

## Special Education: Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities (0381)

### Test at a Glance

Test Name	Special Education: Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities		
Test Code	0381		
Time	1 hour		
Number of Questions	50		
Format	Multiple-choice questions		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Factors Other than Direct Instruction that Influence the Education of Students with Learning Disabilities II. Delivery of Services III. Curriculum and Instruction	10 15 25	20% 30% 50%

### About This Test

The Special Education: Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities test is designed for examinees who plan to teach students with learning disabilities, at any grade level from preschool through grade 12. The 50 multiple-choice questions assess the knowledge and understanding of the principles and other factors related to teaching students with learning disabilities. Some of these questions are based on a case study of about 500 words that relates to the teaching of students with learning disabilities.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

## Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

### I. Factors Other than Direct Instruction that Influence the Education of Students with Learning Disabilities

- Basic concepts, including characteristics of students with learning disabilities (for example, attention; memory; organizational skills; strategies and meta-cognition; receptive and/or expressive language; academic skills, including reading, written expression, mathematics, and listening comprehension; social/emotional development; deficits and automaticity; individual profiles of strengths and weaknesses; discrepancy between aptitude and achievement); causation and prevention (such as environmental factors, cultural factors, genetic factors, neurological factors)
- Definitions/terminology related to learning disabilities (for example, the federal definition [IDEA]; professional organizations' definitions [CEC, National Committee on Learning Disabilities])

### II. Delivery of Services

- Conceptual approaches (for example, medical, psychodynamic, behavioral, sociological, cognitive, eclectic)
- Assessment, including how to modify, construct, or select and conduct nondiscriminatory and appropriate informal and formal assessment procedures; how to interpret standardized and specialized assessment results; how to use evaluation results for various purposes, including monitoring instruction and IEP/ITP development; and how to prepare written reports and to communicate findings to others
- Placement and programming issues, including consultative-collaborative models; the continuum of services; mainstreaming; least restrictive environment; assistive technology; the multi-disciplinary team; the teacher as collaborator with parents; transition planning, such as planning for career vocational skills or for leisure recreation skills, and ITP development); related services (such as speech/language); and family participation and support services

### III. Curriculum and Instruction

- The development and implementation of instruction, including data collection and data-based decision-making; developing instructional activities and materials

(for example, sequencing, and the identification and modification of curricular material, resources, and equipment); methods for enhancing motivation (such as token economies, contingency contracts); alternative methods for evaluation and grading (such as classroom observation, work samples, error analysis, curriculum-based assessment, criterion-referenced assessment); cross-age and/or peer tutoring; the use and adaptation of technology (for example, assistive technology); and addressing cultural, linguistic, and gender differences

- How to select from varied teaching strategies and methods, including direct instruction, cooperative learning, task analysis, diagnostic-prescriptive methods, and applied behavior analysis
- How to use varied instructional formats and components, including motivation, modeling, drill and practice, demonstration, corrective feedback and reinforcement with individuals and small and large groups, as appropriate
- How to address appropriate areas of instruction (such as self-care and daily living skills, social-leisure skills, study and organizational skills, learning strategies, academics, vocational skills)
- How to manage the learning environment, including using behavior management, behavior analysis (such as identification and definition of antecedents, target behavior, consequent events); data-gathering procedures; selecting and using behavioral interventions (for example, approaches to changing behaviors, such as behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, and affective, degrees of intrusiveness); using classroom organization/management; providing the appropriate physical-social environment for learning (such as expectations, rules, consequences, consistency, attitudes, lighting, seating, access, strategies for positive interactions); planning transitions between lessons and activities; grouping students; and maintaining effective and efficient documentation (such as parent/teacher contacts and legal records)
- Professional responsibilities, including working with classroom personnel (such as volunteers, aides, consultants, external resources); the teacher as advocate (for example, with parents, students, and families and for educational change); responsibilities in cases of suspected abuse and neglect; awareness of the influence that teacher attitudes and expectations have on student achievement and behavior; use of professional literature (for example, implications of published research for practice); and reflection on one's own teaching

## Sample Test Questions

*The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions in the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.*

**Directions:** Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

**Note:** In this test, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (Public Law 108-446) and its updates will be referred to as IDEA. An individualized education program will be referred to as IEP.

1. Students with learning disabilities are more likely than students without disabilities to exhibit which of the following?
  - (A) Clear dominance of the left brain for learning
  - (B) Deficits in long-term memory retrieval
  - (C) Selective attention disorders
  - (D) Characteristics of giftedness in artistic expression
  
2. Which of the following best represents current research findings on brain damage/dysfunction as it relates to learning disabilities?
  - (A) Direct, causal links have been found between prenatal exposure to toxic substances and certain well-defined learning disabilities.
  - (B) Brain damage/dysfunction has been ruled out altogether as a factor in the occurrence of learning disabilities.
  - (C) Brain damage/dysfunction caused by accident or abuse is clearly linked to learning disabilities, but such a link has not been established for damage that is prenatal.
  - (D) There is little direct evidence of a link between learning disabilities and brain damage/dysfunction but some evidence that is correlational.
  
3. Which of the following single indicators is most commonly used to signify students' eligibility for services for specific learning disabilities?
  - (A) Academic achievement that is hampered by social and emotional deficits
  - (B) Academic achievement that is significantly below grade level
  - (C) Academic aptitude that is significantly lower than the norm for the chronological age
  - (D) Academic aptitude that is significantly higher than academic achievement

4. A student with learning disabilities who reads at grade level is enrolled in a regular biology class. The special education teacher is trying to determine what strategies to use to help the student perform well in the class and pass the required tests. Which of the following steps should the special education teacher take first?
- (A) Determine how well the student organizes and retains material that is representative of the course.
  - (B) Obtain the required reading materials and highlight important concepts for the student.
  - (C) Secure a tape recorder for the student to use to tape the lectures and other teacher presentations.
  - (D) Use a readability index to determine the difficulty of the required reading materials.
5. Ralph is a fourth-grade, recently mainstreamed student who has a learning disability that causes him to decode written materials in a slow and labored manner. His comprehension is excellent. His teacher has organized the classroom in five reading/discussion groups to which students have been assigned based on their reading performance. Ralph is placed in the highest group. Which of the following best justifies the teacher's decision?
- (A) Ralph will have his strengths reinforced and will likely receive spontaneous peer tutoring.
  - (B) Ralph will be forced to decode faster in order to be competitive with the other students.
  - (C) The social benefits of being in the highest group will outweigh any instructional disadvantage Ralph experiences.
  - (D) Ralph can keep pace by listening to the discussion and thereby avoid some of the decoding tasks.

## Answers

1. The correct answer is C. Research indicates that students with learning disabilities are likely to lag behind other children in their ability to identify and focus on the key aspects of a task while disregarding the less important aspects. It has not been proven that students with learning disabilities are more likely than other students to have either left-brain or right-brain dominance for learning, and students with learning disabilities have no particular difficulty with long-term memory retrieval (choice B). There is no clear evidence to suggest that students with learning disabilities are more gifted than others in artistic expression (choice D).

2. The best answer is D. Specific causal linkages between pre- or postnatal development and/or experiences and learning disabilities, as indicated in choice A and choice C, have not yet been established with certainty. Because research is ongoing in this area, choice B is not correct.

3. The best answer is D. Although definitions of learning disabilities vary, most have an aptitude-achievement discrepancy component. Social and emotional deficits (choice A) are not primary to identifying learning disabilities. Choice B as a single indicator is incorrect; many factors other than the presence of a learning disability could account for low academic achievement. Chronological age related to aptitude (choice C) is not a primary indicator for learning disabilities.

4. The correct answer is A. Many students with learning disabilities have difficulty organizing materials for study and using strategies that aid their retention of information. As a first step, highlighting information (choice B) would not be useful; it would not provide information about the student, who might not have a deficit that requires this step. Choice C would not be useful as a first step, before the teacher learns the student's specific study needs. Because the student reads at grade level it would be more advantageous to determine how the student approaches study tasks than to determine the difficulty of the material (choice D).

5. The best answer is A. Because Ralph has no trouble understanding what he reads, he is more likely to improve his skills in the highest group than in one in which the students have difficulty with both decoding and comprehension. The teacher can employ strategies that will aid him in decoding the materials. Trying to decode faster without any type of adaptation (choice B) will likely prove frustrating and counterproductive for Ralph. The teacher should not undervalue Ralph's instructional needs (choice C), and avoiding decoding (choice D) would not be beneficial for Ralph.



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