Educational psychology and special education

Education, Special Education

What is the definition of a learning disability and who should qualify to be specialeducation? What assessments should be made to be able to know what child belongs where? This is what we are going to explore in this paper. We want to see exactly who qualifies and how to go about assessing what needs can be met by choosing to place a child in special education or leaving in general education and making some modifications. The main point to remember for any child is doing the best we can for their success.

Learning disabilities are a bit tough to diagnose, the reason for this is because learning disabilities affects everyone differently. While one person may have difficulty with reading or writing another person may have trouble with math or following through with directions. " Researchers think that learning disabilities are caused by differences in how a person's brain works and how it processes information" (Medicinenet, 2013) Usually the people with learning disabilities, such as Aspbergers, are highly intelligent and only have problems with how the brain sends the information, not being non-intelligent.

IDEA states that " A learning disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia".

This encompasses a wide range of children and we have to figure out how to best assess whether these children should be put into special education, or if

they could function better with modifications to the general education classroom. Because learning disabilities are so multidimensional the assessments must also be in order to properly diagnose what steps to take. One of the most important parts of assessment is to always keep everyone involved in the child's life in the loop.

Keeping opencommunicationand checking often to see what is working and what is not is a vital key to the assessment process. Checking first who needs to be involved within the team and then going from there with making the plan and seeing if it works or what needs to be changed. It is important to find out first if the child truly has a learning disability, second the nature, specificity, and the severity of the learning disability to know how to proceed with it. If you do not know the extent you cannot do very well at teaching for their abilities when you do not know what is lacking.

" Schools are required to implement a system of interventions before evaluating a child for a disability" (Logsdon, 2013) This is important because we do not want to put any child into a special education classroom without reason, this would not benefit that child at all. It is so important to know exactly what needs the child has and modify to try to benefit them before you place them. We must not simply send children to special education because theteacherdoes not want to deal with them.

People tend to want to box people into certain categories and this just cannot happen with learning disabilities. A child who may have difficulty reading may be dyslexic, or they may simply not be being read to and worked with enough. They also may have moved into the country fairly recently and may be lacking because of a language barrier. There are 9 ways

that are great for adapting instruction to be more easily understood by children with learning disabilities as stated by Teachers First. The first is adapting the size of what they are to read or do, then adapt the time for assignments and testing.

Next, increase personal assistance by peer teaching, pairing students who are less adept with more advanced students. Fourth, is input, allow for more hands on types of teaching. Fifth, Adapt the skill level or the amount of problems that they must accomplish and change the output, how they respond to what was taught, such as drawing pictures, writing a story, or working with a computer program related to the lesson. Allow the child to participate in the lesson either mentally or physically to keep them on task.

Alternate is the next one, adapt thegoalsand outcomes with the same materials, tailor the lesson to the child's needs and what they can handle, and lastly change curriculum if necessary. If the lesson is on theVietnam war, you might be able to have theminterviewa person from the Vietnam war instead of having a discussion about it as they might get more out of that. It is all about our children and making the lessons understandable to them. An example of making adaptations to a lesson would be a child with vision impairment. For this child it is very difficult towards the end of the day to be able to read because her eyes are fatigued and cannot take much more strain.

For this reason her parent is allowed to read to her and she can write her answers to questions because the child simply cannot do that for herself at the end of the day like the other children. She also has adaptations in her regular education classroom with magnifiers, a monitor by her desk to blow

up what is on the board, all her books and papers are blown up, and she always sits in the front of the classroom. These are modifications for a visually impaired person who is very bright, but lacks some because of her vision impairment which creates the learning disability.

" The world is full of examples of accommodations that permit people with disabilities to perform specific tasks they might not otherwise be able to. Drivers with poor vision wear glasses or contacts, elevators mark the buttons in Braille, and voters with disabilities may be given assistance by the person of their choice . " (Luke, Schwartz. 2010) We must do the same with our children. We need to take them and assess where their issues lie and do the best we can to create a successful learningenvironmentfor them!