

Specific Learning Disabilities

Trudie Hughes, Ph.D.

Specific Learning Disabilities

- A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language.
- This disorder may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, read, write, spell, and/or to perform mathematical calculations.

Simulation

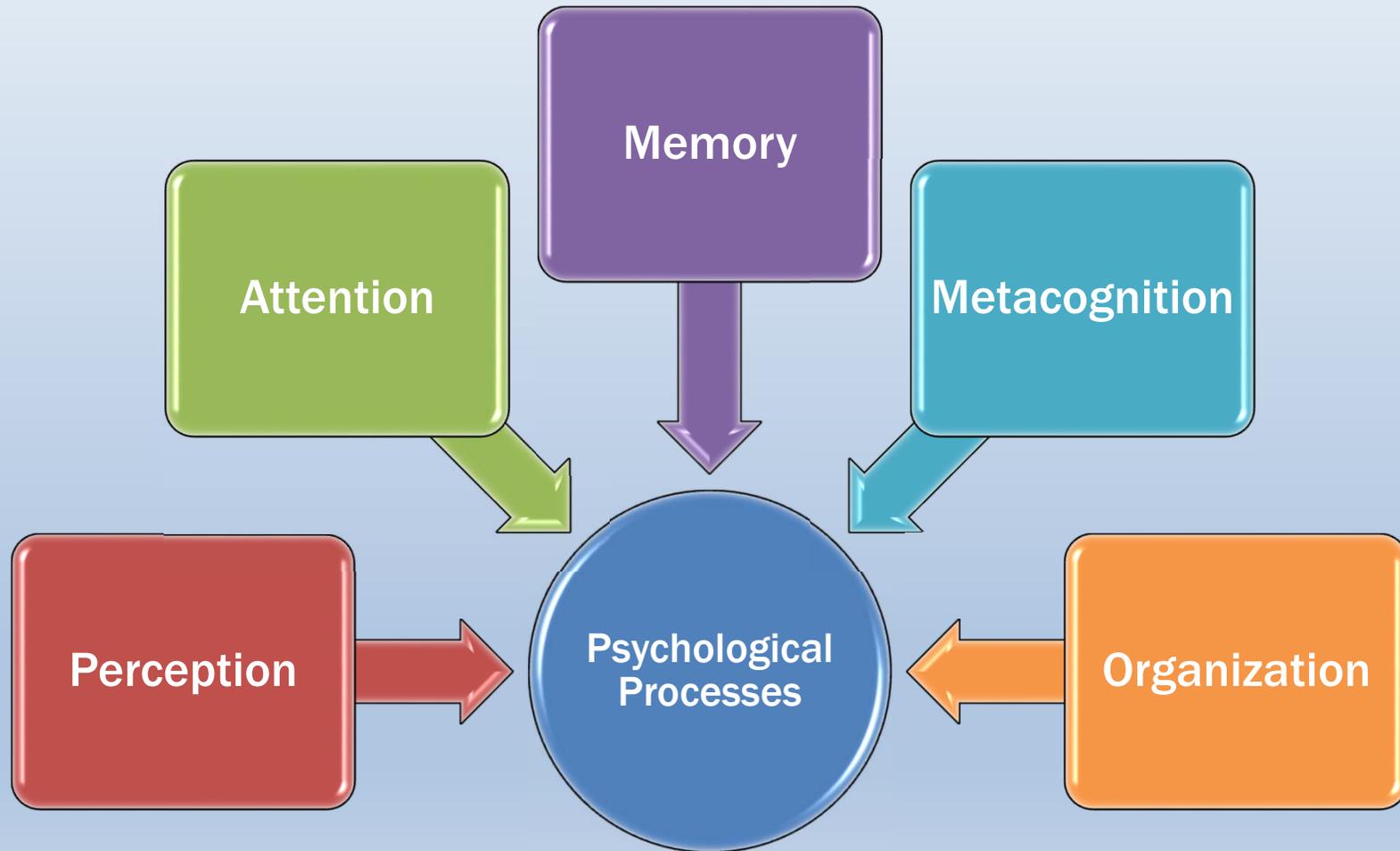
- Write a 5 sentence paragraph about your weekend – have 2 minutes. Oh and you can NOT use letters

• **D R T E N & S**

Characteristics

- Academic problems
- Disorders of attention
- Poor motor abilities
- Psychological process deficits and information-processing problems
- Lack of cognitive strategies needed for efficient learning
- Oral language difficulties
- Reading difficulties
- Written language problems
- Mathematical disorders
- Social skill deficits.

Impact on Learning



MUST SEE!!! On your own time

- F.A.T. City video on learning disabilities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlaNxmG9J0Q>

- Misunderstood Minds

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=misunderstood+minds

Perception

The ability to organize and interpret the information experienced through the sensory channels, such as visual or auditory input.

Perception is important to learning because it provides us with our first sensory impressions about something we see or hear.

A student relies on his perceptual abilities to recognize, compare, and discriminate information.

Writing Simulation

- **Take out a piece of paper.**
- **You have two minutes to write this information down.**
- **But you must write with your non-dominant hand.**
- **Ready- Set – Go**

Writing Simulation

Addysgu

Mae gwaith yr Uned Dyslecsia yn ymestyn dros ardal eang Gogledd-Orllewin Cymru, a'r rhan helaethaf ohoni'n wledig. O ganlyniad, nid yw'r Uned yn cynnal canolfan addysgu. Mae ganddi swyddfeydd ac ystafelloedd at ddefnydd athrawon, ond addysgir yn bennaf mewn ysgolion neu leoedd eraill.

Here are some suggestions of how you might ease this burden :

- write down main points and terminology for students
- provide handouts, summaries or copies of notes
- be sympathetic to students using tape recorders in classes
- avoid dictation
- provide guided/structured lectures, indicate changes in topics and key points
- allow students time to absorb information

The ability to receive and process information.

Attention deficits are one of the disorders teachers most frequently associate with individuals with learning disabilities.

Teachers may describe their students with learning disabilities as “distractible” or “in their own world”.

Memory

Memory involves many different skills and processes such as encoding (the ability to organize information for learning).

Metacognition

The ability to monitor and evaluate performance. This process supplies many of the keys to learning from experience, generalizing information and strategies, and applying what you have learned. It requires the ability to:

Identify and select learning skills and techniques to facilitate the acquisition of information;

Choose or create the setting in which you are most likely to receive material accurately;

Identify the most effective and efficient way to process and present information; and,

Evaluate and adapt your techniques for different materials and situations.

Organization

The inability to organize information can affect the most superficial tasks or the most complex cognitive activities.

Students with learning disabilities may have difficulties organizing their thought processes, their classwork, and their environment.

Reading

Word analysis

- The ability to associate sounds with the various letters and letter combinations used to write them, to immediately recognize and remember words, and to use the surrounding text to help figure out a specific word.
- Word analysis is a foundational skill for reading and for students with learning disabilities it is a major issue to overcome to be a successful reader.

Fluency

- The rate of accurate reading (correct words per minute).
- With processing and word analysis issues, a high rate of reading fluency is often quite difficult for a student with a learning disability.

Reading comprehension

- The ability to understand written material.
- If a student with learning disabilities has difficulty reading written material, then comprehension will always be greatly affected.
- While problems with word analysis can affect reading comprehension, other factors that may contribute to problems with reading comprehension include the inability to successfully identify and organize information from the material.

Reading Comprehension Activity

Last Serny, Flingledobe and Pribin were in the Nerd-link treppering gloop capies and cleaming burly grepes.

Suddenly a dirty strezzle boofed into Flingledobe's tresk.

Pribin glaped and glaped. "Oh Flingledobe," he chifed "that diffy strezzle is tunnning in your grep!"

Questions

- When did this story take place?
- Who was with Flingledobe?
- Where were they?
- What were they treppering?
- What were the cleaming?
- Then a strezzle showed up.
- What kind of strezzle was it? Did they expect it?
- Then what did it do?
- Where did it boof?
- And, Pribin he was no help, what did he do? Finally what did Pribin chife?

Math

Math Calculation

- Specific problems may include difficulty understanding size and spatial relationships and concepts related to direction, place value, decimals, fractions, and time and difficulty remembering math facts.

Math Reasoning

- Remembering and correctly applying the steps in mathematical problems (such as the steps involved in long division) and reading and solving word problems are significant problem areas.

Social and Emotional Development

Social Skills/Cues

- The characteristics that interfere with a student's acquisition of reading or writing skills can also interfere with his or her ability to acquire or interpret social behaviors.



Teaching Strategies for Students with Perceptual Difficulties

- **Do not present two pieces of information together that may be perceptually confusing.**
 - For example, do not teach the spelling of *ie* words (*believe*) and *ei* words (*perceive*) in the same day.
- **Highlight the important characteristics of new material.**
 - For example, underline or use bold letters to draw a student's attention to the same sound pattern presented in a group of reading or spelling words (*mouse, house, round*).

Teaching Strategies for Students with Memory Difficulties

- Teachers may need to teach the following memory strategies to students with learning disabilities:
 - *Chunking* is the grouping of large strings of information into smaller, more manageable “chunks”. Telephone numbers, for example, are “chunked” into small segments for easier recall.
 - *Rehearsal* is the repetition, either oral or silent, of the information to be remembered.
 - *Elaboration* is the weaving of the material to be remembered into a meaningful context.
 - *Categorization* is when the information to be remembered is organized by the category to which it belongs.

Teaching Reading Comprehension:

- Predictions can be based on pictures, headings, subtitles, and graphs. They can be used to activate the students' prior knowledge before reading, increase attention to sequencing during reading, and can be evaluated after reading.
- Questions can be asked before reading to help students attend to important information.
- You can prepare an advanced organizer on the text to help focus students' attention on key material in the text. The student can review the organizer before reading and take notes on it while reading.
- Self-monitoring or self evaluation techniques can be used when reading longer passages. For example, students can stop periodically and paraphrase the text or check their understanding .

Teaching Writing

- Provide effective writing instruction that includes daily practice on a range of writing tasks, teacher modeling, cooperative learning opportunities, follow-up instruction and feedback.
- Intervene early on writing assignments.
- Identify and address academic and non-academic stumbling blocks such as behavior or social problems in the classroom.
- Take advantage of technological tools for writing.

Self Monitoring Questions

- What is my purpose for learning or doing this?
- What is my plan for doing this task?
- Does what I am learning, reading or doing make sense?
- What do I already know about this topic?
- How am I doing with my work?
- What are the main points I am learning?
- How can I use this elsewhere?

Assistive Technology

Reading:

- text to speech software
- OCR software applications
- screen reading software
- audio books

Writing:

- portable word processors
- auditory word processing software
- word prediction programs
- graphical word processors
- on-screen keyboards
- voice recognition software
- organizational/outlining/drafting software
- online writing support

Math:

- calculator
- mathematics Chart

Websites for Strategies

- <http://www.educationoasis.com/printables/graphic-organizers/>
- <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>
- <https://bubbl.us/>
- www.graphicorganizer.org
- http://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/language_arts/cloze/
- http://bogglesworldesl.com/cloze_activities.htm
- <http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=325.html>
- <http://ldaamerica.org/adults/>

Organizations

Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD)
The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
Web: www.dldcec.org

International Dyslexia Association (formerly the Orton Dyslexia Society) Web: www.interdys.org

LDOnline
www.ldonline.org

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)
Web: www.ldaamerica.org

National Center for Learning Disabilities
Web: www.ld.org

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic
Web: www.rfbd.org