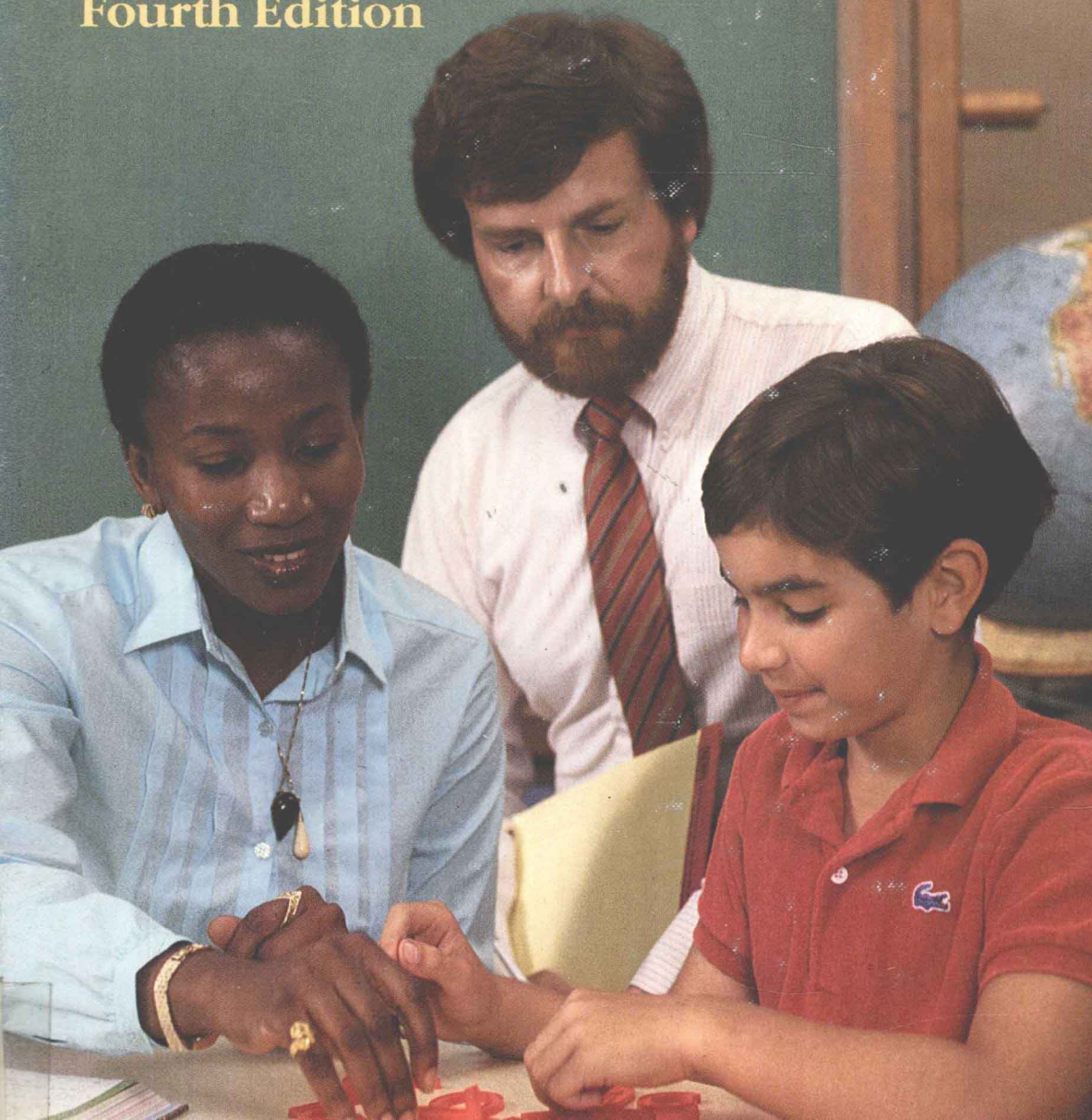


**Janet Lerner**

# **Learning Disabilities**

Theories, Diagnosis, and Teaching Strategies

**Fourth Edition**



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Fourth Edition

# **Learning Disabilities**

Theories, Diagnosis, and  
Teaching Strategies

**Janet W. Lerner**

Northeastern Illinois University

**Houghton Mifflin Company Boston**

Dallas Geneva, Ill. Lawrenceville, N.J.  
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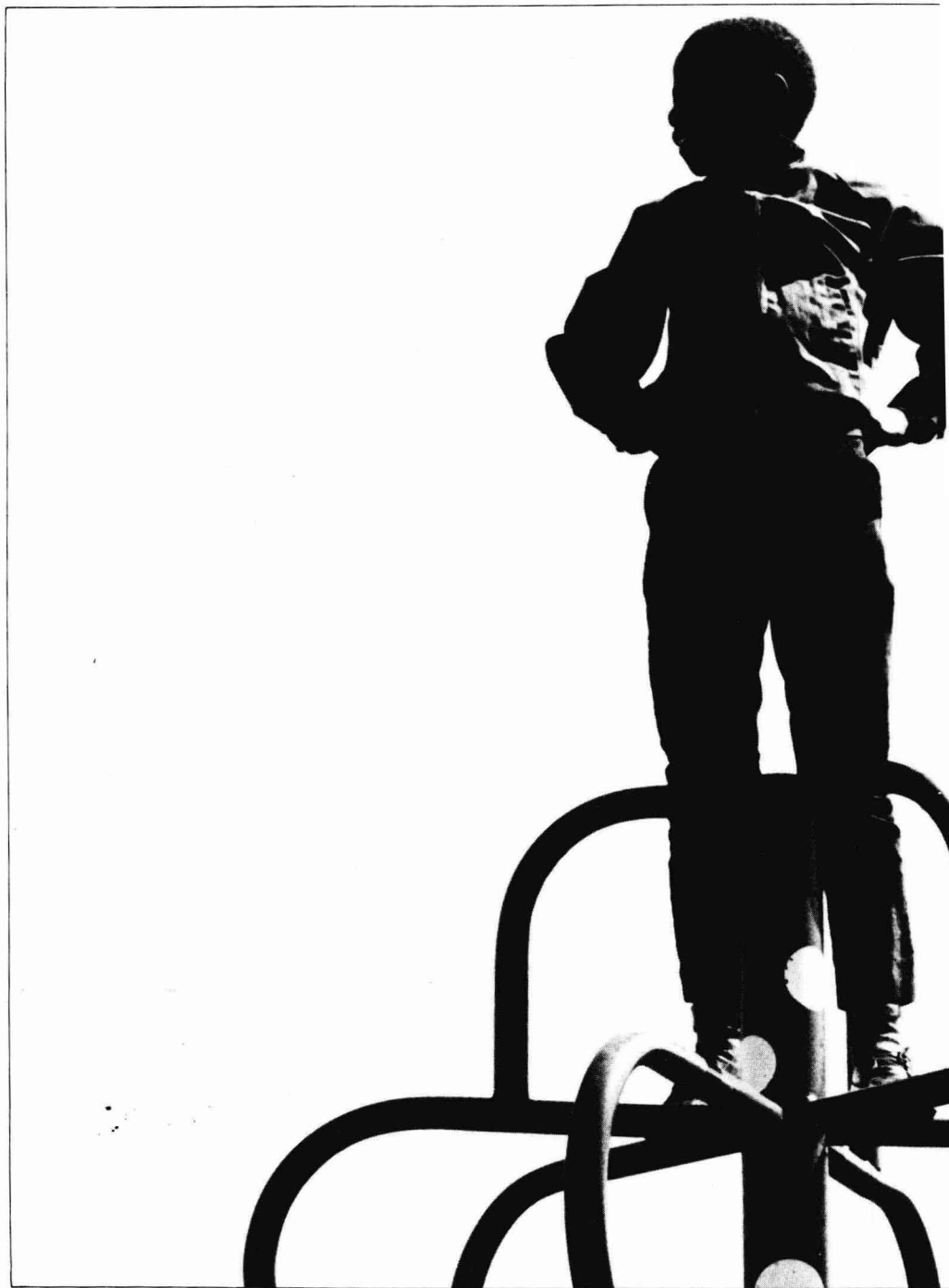
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## **Learning Disabilities**

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**To Eugene**

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# Preface

The field of learning disabilities continues to be a dynamic discipline, responsive to advances in education and changes in society. The fourth edition of *Learning Disabilities: Theories, Diagnosis, and Teaching Strategies* reflects these advances and changes.

Children and youth who are destined to become educational discards unless their learning disabilities are recognized and treated are likely to be found in any classroom. The condition of learning disabilities is perplexing; although such students are not blind, many do not see as normal students do; although they are not deaf, many do not listen or hear normally; although they are not retarded in mental development, they do not learn. Many of these students exhibit other behavior characteristics that make them disruptive in the classroom and at home. Such individuals are the concern of this book.

## Audience and Purpose

*Learning Disabilities: Theories, Diagnosis, and Teaching Strategies* is an introductory text, written for both undergraduate and graduate students who are taking a first course in learning disabilities. It is designed to provide a broad view of the field of learning disabilities for present and future special teachers, school psychologists, administrators, language pathologists, counselors, and other professionals preparing to work with the learning-disabled individual. This book is also intended for both preservice and inservice regular classroom teachers who are often responsible for teaching learning-disabled students mainstreamed in their classrooms. In addition, the text can serve parents seeking necessary background information to better understand the problems their children face.

The approach of the book is eclectic so that readers may gain a comprehensive overview of this complex subject. Teachers need to understand the diverse theoretical approaches to the field; have knowledge of assessment procedures; possess skill in the art of clinical teaching; and develop familiarity with teaching techniques and materials. This book deals with each of these essential areas.

## Revisions in This Edition

Up-to-date information and coverage of new issues and topics is contained in this thoroughly revised text. Many chapters including those on early childhood, adolescents and adults, reading, math, and social disabilities have been completely rewritten to make them current and to reflect the latest research. In addition, treatment of preschool, adolescent, and adult populations is now

positioned centrally in the text and referred to, when appropriate, throughout the entire book.

The revision also includes sections on microcomputer uses in learning disabilities and new ideas and approaches being used with learning-disabled students, such as metacognitive learning strategies and Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment. Many short "Case Examples" are provided to illustrate major points, and two longer extended "Case Studies" are presented to offer practical applications of the theories and procedures. The text strives to provide a fair and clear explanation of new and controversial issues in the field, such as eligibility criteria, increasing prevalence rates, ecological systems, and diverse theories of assessment and intervention. Finally, a greatly expanded art program offers thirty new photographs that serve to illustrate aspects of learning disabilities instruction.

### **Coverage and Features**

This book is organized into four major sections. Part One is an overview of learning disabilities and includes important features of PL 94-142. Chapter 1 presents learning disabilities as a field in transition. Chapter 2 looks at the field's historical perspectives and emerging directions.

Part Two deals with the assessment-teaching process. Assessment and clinical teaching are viewed as interrelated parts of a continuous process of trying to understand students and to help them learn. Assessment is discussed in Chapter 3, with special emphasis on the development of the individualized education program (IEP). Chapter 4 examines clinical teaching and elements that make teaching successful. In Chapter 5, the various systems for delivering education services are discussed.

Part Three deals with theoretical issues and expanding directions. Chapter 6 examines basic theories of learning disabilities. Chapter 7 discusses medical aspects of research, assessment, and treatment. In Chapter 8, the specific problems of the high-risk preschooler are examined. In the last chapter in this Part, Chapter 9, the focus is on the learning-disabled adolescent and adult.

Part Four bridges the gap from theories to teaching strategies, dealing with the heart of the problem—teaching learning-disabled children and youth. The chapters are organized by academic areas. Each chapter has two sections: the first section explains the theoretical framework for teaching that particular content area; the second section offers teachers practical suggestions and methods. Chapter 10 discusses problems in motor and perceptual development. Chapter 11 looks at oral language, specifically listening and speaking. Chapter 12 analyzes the area of reading—both reading skills and reading comprehension. Chapter 13 reviews written language, including handwriting, spelling, and written expression. Chapter 14 analyzes disorders in mathematics—concepts, skills, and problem solving. Chapter 15 discusses social and emotional implications of learning disabilities.



In order to make this text easy to study and more appealing to use, the following features have been included:

**Chapter Outlines** for each chapter present the major headings and provide a handy checklist or organizational aid for students to use in learning chapter material.

**Introductions** to each chapter offer an overview of the chapter's contents and give students a framework into which they can fit new ideas.

**Summaries** conclude each chapter and highlight, in a clear point-by-point format, the major ideas presented in the chapter.

**Key Terms**, which follow each chapter, list the most important terminology and provide an opportunity for students to review their knowledge of key chapter concepts.

**Case Examples**, short illustrative vignettes and discussions, are interspersed throughout all chapters to demonstrate real-life situations.

**Case Studies** are included to provide longer more comprehensive cases and are designed to show practical applications.

**Appendixes** contain useful information for teachers. Appendix A is an extended Case Study. Appendix B consists of a phonics quiz and a brief review of important phonics generalizations. Appendix C is a listing and brief description of commonly used tests. Appendix D contains a listing of publishers' addresses. Appendix E is a glossary of important terms.

## Study Guide with Cases

The *Study Guide with Cases* that accompanies this text is a supplementary manual designed to help students learn the content and concepts presented in this textbook. It provides practice in using the field's important specialized vocabulary and in understanding key concepts and systems. It also provides applications of ideas, brief quizzes for review, and illustrative case studies.

Each chapter is divided into seven parts: (1) *Objectives*, major goals of the chapter; (2) *Terms You Should Know*, a series of key vocabulary terms and definitions for students to match; (3) *Key Points*, questions about the key ideas of the chapter; (4) *Seeing the System*, questions related to tables and drawings presented in the text; (5) *Application and Synthesis*, open ended activities, discussions, and debate questions; (6) *Rapid Review Questions*, a multiple choice quiz on the chapter; and (7) a *Case Study*, a brief case that illustrates a topic in the chapter, with accompanying questions.

The final section of the *Study Guide with Cases* contains answers to the questions of each chapter.

## Acknowledgments

*Learning Disabilities: Theories, Diagnosis, and Teaching Strategies* grew out of my experiences working in public schools with students who had reading and learning disabilities and in teaching learning disabilities courses in colleges and universities. The work was considerably influenced by feedback from students enrolled in the courses I have taught. Also, students and colleagues alerted me to new concepts, programs, assessment instruments, and intervention strategies. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the critical suggestions and helpful feedback of a number of faculty members at Northeastern Illinois University: Dr. Rosemary Egan, Dr. Kenneth James, Dr. Jeffrey Messerer, Mrs. Gertrude Meyers, and Dr. Margaret Richek. I am also indebted to many authors of books and articles, to speakers at conferences, and to educators in school districts and universities with whom I have worked. In addition, I have been fortunate in having had the opportunity to keep abreast of the current scene by listening to and meeting with professionals and parents at conferences held in various communities throughout the country. I am grateful to Northeastern Illinois University for having provided the conditions needed to complete this work.

I wish to thank the following reviewers, who read the manuscript at various stages and provided helpful suggestions and criticisms: Dr. Jerome Ammer, C. W. Post College (New York); Dr. Judith A. Bondurant, State University College at Buffalo; Dr. Roger Carlsen, University of Dayton; Dr. Charles A. Chrystal, State University College at Buffalo; Dr. Robert J. Evans, Troy State University (Alabama); Dr. Robert N. Freeman, Georgia Southern College; Dr. Michael Hannum, University of Tennessee—Knoxville; Dr. Kathleen Harris, California State University—Los Angeles; Dr. Jeffrey Hummel, SUNY at Buffalo; Dr. Virginia Laycock, College of William and Mary; Dr. Bob MacMillan, University of the Pacific; Dr. John A. Merica, University of South Florida; Dr. Peggyann Reed, San Jose State University; Dr. Steven C. Russell, Bowling Green State University; Ms. Nancy Saltzman, University of Colorado; Dr. Marilyn Smith, Kansas State University; Dr. Ruth Steinberg, University of Wisconsin; Dr. Saroj Sutaria, Kent State University; Dr. Carol Thornton, Illinois State University; Ms. Nancy Warnock, Eugene Public Schools; Dr. J. Barbara Wilkinson, Oklahoma State University.

The editorial staff at Houghton Mifflin offered persistent and creative guidance. Dr. Samuel A. Kirk played a continuing role in the making of this book: as my first college instructor in special education, and as a stimulating and provocative scholar and writer. I wish to acknowledge my family—Susan, Laura, Dean, James, and Aaron. Finally, thanks to my husband, Eugene, who continues to provide the encouragement and support every author needs.

*Janet W. Lerner*

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*Overview of  
Learning  
Disabilities*

*PART* **1**

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*Chapter Outline*

***Introduction***

***The Enigma of Learning Disabilities***

Some Eminent People with Learning Disabilities

***Definitions of Learning Disabilities***

The Federal Definition

Other Definitions

Need for Several Definitions

***Common Elements in the Definitions***

Neurological Dysfunction

Uneven Growth Pattern

Difficulty in Academic and Learning Tasks

Discrepancy Between Achievement and Potential

Exclusion of Other Causes

***Diverse Characteristics of Learning Disabilities***

Subtypes of Learning Disabilities

***Widening Age Span of the Learning Disabilities  
Population***

Learning Disabilities at the Preschool Level

Learning Disabilities at the Elementary Level

Learning Disabilities at the Secondary Level

Learning Disabilities in the Adult

***Prevalence of Learning Disabilities***

***Disciplines Contributing to the Study of Learning  
Disabilities***

Education

Psychology

Language Disciplines

Medicine

Other Professions

The Learning Disabilities Teacher as a Coordinating  
Agent

***Summary***

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# Learning Disabilities: A Field in Transition



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## *Chapter* **1**