

CONTENTS

Preface xiii

1 Defining Learning Disabilities: A Historical Perspective 1

History and Development of Learning Disability 1

Early Definitions: Research Based 2

Transformational Definitions: Education Oriented
and Discrepancy Based 5

Consensus Definitions: Current Revisions and
Modern Conceptualizations 8

Contemporary Issues in the Operationalization and Definition of LD 11

Summary of the Evolution of the LD Concept 13

Issues in Learning Disability Identification in Adults 15

Conclusion 16

2 Key Concepts and Terms in Learning Disability Evaluation and Diagnosis 18

General Conceptual Issues: Differentiating *Normal* from Abnormal Functioning 18

Standards and Bases for Comparison 19

Age Norms versus Grade Norms 20

Score Information 23

Boundaries of Normal or Average Functioning 25

Classification Schemata 26

General Conceptual Issues: Differentiating Discrepancy from Disability 27

Ability and Aptitude 28

Ability and Achievement 29

Discrepancy Analysis 30

Inter-Individual Ability Analysis 37

Approaches to the Determination of Learning Disability 38

Conclusion 42

3 Application of Diagnostic Criteria for Learning Disabilities: Common Errors and Recommendations 44

Examples of Common Errors in the Evaluation of LD and Recommendations 45

- Overreliance or Sole Reliance on Intra-Individual
versus Inter-Individual Deficits 45
- Overreliance or Sole Reliance on Ability-Achievement
Discrepancy Analysis 49
- Misinterpretation of Verbal IQ-Performance IQ Discrepancies 51
- Failure to Consider, Interpret, or Explain Data That Contradict
Diagnostic Impressions: Confirmatory Bias 54
- Prescribing Diagnostic Meaning to a Single Outlier Score 59
- Failure to Document a History of Learning Difficulty
Prior to Diagnosing LD in Adulthood 64

Conclusion 64

4 Advancing the Practice of Learning Disability Determination: A Modern, Theory-Based Operational Definition 65

Toward a Modern Operational Definition of LD 66

- The Kavale and Forness Definition 66
- The Flanagan, Ortiz, Alfonso, and Mascolo Definition 67
- Level I-A: Inter-Individual Academic Ability Analysis—
Performance in Academic Skills and
Acquired Knowledge 71
- Level I-B: Evaluation of Exclusionary Factors 73
- Level II-A: Inter-Individual Cognitive Ability Analysis—
Performance in Abilities/Processes and
Learning Efficiency 74
- Level II-B: Reevaluation of Exclusionary Factors 79
- Level III: Integrated Ability Analysis—Evaluation
of Underachievement 79
- Level IV: Evaluation of Interference with Functioning 83
- Summary of the Operational Definition of LD 85

A Comprehensive Framework for LD Determination 86

Perceived or Persistent Cognitive/Academic Difficulties	90
Clarification and Theoretical Specification of Referral Questions	91
Sufficiency of Evaluation	91
Attribution of Performance	92
Justification for Intervention	93

Conclusion 94

5 Comprehensive Assessment of Learning Disability: Case Study 1—Rose 95

The Case of Rose 96

Perceived or Persistent Cognitive/Academic Difficulties	96
Clarification and Theoretical Specification of Referral Questions	97
Level I-A: Inter-Individual Academic Ability Analysis	99
Level I-B: Evaluation of Exclusionary Factors	100
Level II-A: Inter-Individual Cognitive Ability Analysis	100
Level II-B: Reevaluation of Exclusionary Factors	101
Level III: Integrated Ability Analysis—Evaluation of Underachievement	102
Level IV: Evaluation of Interference with Functioning	106
Justification for Intervention	106

Conclusion 107

Appendix: Psychological Evaluation Report for Case Study 1—Rose 109

6 Comprehensive Assessment of Learning Disability: Case Study 2—Ron 121

The Case of Ron 122

Reason for Referral	122
Educational History	122
Clarification and Theoretical Specification of Referral Questions	124
Level I-A: Inter-Individual Academic Ability Analysis	124
Level I-B: Evaluation of Exclusionary Factors	128
Level II-A: Inter-Individual Cognitive Ability Analysis	130
Level II-B: Reevaluation of Exclusionary Factors	135
Attribution of Performance	137
Justification for Intervention	139

Conclusion 140

7 Comprehensive Assessment of Learning Disability: Case Study 3—Catherine 143

Report of Psychoeducational Evaluation 144

Reason for Referral	144
Background Information	145
Educational History	145
Tests Administered	148
Clinical and Behavioral Observations	148
Assessment of Academic Achievement	148
Assessment of Cognitive Functioning	151
Stores of Acquired Knowledge	153
Thinking Abilities	153
Cognitive Efficiency	155
Data Integration and Interpretation	157
Justification for Intervention	160

Conclusion 162

8 Evaluating Adults for Learning Disabilities: A Summary of Best Practices 165

Identification of an Inter-Individual Deficit in Academic Ability 166

Identification of an Inter-Individual Deficit in Cognitive Ability 167

Evaluation of Exclusionary Factors 168

Evaluation of Underachievement 170

Evaluation of Interference with Functioning 172

Conclusion 175

APPENDIX A Percentile Rank and Standard Score Conversion Table 177

APPENDIX B The CHC Theory of Cognitive and Academic Abilities: Definitions 181

**APPENDIX C Inter-Individual and
Intra-Individual Analysis Worksheet 189**

APPENDIX D Test Score Summary Sheets 191

References 195

Index 203