas of major concern in psychological evaluation:

1. Intellectual
2. Visual-motor perceptual, and
3. Personality.

The following is an account on psychological evaluation taken
from James J. McCarthy's book *Learning Disabilities*:

**INTELLIGENCE TESTS:** There is a host of intelligence tests available to the psychologist, but the WISC and Binet are among the most reliable and useful of these instruments. Generally they present no major problems of administration and they do not rely excessively upon visual-motor perceptual abilities, often said to be impaired in children with learning disabilities.

**VISUAL-MOTOR PERCEPTUAL TESTS:** The observation is that visual-motor perceptual abilities may be impaired in children with learning disabilities. Children with established neurological impairment often perform in deviant manners on these tests; children with learning disabilities are often unable to recall and reproduce a sequence of numbers, letters, or non-meaningful symbols although many of these same children can correctly repeat meaningful sequence such as sentences.

**PERSONALITY TESTS:** It is important to make a distinction between the impulsive and disinhibited behavior exhibited by some children with learning disabilities and the acting-out aggressive behavior sometimes exhibited by children with behavioral problems. Normed tests such as the California Test of Personality, clinical tests such as the Children's Appreception Tests, scales like the Vineland Social Maturity Scale, have all been employed. As in so many other instances, results distinguish the child with learning disabilities from the normal child but not from children with other kinds of handicaps. This then is one of the hard empirical facts that makes characterizing children with learning disabilities so difficult. They are difficult to distinguish on the basis of psychological testing, from other handicapped children [15:21-22].

A linguistic evaluation helps when diagnosing a child's problem. This refers to the ability to communicate and think in language symbols. Speech is regarded simply as sounds and sound patterns. It is possible for a child to have language and speech problems, speech problems alone, or language problems alone.

Linguistic performance is often affected in the child with learning disabilities. On tests like the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, the Illinois Test of Psycho-linguistic Abilities, and on classic measure of language
ability such as sentence complexity, children with learning disabilities not only tend to score lower than normal children but are often quite discrepant in their performance on tests of various abilities that contribute to overall language performance. Such children, for example, might be average for their age on tests of receptive language ability but below average on tests of expressive language ability [15:23].

The fundamental skill of speaking is sometimes deficient in children with learning disabilities. Large families living in small quarters may encourage their children to keep quiet; therefore they do not have the opportunity to use words or to learn their meanings. Another language may be spoken in the home, causing the child to have a limited knowledge of the English language.

Motivation is the key to educating all children, but it is certainly harder to motivate children with learning disabilities. Their problems are often multiple in nature. They may be hostile or apathetic; they may be doing a minimum amount of work; or they may be doing absolutely no work in school at all. When a child has a purpose to learn, he will.

We have heard of a boy learning to read in six months, after six years of failure, because he wanted to construct a motor and had to read the plans for it himself. We know of children, considered to be slow learners, working hours in the library to prepare debates for social studies [12:9].
Chapter 4

MOTOR-PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

Many children who present learning problems in elementary school classrooms appear to suffer from a lack of basic motor development. Since many of the complex activities presented to these children involve basic motor skills, the child meets failure and frustration. The best efforts of teachers often fail because they ignore this vital area.

Consider the problem of laterality. If laterality is not established in the child, and directionality has not been developed, then directions such as left and right are meaningless. When learning to read, this child runs into problems because many of the letters shown him will have no basis for differentiation. Without laterality, there is no difference between b and d. It is not that the child is confused, or reversing the letters. It is that he has not learned the difference. The only difference between b and d is a difference in direction; if no concept of direction exists then no difference exists. It is very difficult to teach a child with this problem the complex activities involved in reading as long as a deficiency in this basic skill persists.

Eye-hand coordinations are very important to the development and performance of simple tasks related to a subject like reading. The child must learn to substitute his
eye for his hand. In drawing a square, the child must use his eyes to determine the shape of the figure and translate this series of eye movements into a series of hand movements that matches what he is copying.

Just as in our thinking we cannot separate what part of the child's activity in any task, such as copying a figure, is motor and what part is perceptual, in our teaching we cannot separate what parts of the activity are perceptual and what parts are motor. Many successful teaching programs have recognized this fact and have trained all aspects of the perceptual process at one time. If we think in these total-process terms, such activities as teaching a child to balance on a walking board in order to improve his perceptual performance no longer strike us as bizarre. In like manner, it will be obvious to us that attempting to teach in terms of input factors alone overlooks many valuable aids. The total perceptual-motor process should be considered in every learning activity which we set up for the child. Learning experiences should be designed for him in terms of this total process in order to obtain the desired results [13:63].

The development of an adequate form perception depends upon the adequate learning of basic sensory-motor skills. This learning begins with the development of laterality. The child must learn kinesthetic laterality before he can proceed to the visual form. This laterality must be projected outside of the body in terms of directionality. The eyes are used as a mediator of the projection of directionality into visual stimuli. These basic skills are necessary in order to ensure that the relationships involved in a form are presented to the child and are responded to by him in a consistent manner. If those relationships do not come to the child in a consistent fashion, if they vary from one presentation to another, it is likely that he will experience difficulty in constructing a pattern within himself that will represent a consistent set of relationships.
When a child has inadequate basic sensory motor skills, he needs help in the development of them. Pegboards, drawing, copying, coloring, paper cutting and pasting are types of tasks that help.

Normally a child develops through the stages of the initial motor performance during the pre-school years and by the age of six or seven. In some children the developmental process is broken down because of environmental deprivations, injuries or defects in the organism, or emotional pressures with which the child has been unable to cope. Many of these breakdowns reveal themselves in the early elementary grades through the difficulties in learning and low academic achievement.

In order to help the child who is in difficulty, it is necessary to identify the stage at which learning failed, to supply the necessary relearning, and to assist him to more advanced stages of development that become feasible, on the basis of the new learning.

EVALUATION TASKS

A series of tasks has been devised to help reveal the perceptual-motor performance of the child at each developmental stage. The examiner observes the performance of the child and judges his perceptual-motor skill. A close observation of the child's performance will permit the teacher to identify his level of development and to make a selection of training methods which will aid him.
In the last ten years, Dr. Newell Kepart with the Department of Psychology at Purdue University has written Slow Learner in the Classroom and Learning Disabilities--An Education Adventure. Also during this period he has been the co-author of the following books on perceptual motor skills:

1. Purdue Perceptual Motor Survey
2. Motoric Aids to Perceptual Training
3. Movement Patterns and Motor Education

The following tasks for evaluation of the motor-perceptual performance of the child were condensed from Newell C. Kephart's book The Slow Learner in the Classroom.

Walking Board

Task. The walking beam is a section of two-by-four about twelve feet long laid along the floor with its wider edge down. A child walks on the two-by-four as he would walk on a fence rail. Start the child at one end and ask him to walk to the other. If the child runs or takes very long strides, ask him to walk slowly and use normal strides.

Evaluation. Inadequate performance in this task is indicated by failure to maintain balance. The child who steps off the board more than once or who pauses frequently and has trouble regaining his balance is showing difficulty. He could profit from training procedures designed to aid general postural adjustment. If the child uses one side more than the other to maintain his balance he needs to learn to use both sides together. This can be achieved by having the
child walk across the beam holding a broomstick or long pole in the manner in which a tightrope walker holds a balancing pole. Set his hands wide apart on the pole. If the child uses his two arms symmetrically during much of his performance, give the child two weights to carry in his hands as he balances.

Walking backward. Start the child at one end of the beam with his back toward it. Follow the same procedure as for forward walking of the beam.

Evaluation. Inadequate performance is indicated by frequent loss of balance and by stepping off the board more than twice. If the child cannot perform without watching his feet or hesitates excessively, he may be having trouble with the backward direction. For the child who has trouble with the backward direction, the crab walk and the elephant walk may be useful. (See the directions for the crab walk and the elephant walk under the section of Motor-Perceptual Activities.)

Walking sidewise. Start the child at one end of the beam facing at right angles to it so that the beam extends to his right. Ask him to walk sidewise to the other end. Observe if the child is able to shift his weight from one foot to the other. He should move his right foot to the right and bring his left foot up to it. Notice any hesitation or confusion when movement must change from one foot to
the other. When he has progressed to the end of the beam, ask him to walk back sidewise, moving to his left.

**Evaluation.** This activity is designed to provide additional information regarding the use of the two sides of the body. Watch for the child who has particular difficulty in one direction. If the child steps off the board more than twice, he is probably having trouble with laterality. The game Angels-in-the-snow may be used to help the child identify and control the parts of his body on the non-dominant side. See the directions for Angels-in-the-snow under the section of Motor-Perceptual Activities.

**Jumping**

Evaluating the child's performance against the pull of gravity will give further information concerning his ability to maintain balance. One method of controlling such activities is through the use of hopping, skipping, and jumping performances.

**Both feet.** This is a bilateral activity. Stand the child at the side of the room with clear space in front of him. Ask him to put both feet together and jump forward one step. The child must hold his foot together while he jumps and must not step forward as in walking. Observe whether he can use both sides of his body in this parallel fashion.

**Right foot.** Ask the child to stand on his right foot with his left off the floor. Then ask him to jump forward
one step using his right foot only. Observe whether he can shift his posture in order to operate with one side of his body only. The left foot must not touch the floor.

**Left foot.** Ask the child to stand on his left foot and jump one step forward with his left foot only. Observe same behavior as in the right foot task above.

**Skip.** Ask the child to skip across the room using the feet alternately. Observe whether this is good free movement. Does the child alternate sides with ease or does he have to stop after each step and determine which side he must use next?

**Hop 1/1.** Ask the child to stand with his feet together and hop on the right foot, lifting the left. Next ask him to hop on the left foot, lifting the right. Now ask him to alternate, hopping first on the right and then on the left. The body should remain in one spot during the hopping performance. Observe whether he is able to shift easily from one side to the other and whether his behavior is smooth and rhythmical or stiff and jerky.

**Hop 2/2.** This task is the same as the above except that the child hops twice on the right foot, and then twice on the left. This task is more difficult since the rhythm patterns and alternations are not as regular. Observe the performance for rhythm and smoothness.
Hop 2/1. Ask the child to hop twice on the right foot, and once on the left, twice on the right, etc. This task is still more difficult since the alternation patterns are more complicated. Observe the performance for rhythm and smoothness.

Hop 1/2. Ask the child to hop once on the right foot, twice on the left, etc. This task is the same as the above except that the sides are reversed.

The activities of jumping on both feet, right foot, left foot, skipping and hopping 1/1 are related to the child's ability to control his gross musculature and to alternate activities across the center of gravity of his body. Failure on any of these items would suggest that the child could profit from training techniques concerned with gross body control, such as Angels-in-the-snow. (See the directions for Angels-in-the-snow in the section of Motor-Perceptual Activities.) The activities of hopping 2/2, 2/1, and 1/2 are related to the child's rhythm control. Kinesthetic rhythms must be integrated with auditory rhythms. The use of the trampoline will benefit this child.

Imitation of Movements

Task. Ask the child to stand facing you at about eight or ten feet and far enough away from walls and other obstructions that when he extends his arms he will not strike some object. With his hands loose at his sides, ask him to do whatever you do. Beginning with pattern number 1 move
through each of the patterns in the diagram on page 19. It is desirable that the child reverse the laterality of the examiner's movements. When you move your right hand, he should move his right hand. A great many children will parallel the movement which they see. Do not instruct the child regarding this translation. Their performance should be consistent. The child who sometimes parallels and sometimes reverses is indicating trouble. Movements should be made promptly and with definiteness. Look especially for abortive movements, either in the arm which should not move or toward a different direction in the arm or arm which should move. Some children will move both arms when only one is required to move. If the movement is completed before the child appears to recognize that he has made a mistake, point out his error and be sure that he achieves the correct position before proceeding. The child that reverses the pattern then parallels the pattern is showing confusion in laterality and in body image.

Evaluation. This activity is related to the child's ability to control his upper limbs independently and in combination. It also requires the translation of a visual pattern into a motor pattern which will reproduce it. Difficulty can be aided by training procedures designed to help him with identification and control of individual parts. The Angels-in-the-snow and rhythm techniques will be useful. To aid with the translation of the visual pattern into a motor pattern, this same examination procedure can be used as a training device.
IMITATION MOVEMENT PATTERNS

U = Unilateral Movement
B = Bilateral Movement
C = Crosslateral Movement
Obstacle Course

Task. Ask the child to step over an obstacle about as high as his knee, without touching it. An adequate obstacle can be constructed by laying a yardstick across the seat of two chairs. Observe whether he can step over the obstacle with adequate estimation of its height. Does he knock off the board or does he step too high to clear the board? Next ask the child to duck under an obstacle about two inches lower than his shoulders without touching it. A suitable obstacle can be provided by laying the yardstick across the backs of the chairs. Observe whether he can estimate the height of the board. Does he knock it off or does he bend too far forward to clear it? Next ask the child to squeeze through a narrow opening without touching it. A suitable opening can be provided by placing the chairs back to back close enough together that the child must turn his body in order to squeeze through. Observe whether he can estimate the space and can manipulate his body to fit it. Does he touch either chair?

Evaluation. This task is related to the child's awareness of the space occupied by the parts of his body in various positions. Difficulty is shown when the child either overestimates or underestimates by more than approximately one and one-half inches. One of the best training devices for such children is a trampoline. The child must maintain awareness of his body and its position in space. The seat-drop
and back-drop exercises are particularly useful in aiding the child's awareness of those parts of his body which are behind him.

**Chalkboard**

**Task.** One of the most direct methods of testing the child's adequacy in directionality is through observation of his performance on a chalkboard. In such an activity ask him to produce a movement with certain characteristics of shape and size that will leave a trace in the form of a line on the chalkboard. The child is required to develop a memory (visual) image of a given shape in response to your instructions, translate this into a movement pattern, and reproduce the required movements. The projections characteristic of directionality go on twice—once indirectly when the memory image is translated into motor patterns, and once directly when these patterns are externalized and the child uses the developing trace to control the performance.

**Circle.** Ask the child to step up to the chalkboard and draw a circle. Give no other instructions. Observe preferred hand, size of drawing, position of drawing with reference to midline of body, accuracy of production, and direction. Observe whether he prefers the same hand for this type of activity, especially writing. Observe size of circle. Children who make a circle two or three inches in diameter are usually using the wrist and fingers in the drawing performance but not the forearm and shoulder. If the child
draws a circle which is too small, ask him to make a bigger one. Continue to repeat this instruction after each trial until he produces a drawing eighteen to twenty-four inches in diameter. Observe the position of the circle in relationship to the sides of the body. If the child draws a circle toward the side of the body represented by the preferred hand, stand him in the center of the board space and ask him to look straight ahead and make his circle with this spot as its center. The following difficulties may be observed. One side of the circle becomes flat. The child may draw half the circle with the right hand and half with the left. The child may display confusion in finding the starting point for the drawing. The circle requires the rotation of the wrist if a smooth drawing is to result. The child may lose direction and difficulties may occur at the bottom of the drawing and at the side opposite to the preferred hand. The examiner should observe whether the wrist is stiff or whether the child is having difficulty in controlling it. The circle should be drawn in a counter-clockwise direction if the child uses the right hand and a clockwise direction if he uses the left. If the child shows difficulty in positioning his drawing, it is likely that he is having difficulty mastering the midline problem. If the child's general motor performance is adequate but his chalkboard performance is cramped, it is likely that his drawing activity is limited. Finger painting will help in this case.
Ocular Pursuits

Ocular pursuit attempts to investigate the ability of the child to control ocular movements. Adequate control of the eyes is necessary. Lack of control may be caused by malfunction of the muscular system of the eye and may be a medical problem. On the other hand, the difficulty may be in matching perceptual data and may be a problem of learning within the perceptual area.

Lateral. Obtain a common lead pencil with an eraser. Drive a thumb tack through the eraser so that the head of the tack is parallel to the length of the pencil. Hold the pencil upright before the child's eyes about twenty inches in front of his face. Ask him to watch the head of the tack. Move the pencil about eighteen inches to his right, following an arc of a circle of which the child is the center and which has a radius of twenty inches. Next, move the pencil laterally to the child's left until it is eighteen inches to his left. If the child moves his head instead of moving his eyes, ask him to hold his head still. If he is unable to do so, lightly hold his head with your hand. Repeat the lateral movement of the pencil until he follows the pencil with his eyes. Observe whether the movements are smooth or jerky. Watch the two eyes working together. Observe whether they maintain their relationship to each other or whether one wanders off from the target. The loss of relationship may be apparent only at the extremes of the movement, or may come and go during the movement. Observe if the child's eyes are
always on the target or if he loses it from time to time. If he loses it, can he regain it promptly or does he have to look around for it? Does he overshoot the target and have to wait for it to catch up?

**Evaluation.** This task is designed to identify the child who needs help in establishing ocular control. The child whose pursuit movements are jerky, lack smoothness, or are not well coordinated needs additional help in establishing such control. The following activities can be used.

A pencil and tack routine can be used until adequacy of performance is reached. It is very important in ocular-pursuit training that the child make progress in the training activity. If he continues to follow the target with uncontrolled movements, he is in danger of merely practicing his errors. If the child does not show observable improvement within a few trials, it is doubtful that the training procedure used will be effective if continued. If the progress is not coming, try the following activity. This is identical to the above except that the target is a penlight. The same observations should be made and the same procedure recommended should be followed. The penlight presents its stimuli through direct light rays and is much stronger visual stimulus. If progress is not noted within a few trials, try the following: Ask the child to point to the target and follow it with his finger as he follows it with his eyes. The penlight target is used. If the child does not show
improvement within a few trials, try the following: Ask the child to place his finger on the light and move his finger in contact with the penlight as the light moves. Urge him to offer a certain resistance to the movement of the light by saying to him, "Press down, hard. Try to keep the light from moving." The light is then moved in the principal meridia as in the procedures before. If no observable improvement is noticed, then try the following: This time use a ball as the target. Begin with a large ball such as a beach ball or a playground ball. As training progresses and as the child improves, decrease the size of the ball. The child places both of his hands flat against the other side of the ball and directly opposed to the hands of the instructor. The ball is held between the two pairs of hands. Then begin to move the ball, carrying the child's hands along with you. The child is encouraged to watch the ball and to keep it in sight as it moves. If the child does not show improvement at this level, he should be referred to a professional visual therapist. In beginning ocular-pursuit training, work down through the stages until a level is found at which the child can start to learn. Then move upward through the stages, helping the child achieve each stage.
Chapter 5

MOTOR-PERCEPTUAL ACTIVITIES

The following activities are used to help develop the child's motor perception. Some of the activities can be done by the entire classroom as part of the physical education time. Some activities need to be done individually on a one-to-one relationship with the teacher or aide. This is a way to use the paraprofessional to help the individual child having a particular problem.

CRAB WALK

Ask the child to squat down reaching backward and putting both hands flat on the floor behind him without sitting down. Ask him to walk or run in this position. He should keep his head, neck, and body in a straight line.

ELEPHANT WALK

Two children are required for this stunt. The first child grasps the second at the hips. The second child then jumps upward and locks his legs high around the hips of the first. He then drops backward and works his head, shoulders, and arms between the legs of the first child. The first child then drops forward onto his hands keeping his arms and
legs stiff. Both children hold these positions while the first child walks forward.

**DUCK WALK**

Ask the child to place his hands on his knees and perform a deep knee bend. In this position ask him to walk forward. He may also place his hands behind his back with his palms together and his fingers pointing backward in imitation of a duck's tail.

**RABBIT HOP**

The child places his hands on the floor and performs deep knee bends. Have him move his hands forward and, keeping his hands on the floor, bring his feet forward between his hands with a jump. He then moves his hands forward again and repeats the process as he progresses across the room.

**MEASURING WORM**

The child places his hands on the floor in front of him and about shoulder-width apart. His legs should be stretched out straight behind him, with the weight of the body supported on the arms and toes. Arms are straight, and the body straight from head to heels. Keeping the hands in place and knees straight, the child brings his feet up by little steps until they are as close to his hands as possible. Next, keeping his feet in place, ask him to move
his hands forward with little steps until he has reached the starting position again.

ANGELS-IN-THE-SNOW

The child lies on his back on the floor with his arms at his side, and his feet together. Ask him to move his arms up over his head. Be sure he moves them along the floor. Ask him to feel the floor with his wrists as his arms move. Be sure he gets his arms completely above his head until his two hands touch. Next ask him to move his feet apart. Be sure he moves them wide apart and keeps his heels on the floor during the movement. When he has learned what you want him to do, go through the following routine:

1. Move just the right arm, now put it back.
2. Move just the left arm, now back.
3. Move just the right leg, now back.
4. Move just the left leg, now back.
5. Move both arms, now back.
6. Move both legs, now back.
7. Move this arm and this leg (pointing to left arm and left leg).
8. Move this arm and this leg (pointing to right arm and right leg).
9. Move this arm and this leg (pointing to right arm and left leg).
10. Move this arm and this leg (pointing to left arm and right leg).
In the above routine do not give orally; only point to the limb to be moved. Some children will be found who are unable to identify visually. Observe whether the child starts his movement promptly and whether his first movement is a definite part of the prescribed pattern. If the child has severe problems, take him back to the walking board activity, or imitation movements. This will help him to develop more control of the limbs.

**RHYTHM**

Many children find it difficult to maintain a rhythm pattern when the rhythmical activities alternate from one side of the body to the other. They are able to establish a rhythm when they are required to beat it out with one hand, for example, but encounter difficulty when two hands must be used and movement of the rhythm must be passed from one hand to the other and back again.

Start the rhythm on one side of the body only. Give the child a drum. Beat out a constant rhythm pattern. Ask the child to repeat on his drum with you what you have produced. Then go to a simple two-beat rhythm. Vary the speed of the overall rhythm and begin by permitting him to watch as well as listen until he is able to pick up the rhythms from the auditory clues alone. Then move to the three-stage rhythm patterns on one side of the body. He must learn to establish the same rhythm patterns when both sides of the body are used. Work with one side, then the other side alone, then
alternating from side to side. The child should learn to beat out rhythm patterns with both hands and both feet.

**CHALKBOARD DIRECTIONALITY**

This activity is best worked individually with each child. This is a good activity for an aide to conduct. The teacher stands at the chalkboard beside the child. He places a dot at random on the board. The child places his chalk on the dot and the teacher then makes another dot on the board. The child draws from the first dot to the second and the game is continued in this manner, the teacher always waiting until the child has drawn his line before placing the next dot.

**CHALKBOARD ORIENTATION**

Ask the child to stand before the chalkboard with a piece of chalk in each hand. Ask him to describe circular motions with both hands simultaneously. Note the direction of the movement in each hand. Then ask him to bring the chalk in contact with the board so that he is drawing circles with each hand simultaneously. He should be asked to continue drawing pairs of circles, each pair on top of the previous pair. He should continue the motion, not stopping after each circle until he produces a series of retraced circles, one set with the right and one set with the left. Normally the child will draw his circles clockwise with the left hand and counterclockwise with the right. If he begins with these directions ask him to change and draw clockwise with the right and
counter-clockwise with the left. When this movement has been established, then ask him to draw with his hands moving parallel to each other, going clockwise with each hand. When he has established this movement ask him to shift and go counter-clockwise with both hands. In this manner he is experiencing all combinations of direction of movement with the two hands.

In this activity learning results from the change of direction and the reorientation process. As soon as the child has established the correct pattern in the new direction, little further learning takes place. If certain patterns are too difficult for him, draw circles previously on the board and have the child trace these heavy circles.

**LAZY EIGHT**

With a continuous line draw on the board a figure eight lying on its side. The figure should be approximately twenty-four inches wide and approximately ten inches high. Ask the child to trace over this figure with one continuous line and without taking his chalk from the board. When he has achieved a smooth, free movement which is reasonably accurate, ask him to reverse directions without removing his chalk from the board or interrupting the activity. This figure is helpful since the direction of movement in the left-hand loop is the opposite of that in the right hand loop. The form permits the child to observe relationships between different motor acts and perceptual products with the same
figure. The child should trace this figure with both hands in both directions. To continue practice the child can move so the figure is to the right of his body and then to the left of his body.
Chapter 6

LEARNING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Children with learning disabilities learn by doing. Learning activities and games provide them with the opportunity to become involved. If games are not misused or overused, they can provide the teacher with an excellent device for making learning fun. The following plan will help insure children's enjoyment as they play the game.

1. See that the losers remain part of the game.
2. In selecting appropriate games, consider the group interest, age ability, play area, equipment, and objectives.
3. Have the children choose, plan, and control the game.
4. Be flexible; if one game does not seem to be going well, change to another. Do not be afraid to change the rules if it looks as though a change will make the game more fun, but check with the children first.
5. Stop the game while the children are still enjoying it and asking for more. They can always play another day.

Games should be fun for all students. They should not be eliminated from the game when they fail to give the response or performance called for. It should be the aim of
the teacher to keep all the children participating at all
times. Having point scores, rotating the child who is best,
and giving additional help to the person who misses are
examples of how to keep the game fun for all the children.
The following are some games and activities that have been
found to be successful.

**GAMES**

**Quiz Bowl**

This game is patterned after the television program
of Quiz Bowl. Make a list of questions ahead of time and
give each question a number of points: 5, 10, 15. The easier
questions have the lowest points. Divide the class into
four teams. While two teams are competing, the other two
teams keep score and help judge the answers and who is the
first to stand up to answer the questions. If the two teams
are unable to answer the question, then the teams at their
seat have a chance. After the first two teams have played
for a specified time, allow the other two teams to compete.
The winners can compete for the championship. This is a very
good way of reviewing a unit in Social Studies or Science.

**Bingo**

Bingo has many variations. It can be organized to
provide practice with new words, opposite words, punctuation,
synonyms, numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication,
division, and many others. The cards can be used over and over again, but for new words it is better to make up a set for a particular group. This can be done by supplying paper with squares. These may be duplicated and the teacher or the children may enter in the words to be used.

**War on Multiplication**

The kids are bound to win in this war. War is adapted from a card game most youngsters play with a regular deck of playing cards. The decks of cards are made with the multiplication facts. Begin with limited facts and add new ones as students progress. Run off the ditto to make up the cards on different color of construction paper. Each child gets a deck of cards and the battle plan is as follows:

1. Shuffle cards.
2. Each player reveals his top card and calls out the answer to the fact on his card. The higher value wins, and that player picks up both cards. Each player is allowed approximately five seconds to answer. If he doesn't answer, or gives the incorrect response, he loses the card to his opponent.
3. If both players' cards have the same value, then war is declared. Each player lays two cards face down and then one face up. The player with the highest value on the face-up card wins all the cards for that play.
4. The game goes on until one player loses all his cards or the game can also be a timed event, the winner being
the one with the most cards at the end of the specified time. The losers are winners too, as they become quicker with the multiplication tables.

**Concentration**

Lay the word cards face down on the table. One child picks up one card and says the word and lets the other players see the word, then replaces it exactly where he picked it up face up. The player then turns over another card trying to make a match. If the card matches, the player takes both cards as his, and takes another turn. If the cards do not match, they are both turned face down exactly in the spot they were originally picked up. Four or five is a good number to play the game. The children should learn to take turns around the table clockwise.

Make word cards on tagboard. Be sure you make a pair of words. Then cover the backs of the tag board with contact paper, and cut into cards with one word on each card. By using the contact paper you can keep the cards in decks so that there are always pairs of words.

**Tactile Perception Game**

Put familiar objects into a bag. Have the child reach in, feel the object, and then name it. If named correctly the child can hold the object. Have the child verbalize what he feels and how he came to his conclusion. Four or five is a good number to play this game. The winner is the child
holding the most objects when the bag is empty. This is a
good game for the aide to supervise.

SIMULATED ACTIVITIES

Role Playing and Dramatization

Role playing is an important technique for the
teacher to know and to use. The teacher should plan a warm­
up exercise and then the general specific instructions to
participants and audience. The students should be able to
feel the part they are playing. Immediately after the
action the children should be asked to assume their normal
roles, and then the audience and players discuss the roles
each played. An evaluation should be given by both the
students and the teacher. They need to discuss what they
might want to do in the future and how it might be improved.

What Am I Doing?

Cards with directions on them are placed face down on
a table. A child picks a card, reads it, places it face down
again, and then follows the directions given. The child acts
it out and the rest guess what he is doing. This is a good
activity set up in an activity station where a group of five
or six can work together. They need very little supervision
in this activity. The following is a list of a few ideas to
put on the cards:
1. drink some water  
2. go to sleep  
3. take off your coat  
4. open the door  
5. put on your hat  
6. cross a street  
7. fly like a bird  
8. hop like a rabbit  
9. saw wood  
10. drive a car  

Putting on a Show  

Probably no activity is harder on the children and the teacher but more satisfying than putting on some type of show. There are all types--puppet, marionette, magic, talent, drama, songs. The children learn to read, write, and improve their feeling about themselves and ability to work with other children far more through a show than they do in everyday lessons.

Classroom Store  

To help the children learn to count money, set up a classroom store. Have the children make money from construction paper--pennies, nickles, dimes, quarters, fifty-cent pieces. Let the class decide which color each denomination should be, and have several pieces of money available for them to trace around. Each piece when cut out can be labeled with a felt marker. The children can bring to school empty boxes and cans of food to set up a store. Before you start buying in the store work as a group with purchasing two items, add the items together and decide how much money you would give to the clerk and how much change you would get.
back. Divide the class up into pairs so they can help each other and all be taking part at the same time. Teach addition method of making change as the store clerks do, such as, "Have one dollar, spend 57 cents; 3 pennies make 60 cents, and 1 dime and a nickel make 75 and a quarter makes one dollar."

When the students have counted change until they are familiar with the procedure, then set up the store and have students assigned to jobs such as checkers, box boys, and shoppers. Each child takes part in the shopping for the day. The students enjoy going to the store several times and everyone gets an opportunity to play each role.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

Treasure Hunts

A great deal of learning can be obtained through finding treasures. Use this idea after the children read a story about a treasure hunt. The children each make up a treasure map of their own within the room. They use directions south, east, north, west; draw pictures of desks, chairs, doors, windows; and tell how many steps from one position to another and in which direction. After they finish making their maps, they pair off in twos, and each take turns finding the others' treasure. A side benefit of this activity is reinforcement of map directions, following directions, and making directions clear for someone else to follow.
Visual Memory

Place a number of objects on the table and then remove one and ask the child what object has been removed. This is an activity the paraprofessional can supervise.

Place several objects on a table and have the child turn away and make a list of all the things he saw on the table.

Use a projector and flash a picture or words on the screen. Then the child tells what he saw. The entire class can play this game also, by letting the children make a grand list of everything they saw on the screen. This is a good learning station activity for a small group with an aide in charge.

Material Matching

Pin several pieces of different-feeling material on the flannel board. Have a blindfold available at the station. Have a sack with the same pieces of material in it. The child blindfolds himself and matches the material. This is a good station activity that can be set up in the room and played by the students when they have some free time.

Scrapbooks

Children love to cut and paste and make scrapbooks. This can be of any topic. This is where a child that cannot do well in writing a report in Science or Social Studies can do a good job making a scrapbook. The children can be given
their choice of written reports, oral reports, or scrapbooks. This gives every child an opportunity to work at his particular level.

Matching Picture with Sentence

Cut out some small attractive pictures from magazines or old books. Prepare a set of cards with one sentence on each card. Each sentence should describe one of the pictures. Put the pictures and sentences in an envelope; then the child takes the pictures and sentences from the envelope and matches them. This can be done at an activity learning station and can be worked individually or with a pair of students. It is good to have an aide check their work. It pleases the child to have his work checked and praised.

Sequence

To reinforce recall of details in sequence, the teacher lists significant statements or phrases about a story in random order. The students are asked to read the assigned selection and to find the statements in order that they appeared in the story, and to write them in that order. Use the Sunday funnies and cut them out and have the students arrange them in the correct order. This is a good activity for an individual center.
Classroom management is a very important part of teaching children with learning disabilities. There are a number of setting modifications which can be used that will help make it easier.

Cubicles made from commercial materials or from cardboard can be placed on the child's desk to prevent viewing from the front, left, and right sides. The cubicle provides a degree of stimulus isolation within the room and reduces extraneous stimulation which might otherwise distract the youngster. Many students like this method of isolating themselves from the rest of the class.

Listening stations can be geared to provide instruction on tape for one child or a number of children. For those hyperactive children, the muting effect of the earphones may provide the same kind of stimulus isolation that the cubicle provides, both enhancing learning on the one hand and facilitating general classroom management on the other.

Learning stations can be set up as an individual station or a group station. Set up about eight different stations with easy-to-follow directions at each station. Some activities that can be used at these stations are individual filmstrip viewing, finding the hidden items in the hidden
pictures, painting, finger painting, paper-bag puppet making, flannel board stories, typing, make your own picture puzzle, and stories on tape. Some of the above ideas can be used for the group stations along with puzzles and word games.

When the learning stations are set up, the teacher is free to work with individual students. Use the stations so the students rotate around the centers giving not more than twenty minutes per center, with exact time depending on what activities you have set up. Change the activities in the stations about every two weeks for groups, but change the individual stations when all the children have had a chance to work at each station.

Paraprofessionals can be used at different learning stations to coordinate listening station activities. They can prepare word games for the stations, keep records, tutor, laminate pictures taken from different children's magazines, etc. They can be trained to work with students who need activities in developing motor perceptual skills. They can give encouragement and help to those students who need encouragement with every step of their work.

Contracts can be written for every child in the class taking into consideration the child's behavior patterns and his abilities. A contract is an agreement between the child and his teacher which specifies a behavior from the child with a reward contingent upon that behavior. Contracts should be clear, fair, honest, and positive. Some children
will not need a behavioral type contract, but a contract to complete a certain amount of work. Contracts can help both to control disruptive behavior in the classroom and for individualized instruction. If the child decides for himself what he wants to study, a contract can be written so that any spare time the child has will be spent working on it. A contract can be a reward for completing other work because a child may desire spare time to work on his chosen project.

A contract can also be used along with behavior modification. It can be used with a child who can perform a task, but has never done it. Arrange in the contract what he will do each day and what reinforcement he will receive each time this performance has been completed.

Proper grouping for instruction can ease classroom management problems. An objective of education is to help individuals take an effective place in society and become well adjusted individuals. Helping him to become better acquainted with his personal problems and develop a greater understanding of them will contribute to this objective. Grouping for this purpose is vital.

In addition, grouping for instructional purposes should be of such a nature that all children will benefit. The child's physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and academic development must all be taken into consideration. Each child must be considered individually to determine with what group he will derive the greatest total educational benefit. Grouping must be flexible, with regrouping
occurring whenever necessary. The disabled learner, like all children, must be provided with meaningful instruction and careful attention to grouping can make a valuable contribution.
Chapter 8

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

An important role of the school is to help develop a good self-concept for each child. The child needs a feeling of being accepted for what he is and for the contribution he can make to the lives of others. It is the teacher's responsibility to build a positive, constructive relationship with each child. The teacher must interact to help the child learn. This does not mean that an accepting attitude is a permissive unstructured environment or lack of discipline. Children need to know the limits, and they depend on the teacher to guide them in their behavior. The teacher who creates a positive environment does the following things:

1. Remembers special events, birthdays.
2. Takes a personal interest in each child.
3. Finds personal things to say.
4. Picks up the child's special interests.
5. Shares the fun with the children.
6. Discusses the problems and listens to their points of view.

The teacher must create an atmosphere in which children feel that they can express themselves and their feelings. Communications are better when they are kept open and where
there is mutual trust. Communication includes not only words, spoken or written; noverbal behavior such as a smile, pat on the back, a hug, etc., is also important. A teacher who becomes angry because of a child's slowness or inability to understand quickly closes the communication channels.

Disabled learners as a group have a specific emotional and behavioral characteristic. They need the feeling that they belong, that they are of value, and that they are accepted as a part of the group. They need to be able to contribute to the activities of the group. They need to be able to contribute something that is accepted as value by the group.

It is common to find many more discipline problems among these children, because there has been little attempt to provide a curriculum designed to their needs and characteristics or to adapt the methods of instruction in relation to their intellectual abilities to learn. As a result, the school situation may be a continuous succession of frustrations for the disabled learner. His attitudes are largely the result of past experiences which in too many instances have not been of positive value or of a satisfying nature. The greater the individual deviates from the middle groups, the less chance he has of being able to make an adequate personal adjustment in that situation, because instruction is usually planned for at the level of the majority. The disabled learners cannot derive satisfaction for their academic achievements in the classroom and become
frustrated. As a result they react to their frustrations. Some tend to withdraw from the group and refuse to participate actively in the class programs or even contribute insofar as they are able. Others tend to become aggressive in their attempts to compensate for their inability to participate, and then become known as the discipline problems in the class.

A well-organized teacher can give special treatment to the child with learning disabilities. It is a long, difficult process, but it starts with encouragement. Speaking is one of the most fundamental of the language arts skills, basic to the others. The teacher must at any grade level teach children with learning disabilities to express themselves in words. Vocabulary knowledge is one of the major parts of the test used to calculate the I.Q. The teacher must help children increase their use of words, expand their self-expression. Allow them to feel free to speak, encourage them to speak, praise them when they do, set up situations in which they will speak.

The disabled learner must feel free to be himself, to think his own thoughts, and to be accepted as a person. The teacher must accept his answers without "putting him down" and help him to add to his own answers to make a complete and better answer. The teacher must help the child feel that what he has to add to the class discussion is important. There are certain disciplines--some self-imposed, others imposed by authority. These children may have difficulty with concepts, relationships, generalizations; an undisciplined atmosphere may prove disastrous to them.
Love is another fundamental need of every child. If the child does not get love at home, he must find it at school. If he gets love from his teachers and from friends, his chances for success are much better. A child can detect which people really love him for himself. Such love will allow him to develop a valuable self-concept, which is another fundamental need for the child. The teacher of the child with learning disabilities will help him feel bigger and stronger.

The following are suggestions that contribute in a positive relationship between the teacher and the child who needs special treatment:

1. Give the child more time and attention than you do the others. They need more attention, and be patient and encourage the child. Show him you are anxious to help him, and get him to seek your help. Make him feel his questions are welcome.

2. Seat him closer to you and if possible seat him next to a bright child, but be sure that they are compatible. Some bright children don't have patience with children that have learning difficulties. Structure the situation so that the child with problems will be able to accept help of other children.

3. Form groups to teach new skills, or to strengthen those skills in which the children are deficient. It is a good idea to give a diagnostic test to the entire class in order to help you form groups. This test will help you
determine which children have needs in common, and then keep
them both together. Within the groups, have the children work
independently and at other times together. By varying the
routine lessons you make your class far more interesting.

4. Give the child monitor jobs. They need to
feel important and to develop self-confidence, particularly
if they have had little academic success. Speak to these
children with the same tone you speak to the rest of the
class. Work toward the goal of not being annoyed by the
inability the student may have, and make sure that the child
does not feel different or handicapped.

5. If the child seems blocked in his ability to
learn a particular concept, he needs your patience and sympa­
thetic understanding. Speak to him gently and explain the
work again, simplifying the thought and wording. If he still
appears perplexed, change the subject and tell the child that
we will return to this at another time.

6. When the child does work that is worthy of
exhibiting, be sure that it is displayed. Encourage him to
take part in plays and class discussions. Strive to build
his self-esteem so that he has poise and a feeling of self
worth.

7. Guide the disabled child in working toward elimi­
nation of his problem areas. If he has older brothers or
sisters, ask their aid in helping the child. Invite the
child's parents to confer with you, and suggest ways in
which they can help the child.
The basic characteristic of the child with learning disabilities is that they have some problem that prohibits them from acquiring basic academic knowledges and skills as rapidly as other children. Their chronological ages may be greater than their academic ages and social ages.

Every child has the right to an equal opportunity for an education. This does not mean that all children shall receive the same education experiences. It should mean that the educational experiences provided each child will be those that will promote learning for that child in the best way and to the highest degree possible.
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