

Lindsay is a grade 4 student who is diagnosed with a language learning disability. She has excellent musical talent but has low self esteem as a learner. She is at grade level in math, very organized, and has strengths in computers.

Part 1-

What other information about the student would be helpful to know?

- When was Lindsay first diagnosed and who initiated the IPRC?
- Does Lindsay have any other specific disabilities or needs besides the language learning disability AND what is the nature of the LLD?
- What portion of language does she have difficulty with i.e. oral, reading as this would speak to whether she has a visual or auditory processing issue?
- How does Lindsay do in small versus large groups?
- What is the nature of the low self esteem as a learner?
- How well does Lindsay interact with her peers, is she teased, liked?
- Are there any other areas I need to be sensitive i.e. cultural, family issues?

Where would you obtain this information?

- Go to the OSR (Ontario student record)
- Speak with Lindsay's previous grade 3 teacher and gain some insights into Lindsay from him or her
- Review past IPRC, IEP's, Psychological assessments, any testing completed by the LST (Learning Support Teacher) and past report cards
- Speak with the PARENTS and get an accurate picture of Lindsay at home, in the community. Find out how she does with her music teacher

What are the student's strengths?

- Lindsay is very well organized
- She is a good musician
- She does well in Math
- She has a natural ability in the area of computers

What are the student's areas of concern?

- Lindsay needs to have success in all areas of her learning. At present her LLD is a key issue and as Language is foundational this must be addressed
- Her self esteem is a big issue, her meta cognition i.e. thoughts on learning will impact her potential success in language
- Peers will be an issue as well, how does she do in the context of a class, does she have friends, is she an isolated child, is there support at home?

What does the student need?

- Lindsay needs encouragement, praise and support to be a successful learner. Perhaps she could even play her musical instrument in class one day for other students one day or the teacher could make a point of highlighting how well organized Lindsay is and use her as a role model for other students in the class. Her strengths should be reinforced and need areas addressed as follows:
- The psychologist could request designated equipment i.e. he/she could write a letter outlining the needs of Lindsay. The LST could send both the letter and an application to the board to request specialized assistive technology. Some students are able to get their own Scanner and Laptop Computer with software like: WORD Q, SPEAK Q, KURSWEIL 3000 and SMART IDEAS. This combination of software will greatly help level the playing field for Lindsay

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Lindsay is a grade 4 student who is diagnosed with a language learning disability. She has excellent musical talent but has low self-esteem as a learner. She is at grade level in math, very organised, and has strengths in computers.

What program accommodations and modifications would be of assistance to the student?

Because Lindsey's strengths are in music, math and computers, she might succeed in these areas of the curriculum with some accommodations. These would keep the learning expectations the same as her peers but would allow the materials to be presented differently and the demonstration of knowledge to be

different. Perhaps Lindsey would benefit from materials being more visual, with pictures as the instructions along with the words. Perhaps Lindsey would benefit from being able to give test answers verbally as opposed to writing them or listening to taped books or using a calculator, or tools to assist in spelling.....

Because Lindsey's weaknesses lie in the language area of the curriculum, she could certainly benefit from modifications in these areas in order to succeed to her full potential. Alternate expectations in reading / writing – perhaps at a different grade level would help Lindsey. Perhaps an individualized reading program (bridge reading.....) would help Lindsey succeed.

Here are some general modifications and accommodations that might assist Lindsey;

- z Extended Time to finish a task
- z Handouts or Text on Audio-tape
- z Reduced Number of Expectations
- z Reduced Number of Tasks Required
- z Use of Spell Checker
- z Reference Sheet for Mathematical or Scientific Formulae
- z Repetition and Rephrasing
- z Substitution of a Portfolio for a Written Exam
- z Substituting Alternative Expectations- Alternative Program
- z Reduced Penalties for Spelling Errors
- z Including previous grade expectations in a subject
- z Spreading a Credit Course over 2 Years or 2 Semesters
- z Compacting Credit Course to be Completed Individually
- z Evaluation Based on Different Expectations
- z Individualized Reading Program
- z Use of Thesaurus and Word lists

- z Prompting and Pacing in Instruction
- z Compulsory Credit Substitution
- z Use of Peer Tutoring

What other components of an action plan should be considered to assist the student?

Lindsey's special need of having a language learning disability could require an action plan to assist her so that she may succeed. An action plan, as described in "Teachers Helping Teachers" is used in many schools and was developed in New Brunswick. It is created during a 20-30 minute process that utilizes the expertise of school staff and Board personnel to develop the action plan. It involves the evaluation of the following 7 areas;

- 1- Introducing the process and the problem.
- 2- Referring Teacher defines the problem.
- 3- Group discussion for clarification.
- 4- Brainstorming "do-able" strategies.
- 5- Referring teacher selects strategy to try.
- 6- Establish Action Plan – who and when.
- 7- Wrap up.

In Lindsey's particular case, an action plan that outlined the problem (her learning disability) and that defined the areas of strengths (organization, music, math, computers) and weaknesses (language) would be beneficial to Lindsey's teacher because it would be a good starting off point for brainstorming potential helpful strategies. Some strategies to help Lindsey might be for the teacher to use Lindsey's strength in music to help her develop language skills, perhaps by singing certain key materials or having Lindsey read about music..... Or perhaps the teacher could combine Lindsey's strength in computers with a specialized reading/writing program accessible on the computer. Once the action plan had been set in place and the strategies had been tried by the teacher it would be useful (and necessary according to the "teachers helping teachers" theory) to revisit and evaluate the plan on a regular basis.

How would additional supports be provided to the student?

Depending on Lindsey's particular needs and the schools resources, Lindsey could certainly profit from meeting with a speech pathologist. As stated earlier (part 1) Lindsey could profit from designated equipment and specialized assistive technology, for example scanner and Laptop Computer with special software. In addition, perhaps Lindsey could profit from having extra help from an educational

assistant for some of the day whether it be in the regular classroom or being pulled out for a specified amount of time to do specially designed learning activities. All of these additional supports would have to be written in Lindsey's IEP.

How would you assess the effectiveness of the supports?

The assessment of the effectiveness of the accommodations and modifications would be key to Lindsey's overall success. It would be important for the teacher and action plan committee to review Lindsey's achievements, strengths and weaknesses on a regular basis so that any changes could be made if necessary. If Lindsey were succeeding in an area that used to be modified perhaps the teacher could consider moving to accommodations in that area, or if Lindsey wasn't succeeding in a certain area that used to be accommodated for, perhaps this area could now be modified. Always keeping in mind that the goal is to enhance Lindsey's learning.

Submitted by Adele Wilson