CLD LD Forum

COUNCIL FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

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President's Message

Dear CLD Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president. As we face unprecedented times, it is important now more than ever that we continue to advocate for individuals with learning disabilities, encourage our K–12 and higher education faculty, and support the implementation of evidence-based practices. We are facing unique challenges this year, but with challenges come opportunity. The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees worked diligently this summer to develop goals for the year and alternative plans that account for the pandemic and address the social injustices facing our nation.

This year we are scheduled to update our strategic plan. We are in the process of developing a data-informed, collaborative strategic plan that focuses on streamlining of organizational practices and access to data; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and collaboration among CLD committees and with other organizations that are engaged in supporting the needs of students with learning disabilities. We will maintain our commitment to financial stewardship, continue to serve our members, and encourage member engagement. Our summer work aligns with these goals. Below I highlight a few exemplars of this work.

CLD will be holding a virtual conference this year. Thank you Joseph Morgan, conference chair and incoming president, and Conference Planning Committee co-chairs Anne Brawand and Maria Peterson-Ahmad, who worked diligently to quickly transition from a face-to-face format to a virtual one. The virtual conference helps to maintain safety, is fiscally responsible, and allows us to remain connected. Our conference is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14th (opening session) through Tuesday, October 20th. I am hopeful that the dates are convenient and that you will be able to attend some of the engaging sessions. Our Business and committee meetings will be held on Saturday, October 17th. Please save the date. Additional details are provided on page 2.

I am excited to also share that CLD is part of the AmazonSmile program. Thank you to Executive Director Linda Nease and the Communications Committee, chaired by Kathleen Pfannenstiel, for completing the paperwork necessary to enroll in the program. The AmazonSmile program donates 0.5% of Amazon purchases to a specified charity. If you are an Amazon customer, please consider designating CLD as your charitable recipient. I also encourage you to share this opportunity with those in your network. More information is provided on page 7.

These aforementioned activities are just two exemplars that align with our commitment to financial stewardship and organizational planning. The strength of our organization is derived from our members. CLD is my professional home. Over a decade ago, Peggy King-Sears welcomed me

to the organization. The following year, I was a member of the inaugural CLD Leadership Academy along with Beverly Weiser (treasurer), Chad Rose, and Kathleen Pfannenstiel (Communications Committee chair). Diane Bryant (past president) served as my CLD mentor and continues to offer support, encouragement, and mentorship. It is the relationships among members that allow CLD to engage in the work that improves outcomes for individuals with learning disabil-

ities. Collectively we can drive the field forward. This year I encourage you to share the CLD mission with a student or colleague and welcome them to the organization. If you are not already a member of a CLD committee, please consider the opportunity to serve CLD. I look forward to "seeing" you online in October.

Onward!
Brittany L. Hott, PhD
CLD President

CLD 2020 Virtual Conference Update

While we had to reschedule the CLD 2020 conference in Richmond, Virginia, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Board of Trustees of CLD wanted to ensure that all CLD members had an opportunity to learn and network this fall while we wait for the CLD 2021 conference in fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada. Therefore, plans for the CLD 2020 Virtual International Conference on Learning Disabilities are underway! The Conference Planning Committee and president-elect are currently working on establishing a program for this virtual conference, and details will be sent to members in the coming weeks. However, we wanted to invite you to save the dates for these virtual conference activities. Sessions will occur between **Thursday, October 15, 2020, and Tuesday, October 20, 2020**.

All sessions will be centered on a particular theme related to individuals with learning disabilities. There will be an opening presentation related to that theme, and then par-

ticipants will engage in two breakout discussion sessions to learn more about scholarship, policies, and practices related to the theme. Sessions will close with a discussion between participants with a focus on networking with other members to determine potential projects or ideas they can implement in their practice. Each session will be scheduled for 90 minutes, and we are planning on having morning and afternoon/evening sessions on each day of the virtual conference. Additionally, we will hold "CLD Saturday" on Saturday, October 17, 2020; this will be a time for committee meetings, our annual Business meeting, and celebration of our 2020 award winners.

We hope that you will participate with us in the CLD 2020 Virtual Conference; details regarding the session schedule and registration information will be disseminated by mid-August! If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Joe Morgan, president-elect, at **joseph.morgan@unlv.edu**.

Nomination/Election Committee Announcement

Up for election this coming year will be two Executive Committee positions: vice-president and secretary. The Bylaws indicate that the vice-president position be filled by a member with prior service as a member of a standing committee, the Board of Trustees, or the Executive Committee of an affiliated chapter. The nomination/election committee is

charged with identifying the slate of candidates. This year's committee comprises the following past presidents: Sheri Berkeley (chair), Diane Bryant, Beth Calhoon, and Peggy King-Sears. Watch for forthcoming communications this fall/winter regarding the election.

5 Ways To . . .

5 Ways to Effectively Implement Praise for Students with Learning Disabilities

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Classroom management is a leading cause of teacher stress and subsequent burnout (Huk et al., 2019). Stressed and emotionally exhausted teachers are also at higher risk of not prioritizing classroom management (Jennings & Greenburg, 2009). In addition, poor classroom management can create an environment that leads to more emotional stress and poorer outcomes for students with learning disabilities (LD; Dunn & Ernst-Slavit, 2018). In such circumstances, often further exacerbated by a lack of training or experience, teachers sometimes develop ineffective classroom management strategies (e.g., clip charts, classroom removal, reprimands) that may highlight misbehaviors of students with LD and lead them to feel shame and embarrassment (Compise, 2019). Therefore, teachers may want to consider other, more positive forms of classroom management such as praise statements (e.g., Kranak et al., 2017). Praise can be an especially attractive classroom management strategy because of its ease of implementation and effectiveness.

Unfortunately, praise is easily forgotten as teachers can spend more time providing corrective feedback (Myers et al., 2011). In fact, teachers often provide only one praise statement to every 10 instances of corrective feedback (Pisacreta et al., 2011). Researchers have found low rates of praise to be correlated with inappropriate student behavior among students with LD (Johnson & Johnson, 1984; Kestner et al., 2019). Researchers have also found that rates of praise in classrooms are sometimes less than one per minute (Caldarella et al., 2020). Sadly, rates only further decrease as students progress through school (Shores et al., 1993). Using praise can be an easy, effective way to increase the positive outcomes of students with LD (Gable et al., 2009). In addition to increasing positive student outcomes, praise is an easily implemented classroom management strategy (Moore Partin et al., 2010). In fact, the use of praise in classrooms with students with LD can be considered one of the hallmarks of an effective learning environment (Kestner et al., 2019). However, increasing the use of meaningful praise and forego-

ing ineffective classroom management strategies may be difficult. Accordingly, the purpose of this *Five Ways To* article is to summarize some of the praise literature, provide five ways for teachers to support the use of praise for students with LD, and refresh readers' memory of this critical practice.

1   Explicitly State Classroom Expectations

Students need to be explicitly taught classroom expectations before they can be responsible for their behavior and before teachers can hold them to particular contingencies of reinforcement (e.g., praise). Teachers can establish classroom rules by promoting clear expectations for how students will receive praise. Once a clear guideline is in place, students are then expected to follow the rules and, in return, receive praise.

When developing classroom rules, there are a few guidelines to consider. First, teachers should take into consideration student feedback and collaborate with them when creating rules (Chiarelli et al., 2015). Student input and buy-in can influence students' adherence to rules. Second, consider keeping rules to as few as possible (Alberto & Troutman, 2013). This is best practice and can make tracking, reinforcing, and providing specific praise more straightforward for the teacher.

Third, teachers can increase the overall effectiveness of rules by explicitly teaching each rule to their students (Alder & Haydon, 2017). These rules can be taught as if they were a new academic topic while providing a rationale for each rule (Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Scott et al., 2011). Fourth, rules should be consistently tied to positive and negative consequences (Alter & Haydon, 2017). Lohrmann and Talerico (2004) found that pairing a token economy with the posted rules was effective when pairing adherence to rules with con-

sequences for students with LD. Tying adherence to the rules with specific praise was one of the most effective strategies used across 30 years of related research (Alter & Hayden, 2017). Fifth, rules should be posted in such a way that they are salient and visible from all areas of the classroom. This posting strategy has been shown to positively affect the behavior of students with LD (Oliver et al., 2011).

2 Provide Praise Statements at an Appropriate Rate

One barrier when praising and acknowledging correct student responses among students with LD is knowing how much praise to provide. Not providing enough can lead to a cessation of responding, while praising too much can cause students to become satiated. It is important to find the amount of praise that is just right. Findings from research suggest teachers should aim to (a) maintain a minimum 5:1 ratio of praise-to-corrective feedback and (b) deliver six praise statements per 15 minutes (Collins & Cook, 2016; Myers et al., 2011).

Teachers can ensure they are delivering praise at this optimal rate by using a timer. Timers can be as simple as a buzzing wristwatch or a smartphone application. A few examples of timer applications include (a) OK Timer, (b) Interval Timer, (c) Stopwatch and Timer, (d) Multi Timer Stopwatch, and (e) Twisty Timer. In addition to applications, there are also timers designed specifically for special educators. To reach the goal of six praise statements per 15 minutes, the timer should be set at 2.5 min intervals. When using a timer, teachers do not have to actively attend to a clock to keep track of intervals. This way, teachers are free to attend to other classroom duties such as delivering instructions, answering questions, or prepping materials. Timers can also help keep teachers on track and minimize missing praise opportunities.

One popular timer among special educators is the MotivAider. This small, battery-operated device vibrates at various intervals that can be set to fixed intervals (e.g., every 4 minutes) or variable schedules (e.g., on average every 25 seconds). It is the size of a pager, weighs less than a cell phone, and can be easily clipped to an article or part of clothing (Flaute et al., 2005). The vibration from the MotivAider can serve as a prompt for a teacher to praise an individual student or group of students who (a) just responded correctly during instruction, (b) recently followed directions, or (c) are currently on task. To help reach the optimal praise rate of six per 15 minutes, the MotivAider should be set to vibrate every 2.5 minutes. In some situations, neither a MotivAider nor another timer will be available. When this happens, a good rule of thumb to follow to reach the six per 15 minutes goal is to follow 80% of correct student responses with a praise statement (Kestner et al., 2019). If teachers do this, they are very likely to achieve praise rates of six per 15 minutes.

3 Use Direct Behavior-Specific Praise Statements

Although we often hear, "Good job!" echoing the halls of schools, not often do students with LD thrive without specific praise. What differs between behavior-specific and general praise statements may be obvious: *behavior-specific* praise clearly identifies the correct behavior in which the student engaged. This clearly and directly identifies what the correct response was for the student, and what behavior he/she should engage in in the future to receive more praise. In fact, behavior-specific praise has been shown to lead to better academic outcomes for students with LD than general praise alone (Harwell & Jackson, 2014). Behavior-specific praise can also lead to increases in student achievement and academic engagement among students with LD (and other disabilities) and decreases in inappropriate behaviors (Collins & Cook, 2016). The more often desired behavior is followed by behavior-specific praise, the more likely it will occur again in the future. That is, behavior-specific praise can function as a positive reinforcer for desired behavior (Cooper et al., 2019).

Now, it can seem repetitive to always use behavior-specific praise. One way to avoid the possible constant repetition is to include praise that is *whole-group*, *general* (e.g., non-specific), and *noncontingent* (i.e., independent of a behavior; Kranak et al., 2017). Whole-group praise can be great during group instruction, lunch or snack time, or student-led activities. Additionally, general and noncontingent praise can be interspersed throughout all academic tasks throughout the day. See Table 1 for examples of behavior-specific, general, whole-group, and noncontingent praise statements.

4 Use a Group Contingency When Delivering Praise

Teachers often use generalized conditioned reinforcers (e.g., tokens, stickers, points) to individually reinforce student-specific behaviors such as time on-task or raising a quiet hand. Providing the optimal high rate of praise individually can be time-consuming. However, teachers can reduce their reinforcement efforts and praise more than one student using a group contingency model of reinforcement. Teachers can praise small groups of students for behaviors such as teamwork (i.e., dependent group contingency), or whole groups of students (i.e., interdependent group contingency) for behaviors like attending to tasks or completing homework.

Table 1. Examples of praise statements.

Type of Praise	Examples
Behavior-specific praise	"I like the way you answered so quickly, Aaron!" "Sarah, thank you for raising your hand!" "Excellent job getting your materials, Murray." "Thanks for lining up, Noel!" "John Michael, great work finishing your math assignment."
Whole-group praise	"I love how all my friends are paying attention right now!" "Great job working independently, everyone." "Thank you all for following that direction." "Everyone, great work!" "Class, very nicely done."
General praise	"Wow, you're a rock star!" "Neat-o, gang!" "Super-duper." "Nice!" "Great job!"
Noncontingent praise	"Welcome to class today." "Good morning, students!" "Enjoy your weekend." Smiling at students. Interacting with them during lunchtime.

The Good Behavior Game (Tingstrom et al., 2006) is a well-researched interdependent group contingency strategy often used by teachers when seeking to reduce common systemic classroom-wide challenging behaviors (e.g., calling out). First, the teacher announces to the class the targeted behavior he/she will be recording. Then, he/she draws a T-chart on the board labeled *teacher* and *class*. Each time a student calls out, the teacher gets a point. Each time a student raises his/her hand, the class gets a point. At the end of the predetermined interval (e.g., hour, period), if the class has more points, they earn a group reward (e.g., 5 more minutes at recess). This strategy has been effective when shaping the behaviors of students with LD and behavioral challenges (Tingstrom et al., 2006). Teachers should be aware of their learners with LD and behavioral challenges, as their peers might point out or draw attention to their misbehaviors. Although peers pointing out students' misbehaviors might sound concerning, teachers should persist, as some degree of peer pressure is what makes a group contingency effective.

The hero procedure (i.e., dependent group contingency) is another popular procedure to use when the teacher wants the whole class to adjust their behavior while minimizing the teacher's own efforts when encouraging the whole group. The hero procedure is designed to target a small group or even one particular student (Cooper et al., 2019). The teacher should announce to the class that he/she is going to be watching one student or small group. He/she should tell the class particularly what he/she is looking for (e.g., on-task behavior during independent time), and explain to the students he/she will not tell the class who he/she is watching. Then, at the end of the defined interval, the teacher can tell the class who the hero(s) was (only if he/she meets the criteria), and that student(s) can deliver the reward. During the observation period, the students can encourage each other to stay on-task. Peer modeling paired with a healthy dose of peer pressure makes this group contingency effective.

5 | **Teach Students to Recruit Praise**

Students are likely to work with a variety of teachers. Although one teacher may have followed the first four ways to increase meaningful praise, another may not have. Thus, it is essential to equip students with LD with ways to increase their own self-advocacy (Test et al., 2005). One way to increase student self-advocacy is to teach them to recruit teacher praise (Alber & Heward, 2000). Teaching students

to recruit praise is as easy as adding prompts to assignments (e.g., self-assessments). Students are prompted to check for important variables such as task completion or accuracy. After a certain period of time has passed, students can ask the teacher to check and recognize their good work (Solis et al., 2012). Setting up timed work periods in which students track and self-monitor their work will also enable them to record what they are doing on their own, before recruiting praise, potentially fostering the development of students' self-determination skills (Konrad et al., 2007; Test et al., 2005).

Conclusion

This article presented five ways teachers can use and increase the amount of praise in their classrooms when working with students with LD. When teachers use praise in these proposed, strategic ways, the effects can have many benefits for students with LD. Praise can help decrease inappropriate behaviors such as disruption, which in turn increases the likelihood of appropriate behaviors such as maintaining time on task. Praise can also indirectly help support students' self-awareness and self-advocacy, which can lead to better academic and social outcomes for students with LD. Moreover, these behavioral adjustments can help support improved classroom management which may also benefit teachers' emotional health. A classroom filled with praise can help foster an effective learning environment for both teachers and their learners with LD.

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AmazonSmile Announcement

How many of you are frequent Amazon shoppers? How would you like to continue shopping and know that you are supporting CLD every time you shop, at no cost to you? Now you can with AmazonSmile! When you shop AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection, and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to CLD! Plus, you do not need to be a member of CLD to identify it as the charitable organization, so please feel free to share with family and friends!

Add CLD to your AmazonSmile:

1. Sign in to **smile.amazon.com** on your desktop or mobile phone browser with your Amazon credentials.
2. From your desktop, go to **Your Account** from the navigation at the top of any page and then select the option to **Select your AmazonSmile Charity** (under **Other Programs**). Or, from your mobile browser, select **Select Your AmazonSmile Charity** (under **Other Programs**) from the options at the bottom of the page.
3. Select **Search** and type in **Council for Learning Disabilities** as your charitable organization.
4. Bookmark **smile.amazon.com** so you can see your generated donations to the Council for Learning Disabilities each time you shop at Amazon.

Change your current AmazonSmile Charitable Organization to CLD:

1. Sign in to **smile.amazon.com** on your desktop or mobile phone browser.
2. From your desktop, go to **Your Account** from the navigation at the top of any page and then select the option to **Change your AmazonSmile Charity** (under **Other Programs**). Or, from your mobile browser, select **Change your AmazonSmile Charity** (under **Other Programs**) from the options at the bottom of the page.
3. Select **Search** and type in **Council for Learning Disabilities** as your new charitable organization.
4. Bookmark **smile.amazon.com** so you can see your generated donations to the Council for Learning Disabilities each time you shop at Amazon.

Seeking Applications for *LD Forum* Editor

CLD is seeking applications for the position of editor of *LD Forum*, its official newsletter. The role of the editor involves preparing in a timely manner the newsletter content, which should:

(a) inform the membership about business of the international organization and state chapters, and

(b) offer brief articles related to the LD field.

Applicants must be a member of CLD and maintain membership during the term as editor.

Editor Responsibilities:

1. Commit to finish the 3-year appointment that officially began July 1, 2020. (Note: Thus, the upcoming term will be a 2-year commitment.)
2. Annually prepare five issues of *LD Forum* (February, April, July, September, and December).
3. Assist with recruiting and selecting an assistant editor and serve as a mentor for that person.
4. Based on previous schedules for disseminating CLD business, confer with the CLD Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, and the CLD committee chairs regarding possible content.
5. Coordinate the review board, arrange for the peer review of articles submitted for consideration, and work with potential authors through the revision process.
6. Plan, assemble, and edit information to be included in each issue.
7. Send each issue to the Hammill Institute on Disabilities for typesetting on a preset schedule.
8. Participate on the Communications Committee and as a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees, provide status reports as requested.
9. Contribute to the mission of CLD by contributing to continuous improvement of *LD Forum* to meet the needs of our membership.

Interested parties should submit a letter of interest that includes your qualifications for the position, a description of your plan for *LD Forum*, and a brief vita to Kathleen Pfannenstiel, Communications chair, at **kpfannenstiel@air.org** by **November 30, 2020**.

Committee and Chapter News

Archive Committee Updates

The CLD Archive Committee has been actively working on preserving the CLD conference records and other related matters under the guidance of the CLD past presidents. The Archive Committee chair is Meijia Liu, a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin). The committee is committed to maintaining and updating conference information, including the yearly investment balance, award winners, and past presidents.

Since 2019, the committee has double-checked many printed materials (held at the Hammill Institute) from previous conferences with the help of Judy Voress and Linda Nease. With the help of Samantha Bos, a CLD member and doctoral student at UT-Austin, we updated the data into the Archive Form. Last year, the committee also collected a stack of photos taken at previous CLD conferences; the photos are now kept in the CLD Archive Room. Recently, the committee worked with Judy Voress and Linda Nease to update information specific to chapter presidents and to share this information with CLD members for research. We are still working on some information that is missing. Should you have any information regarding the locations of CLD spring regional meetings from 1993–2019, and the editor(s) of *Intervention in School and Clinic* from 1996–2005, please reach out to Meijia Liu at **meijia.liu@utexas.edu**. Watch *LD Forum* for postings of other materials that are still missing and needed by the committee.

Meijia Liu
Archive Committee Chair

Texas CLD Announcements

The Texas Council for Learning Disabilities (TCLD) would like to wish educators across the country a safe and healthy start to the school year. Whether that be face-to-face or virtual, we hope that this school year, although strange and unprecedented, will have a positive outcome for all. As educators, this past year we were faced with immense challenges, and we were able to push ourselves in ways that we may not have thought capable. Best wishes as we start this new academic year.

Prior to the shutdown of the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCLD was able to host a webinar to learn about High Leverage Practices delivered by Dr. Michael Kennedy from the University of Virginia. This webinar is still available on our TCLD website and contains very valuable information for current and future educators. Additionally, in the midst of business, school, and university closures, TCLD hosted two additional webinars, the first of which was an opportunity for TCLD members to come together and discuss the challenges and triumphs we had faced as a result of moving instruction online. Members were also able to participate in a webinar delivered by Dr. David J. Francis from the University of Houston. Dr. Francis shared the process and pitfalls of identifying English learners. Finally, TCLD gave away five Wrights Law books in a raffle to new members.

Lastly, I would like to send a thank you to all current and past members of CLD for your commitment to students with disabilities and improving the educational experience for these students. I am very excited and honored to serve as the president of TCLD this coming year. On behalf of TCLD I would like to wish you all a year of health and safety.

Best wishes,
Randa Keeley
Texas CLD President

Virginia CLD Announcements

The Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities (VCLD) and the Virginia Council for Exceptional Children, two state organizations supporting students with learning disabilities and learning differences, are joining forces to provide free quality professional development to educators throughout Virginia. The four part webinar series, offered on the first Friday of each month, will address current issues in the field of education. An expert, or panel of experts, will present practical suggestions for addressing the myriad of issues facing teachers today. The format will include a 60-minute presentation followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer session. Don't miss this relevant and timely professional development opportunity! See **http://cglink.me/r725338**

TIME: 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm EST

AUDIENCE: General education and special education teachers, future teachers, teaching assistants, co-teachers.

DATES & TOPICS:

August 7: *Virtual Teaching from Several Perspectives*

September 4: *COVID-19 and Special Education Law*

October 2: *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

November 6: *Co-Teaching* (tentative based on participant feedback)

For more information, contact Mindy Gumpert, VCLD president, at **mgump001@odu.edu**.

Diversity Statement

The Council for Learning Disabilities is committed to celebrating and enriching the field of special education through its diversity. As a group, we pursue the best practices, research, and policies that exemplify enhancing the lives of individuals with learning disabilities, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a diverse group of professionals in the field of special education, we believe that this work cannot be completed in a silo, but rather, it must be embedded within every part of what we do. As an organization, we are committed to welcoming, understanding, learning about, and honoring individual diversity.

CLD Mission & Vision

Mission Statement: The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), an international organization composed of professionals who represent diverse disciplines, is committed to enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities across the life span. CLD accomplishes this by promoting and disseminating evidence-based research and practices related to the education of individuals with learning disabilities. In addition, CLD fosters (a) collaboration among professionals; (b) development of leaders in the field; and (c) advocacy for policies that support individuals with learning disabilities at local, state, and national levels.

Vision Statement: All individuals with learning disabilities are empowered to achieve their potential.