

**TRAINING NEEDS OF SPECIFIC LEARNING  
DISABILITIES DECISION-MAKERS AS PERCEIVED BY  
NORTH CAROLINA ELIGIBILITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

by

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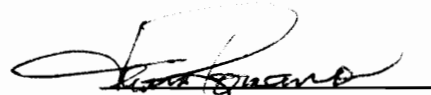
in

Administration and Supervision  
of Special Education

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In Memory of  
Philip R. Jones  
(Deceased 12-20-94)

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(ABSTRACT)

The purposes of this study were to (a) identify training provided by North Carolina school systems for its Administrative Placement Committee/Specific Learning Disabilities (APC/SLD) eligibility committee members, and (b) assess the perceived training needs of APC/SLD eligibility committee members. The sample consisted of 77 special education program administrators, 58 teachers (special education and regular education), 56 pupil support personnel and 63 school administrators.

Descriptive data were gathered using two questionnaires. The special education program administrator survey contained items regarding the composition and selection criteria of the APC/SLD eligibility committee and system-wide training provided. In addition, the survey made inquiry regarding problems and concerns that committee members have expressed regarding their understanding and implementation of SLD requirements and the efficiency or effectiveness of committee meetings. The eligibility

committee survey included items regarding job title, SLD criteria/ requirements, information crucial to eligibility decisions, structure of eligibility meetings, group dynamics, and training needed for effective decisions regarding eligibility and placement of students in programs for the learning disabled.

The major conclusions drawn from this study were that (1) training is being conducted in the school systems regarding the regulations and procedures for determining a specific learning disability; (2) that there is a definite need for training to be conducted with the eligibility teams on all aspects of making effective eligibility decisions; and (3) there is little difference among the training needs of teachers, support personnel and administrators.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

**"Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew. They're what makes the instrument stretch - what makes you go beyond the norm"      Tyson**

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**This manuscript is dedicated to  
the memories of**

**My father, Mr. James A. Floyd**

**and**

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**They paid for me.**

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Specifically mandated in Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (now known as The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), is the provision that special education placement decisions be made by a multidisciplinary team. The team approach was viewed as a way of ensuring "accuracy in assessment, classification, and special education decisions" (Pfeiffer, 1981, p. 330). The law attempts to limit any individual's or profession's influence in determining eligibility and programming for special education services (Kaiser & Woodman, 1985; Huebner & Gould, 1991).

Education, particularly special education, has used multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) a relatively short time for educational decision making. The mental health and medical fields have also used group participation to enhance their services (Kaiser & Woodman, 1985). According to Pfeiffer (1981), "The key elements of a multidisciplinary team are a common purpose, cooperative problem solving by different professionals who possess unique skills and orientations, and a coordination of activities" (p.330)

The multidisciplinary team in special education must evaluate a variety of assessment information and then make special education eligibility and placement decisions based on that assessment information. McElroy

(1988) identified a variety of factors, both positive and negative, which were perceived to influence eligibility decisions. They included: presence of an administrator, psychologist, and classroom teacher; the psychologist's report; ability/achievement discrepancy for LD students; classroom modifications (untried or tried and failed); unclear handicap definition; inconsistent local criteria for decision making; time constraints; review of state handicap definitions; and teamwork. She found that long agendas, inhibited discussions, the emotionality of the committee, the committee's reliance on expert opinion, a protective attitude toward the child, prior formation of opinions, the inexperience of committee members, parental threats of due process, the neediness of the child, and problem behavior were indications of inappropriate influences that affect eligibility decision making.

Current North Carolina regulations call for two multidisciplinary teams to serve the student during the referral and placement processes. The School-Based Committee (SBC) provides a team framework for evaluating data and recommending the most appropriate placement for children referred for special education services. The SBC is responsible for receiving referrals, involving parents in the planning process, obtaining parental permission for assessment, initiating screening and evaluation procedures, evaluating information, and seeing that an individualized education program (IEP) is

developed and is reevaluated annually. The second committee, the Administrative Placement Committee (APC), makes all final decisions regarding classification of students as special needs and placement of students in programs for exceptional children. APC is responsible for the following: (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1991)

- A. Receiving and reviewing information collected and considered by the school-based committee in formulating the recommendation regarding classification of a student as special needs and placement of a student in a special program;
- B. Reviewing the recommendation of the SBC regarding classification of a student as special needs and placement of a student in a special program;
- C. Ensuring compliance with due process procedures;
- D. Reviewing referrals of students from other agencies or of students who are not being presently served in the LEA and making the final decision concerning classification of a student as special needs and placement;
- E. Conferring with appropriate Department of Human Resources staff for the development of an individualized education program (IEP) for the handicapped, group education program (GEP) for the academically gifted or written education program

(WEP) for the pregnant, and determination of appropriate placement if it is determined by the APC in a city or county school administrative unit that a child should receive a free appropriate public education in a program operated by the Department of Human Resources;

- F. Making financial arrangements with other LEAs, other public agencies or private schools;
- G. If placement decision is for placement outside the local educational agency, the committee must see that an appropriate individualized education program for the handicapped, group education program for the academically gifted or written educational program for the pregnant is developed in conjunction with the school or program where the child is being placed;
- H. If the APC determines that the IEP for the handicapped, GEP for the academically gifted or WEP for the pregnant is not adequate and does not define an appropriate education for the child, then the APC can reconvene the committee or ask the parent to join the APC and actively change the education plan or program;  
and

- I. Ensuring that an eligible child with special needs is placed in the appropriate special program within 90 calendar days of receipt of a referral, unless the parent refuses to give consent for evaluation or placement. (pp. 17-21)

One member of the administrative placement committee must be someone who has been designated by the superintendent as eligible to commit financial or other resources of the school district. Other members of the APC should be selected from the following and must include at least one member who is knowledgeable about the child:

- A. Exceptional Children Program Administrator;
- B. Chairperson of the appropriate school-based committee;
- C. Superintendent, or designee;
- D. General supervisor;
- E. School psychologist;
- F. Other appropriate personnel;
- G. Agency representative, if child is referred by another agency.

The APC committee should have at least one member of the same race and sex as the student being considered for special education placement. School districts may elect to have a combination SBC/APC. (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1991).

## **Statement of the Problem**

The number of students receiving special education services, particularly in LD, has increased dramatically since the inception of 94-142. North Carolina in 1976-77 reported serving 17,501 learning disabled students. In the 1990-91 school year that number had increased to 51,566, which represents a 194.07 % increase in the numbers served (US Department of Education, 1992). It is possible that some of these students were misclassified as having specific learning disabilities. The decision making process currently employed in most public schools varies as to its consistency in placement and eligibility decisions. Ysseldyke, et al. (1982), developed a set of generalizations based on five years of research in assessment and decision making. They found that: (a) placement decisions made by teams of individuals have very little to do with the data collected on students; (b) many non-handicapped students are being declared eligible for special education services; (c) there are a variety of definitions and criteria used for declaring students eligible for learning disabilities services and the identification can vary depending on the definition and criteria used; and (d) training is needed in evaluating student performance data and making educational decisions based on the data. (pp. 3-12) They concluded that inconsistencies in decisions made by the multidisciplinary teams are due to factors other than educational and psychological data.



Studies concerning the needs of multidisciplinary teams in special education eligibility point toward the lack of training of eligibility team members in group processes. Communication tools (Moore, Fifield, Spira, and Scarloto, 1989), recognizing and dealing with bias (Cherkes & Ryan, 1985), eligibility criteria for specific disability categories (Ysseldyke et al., 1983), and evaluation of the team process and their educational outcomes (Moore et al., 1989) are identified factors that inhibit appropriate eligibility decisions. Few guidelines have been given to special education practitioners on activities or procedures they may use to help the MDT reach its potential. Day (1985) recognized for a MDT to accomplish its goal they must have a shared vision, team goals, and a clear understanding of individual roles and program evaluation.

According to information received in a telephone conversation with the comptroller's office, North Carolina does not require systematic training for its SBC and APC members. The training that is provided by the state is given at the request of the LEA and is focused on compliance issues only. Without appropriate training in eligibility requirements, assessment functions, and group interaction skills there is the potential to misclassify students as learning disabled.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Multidisciplinary teams have been used for a relatively short period of time in public schools. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) mandated the use of multidisciplinary teams in decisions concerning special education eligibility and placement. However, the law did not mandate specific professionals, other than teachers, who would serve on the MDT nor did it specify the procedures to be used by the MDT on the local level (Kaiser & Woodman, 1985; Vance, Bahr, Huberty & Ewer-Jones, 1988). The federal act (PL 94-142) stipulated that the basic requirements of Public Law 94-142 must be met by the state, or financial aid to the state would be withheld (Kaiser & Woodman, 1985). The lack of specificity in MDT procedures allows for a great deal of flexibility among states in their procedures and requirements regarding special education eligibility (Mercer, King-Sears & Mercer, 1990).

This review addresses the literature as it relates to special education eligibility and placement decisions made by multidisciplinary teams. Research tends to support the use of multidisciplinary teams as an approach to increase effective decision making (Abelson & Woodman, 1983; Chalfant, 1985).

## Multidisciplinary Team Functioning

Crucial to any team functioning is the effective use of the resources brought to the team by each member. It is the inappropriate or poor management of these resources that leads to ineffective team decision making. Abelson and Woodman (1983) suggested that this is a "troublesome" issue for MDTs in school systems, since team members rarely receive training in team management. As a result of their research on team effectiveness, they identified several implications concerning the improvement of MDT's effectiveness:

1. Trust and collaboration must be present. Within a school setting MDT members lack mutual respect and understanding of discipline goals and constraints. Multidisciplinary team members must work cooperatively and collaboratively in order to understand the constraints each works with and to trust each other.
2. Commitment and involvement of team members must be present. Team members should possess a high level of individual motivation for carrying out decisions of the team.
3. Appropriately determined team goals and role expectations necessary to meet those goals should be present.

4. A systematic collection of data should be evident. Decisions may be made without all the information due to time constraints.
5. Training school psychologists and other MDT members in techniques which will enable them to manage the MDT more effectively should be present. Training should include group process management. (pp 133-135)

The multidisciplinary team must be able to determine and discuss the team's knowledge of the various kinds of assessments (criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, and ecologically based) typically conducted during a special education evaluation. The process and procedures must be in place for the MDT to be able to resolve problems associated with bias in the assessment instruments as well as bias within the members' background, attitudes and orientation which have the potential to affect the interpretation of the assessment and data (O'Reilly, Northcraft, & Sabers, 1989; Knoff, 1983a). In addition the MDT must be able to identify biases during team meetings and work to minimize their impact upon the placement decision (Knoff, 1983b).

#### Multidisciplinary Team Problems

Studies conducted after the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975) investigated multidisciplinary team

functioning and identified a variety of problems that may effect the special education eligibility decision making process: unsystematic approaches to communication and the decision-making process (Anderlini, 1983; Yoshida, 1983; Ableson & Woodman, 1983; and Bailey, 1984); bias in assessments (Hoge & Coladarci, 1989); and team members (Cherkes & Ryan, 1985 and O'Reilly, Northcraft, & Sabers, 1989); inadequate participation by parents and regular educators (Ysseldyke et al., 1982; Pfeiffer, 1981; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Allen, 1981); insufficient time devoted to discussing intervention (Huebner & Gould, 1991), and a lack of understanding of definitions and criteria used for determining eligibility (Dangel, 1988).

Cherkes & Ryan (1985) examined individuals' awareness of subjective bias and psychometric weaknesses of testing instruments to determine the important part they play in the decision making process. They reported on three "loose logical thinking processes" (p. 324) that are potential pitfalls for those involved in eligibility decision making. The first, is described as an "obsessive tendency" - the individual starts with an hypothesis and seeks positive support for that view. The second pitfall is "to keep inferences neatly symmetrical, to believe that positive outcomes are related to positive causes, negative outcomes to negative causes, and that behaviors or performances that look similar are... derived from the same source" (p.325).

The third "loose logic" pitfall is to overgeneralize an observation or assumption.

The study by O'Reilly, et al. (1989) looked at the potential for "confirmation bias" in special education eligibility decisions. They defined confirmation bias as preferential gathering of data that confirms the hypothesis being tested. The study involved practicing school psychologists. The psychologists were asked to evaluate a simulated report of a child referred for learning disabilities or gifted placement. The results of the study suggest that the psychologists were significantly biased by the reason for referral.

Diagnostic data have been shown to have an influence in the eligibility decision-making process. Knoff (1983a) asked school psychologists and special education practitioners and trainees to rate the following diagnostic data: classroom observation, receptive-expressive language, interview with child, emotional indicators, social skills ratings, visual-motor ability, reading grade level, math grade level, intelligence quotient, chronological age, neurological exam, grade retention, habitat, income level, race, and sex to determine which data may have a greater impact on the decision making process. Results indicated that classroom observation, assessments of expressive and receptive language, an interview with the referred child, and emotional indicators were most important to the decision.

Braden & Algina (1989) identified three problems in the current method of determining special education eligibility: (a) continuous variables (e.g., achievement, IQ) are artificially divided into dichotomous classes; (b) errors of measurement are not used in a meaningful way; and (c) multiple test scores are not combined to make decisions. They presented a new method for the calculation of the probability that a student meets eligibility criteria based upon the fact that the individual's true score on a test lies within a range of scores. The new method has its problems too, namely, school districts are comfortable with cutoff scores to determine eligibility. This method only indicates a probability of eligibility.

Knoff (1983b) investigated the influence of the status of the multidisciplinary team over the decision-making process. The subjects rated multidisciplinary team professions on "influence on placement decisions given the intent of PL 94-142", the "profession's influence in the subjects's actual experience", and the desirability of each profession to "chair the multidisciplinary team meeting". Knoff found that certain professions of multidisciplinary team members exert a disproportionate influence on placement decisions. The school psychologist and special education teacher were rated as extremely influential on placement decisions given the intent of the statute and actual experience. The school psychologist and central administrator were perceived as extremely desirable to chair the team.

Pfeiffer (1981) investigated the problems that team members perceive to exist on MDTs. He notes that this group felt that the roles and goals of the team were too "constructive" and that the team functioned "under extensive pressure with minimal support" (p. 331).

In an eligibility and classification decisions study, Potter, Ysseldyke, Regan, and Algozzine (1983) found considerable confusion and uncertainty on the part of educators when it comes to making eligibility and classification decisions. Among their sample was the tendency to label a child learning disabled when there was nothing to indicate any other handicap. This group found that educators were to "an alarming extent" willing to consider an average student eligible for special education services in spite of investigator-constructed assessment data that reflected average performance. From this study they concluded that decision makers must have access to and use technically adequate assessment devices, but they must also be trained to use this information and all of the information they have about a child in an appropriate manner.

Huebner and Gould (1991), in a more recent study of MDT functioning, surveyed school psychologists' perceptions of MDT functioning. The results indicated that school psychologists indicated an overall average level of satisfaction with typical team functioning. They found that MDTs continue to experience at least "moderate" problems with insufficient time



devoted to formulating intervention plans, lack of participation by parents and regular educators, and lack of appropriate follow up on cases.

According to Huebner and Gould, the most interesting finding was that school psychologists typically serve as MDT leaders and that more than one quarter of the sample indicated no formal pre-service or in-service training for this role.

North Carolina defines specific learning disability as:

"an inclusive term used to denote various processing disorders presumed to be intrinsic to an individual (e.g., acquisition, organization, retrieval, or expression of information; effective problem-solving behaviors). The disability is manifested by substantial difficulties in the acquisition and use of skills in listening comprehension, oral expression, written expression, reading, or mathematics. A learning disability may occur concomitantly with, but is not the primary result of, other handicapping conditions and/or environmental, cultural, and or economic influences" (NC Department of Public Instruction, 1991). The state regulations concerning eligibility in North Carolina for specific learning disabled indicate that the following criteria shall be met in identifying school-age students as

learning disabled and in need of special education: (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1991)

1. After intervention strategies have been implemented in regular education or other programs, the student still exhibits learning difficulties;
2. Achievement measured in age standard score units is 15 or more points below intellectual functioning;
3. The disability is not primarily the result of sensory deficits; mental handicap; behavioral/ emotional handicap; or environmental, cultural, and/or economic influences. If a student's learning problems can be attributed to any of these exclusionary factors, then the primary disability is not a learning disability;
4. The student exhibits characteristics of learning disabilities consistent with the definition.

In a follow up study Mercer, King-Sears, and Mercer (1990) reported the results of a survey of 51 state education agencies regarding their learning disabilities definitions, identification criteria, and operational procedures. The authors analyzed the survey results using a conceptual framework consisting of the following eight components: (a) definition type, (b) intelligence, (c) process, (d) academic, (e) exclusion-primary, (f)

neurological impairment, (g) discrepancy, and (h) the operationalization of discrepancy.

The results indicated that three components: language, academic and exclusion are used most frequently in state definitions and criteria. The process, spelling, and neurological impairment components are frequently found in definitions but less so in criteria. Many of the states have operationalized their identification procedures recommending prereferral interventions, adequate assessment instruments, and discrepancy models that emphasize the use of standard scores and regression formulas.

North Carolina uses a standard score discrepancy model to determine specific learning disability eligibility. This method often appears, according to Webster & Rogers (1987), "to discriminate against those children who are called slow learners."

### Training Needs

A great deal of the concern about the identification of learning disabled students involves the training needs of the multidisciplinary team. These teams are responsible for making objective decisions based on a student's ability. Teachers frequently do not understand the criteria used for identifying a student with LD, and do not have the ability to differentiate variables that may affect individual performance (Cherkes & Ryan, 1985). Furthermore, there are wide differences among team members in their

perceptions of whether a student meets stated eligibility criteria (Epps, McGue & Ysseldyke, 1982). Additionally, MDTs have received little or no training in team dynamics, communication, and problem solving/decision making (Anderlini, 1983). Dangel's (1988) study focused on the type of help that special educators and psychologists need in order to determine the eligibility of students referred for learning disabilities. His sample was asked to respond to seven items on a survey about their understanding of eligibility requirements, language processes, discrepancy, 5- and 6- year olds eligibility, professional judgement, and important assessment information. Dangel identified several areas in which training was needed--training in implementing the regulation for determining LD eligibility, particularly in the area of evaluating and interpreting information dealing with language process and training in collecting and evaluating information beyond the test results. Additionally, the sample indicated a need for understanding the certification standards used by monitors from the SEA.

Making accurate decisions regarding eligibility and placement of exceptional children and youth requires an organized and collaborative effort by the MDT. Bailey (1984) proposed a three-dimensional model for conceptualizing problems in the functioning of interdisciplinary teams. The dimensions represent team development, team subsystems, and whole team functioning. Bailey contended that team members, by understanding the

different dimensions, can "pinpoint the specific nature and type of dysfunction within a given team and identify strategies for improving team performance" (p.25).

Anderlini (1983) described an inservice program for improving team participation in educational decision making. The program has three components: team dynamics, communication, and problem solving. Each component includes a number of concepts and skills and a variety of instructional techniques. Team members are encouraged to share problems that exist during team meetings and to share their perceptions of the outcomes.

## Chapter III

### **METHOD**

The primary purpose of this chapter is to describe the method, population, and procedures used to collect information on the training and training needs of APC/SLD eligibility committee members in North Carolina.

#### Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to: (a) identify training provided by North Carolina School systems for its APC/SLD eligibility committee members, and (b) assess the perceived training needs of APC/SLD eligibility committee members.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What training is provided by or available for eligibility committee members?
2. What criteria are used for selecting eligibility committee members?
3. In what areas do APC/SLD eligibility committee members indicate a need for training in order to determine eligibility?
4. Are training needs different for administrative personnel, pupil support personnel, and instructional personnel who serve on eligibility committees?

Self-administered mailed questionnaires (See Appendices A and B) were chosen because they were advantageous in terms of ease of use and economy. Additionally, it increased chances of obtaining truthful responses because of anonymity and ample time for respondents to give responses that may reflect their true feelings.

### Population

At the time this study began North Carolina had 136 school systems (133 state school systems and three federal schools). Due to consolidation of city school systems into county systems North Carolina currently has 124 school systems. The data from the former city districts were collapsed into their respective county systems.

The group surveyed consisted of the Special Education Program Administrators (n = 124) and three APC/SLD eligibility committee members (n = 372) from each school system.

The APC/eligibility committee members were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of information needed in determining SLD eligibility and their need for staff development in making LD eligibility decisions. The systems' special education program administrators were asked to complete demographic information on the system, training provided, sponsored or encouraged for APC/LD eligibility

committee members and criteria for selection of APC/LD eligibility committee members.

The special education program administrator was sent a letter (see Appendix C) explaining the research project. Included with the letter were four questionnaires. They were color coded for the program administrator and the APC/LD eligibility committee members by job classification: administrator, pupil support personnel, and teacher. The program administrator was asked to distribute the surveys along with an introductory letter to the following APC/LD eligibility committee members: pink -- a teacher (regular or special education); gold -- a school psychologist, educational diagnostician, guidance counselor, social worker, or school nurse; green -- a program area coordinator/supervisor or an administrator (building level or central office). (Appendices D, E, and F, respectively)

#### Instrument Development

Two survey instruments were used in this study (See Appendices A and B). The development of these instruments followed the sequence and procedures recommended by survey research literature (Babbie, 1990). The questionnaires were developed based on a comprehensive review of the literature, interviews and field-testing with eligibility committee members, directors of special education and former North Carolina special education program administrators.



Field test. The two questionnaires were field tested in January of 1993 with doctoral students who had served on SLD eligibility committees, former special education program administrators in North Carolina, and directors of special education in Virginia. The special education program administrator survey was field tested with 5 individuals (3 former special education program administrators in North Carolina and 2 special education directors in Virginia). Based on field test reviews and reviews by committee members, final versions of the instruments were completed. The questionnaires were then mailed to the population

Description of the instruments. The special education program administrator survey consisted of 16 items. Nine of those items were open ended and asked for specific information regarding the composition of the APC/LD eligibility committee: percentage of eligibility committee member pool trained in the system; individuals, by job title, who conducted the training; materials and references recommended for use in conducting eligibility decision-making training; types of staff training activities conducted; problems and concerns committee members have expressed regarding understanding and implementing the LD requirements; and the efficiency and effectiveness of committee meetings. The remaining questions addressed: the types of committees used in making eligibility decisions; the selection of eligibility committee members by job categories - instructional

personnel, pupil support personnel and administrators; specific information regarding the APC/eligibility committee meeting, (location, length of committee assignment and chair of the committee); training of committee members in areas related to understanding and implementing LD requirements: assessment, test and personal bias, legal rights, and group interaction.

The APC/SLD eligibility committee survey, adapted from the instrument used by Dangel (1988), consists of 17 items regarding job title, SLD criteria/requirements, information crucial to eligibility decision, structure of eligibility meetings, group dynamics, and training needed for effective decisions regarding eligibility and placement of students in programs for the learning disabled. In addition, several questions focused on prior experience as an eligibility committee member.

Attention was given to the format and appearance of the questionnaires. A cover letter (Appendix C) provided an introduction to the study and encouraged the respondent to complete the questionnaire. The cover letter described the purpose and importance of the study, established the legitimacy of the researcher, requested cooperation, and guaranteed confidentiality for the respondent.

The questionnaires were printed on brightly colored paper (blue, pink, goldenrod and green) to get the respondents' attention and avoid being lost

among other correspondence. It was determined that each special education program administrator would serve as the contact for a teacher, pupil support person and administrator serving on the APC/SLD eligibility committee in their school system. On March 4, 1993, each special education program administrator in North Carolina was mailed a packet which contained four color-coded questionnaires, four separate cover letters explaining the purpose of the study, stamped return envelopes, and a suggested return date. Several days after the initial mailing the East Coast was hit with the "Blizzard of '93" which caused North Carolina school systems to suspend school for as many as seven days. This resulted in a delay in the receiving, distribution, and return of the questionnaires. Due to the poor response of the first mailing a reminder letter was sent to nonrespondents. However, the reminder letters could only be sent directly to the special education program administrators who were asked to pass on the appropriate reminder letters to the teacher, pupil support person, and administrator they selected to participate in the study. At the end of April, 1993, a third mailing was sent to the special education program administrator: (a) thanking them for their response and reminding them that some (or all) of their committee members had not responded, or (b) a follow up letter to nonresponding special education program administrators encouraging their participation and the participation of their eligibility

committee members who had not responded. Additional surveys and stamped return envelopes were included in the mailing. (See Appendix G)

### Management of Data

The completed questionnaires were reviewed and coded by the researcher. All item responses were given number codes and entered into the computer. Open ended responses were sorted and grouped under common headings. Eleven program administrators were called to clarify responses given to open ended questions. Missing data from the SLD eligibility committee members were coded as a zero and recorded as a nonresponse.

### Non-Respondents

A small sample of special education program administrator non-respondents (10%) was randomly selected and interviewed by telephone in an effort to determine why the questionnaire(s) were not returned and to have them answer selected items. This procedure was designed to determine whether or not there are any major differences between respondents and nonrespondents. There appeared to be no evidence of systematic differences between the two groups.

### Analysis

The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics. To determine the training available to eligibility committee members, the criteria for committee

selection, and area of training needed by committee members frequency counts were used. Cross tabulations were used to determine if there were differences in the training needs for instructional personnel, pupil support personnel, and administrative personnel who serve on the eligibility committee.

### Limitations

This section describes the problems encountered in administering this survey. A few problems arose from the method used to distribute questionnaires to the APC/SLD eligibility committee members. The distribution of the questionnaires to the teacher, pupil support person, and administrator were dependent upon the discretion of the special education program administrator. In cases where the systems merged or the program administrator position was vacant the questionnaire was returned.

Additional complications occurred when the special education program administrator refused to participate and did not distribute the survey or distributed the survey to individuals who were not APC/eligibility committee members. In addition, some special education program administrators felt overwhelmed with work as a result of "The Blizzard of '93," state audit preparations and preparations for the April 1 head count. In addition, the population kept changing due to the consolidation of school systems in

North Carolina. Finally, some respondents did not follow directions in responding to certain items. This resulted in some data that were unusable.

## Chapter IV

### RESULTS

The literature has shown a need for concern with the functioning of multidisciplinary teams in determining specific learning disability eligibility. Concern surrounding the misidentification of mildly handicapped children has focused the decision making process of multidisciplinary teams that determine SLD eligibility.

The questionnaires for the program administrators and the APC/eligibility committee members were designed to collect information relative to the function of SLD eligibility committees in North Carolina, the training provided, and training needs of those individuals who make eligibility decisions. The program administrator's questionnaire provided information concerning the school system's selection and training of the eligibility committee. The SLD eligibility committee questionnaire asked for information on the committee members perceptions of information needed to make eligibility decisions.

#### General Respondent Characteristics

The survey group consisted of 124 Special Education Program Administrators and three APC/SLD eligibility committee members (n = 372) from each school system.

The return rates for program administrators (n = 77) and the APC/eligibility committee members (n = 177) are presented in Tables 1 and 2. There are 77 special education program administrators represented in this study, which represents 62% of North Carolina current special education program administrators. The 177 eligibility committee members represented in this study include 58 (33% of) teachers, 56 (32% of) pupil support personnel and 63 (35% of) supervisors/coordinators and other administrators and 74 school systems. Committee members have served on the eligibility committee from 0-29 years with a combined average of 6.4 years.

#### Prevalence of Disabled Children in School Systems

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the special education program administrators indicated that their school systems served less than 2000 exceptional children. One special education program administrator reported serving 8000 exceptional students. It is significant to note that 53% of the program administrators did not respond to questions involving the numbers of students referred and eligible for learning disabilities services. The respondents reported this information was "not available" or "not known". Thirty-six percent (36%) indicated between 1 and 200 students were referred for learning disabilities services during this study period. Between 1 and 190 students were reported eligible for specific learning disabilities services by 47% of the special education program administrators.



**Table 1**      **Eligibility Committee Return Rates and Committee Experience Levels (n = 177)**

<b>Primary Job</b>	<b>No. Returned by Job Title</b>	<b>Return Rate</b>	<b>Range of Years on Committee</b>
<b><i>Instructional Personnel</i></b>			<b>0-20</b>
Regular Education	1		
Special Education	57		
Total	58	33%	
<b><i>Pupil Support Personnel</i></b>			<b>0-23</b>
Psychologist	25		
Diagnostician	16		
Guidance Counselor	13		
School Nurse	1		
Social Worker	1		
Total	56	31%	
<b><i>Administrators</i></b>			<b>0-29</b>
Building Level	41		
Central Office	12		
Supervisor/Coordinator	10		
Total	63	36%	

**Table 2      Special Education Program Administrators Return Rate**

<b>Primary Job</b>	<b>No. Returned by Job Title</b>	<b>Return Rate</b>
<b><i>Program Administrators</i></b>		
Exceptional Children Program Administrators	77	
Total	77	62%

Most of the respondents indicated that their system offered 12 or more different special education programs (specific learning disabilities, 100%; mentally handicapped -educable 83%, trainable 79%, severe and profoundly 72%; speech and language impaired, 83%; academically gifted, 81%; behaviorally-emotionally handicapped, 80%; visually impaired, 74%; hearing impaired, 71%; preschool transition, 70%; Willie M, 66% and autistic, 14%). The remaining categories (traumatic brain injury, multihandicapped, other health impaired, orthopedically impaired and deaf/blind) were reported as 10% or less.

The Willie M category of special needs service is specific to North Carolina. It is the result of a voluntary settlement of a civil action by the state. These students have an emotional, mental or neurological handicap combined with a history of assaultive behavior. The local education agency must provide "habilitation, including medical treatment, education, training and care..." (NC Division of Exceptional Children Services, 1991). More than half of the program administrators indicated that they offered a Willie M program. One program administrator signified that Willie M was not a special education program category in North Carolina and the researcher should "take it off the survey."

### Committee Composition

North Carolina has two eligibility committees -- the School Based Committee (SBC) and the Administrative Placement Committee (APC). State regulations allow for the combining of these committees, as well as the IEP committee, when necessary. Forty-five percent (45%) of the respondents have a combination SBC/APC committee and 42.9% have a central office APC committee.

Almost three-fourths (73%) of the respondents indicated that the special education program administrator was a member of the eligibility committee. Other committee members were: psychologist (67%); exceptional children teachers (60%); regular education teachers (54%); principals (48%); counselors (22%) and diagnostician (20%). This committee membership is consistent with the state guidelines for administrative placement committee composition.

### Meeting Structure

Most eligibility committee meetings follow a clear and formalized structure (80%). The respondents described the meeting structure as "a presentation of reports (assessment measures, psychological, social), discussion and decision." Fifty-eight percent (58%) reported that committee members have specific functions during the eligibility meeting, e.g., chairperson presides, committee members report findings from various

assessments conducted, or they share their expertise in a particular area. Eligibility meetings are called as needed (45%), with scheduled meetings of once a week (26%) and twice a month (18%) reported. Committee meetings are held in the local school (73%) or at the central administrative office (26%). Members serve for an academic year (41%), at the discretion of the chair (24%), or as permanent members (23%). The special education program administrators (53%) were indicated as the individual most often serving as chairperson of the eligibility committee; followed by special education teachers (17%); and principals (15%).

It is interesting to note that over half of the respondents (58%) reported that no profession exerts more influences than others represented in the eligibility committee. Of those that responded in the affirmative (42%), psychology (60%) and teachers of exceptional children (29%) are the professions indicated that exert more influence.

#### Eligibility Committee Selection Criteria

Table 3 provides information on the selection criteria of eligibility committee members used by program administrators. They are listed in order of criteria selected from highest mentioned to lowest by type of personnel. Instructional personnel (teachers) are most likely to be selected to serve on the eligibility committee based on knowledge of disability category (83%), knowledge of student (79%), training in areas relating to

**Table 3**      **Criteria Used by School Systems for the Selection of Eligibility Committee Members (n = 77)**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>No. Using Criteria</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b><i>Instructional Personnel</i></b>		
Knowledge of disability category	64	83.1
Knowledge of student	61	79.2
Training in areas related to SLD	56	72.7
Prior experience on eligibility committee	23	29.9
Other (School assignment/position Principal discretion/appointment)	7	9.1
No response	6	7.8
<b><i>Pupil Support Personnel</i></b>		
Professional expertise	58	75.3
Training in areas related to LD	54	70.1
Knowledge of student	49	63.6
Prior experience on eligibility committee	27	35.1
Other (Principal discretion, School position)	5	6.5
No response	7	9.1
<b><i>Administrators</i></b>		
Knowledge of program area	63	81.8
Prior experience on eligibility committee	36	46.8
Knowledge of student	33	42.9
Can make financial commitment for system	13	16.9
Training in areas related SLD	2	2.6
No response	5	6.5

SLD eligibility (73%). Similarly professional expertise (75%), training in areas related to SLD (70%), and knowledge of student (63%) are the most frequently cited criteria indicated for the selection of pupil support personnel. Administrators are selected based on their knowledge of program area (82%), prior experience on eligibility committee (47%) and knowledge of students (43%). Training in areas related to SLD eligibility (3%) was not indicated as a major criterion for administrators who serve on the eligibility committee. This researcher finds it interesting that the selection of supervisors/coordinators and other administrators are based on their knowledge of the program area yet knowledge of areas related to SLD eligibility is not a major factor in the selection criteria. It would seem that all SLD eligibility team members should understand the definition and criteria used for determining LD eligibility.

#### Training Provided by the School System

Over half (54%) of the program administrators reported 90-100% of the eligibility committee member pool is trained in the school system. Tables 4-6 summarize the data collected on the types of training activities, who conducts the training, and references and materials most often used in the training the eligibility committee pool. An annual workshop on reviewing the exceptional children regulations and procedures (57.1%) is the most frequently cited school system sponsored activity for addressing the issues

**Table 4      Staff Development Conducted by School System (n = 77)**

<b>Staff Development Activities</b>	<b>No. Reported</b>	<b>% of Group</b>
Yearly review of regulations	44	57.1
LD program area (ADD/ADHD, inclusion, current issues, criteria for LD, learning styles)	21	27.2
Modifications/interventions	21	27.2
Developing IEP's	16	20.7
Local procedures	14	18.1
Compliance issues	7	9.0
Transition/networking with agencies	7	9.0
New forms	6	7.7
Attend conferences	5	6.4
Eligibility committee training	4	5.1
Legal issue	4	5.1
Assessment interpretation	2	2.5
Bias and the potential for bias	1	1.2
<b>Total comments by Program Administrators</b>	<b>152</b>	



**Table 5      Providers of Eligibility Committee Training (n = 77)**

<b>Providers of Training</b>	<b>No. Reported</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Program Administrators	39	50.6
State Department Consultants	24	31.1
Psychologists	17	22.0
Director of Special Education	11	14.2
Private Consultant	7	9.0
Teachers	6	7.7
Regional Center Personnel	4	5.1
Diagnostician	3	3.8
Supervisor	2	2.5
School Based Committee Chairperson	2	2.5
Administrative Placement Committee Rep.	1	1.2
Interventionist	1	1.2
Director of Pupil Services	1	1.2
Director of Pupil Personnel	1	1.2
Speech/language Pathologist	1	1.2
<b>Total comments by Program Administrators</b>	<b>120</b>	

**Table 6** **Materials and References Used for Eligibility Committee Training**  
(n = 77)

<b>Recommended Materials and References</b>	<b># Reported</b>	<b>% of Group</b>
State Regulations and Procedures Manual	47	61.0
Federal Law and regulation	9	11.6
Local staff manual	6	7.7
State forms	2	2.5
Video: "How difficult can this be?"	2	2.5
Professional articles	2	2.5
Case studies	2	2.5
Consultants	2	2.5
Psychologists	2	2.5
LD textbook	2	2.5
Experienced and trained teachers	1	1.2
Common sense	1	1.2
Technical assistance center	1	1.2
University faculty	1	1.2
Hawthorne series regarding placement	1	1.2
Assessment, test and evaluations	1	1.2
Everything you can	1	1.2
Janet Lerner	1	1.2
Due Process Manual	1	1.2
<b>Total comments by Program Administrators</b>	<b>85</b>	

involved in referral, eligibility, placement, and review of exceptional children. Other in-service program topics reported focused on learning disabilities-- ADD/ADHD, inclusion, current issues, criteria and current issues (27.2%); modifications/interventions (27.2%); IEP development (20.7%) and local procedures (18.1%).

Training activities that focus on eligibility committee training, legal issues, assessment interpretation and bias were indicated as staff development activities by 4 or fewer program administrators.

The training is most often conducted by the special education program administrator (50.6%), state department of education consultants (31.1%), the school psychologist (22%), or the director of special education (14.2%). The Procedures Governing Programs and Services for Children with Special Needs Manual (61%) is the most cited reference; followed by federal law and regulations (11.6%); and local staff manuals (7.7%).

### Training Needs

Seventy-six percent (76%) of the eligibility committee members responding indicated that they had received formal training in making effective learning disability eligibility decisions. Only slightly more than half (54%) plan to take any additional training to improve their skills in this function. Yet, 156 (88%) indicated that SLD eligibility committee members

should receive formal training. Table 7 contains a summary of the data on future training topics selected by the SLD eligibility committee respondents. Overall, 66% of those planning to take additional training were interested in interventions (modifications of environment and instruction). This area of training was the most commonly selected by both pupil support personnel (48%) and administrators (30%). Teachers also gave high preference to this item (31%), but selected understanding the discrepancy alternative even more (36%).

Only 24% of the eligibility committee members indicated that they had difficulty in understanding SLD requirements (See Table 8). The responses by job category vary only slightly. Fourteen, or 22%, of the administrators, along with 20% of the teachers and 18% of the pupil support personnel, indicated having difficulty with understanding the SLD requirements. Twenty-five eligibility committee members indicated specific items of difficulty in understanding the SLD requirements. They were: reliance on the 15 point discrepancy formula (7); the discrepancy alternative (4); and test used for assessment (3).

Listening comprehension (54%) and oral expression (46%) were identified as the academic areas having the greatest need for clarification in order to determine LD eligibility. It is interesting to note that half or more teachers, psychologists, and diagnosticians responding indicated needing

**Table 7** **Frequency and Percentage of Additional Training Selected by Committee Members (n = 177)**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Teachers n = 58</b>	<b>PSPersonnel n = 56</b>	<b>Administrators n = 63</b>
Understanding of state and federal mandated programs	12 20.7%	14 25.0	17 27.0
Understanding of the requirements for specific learning disabilities placement	12 20.7	13 23.0	18 28.6
Familiarity with the types of information collected during the SBC process	9 15.5	11 20.0	8 12.7
Awareness of state and federal timelines in the referral to eligibility process	9 15.5	12 21.4	7 11.1
Understanding of assessments used in the evaluation process and their potential for bias	20 34.0	19 33.9	18 28.6
Understanding and awareness or personal biases that may influence an eligibility decision	9 15.5	19 33.9	7 11.1
Knowledge of interventions (modifications of environment and instruction)	18 31.0	27 48.0	19 30.2
Understanding of cultural differences and the challenges that these differences present in the classroom	14 24.1	19 33.9	14 22.2
Awareness of parents rights and due process	9 15.5	12 21.4	11 17.0
Understanding of the discrepancy alternative and how and when it is used	21 36.2	18 32.1	15 23.8
Understanding of group interaction and communication techniques	10 17.2	12 21.4	10 15.9

**Table 8      The Number of SLD Committee Members who have Experienced Difficulty in Understanding and Implementing the SLD Requirements (n = 177)**

<b>Primary Job Title</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b><i>Instructional Personnel (n = 58)</i></b>		
Regular Education	1	0
Special Education	11	46
<b><i>Pupil Support Personnel (n = 56)</i></b>		
Psychologist	6	19
Diagnostician	4	12
Guidance Counselor	0	13
School Nurse	0	1
Social Worker	0	1
<b><i>Administrator (n = 63)</i></b>		
Building Level	7	34
Central Office	3	9
Supervisor/Coordinator	4	6
Total Percent	36 20.3	141 79.6

further clarification in these areas. Other academic areas identified included written expression (14%), math reasoning (9%), reading comprehension (5%), basic reading skill (4%) and math calculations (3%). A summary of the data by job category are contained in Table 9.

Eligibility committee members were asked to indicate what they would do if a child's eligibility for SLD services does not fall within prescribed state criteria but they believe that the child does, in fact, have a learning disability. As reported in Table 10, additional testing was suggested most often by teachers pupil support personnel and administration. Followed by modification of the regular education curriculum, completing a discrepancy alternative report, writing a justification, and seeking alternative placement such as 504, or Chapter 1 program were additional suggestions noted.

Less than one-third (31%) of the eligibility committee members indicated they would have difficulty in determining the kinds of information that would justify the placement of a student in a SLD program for whom a severe discrepancy did not exist. Some respondent comments indicated that they were locked into the 15 point discrepancy formula; others questioned how they could meet such student's needs. See Table 11 for a comparison of comments by job category.

Several questions on the eligibility committee survey used a scale of "rarely", "occasionally", "frequently" and "can't say", to ask the respondent

**Table 9 Academic Areas Needing Further Clarification by Eligibility Committee Members for SLD Determination (n = 177)**

Job Title	LC	OE	WE	BRS	RC	MC	MR
<b><i>Instructional Personnel (n = 58)</i></b>							
Regular Education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Special Education	31	29	9	3	2	3	9
<b><i>Pupil Support (n = 56)</i></b>							
Psychologist	17	16	1	0	0	0	1
Diagnostician	10	8	1	0	0	0	0
Nurse	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Counselor	4	5	2	1	1	0	0
Social Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b><i>Administrator (n = 63)</i></b>							
Building Level	14	10	8	1	2	2	3
Central Office	8	6	1	1	1	0	1
Supervisor/ Coordinator	6	7	2	0	1	0	1
Total Percentage	91 51.4	83 46.8	25 14.1	7 4.0	8 4.5	6 3.4	16 9.0
<b>Key:</b>							
<b>LC</b>	<b>Listening Comprehension</b>			<b>OE</b>	<b>Oral Expression</b>		
<b>WE</b>	<b>Written Expression</b>			<b>BRS</b>	<b>Basic Reading Skills</b>		
<b>RC</b>	<b>Reading Comprehension</b>			<b>MC</b>	<b>Math Calculations</b>		
<b>MR</b>	<b>Math Reasoning</b>						



**Table 10 Strategies Used by Eligibility Committee Members for Students Determined Ineligible for SLD Services (n = 177)**

Comments	Job Category		
	IP	PSP	AP
Complete discrepancy alternative report	10	15	5
Additional testing	15	17	16
Modify regular curriculum	11	9	13
Write justification	10	15	5
Alternative placement	7	8	8
No placement	0	3	7
Follow NC guidelines	2	1	2
Student placed anyway	0	1	0
Look for other causes	0	1	0
Total comments	171		
<b>Key:</b>			
IP Instructional Personnel			
PSP Pupil Support Personnel			
AP Administrative Personnel			

**Table 11**    **Problems Determining the Types of Information that Would Justify the Placement of a Student in a Learning Disabilities Program for Whom a Severe Discrepancy Did Not Exist (n = 177)**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b><i>Instructional Personnel (n = 58)</i></b>		
Regular Education	1	0
Special Education	24	33
<b><i>Pupil Support Personnel (n = 56)</i></b>		
Psychologist	7	18
Diagnostician	3	13
Guidance Counselor	1	12
School Nurse	0	1
Social Worker	0	1
<b><i>Administrator (n = 63)</i></b>		
Building Level	11	30
Central Office	4	8
Supervisor/Coordinator	3	7
Total	54	123
Percent	31.0	69.0

to indicate how often they use professional judgment to initially certify or recertify a student as learning disabled. The findings as reported in Tables 12-13 indicate by job category that teachers, support personnel, and administrators rarely (61%) use professional judgment to initially certify and rarely (58%) use professional judgment to recertify a student LD after a 3-year reevaluation. It is interesting to note that 7% and 8% respectively added the category "never" to these questionnaire items with written comments such as "We don't use judgment we follow the regs".

The same scale was used to determine how often 5- and 6- year olds were identified as having a learning disability.

Again most of the eligibility committee members indicated "rarely". In addition, the question was asked if the identification of 5- and 6- year olds was perceived as a problem. Over 70% indicated that this was not a problem. Those respondents who did indicate that this was a problem commented that "assessments are not valid for this age group", there is a "need for developmentally appropriate instruction", and "immaturity is confused with LD" (See Table 14).

Eligibility committee members were asked what information from the psychological report is crucial in determining LD eligibility. Table 15 summarizes the data by job category. Teachers, support personnel and administrators indicated the full scale IQ (92%) as crucial information on the

**Table 12     Use of Professional Judgment to Initially Certify a Student as Learning Disabled (n = 177)**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Can't say</b>	<b>Never</b>
Teachers	34	11	7	2	4
Pupil Support Personnel	35	7	6	7	1
Administrators	39	9	4	4	7
Total Percent	108 (61.0)	27 (15.3)	17 (9.6)	13 (7.3)	12 (6.8)

**Table 13     Use of Professional Judgment to Recertify (after three year reevaluation) a Student as Learning Disabled**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Can't say</b>	<b>Never</b>
Teachers	32	12	7	2	5
P Support Personnel	31	11	7	6	1
Administrators	37	10	2	6	8
Total Percentages	100 (56.5)	33 (18.6)	16 (9.0)	14 (7.9)	14 (7.9)

**Table 14      The Frequency of 5- and 6- year olds Identified as having a Learning Disability (n = 177)**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Can't Say</b>	<b>Blank</b>
Teachers	36	8	4	10	0
Pupil Support Personnel	31	18	0	5	2
Administrators	35	19	1	4	4
<b>Total Percentage</b>	<b>102 (57.6)</b>	<b>45 (25.4)</b>	<b>5 (2.8)</b>	<b>19 (10.7)</b>	<b>6 (3.4)</b>

<b>Is this a problem?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No + 1 Blank</b>
Teachers	12	46
Pupil Support Personnel	18	37
Administrators	15	48
<b>Totals Percentages</b>	<b>45 (25.4)</b>	<b>131 (74.0)</b>

**Table 15** **Crucial Information from the Psychological Report Needed to Determine a Learning Disability (n = 177)**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Teachers n = 58</b>	<b>PSP n = 56</b>	<b>Admin. n = 63</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Academics	41	48	52	141 (80.0)
Full Scale IQ	57	50	56	163 (92.1)
Performance IQ	48	46	53	147 (83.1)
Verbal IQ	49	45	52	146 (83.0)
Profile of Subtest	33	34	40	107 (61.0)
Psychological processes	27	28	32	87 (49.2)
Psychologists suggestions	34	24	35	93 (53.0)
Recommendations for remediation	21	22	24	67 (38.0)
Severe discrepancy	49	40	46	135 (76.3)
Strengths and Weaknesses	37	37	43	117 (66.1)
<b>Key:</b>				
<b>PSP</b>	<b>Pupil Support Personnel</b>			
<b>ADMIN</b>	<b>Administrators</b>			

psychological report. The performance IQ (83%), verbal IQ (83%), academics (80%) and a severe discrepancy (76%) were also deemed crucial information in the psychologists report. Psychological processes and recommendations for remediations were deemed less important by all three groups.

Two open ended questions dealt with concerns expressed by committee members to program administrators regarding difficulties in understanding and implementing the SLD requirements and concerns over difficulties in the group's efficiency and effectiveness (See Tables 16-17). Only 39% of the program administrators indicated having committee members express concerns in understanding and implementing SLD requirements. The concerns noted dealt with understanding the SLD definition and eligibility criteria, the 15 point discrepancy formula, and using the discrepancy alternative. Less frequently mentioned concerns focused on writing quality IEP's, appropriate assessment instruments and interpreting test scores. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the program administrators indicated that they had received concerns regarding the eligibility committee's efficiency and effectiveness. The lack of training in decision making, the volume of cases, timelines for placement, and scheduling were most frequently cited.



**Table 16** **Concerns Expressed to Program Administrators by Committee Members, in Understanding and Implementing the SLD Requirements (n = 77)**

Yes 30	39%	
No 47	61%	
<b>Comments</b>		
The LD definition and eligibility criteria	17	20.5
Fifteen points discrepancy formula/using discrepancy alternative	11	14.2
Interpreting of test scores	4	5.1
Too many children qualify with state formula	2	2.5
Writing quality IEP's	2	2.5
Processing deficits ignored	1	1.2
Placing first and second graders in LD	1	1.2
Need for full-time psychologist	1	1.2
No, but they should have	1	1.2
Total comments by Program Administrators	40	

**Table 17 Concerns Expressed by Committee Members over Difficulties in the Committee's Efficiency and Effectiveness (n = 77)**

Yes	18	23.4%
No	59	76.6%
<b>Comments</b>		
In depth training in better decision making needed	5	6.4%
Volume of cases	4	5.1
Timeline for placement	3	3.8
Scheduling	3	3.8
Meetings too long	2	2.5
Placement recommendations	2	2.5
Consistency	1	1.2
Efficiency	1	1.2
Communications	1	1.2
Presentations by committee members	1	1.2
<b>Total comments by Program Administrators</b>	<b>23</b>	

The APC/SLD eligibility committee members, almost equally by job title, indicated that they did not have problems in determining SLD eligibility. Training provided by the school system focuses on complying with the state and federal regulations regarding SLD determination.

The majority of eligibility committee members indicated that they have received formal training in determining a learning disability and that eligibility committee members should be trained in making eligibility decisions. Additional training topics selected by eligibility committee members included topics related to the quality of SLD decision-making as well as compliance issues.

## Chapter V

### **SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purposes of this study were to identify training provided by North Carolina school systems for its eligibility committee members and to assess the training needs of the APC\SLD eligibility committee members. The need for effective decision making in the determination of a specific learning disability has received some attention in the literature. Federal law and regulations mandate the use of multidisciplinary teams in making eligibility and placement decisions in special education (Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Mitchell, 1982; Kaiser & Woodman, 1985; Huebner & Gould, 1991). The multidisciplinary team must, as a group, be able to evaluate a variety of assessment information and then make eligibility and placement decisions based on that assessment information.

Studies concerning special education decision making provide information on multidisciplinary team functioning (Knoff, 1983b; O'Reilly, Northcraft, & Sabers, 1989), the problems associated with eligibility team decision making (Anderlini, 1983; Hoge and Coladarci, 1989; Cherkes & Ryan, 1985; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Allen, 1981; and Dangel, 1988) and training needed for effective decision making (Epps, McGue & Ysseldyke, 1982).

## Overview of Significant Findings

North Carolina school systems provide basic training in the rules and procedures for determining specific learning disabilities eligibility. The training includes annual updates on procedures for referral and criteria for eligibility as well as workshops on SLD program areas topics. Effective eligibility decisions should be made by committees that are trained in group interaction skills, the eligibility criteria, using assessment data, and recognition of bias (Moore, et al., 1989; Cherkes & Ryan, 1985; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, Regan & McGue, 1981). Program administrators representing 77 of 124 school systems, indicated that fewer committee members were trained in areas related to bias in testing or personal bias, the state criteria, group interaction, and communication techniques.

The composition of the eligibility committee follows the state guidelines, and committee members are selected based on their knowledge of the disability, knowledge of student, knowledge of the program area and training in areas related to SLD eligibility.

Most of the instructional personnel, pupil support personnel, and administrators believe that they do not have any difficulty in making eligibility decisions. Those that do, focus their concerns on the use of the state's discrepancy formula and the discrepancy alternative. Eligibility

decisions are made based on the state's criteria for specific learning disabilities.

The definition and criteria used in determining a learning disability address: academics, exclusion, discrepancy, process, neurological status and intelligence. Academics, exclusion and discrepancy have become the predominate components in state's criteria for SLD determination (Mercer, et al, 1990). The use of a formula has become one method for determining a discrepancy between achievement and potential (McCaul & Schultz, 1991; White & Wigle, 1986; Sinclair & Alexson, 1986). Research by Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Epps (1983) on comparing the formula-identified LD students with their actual school placement designations shows a low agreement rate.

Committee members rarely use professional judgment in making SLD eligibility decisions but follow the guidelines indicated in the state regulations. Only slightly more than half of these committee members plan to take further training to improve their skills in making SLD decisions.

It appears that this study was not effective in obtaining the desired results, the "true" training needs of APC/SLD eligibility decision makers. I question whether the respondents indicated what they felt or what they thought would be the correct response based on North Carolina's criteria for SLD eligibility.

## Discussion

Two major conclusions can be drawn from this study: (a) compliance oriented training is provided to eligibility committee member pools by the local systems; and (b) eligibility committee members need training in issues related to the quality of the eligibility decision. North Carolina's current "cookbook" (Webster & Rogers, 1987) approach to making SLD eligibility decisions has the potential for the misidentification of students. Webster and Rogers (1987) maintained "In North Carolina the use of the standard score discrepancy method to identify SLD students for special education appeared to discriminate against those children who are called 'slow learners'" (p. 6). More emphasis should be placed on looking at the individual student's learning style, behavior and processing skills as well as performance on standardized tests. The state criteria for SLD eligibility and its emphasis on compliance, not quality, appears to ignore the human side of the issue, the children and their educational needs.

Training Provided. Over three fourths of the training references and materials indicated by the program administrators focused on regulations and procedures. The state regulations and procedures manual, federal law and regulations, local staff manuals, and state forms topped the list of recommended items for use in training APC/SLD eligibility committee members.

Videos, case studies, university faculty, consultants, textbooks and experienced personnel within the system were also mentioned, by the program administrators, as recommended resource materials, and references.

Committees Selection Criteria. The composition of the SLD eligibility committee follows the North Carolina guidelines. Committee members are selected based on their knowledge of the disability category, knowledge of the student, training in areas related to SLD eligibility, professional expertise, and knowledge of the program area.

Training Needs of Eligibility Committees. The teachers, pupil support personnel, and the administrators were in agreement that they had no problems in understanding and/or implementing the SLD requirements. This is understandable because North Carolina's regulations and procedures for SLD determination are very specific. Though a smaller percentage, those that did have problems were equally distributed among the groups. The most frequently cited problems focused on the rigid use of the 15-point discrepancy. To a lesser extent, the problems cited centered around issues related to the ability to distinguish learning disabilities from other similar conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity (ADHD), or slow learning. Another prominent problem is documenting the presence or absence of processing difficulties in the referral. These items are not addressed in the SLD criteria.



All three groups indicated a need for further clarification of listening comprehension, oral expression, and written expression. This may be due, in part, to the fact that language development is a "process not a product of instruction" and there are few assessment instruments that are able to measure language achievement with the precision of reading or mathematics achievement (Dangel, 1988).

Well over half of the eligibility committee respondents indicated that they rarely used professional judgment in the initial determination of a specific learning disability and in the recertification of a student after the three year reevaluation. This may be due as one respondent indicated, to the over relevance on a 15 point discrepancy between achievement and ability in determining SLD eligibility. Training in areas related to group dynamics, communication skills, and consensus building, and understanding bias would allow eligibility committee members the opportunity to make quality decisions and still follow the state's criteria.

There was very little difference by job title in what the respondents indicated as crucial information from the psychological report. The items cited were those that are needed to identify a discrepancy between achievement and potential.

The groups did vary slightly in the strategies suggested for students who were not determined eligible for SLD services. Teachers and pupil

support personnel indicated that they would complete the discrepancy alternative report, submit a written justification for learning disabilities services, or conduct additional testing. The administrators were more interested in conducting additional testing and/or modifying the current curriculum.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has described the training provided by school systems and the perceived training needs of the LD eligibility decision makers. The major conclusions drawn from the results of this study indicate that: (1) training is being conducted in the school systems regarding the regulations and procedures for determining a specific learning disability; (2) the selection of eligibility committee members is based on a set of criteria; (3) there is a definite need for training to be conducted with the eligibility teams on all aspects of making effective eligibility decisions; and (4) there is little difference in the training needs of teachers, support personnel and administrators.

### Implications for Educational Agencies

The sample, though small, does represent the eligibility committee members in North Carolina and suggests school systems should take a serious look at its eligibility criteria for specific learning disabilities particularly the rigid use of a standard score discrepancy formula in

determining a achievement/potential discrepancy. The SEA should develop procedures that place less emphasis on cut-off numbers and more on assessing the processing difficulties of students referred for specific learning disabilities. Eligibility committee members should have specific training not only in the understanding and implementation of the regulations, but also in areas related to the efficiency of effectiveness of the multidisciplinary team process - scheduling, group interaction, and problem solving. With training in these areas as well as a knowledge of the student and his environment, eligibility committees may reduce the misclassification of students as learning disabled.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

Additional studies should focus on whether North Carolina's current two step multidisciplinary committees (SBC, APC) are needed in order to make effective eligibility decisions, the composition of the team and its relationship to the quality of decisions, and the effects of training in effective learning disabilities eligibility decision making.

North Carolina has complied with the regulations for providing special education services for students with learning disabilities. Programs and services for students with learning disabilities are increasing. As we now move toward the twenty-first century it is important that the focus should

shift from compliance with the identification criteria for learning disabled students to the quality of future SLD eligibility decisions.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Special Education Program  
Administrator Questionnaire**

#

Special Education  
Program Administrator Survey

The focus of this survey is to describe the operation of the eligibility decision-making committee used for determining specific learning disability (SLD) eligibility. All information will be kept confidential.

Directions: Please indicate your response by writing in the answer. Answer all items completely.

1. Indicate the type of committees your system uses for making SLD eligibility decisions. (Check all that apply)

central office committee (APC)  
 prestanding committee (members serve all year)  
 prestanding committee and add members when needed  
 school based committee (SBC)  
 central office committee and school based committee combination  
 individual education program committee  
 school based committee and individual education program committee combination  
 new committee developed for each child  
 other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the composition of your APC/LD Eligibility committee? (Indicate job title of members)

3. Indicate how eligibility committee members are selected? (Check all that apply for each position category)

Instructional Personnel (general and special education teachers)

knowledge of student  
 knowledge of disability category  
 prior experience on eligibility committee  
 training in areas relating to SLD eligibility (psychological and educational evaluations, discrepancy formula, learning styles, instructional techniques, etc.,)  
 other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil Support Personnel (guidance counselors, psychologists, diagnosticians, social workers, school nurse, program area supervisor or coordinator etc.)

- knowledge of student
- professional expertise
- prior experience on eligibility committee
- training in areas relating to LD eligibility (psychological and educational evaluations, discrepancy formula, learning styles, instructional techniques, etc.,)
- other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative Personnel (central office administrators, principals or assistant principals)

- knowledge of student
- knowledge of program area
- prior experience on eligibility committee
- training in areas relating to LD eligibility (psychological and educational evaluations, discrepancy formula, learning styles, instructional techniques, etc.,)
- other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. The following items pertain to the specifics of the eligibility committee. Please check those responses that describe your committee. Check one for each lettered subheading.

A. Meeting Schedule of eligibility committee

- as needed
- once a week
- twice a month
- once a month
- other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

B. Location of eligibility committee meeting

- in local school
- central location
- other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

C. Term of eligibility committee members

- one meeting
- an academic year
- at discretion of eligibility committee chairperson
- other (please indicate position and term)

- D. Chairperson of the eligibility committee  
 \_\_\_\_\_ special education program administrator  
 \_\_\_\_\_ school psychologist  
 \_\_\_\_\_ superintendent or designee  
 \_\_\_\_\_ school guidance counselor  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Beside each of the statements presented below please estimate the percentage of learning disabilities eligibility committee members who, in your judgement, have received adequate training in these areas.

- |   | % Trained |
|---|-----------|
| a. Understanding of state and federal mandated programs (PL's 94-142, 99-457 and 101-476)                   | _____     |
| b. Understanding of the requirements for specific learning disabilities placement                           | _____     |
| c. Familiarity with the types of information collected during the S2C process                               | _____     |
| d. Awareness of state and federal timelines in the referral to eligibility process                          | _____     |
| e. Understanding of assessments used in the evaluation process and their potential for bias                 | _____     |
| f. Understanding and awareness of personal biases that may influence an eligibility decision                | _____     |
| g. Knowledge of interventions (modification of environment and instruction)                                 | _____     |
| h. Understanding of cultural differences and the challenges that these differences present in the classroom | _____     |
| i. Awareness of parents rights and due process  | _____     |
| j. Understanding of the discrepancy alternative and how and when it is used                                 | _____     |
| k. Understanding of group interaction and communication techniques  | _____     |

6. What percentage of your eligibility committee member pool received training in your system?
7. Who conducted the eligibility decision-making training in your system? (Indicate position)
8. What materials and references do you recommend for use in conducting eligibility decision-making training?
9. What staff development activities has your school system conducted or sponsored within the last 4 years addressing the issues involved in referral, eligibility, placement and review of exceptional children.
10. Has your district been audited within the last 3 years?  
If yes, please check the all that apply.  
 program quality  
 state compliance audit  
 Office of Civil Rights (OCR)  
 Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)  
 other, please specify
11. Have committee members expressed concern over any difficulties in understanding and implementing the SLD requirements in your district?  
If yes, please indicate those concerns?

12. Have committee members expressed concern over any difficulties in the group's efficiency and effectiveness (i.e., understanding of the goals of APC, problem solving skills and communication techniques)?

If yes, please indicate those concerns?

Demographic information

13. How many exceptional education students are served in your district?
14. Indicate the types of special education programs you offer.  
SLD BEH EMH TMH S/PH SLI AG OT/PT VI HI Willie M  
Preschool transition Others \_\_\_\_\_
15. How many students were referred from SBC to APC for SLD during the 1991-92 school year?
16. How many of these students were determined eligible for SLD?

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Jannis V. Floyd  
Virginia Tech  
202 E. Eggleston Hall  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302  
(703) 231-5925

**APPENDIX B**

**Eligibility Committee  
Member Questionnaire**





- Written expression
- Basic reading skills
- Reading comprehension
- Math calculations
- Math reasoning

4. What do you do when a child's eligibility for learning disability services does not fall within prescribed state criteria but you believe that the child does, in fact, have a learning disability?

5. Do you have problems determining the kinds of information that would justify the placement of a student in a learning disabilities program for whom a severe discrepancy did not exist?

If so, describe your concerns.

Questions 6 and 7 deal with professional judgement. For the purposes of this study professional judgement is defined as "an opinion based on theory, experience or practical application".

6. How often do you use professional judgement to initially certify a student as learning disabled?

- rarely (up to 5 times out of one hundred)
- occasionally (20 times out of one hundred)
- frequently (50 or more times out of one hundred)
- can't say

7. How often do you use professional judgement to recertify (after three year reevaluation) a student as learning disabled?

- rarely (up to 5 times out of one hundred)
- occasionally (20 times out of one hundred)
- frequently (50 or more times out of one hundred)
- can't say

8. What information from the psychological report is crucial in determining LD eligibility? (Check all that apply)

- academics       full scale IQ       performance IQ  
 verbal IQ       profile of subtests  
 psychological processes  
  
 psychologist's suggestions  
 recommendations for remediation  
 severe discrepancy  
 strengths and weaknesses

9. How often are five and six year olds in your system identified as having a specific learning disability?

- rarely (up to 5 times out of one hundred)  
 occasionally (20 times out of one hundred)  
 frequently (50 or more times out of one hundred)  
 can't say

Do you perceive this as a problem?

- yes       no

If yes, specify your reasons.

10. Does the eligibility meeting follow a clear and formalized structure?

- yes       no

If yes, describe the meeting structure used.

11. Are committee members given specific functions to carry out during the eligibility meeting?

- yes       no

If yes, describe those functions and who carries them out.

12. Does one profession exert more influence than others represented in the eligibility committee?

yes  no

If yes, please specify the profession.

13. Have you completed any formal training ( i.e., workshop, formal coursework) in making effective learning disability eligibility decisions?

yes  no

14. Do you plan to take any formal training to improve your skills in making learning disability eligibility decisions?

yes  no

If yes, please indicate the training area(s) you plan to pursue. (check all that apply)

Understanding of state and federal mandated programs (PL's 94-142, 99-457 and 101-476)

Understanding of the requirements for specific learning disabilities placement

Familiarity with the types of information collected during the SBC process

Awareness of state and federal timelines in the referral to eligibility process

Understanding of assessments used in the evaluation process and their potential for bias

Understanding and awareness of personal biases that may influence an eligibility decision

Knowledge of interventions (modification of environment and instruction)

\_\_\_\_\_ Understanding of cultural differences and the challenges that these differences present in the classroom

\_\_\_\_\_ Awareness of parents rights and due process

\_\_\_\_\_ Understanding of the discrepancy alternative and how and when it is used

\_\_\_\_\_ Understanding of group interaction and communication techniques

15. Do you feel that eligibility and placement committee members should have formal training in making eligibility decisions?
16. How many years have you served on the eligibility and placement committee in your district?
17. Have you served on a school based committee in your system?

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Jannis V. Floyd  
Virginia Tech  
202 E. Eggleston Hall  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302  
(703) 231-5925

**APPENDIX C**

**Initial Letter to Special Education  
Program Administrators**

March 4, 1993

Dear Program Administrator:

The enclosed questionnaires are part of a study of specific learning disability (SLD) eligibility and placement committees. The study is being conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. We are particularly interested in the operation of SLD eligibility and placement committees and the training needs of committee members.

We are distributing four questionnaires to each school system in North Carolina. You can help us to asses current practices by completing the enclosed program administrator questionnaire (blue) and giving the remaining surveys to a current member of your system's eligibility and placement committee whose primary job function is instructional- regular or special (pink), pupil support (yellow) and administrative (green). To assure that the results will truly represent the perceptions of program administrators, principals, support staff and teachers across the state, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

Please answer all of the questions completely. The confidentiality of your responses will be protected and no name is required on the form. Code numbers at the top of the first page will be used only for the purpose of data collection and analysis. If you have any questions concerning this study or are interested in a summary of the results, please write or call (703) 231-5925. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by March 15, 1993.

Sincerely,

Jannis V. Floyd  
Graduate Assistant



Philip R. Jones  
Professor and Coordinator of  
Administration and Supervision  
of Special Education

**APPENDIX D**

**Initial Letter to Teacher**



March 4, 1993

Dear Teacher:

The attached questionnaire is part of a study of specific learning disability (SLD) eligibility and placement committees. The study is being conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. We are particularly interested the training needs of SLD eligibility decision-makers.

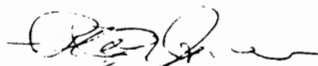
You can help us to asses the training needs of teachers like yourself who must make SLD eligibility and placement decisions by completing the attached pink questionnaire. To assure that the results will truly represent the perceptions of teachers across the state, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

Please answer all of the questions completely. The confidentiality of your responses will be protected and no name is required on the form. Code numbers at the top of the first page will be used only for the purpose of data collection and analysis. If you have any questions concerning this study or are interested in a summary of the results, please write or call (703) 231-5925. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by March 15, 1993.

Sincerely,

Jannis V. Floyd  
Graduate Assistant



Philip R. Jones  
Professor and Coordinator of  
Administration and Supervision  
of Special Education

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Initial Letter to Pupil Support Personnel**



Division of Administrative and Educational Services

College of Education  
E. Eggleston Hall, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0302  
(703) 231-5642 Fax: (703) 231-7845

March 4, 1993

Dear Pupil Support Personnel:

The attached questionnaire is part of a study of specific learning disability (SLD) eligibility and placement committees. The study is being conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. We are particularly interested the training needs of SLD eligibility decision-makers.

You can help us to asses the training needs of pupil support personnel like yourself who must make SLD eligibility and placement decisions by completing the attached yellow questionnaire. To assure that the results will truly represent the perceptions of pupil support personnel across the state, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

Please answer all of the questions completely. The confidentiality of your responses will be protected and no name is required on the form. Code numbers at the top of the first page will be used only for the purpose of data collection and analysis. If you have any questions concerning this study or are interested in a summary of the results, please write or call (703) 231-5925. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by March 15, 1993.

Sincerely,

Jannis V. Floyd  
Graduate Assistant

Philip R. Jones  
Professor and Coordinator of  
Adminstration and Supervision  
of Special Education

**APPENDIX F**

**Initial Letter to Administrator**



Division of Administrative and Educational Services  
College of Education  
E. Eggleston Hall, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0302  
(703) 231-5642 Fax: (703) 231-7845

March 4, 1993

Dear Administrator:

The attached questionnaire is part of a study of specific learning disability (SLD) eligibility and placement committees. The study is being conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. We are particularly interested the training needs of SLD eligibility decision-makers.

**You can help us to asses the training needs of administrators like yourself who must make SLD eligibility and placement decisions by completing the attached green questionnaire.** To assure that the results will truly represent the perceptions of administrators across the state, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

Please answer all of the questions completely. The confidentiality of your responses will be protected and no name is required on the form. Code numbers at the top of the first page will be used only for the purpose of data collection and analysis. If you have any questions concerning this study or are interested in a summary of the results, please write or call (703) 231-5925. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by March 15, 1993.

Sincerely,

Jannis V. Floyd  
Graduate Assistant

Philip R. Jones  
Professor and Coordinator of  
Administration and Supervision of  
Special Education

**APPENDIX G**

**Statement of Procedures Used to  
Follow-up Nonrespondents**

APPENDIX G

Follow-up letters were sent to nonrespondents on several occasions after the initial mailing.

- March 24, 1993
1. Reminder letter to Special Education Program Administrator and committee members who did not respond to the first mailing.
  2. Thank You letter to Special Education Program Administrators who did return their survey with enclosed reminder letters to eligibility committee members who have not returned surveys.
- April 23, 1993
1. Second reminder to nonresponding Special Education Program Administrators and/or eligibility committee members.
- April 26, 1993
1. Second round of Thank You letters to Special Education Program Administrators with reminder letters to nonresponding eligibility committee members.

## VITA

**Jannis V. Floyd**  
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### EDUCATION:

Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, Va.  
Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (Ed.S) in  
Administration and Supervision of Special Education, May,  
1992.

North Carolina A and T State University,  
Greensboro, NC., Supervision Certification, 1988.

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, M.A. - Community  
Education, 1983.

East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, M.Ed. - Special  
Education, 1979.

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, B.A. - Speech  
Communications and Theatre Arts, 1975.

Cardozo Senior High School, Washington, D.C., 1968-1971.

### CERTIFICATIONS:

Speech and Drama (NC)  
Learning Disabilities (NC)  
Curriculum Specialist I (NC)

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Assistant Professor, Special Education Department, Mansfield  
University, Mansfield, PA. Teach undergraduate and graduate  
level courses in special education; faculty advisor and  
department representative for several university committees.  
Current position.



Adjunct Faculty, College of Education and Human Development, Radford University, Radford, Va. Supervised undergraduate student teachers and graduate student practicum students during field experience; conducted seminars on topics related to students concerns during field experience. Spring Semester-1993

Advisor, Va. Tech Academic Success Program, Va. Tech. Advised freshmen and sophomore students academic requirement, as well as social and cultural concerns. Fall, 1992.

Graduate Research Assistant, Administration and Supervision of Special Education, Va. Tech. Technical assistance on university faculty projects. August, 1990-August, 1992

Teacher, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System, Winston-Salem, NC. Elementary and middle school teacher of learning disabled students; eighth grade language arts in summer school; supervised student teachers; mentor teacher; department chairperson and served on various in-school and system-wide committees for school improvement.

Adjunct Faculty, Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem, NC. Model Clinical Project - teaching methods courses using a problem-based approach in collaboration with university personnel.

#### **INTERNSHIPS:**

Giles County Public Schools, Pearisburg, Va. Special Education Office, January, 1992-May, 1992.

Council For Exceptional Children, Reston, Va. Governmental Relations Office, June, 1991.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Winston-Salem, NC. Support Services - LD, January, 1988 - May, 1988.

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC University Development-Alumni Activities, June, 1983.

WAAA Radio, Winston-Salem, NC. News and Public Affairs Department, June, 1982-August, 1982.

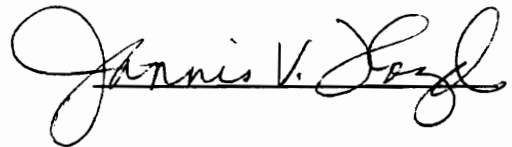
**HONORS AND AWARDS:**

Participant - North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Western Carolina Univ., 1988.

Excellence in Teaching Award, #393 Council for Exceptional Children, 1988.

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Council for Exceptional Children  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
Division for Learning Disabilities  
Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners  
Teacher Education Division  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
Phi Delta Kappa

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jannis V. Loyd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.