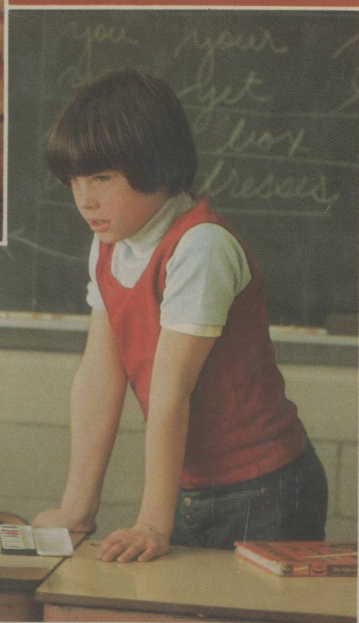
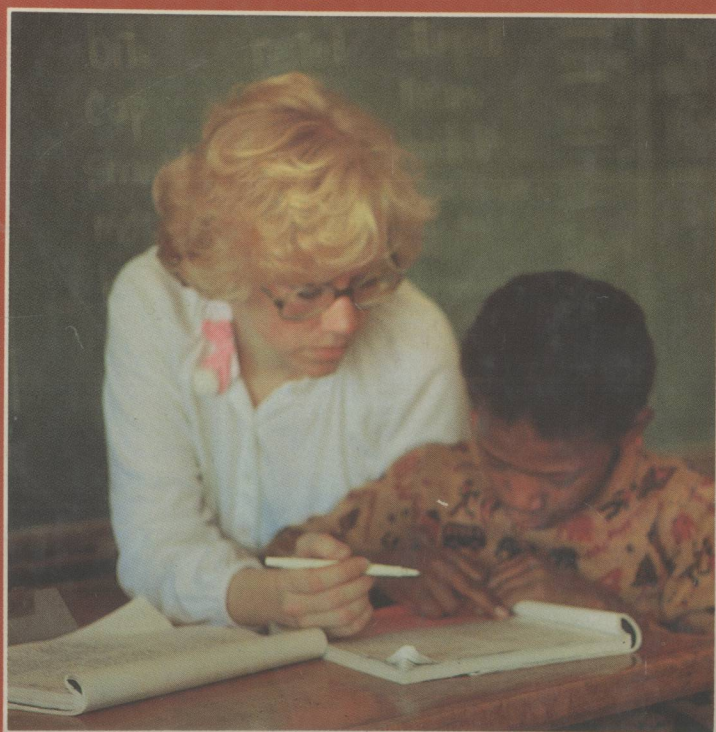


Teaching Students with Learning and Behavior Problems

Third Edition



Gerald Wallace & James M. Kauffman

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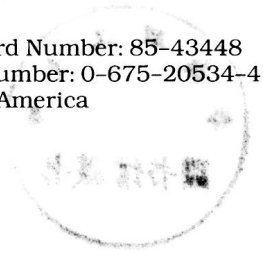
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Preface

This book is a guide to remediating learning and behavioral problems, intended for special and regular classroom teachers in training or in service. In our experience, nearly all teachers can be successful if they have instruction and guidance.

This third edition reflects the rapid educational changes during the thirteen years since the first edition was published. Most significant, this text has two new chapters on cognitive strategy training and study skills. We thought it crucial to show the implications of recent research on effective teaching. We incorporated visual-motor information in other chapters, added information on the use of microcomputers throughout the book, and cover more teaching and management activities for older students with learning and behavioral problems. In addition, we have included the most current references, curriculum materials, and assessment techniques. We believe that these changes will allow teachers to keep pace with the continuing emphasis on teaching students with all types of handicaps in the mainstream of public education.

Part One is a practical approach to remediation. We define learning problems in terms of specific behavioral deficits (not by traditional labels). We use down-to-earth language to describe principles of behavior management and academic remediation and illustrate these ideas with examples drawn from the classroom. Teaching competencies that apply across curriculum areas are also presented. We show that early detection and good teaching can positively impact the prevention of learning and behavioral problems.

Part Two details how to assess and remediate problems in social behavior, spoken language, reading, written language, mathematics, and study skills. The beginning teacher will find many proven teaching suggestions, and the more experienced teacher will find the suggested activities adaptable to particularly difficult problems.

We appreciate the continued support and assistance of many individuals in completing this book. We would like to thank our reviewers: Dr. Jim Krause, Bowling Green State University; Dr. Maurice Miller, Indiana State University; and Dr. Ann Ryan, College of St. Thomas, Minnesota. We are grateful to Carlyn Fujimoto, Denise Green, Donna Murphy, Patty Pullen, and Patty Whitfield for their help in library research, proofreading, and

preparing test questions for the testbank. We are especially appreciative of the patience and forbearance of our own children, Tim and Missy Kauffman and Chris and T. J. Wallace, and the students and parents whose photographs appear throughout the book.

Gerald Wallace
James M. Kauffman

for Marti

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PART ONE

A Practical Approach To Remediation

Most students in American schools do not experience major learning problems. Their academic achievement is within the expected range for their age and abilities, and their behavior is generally acceptable to their teachers. A significant percentage of students, however, do exhibit academic difficulties or social-behavioral problems. Students with learning and behavior problems are becoming easier to recognize as educational technology, pressure for excellence, and the requirements of Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) shape American education.

Efforts to meet the educational needs of all students with learning and behavior problems have not been entirely successful to date. The preparation of special teachers and the enactment of P.L. 94-142 have not yet resulted in adequate educational opportunities for all students. The proliferation of school personnel designated as “resource,” “crisis,” “prescriptive,” or “consultant” teachers has not resolved the problem of appropriate education for all students. Increasingly, educators recognize that if the educational needs of all students are to be met, all teachers must become skillful in the instruction of students with learning and behavior problems.

All teachers know the pleasure of teaching students who learn quickly and easily. Likewise, all teachers share the frustration and anxiety associated with students who learn slowly and with great difficulty. But frustration, anxiety, depression, and anger can be replaced with joy and satisfaction for both teacher and student when learning and behavior problems are managed successfully. Unfortunately, teachers often fail unknowingly to help students with learning and behavior problems because they lack technical skill. Consequently, our emphasis here is on the knowledge and application of sound learning principles and instructional strategies. A working knowledge of the principles presented in part one of this text will increase the probability of developing the technical skill necessary to remediate learning and behavior problems successfully.

Affective aspects of education—self-awareness, self-actualization, and sensitivity to the needs of students—are prerequisites for good teaching, but they must be accompanied by technical knowledge and skill if students are to be helped. Just as awareness and personal concern for patients can enhance but cannot replace the competent physician’s technical knowledge and skill in the practice of medicine, so sensitivity and humanistic goals can supplement but cannot supplant the understanding and application of learning principles in teaching. Technical mastery allows the educational practitioner to give form and substance to human values.

Part one provides a foundation for the development of specific teaching techniques. Chapter 1 is an overview of the characteristics

and etiologies of and the educational services for students with learning and behavior problems. Chapter 2 introduces basic principles of behavior management from a behavior modification point of view. Chapter 3 presents principles of remediating academic deficits, which apply to all curriculum areas. Chapter 4 summarizes recently developed teaching procedures involving cognitive strategies. Chapter 5 outlines the competencies teachers must have to be effective instructors and to evaluate their instruction. Chapter 6 points the way to prevention of learning and behavior problems through early identification.



1

Dimensions of Learning Problems

Public education in America has undergone significant changes and shifts in focus during the past decade. The federal government has mandated special education and related services for all handicapped children under P.L. 94-142. Commissions and study groups have called for a return to basics and an emphasis on excellence. Professional associations, state education agencies, and local school boards have debated merit pay plans for teachers, weighed the merits of voucher systems and tax credits as funding mechanisms for education, and considered the advisability of competency testing for teachers. Through all these proposals run two currents that are the simultaneous goals of American public education: equal educational opportunity and educational excellence. This book is concerned with improving the educational opportunities of students who have become known as school failures. Our intent is to contribute to excellence in their remedial and special education.

The pragmatic spirit of the United States is reflected in public education designed to meet the needs of most students. But for a significant

percentage of the nation's elementary and secondary students, education designed for the average learner leads to personal confusion, academic failure, feelings of inadequacy, disparagement by teachers and peers, and finally despair or disgust for school. These students, commonly designated as having learning problems at school, have been identified by a wide variety of labels, all of which carry negative connotations: *learning disabled*, *emotionally disturbed*, *mentally retarded*, *educationally handicapped*, *disadvantaged*, *slow learning*, *perceptually handicapped*, *dyslexic*, *minimally brain-damaged*, and many more.

Our concern in this book is not with labels by which students can be called but with the specific learning difficulties preventing the students' success in school. We assume that the way a student is labeled or defined for administrative purposes makes very little difference in determining how to teach that student but that a precise definition of his learning problem is the first essential step in remediation. Specifically, it is what the student does and does not do in response to an educational program that is our focus. Individuals defy meaningful classification, but the problems they experience do not. The history of systems of classification shows that attempting to fit people into neat psychological or educational categories is

BEAU

Beau is a 14-year-old-ninth grader who had been receiving special assistance from the high school resource room teacher. Beau is well liked by his classmates and his teachers report that he is well groomed, polite, and quite personable.

Although Beau has above-average intellectual capacity, he continues to experience severe written language problems. He still prints almost all written work because he is completely confused by cursive writing, and his printing is marked by many erasures and incorrectly formed letters. While copying assignments from the chalkboard, Beau must refer back to the board after writing just a few letters. His sentence and paragraph writing is marked by many misspelled, jumbled, and incoherent word combinations. Although Beau does make an effort to use capitalization and punctuation, his work is almost completely void of paragraphing and logical development. In contrast, during spoken language periods Beau uses complete sentences and an appropriate ordering of details.

During a recent school conference regarding Beau's placement, his teachers suggested that the written language problems were contributing to his frustration and poorer grades in other academic subjects. Beau's parents reported that he had recently begun to fight more often with his two younger siblings. For now, Beau has been recommended for additional time with the resource room teacher.

futile (see Hobbs, 1975). On the other hand, precise definition of the individual's learning abilities and difficulties is feasible and points toward specific remedial procedures. The dimensions of learning necessary for school progress provide the most logical framework for defining learning problems.

ACADEMIC LEARNING

The curricular focus within almost all public schools in the United States is on academic skills. Basic language arts and math skills are emphasized in the elementary grades; secondary schools usually stress academic achievement in various content areas. This concentration serves as a constant reminder to all students that the key to success is effective academic performance. Few realize this more than the student with academic difficulties. The frustration and agony of school failure are only too familiar to the pupil with difficulty learning to read, write, or calculate.

The academic characteristics of students with learning problems vary widely. Wallace and Larsen (1986) point out that many of these students encounter difficulties in one specific area (e.g., mathematics), whereas others experience problems in a number of academic subjects. To a large extent, these problems involve the understanding or use of spoken or written language and reveal themselves in difficulty with reading, thinking,

ELIZABETH

Ten-year-old Elizabeth was referred for help because she was functioning 2 years below grade level in all academic areas. She is the youngest of four children in a single-parent family. Her older siblings perform near or above average grade level in school. In addition to her academic deficiencies, Elizabeth is approximately 30 pounds overweight. Her obesity is a source of continual teasing from her classmates.

Assessment results suggest that Elizabeth is functioning in the high normal range of intelligence. The test examiner reported that Elizabeth was concerned about incorrect responses. She often asked, "Is that right?" and many times responded, "I don't know," rather than guess an answer.

Among her many academic problems, math seems to be an area that is particularly troublesome for Elizabeth. She has some understanding of numbers and functions; however, she is confused by place value. Consequently, regrouping is a difficult operation for her. She accomplishes addition and subtraction by counting on her fingers. However, she has great difficulty keeping numbers in the correct columns. She cannot tell time or count money. In fact, she does not know the value of coins greater than a dime.

Elizabeth's teacher notes that she seems to know various math skills one day and then completely forgets them the following day. During these times Elizabeth becomes frustrated and often starts misbehaving in the classroom.

talking, listening, writing, spelling, or doing math (Hammill & Bartel, 1982).

In addition to extending across academic tasks, learning problems are further complicated by varying degrees of severity. Academic skill deficiencies range from mild to severe with the vast majority in the mild to moderate range. Wallace and McLoughlin (1979) note that the complexity of the learning problem is often dependent on the chronological age of the student. Younger pupils exhibit difficulties that are often easily categorized. As the individual matures, however, the once-clear difficulties pervade other academic areas and become quite complex. Thus, students with academic learning problems may have very different types and degrees of difficulty.

SOCIAL-BEHAVIORAL LEARNING

When children enter school, their progress depends not only on their learning academic responses but also on their displaying adequate social-interpersonal behavior. They must adopt behavior patterns that indicate self-acceptance as well as self-realization. The student most likely to succeed in school is one who is both productive (i.e., achieving academically) and happy—reflecting confidence, organization, initiative, persistence in learning desirable skills, self-control, and pride in accomplishment. The successful student also relates well to others. Among peers she is usually outgoing, friendly, popular, and able to take a leadership role. Her relationship to adult authority figures is characterized by confidence, respect, and cooperation (see Kauffman, 1985).

A wide variety of maladaptive behaviors contribute to student problems at school (Cullinan, Epstein, & Kauffman, 1984; Epstein, Kauffman, & Cullinan, 1985). Those behavioral characteristics likely to attract the negative attention of teachers and peers include aggression, impulsiveness, disruptiveness, social withdrawal, and immaturity (see Kauffman, 1985). An individual student who is having significant problems progressing through school often exhibits multiple social-behavioral problems. However, his problems can typically be described as primarily externalized or internalized, as acting out against others or withdrawing into oneself (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983; Edelbrock & Achenbach, 1984). Thomas and Glenda illustrate these two types of social-behavioral learning problems.

CAUSES OF SCHOOL LEARNING PROBLEMS

The causes of learning and behavior problems are many and complex. Seldom, if ever, is a single cause of difficulty unequivocally identified. Some causal factors, such as genetics, operate over a long period of time and may *predispose* an individual to have problems. A predisposing factor does not cause a learning or behavior problem directly, but it increases the probabili-

THOMAS

Thomas is a 9-year-old third grader who seems constantly to be in trouble. His teacher says he is more "street-wise" than other boys in his class. During unstructured time he is particularly likely to be out of the teacher's sight causing a disruption. He frequently lies and is known by his peers as someone who steals. He receives little supervision at home and has, since the age of 5, been free to roam the neighborhood at will. Few days go by without conflict between Thomas and someone at school. Reports for the last 3 school days have been characteristic: Monday—sent to the principal's office for playing with his food in the cafeteria; Tuesday—sent back to his homeroom teacher for hitting another student in music class; Wednesday—sent to the principal for choking another child on the bus. Thomas has the intelligence to do grade level academic work, but his grades are consistently *Ds* and *Fs*. He seems almost never to be on task and seldom completes an assignment.

ty that an individual will develop such a problem. Other factors, such as a traumatic event or inadequate teaching, are more immediate in their effects and may *precipitate* a learning or behavioral difficulty. A precipitating factor may be relatively innocuous yet trigger a problem in someone predisposed to have difficulty; a major trauma or prolonged exposure to poor teaching may lead to a problem in a student who is not predisposed, or "at risk," to experience problems. Most learning and behavior problems appear to be caused by an interaction of several predisposing and precipitating factors (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Lloyd, 1985; Kauffman, 1985; Wallace & McLoughlin, 1979).

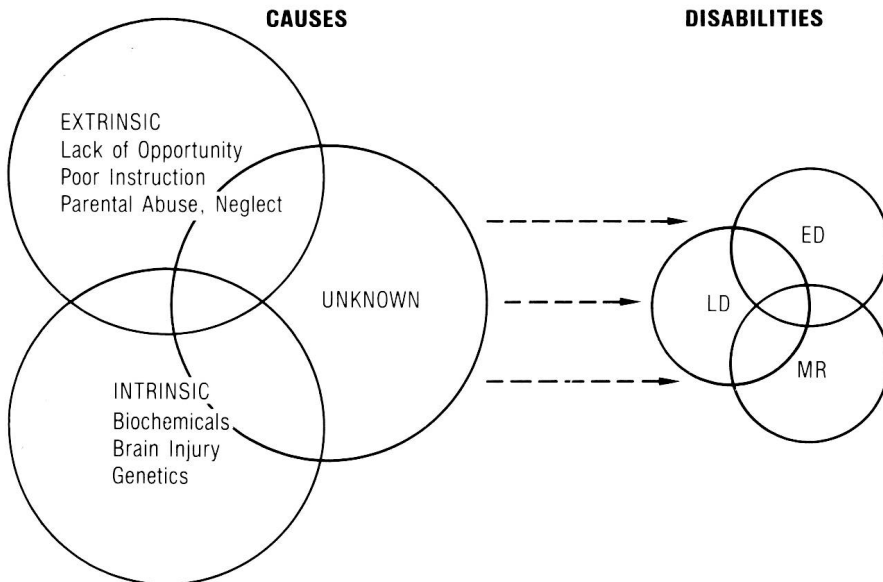
GLENDA

Glenda is a slender, plain-looking 14-year-old. She is in the top 20% of her eighth grade class in achievement, although she is not an academic star. Few of her peers know anything about her, other than her first name. She causes no problems in class and always turns in neat, accurate work. She is never singled out for negative attention by teachers and almost never receives special attention for her achievements. In short, she is close to a social nonentity among her peers and the school personnel. She seldom smiles and seems not to enjoy the things her classmates enjoy. Her English teacher has become concerned about her because of her apparent anxiety, shyness, and lack of self-confidence. The day before she was to give an oral report in class, Glenda complained of feeling nauseous. She eventually confided in her English teacher that she had not been sleeping through the night for months and had begun a pattern of overeating, then vomiting.

Not only do the causes of school learning problems interact and overlap, but the problems they cause also interact and overlap. That is, causal factors seldom operate in isolation; likewise, the resulting problems. Figure 1-1 illustrates the interrelation of extrinsic and intrinsic causes and the categories of resulting learning problems. The figure suggests that the causes are unknown in a significant number of cases.

Figure 1-1. Causal factors related to learning disabilities and other disorders.

Any one of several extrinsic, intrinsic, or unknown factors can cause a child to be learning disabled (LD), mentally retarded (MR), or emotionally disturbed (ED). Typically, the causal factors in a given case cannot be pinpointed. The causal factors tend to be interrelated, as do the disabilities.



SOURCE: From *Introduction to Learning Disabilities* (2nd ed.,) p. 17 by D. P. Hallahan, J. M. Kauffman, and J. W. Lloyd, 1985. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Copyright 1985 by Prentice-Hall. Reprinted by permission.

The importance of identifying the causes of a student's problem can easily be overemphasized. Even if an exhaustive catalog of specific causes of learning and behavior problems could be compiled, the list would be instructive only if each cause implied a specific and available remedy. At present, few specific remedies are implied by known or suspected causes of learning difficulties, and fewer still are usable by educators (see Kauffman & Hallahan, 1974; Hallahan, Kauffman, & Lloyd, 1985; Reeve & Kauffman, in press). Nevertheless, educators may find it useful to be aware of the possible causes of school learning problems so that proper referral can be made