

# A Spanish Perspective on LD

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## Abstract

This article offers an overview of special education in Spain, specifically in the area of learning disabilities (LD). The term *LD* in Spain implies a different conception of the definition that enjoys considerable international agreement and consensus. We give a historical perspective of Spanish legislation and place the proposed definition of LD in the context of recent school reform in Spain. The support services model and the assessment practices and instructional approaches in the LD field are described. Finally, some educational implications of the new school reform regarding teacher training programs to assist special educational needs are presented.

In Spain, a legal category of learning disabilities (LD) as defined in the United States by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD, 1994) does not exist in the special education field. According to NJCLD,

Learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities, but do not, by themselves, constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences. (p. 65)

At the same time, LD remains one of the least understood yet most debated disabling conditions that affect children in the United States (Moats & Lyon, 1993).

Soto and Hetzroni (1993) provided evidence that

The basic goal of special education in Spain and the USA is the same, that is, serving the needs of special needs students. However, historical, cultural, educational, and political differences between Spain and the United States have resulted in significant differences in special education efforts in the two countries. (p. 189)

In the United States, to many professionals the concept of LD has become synonymous with the existence of a discrepancy between academic achievement and measured intelligence (Mather & Healey, 1990). Various learning disabilities (e.g., developmental reading and arithmetic disorders) are defined in a similar way in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)*; American Psychiatric Association, 1994). However, the learning disabilities field is only beginning to display some awareness that the empirical evidence to support some of the assumptions that have led to the reliance on IQ is lacking (Stanovich, 1993). The validity of IQ discrepancy criteria for identifying LD has been seriously questioned (for a detailed review, see Siegel, 1992; Stanovich & Siegel, 1994; Toth & Siegel, 1994). Some recent research

carried out in Spain has provided evidence that children with reading disabilities at a variety of IQ levels did not differ in their word recognition skills (Jiménez & Rodrigo, 1994).

Many handbooks on LD that have been published in Spain include the NJCLD definition. Moreover, quantitative methods have been proposed to calculate the discrepancy between IQ and achievement (Alfaro, 1986; Miranda, 1986; Monedero, 1984; Romero, 1993). However, Spanish legislation has not contemplated LD as a diagnostic category or offered guidelines on how LD could be operationalized. Therefore, Spain has not had a tradition of using an IQ-achievement discrepancy criterion, and Spanish professionals have never used it for the identification of LD.

In Spain, LD is conceptualized in a broader sense because it is viewed as existing on a continuum ranging from *permanent* deficits (e.g., sensorial, physical, motor, and intellectual deficits) to *transitory* or less severe deficits (García, 1995; Suárez, 1995). If we take into account the proposal offered by Adelman and Taylor (1986) of using the etiology for a comprehensive classification scheme of learning problems within a continuum, individuals with LD would be at a specific point on the continuum and differentiated from

other categories of learning problems. However, in Spain LD, designated by the term *special educational needs*, includes all the types described by these authors. The use that we make of the term LD in this article should be interpreted in this way. Our intention is to describe the global, political, and historical context in which LD has developed in Spain, and we will describe how the term LD has developed in the context of special education.

## Historical Antecedents

Several authors have reviewed the historical antecedents of special education in Spain (Bautista, 1993; Cabada, 1991; Illán & Arnaiz, 1996). Special education in Spain began in 1550 when friar Pedro Ponce de León initiated education for deaf children. Thus, Spain saw the beginning of special education, and the first institute for the deaf-mute was created in 1785. However, the history of the concept of deficiency has been associated with prejudices about its nature. In the beginning, the negative attitudes about deficiency hindered any attempt to provide remedial education for this group. At the beginning of the 20th century, compulsory schooling for all children—deaf and blind children included—meant that many children were placed in special education classes. As a consequence, a certain proportion of children were identified as a population with educational needs due to academic failure.

The popularity and adoption of intelligence (IQ) tests implied that children with a low IQ should be segregated from general education classrooms and should be placed in special classes. Consequently, the special education teacher emerged as a new figure to assist these children's educational needs. In this way, the special education field was developed separately from general education. Social attitudes toward the concept of deficiency developed from the view of LD

as an irreversible condition to more favorable beliefs about the educational potential of children with LD, mainly due to the environmental approach in the field of psychology during the 1940s and 1950s.

Furthermore, the normalization and integration principles suggested by Bank-Mikkelsen (1969) in Denmark and Nirje (1969) in Sweden caused social attitudes to change profoundly. Nowadays, people with disabilities are considered to have the same right to receive general education as the rest of the population.

With the National Plan on Special Education (*Plan Nacional de Educación Especial*), the normalization, integration, individualization and sectorization principles were recognized officially for the first time in Spain (Illán & Arnaiz, 1996). The Law on Social Integration of Handicapped Persons (*Ley de Integración Social del Minusválido*; Law 13/1982, April 7, 1982) considered school integration as a fundamental vehicle for social integration.

This new view of deficiency engendered the appearance of the new term *special educational needs* (*necesidades educativas especiales*). It was first introduced by Warnock (1978), who emphasized the responsibility of educational systems to provide appropriate resources for children with special educational needs to achieve general education objectives.

## Legislative Aspects

In 1970, the General Education Law (*Ley General de Educación*; Law 14/1970, August 4, 1970) was implemented. Its main objective was the provision of educational opportunities for the whole population. This law established that special schools should be directed to achieve the integration of people with disabilities.

However, this law soon became obsolete due to the profound political, social, and economic changes following the elimination of the military

dictatorship and the establishment of democracy in Spain. The most important changes were the incorporation of Spain in the European Economic Community, the autonomous organization of different regions, and the general productive, technological, and cultural development. In response to this new situation in Spain, the Law of University Reform (*Ley de Reforma Universitaria*, LRU; Law 11/1983, August 25, 1983) and the Organic Law for the Right to Education (*Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación*, LODE; Law 8/1985, July 3, 1985) were promulgated.

The LODE established that the different autonomous regions could take full responsibility for some legislative aspects in the area of education. In this context, the concept of special education developed further, in that all pupils had the same right to education regardless of intellectual, sensorial, or motor disorders, and encouraged the integration of special education with general education schools where possible. However, the needs of individuals with severe deficiencies could still be served in special centers. The educational response to learning disabilities was given further impetus by the elaboration of Individual Development Programs (*Programa de Desarrollo Individualizado*, PDI) based on the behaviorist paradigm that became influential in this country mainly through Worel and Nelson's (1983) book. The PDI was inspired by the Individualized Education Program (IEP), which was delineated in Federal Law 94-142 in 1975 in the United States (Giné & Ruiz, 1990).

In 1986, the Ministry for Education and Science (*Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia*) created the National Resource Center for Special Education (*Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Educación Especial*). This center provides financial support services and inservices to teachers and other professionals, adapts evaluation and curricular materials for students with special needs, and promotes research in the field of special education

(Chermak, 1990; Soto & Hetzroni, 1993).

After some experimental reforms, which were included in the *White Book* (*Libro Blanco*; Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1989), the Organic Law of General Order of the Educational System (*Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo*, LOGSE; Law 1/1990, October 3, 1990) was approved.

The two main objectives of the LOGSE are to create effective, compulsory schooling for children from 6 to 16 years old and to increase the quality of the educational system by including assessment as an important component in the process (Jiménez & Bernal, 1990). Further tenets include the official approval of equivalent academic titles within the rest of the European Community; the improvement of professional training (*formación profesional*) as a system to guarantee a qualified workforce to cover the demands originated by the productive sector; an increase in equality of opportunity and the balance of social inequality; and the development of art teaching. The LOGSE is the first law that established a unique system of teaching, discarding antiquated conceptions of special education as distinct from general education. This law prescribes general educational objectives for the whole population and recommends methodological principles for the teaching process. The teaching process must be suited to the children's characteristics whether they have LD or not (LOGSE, article 2.5). In fact, the term LD, or special educational needs, was introduced for the first time in Spain through the LOGSE.

The LOGSE states that the "educational system will provide the right resources for those pupils with LD, transitory or permanent, and will make effective the achievement of the general objectives proposed for all children within the school system" (LOGSE, article 36.1; Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1990). The new educational structure in Spain is based on the following subdivisions:

- preschool education (*educación infantil*) from 0 to 6 years old, including two terms (i.e., 0-3; 3-6);
- elementary education (*educación primaria*) from 6 to 12 years old, including three terms (i.e., 6-8; 8-10; 10-12);
- compulsory secondary education (*educación secundaria obligatoria*) from 12 to 16 years old, including two terms (i.e., 12-14; 14-16);
- secondary education (*educación secundaria*) from 16 to 18 years old, including the following areas: higher education (*bachillerato*); professional training-medium level (*formación profesional de grado medio*); and professional training-high level (*formación profesional de grado superior*).

The LOGSE reflects a constructivist approach to learning and teaching. Some cognitive theories were used as a theoretical framework for designing the curriculum in school reform. These theories have influenced the definition, assessment and intervention on LD in Spain. Coll (1987) reviewed the main cognitive theories that have been considered as a basis for the law. They include *Piaget's theory*, which emphasizes the notion that the student is active in his or her own knowledge construction and proposes the existence of logic developmental stages (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966); the *schema theory*, based on the information processing approach, which postulates that previous knowledge is an important variable in learning processes (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1982); the *social constructivism* approach, suggested by Vygotski (1977), which emphasizes the influence of teaching processes that enable the child to develop through his or her proximal developmental zone; the *significant verbal learning theory*, which postulates the importance of the relationship between the new material that the students learn and their previous schema (Ausubel, 1968); and *cultural psychology*, which integrates different concepts such as development, learning, culture, and edu-

cation into an explicable unified scheme (Cole, Gay, Glick, & Sharp, 1971).

Before the implementation of the LOGSE legislation, the situation in special education was characterized by the absence of any definition of LD; there was only an emphasis on deficiency. However, a first attempt to define the term LD appeared with the LOGSE.

## Definition of LD

LD in Spain is identified when a student does not learn in the general education classroom setting and the teacher observes a difference between the achievements of that student and the rest of the class in regard to instrumental learning (i.e., reading, writing, arithmetic) that corresponds to the target student's age or grade. The identification of LD is made regardless of whether this difficulty is caused by sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance, extrinsic influences such as cultural differences, or insufficient or inappropriate instruction (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1992).

Therefore, LD is not considered as a diagnostic category in Spain but as an educational-political-administrative label that provides additional educational resources. Such an approach does not resolve the nature of LD; however, it is useful for providing resources and promoting decision making (García, 1995).

Special educational needs or LD are viewed as a continuum ranging from permanent (e.g., sensorial, physical, motor, and intellectual deficits) to transitory or less severe needs (García, 1995; Suárez, 1995). The educational response to LD should be made explicit in each of the three levels that the curriculum contemplates:

1. Normative curriculum design (*diseño curricular prescriptivo*);
2. School curriculum (*proyecto curricular de centro*);
3. Classroom curriculum (*programación de aula*).

In this context, students with LD are identified when distinct educational resources are required to achieve general education objectives. Thus, the educational response that must be provided for these children has to be implemented within the school system using Curriculum Adaptations (*Adaptaciones del Currículum*, AC) and Individualized Curriculum Adaptations (*Adaptaciones Curriculares Individualizadas*, ACI). ACs are defined as "an accommodation of the normative curriculum design for individuals with LD which must be contemplated in the School Curriculum" (*Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Educación Especial*, 1988, p. 75).

### Delivery Services

Special education organization is governed by the following four principles: *normalization*, *school integration*, the *sectorization* of services through interdisciplinary teams, and the *individualization* of the teaching process. The support structure is formed by three kinds of interconnected professional groups. These are (a) the School Counseling and Psychoeducational Teams (*Equipos de Orientación Escolar y Psicopedagógicos*, EOEP), whose functions are centered on assessment and educational counseling; (b) the special education teacher, who can be attached to one school or can be working in several schools; and (c) the specialist professionals (speech pathologists, physiotherapists, and psychologists), who carry out individualized treatments.

All the professionals who are organized in the EOEPs perform their work at all educational levels except the university level. They develop preventive actions with regard to LD and are responsible for the follow-up work with children who have been identified with LD. "These teams are organized in accordance with demographic, geographic, and educational criteria and with territorial organization of educational inspection" (Hortelano, 1996, p. 55).

Two types of EOEPs are distinguished. *Zone* EOEPs include educational psychologists, social workers, speech-language therapists, and other medical professionals when required. In *specific* EOEPs, educational psychologists and specialist professionals perform their work as a complementary function to the zone EOEPs. They attend to the special educational needs that are considered permanent (i.e., sensorial and motor impairment, mental retardation, emotional disturbances, and gifted individuals). They are organized into different areas such as curriculum counseling, diversity assistance, family counseling and educational, community, personal, and vocational guidance. A coordinator guarantees the effective functioning of the EOEPs.

There are also Early Intervention Teams (*Equipos de Atención Temprana*, EAT; Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1990), whose main objectives are centered on assessment and educational intervention in preschool education. However, these teams are included in the EOEPs; their priorities concern the early detection of LD in preschool education (Nieto, 1996).

### Assessment Practices and Intervention Approaches

In 1995, some rules were established for the assessment of individuals with LD (Law 696/1995, April 28, 1995) that reflect an interactive and contextual assessment perspective. This approach is related to the theoretical framework on which educational reform is based in Spain. The psychoeducational assessment has as its main purpose the study of the abilities and potential of students and their relationship with the school and community in order to determine their educational needs and provide the most appropriate educational response.

Individualized teaching and LD assistance must take place within the ordinary curriculum setting. Children with LD will remain in general edu-

cation classrooms for a great portion of the school day, but they should receive some educational support in the resource classrooms for a few hours per week. The diversity assistance, in which LD is included, should be taken into account when each school center elaborates the school educational project, the school curriculum project, and the annual general program.

Two types of ACs are distinguished according to the continuum on which LD individuals are placed: (a) ACIs to facilitate access to the curriculum, which entail the use of personal and technical resources; and (b) ACs of the general curriculum. Four types of ACs are distinguished with regard to the evaluation, methodology, contents, and objectives depending on the severity of LD.

The introduction of the ACIs in the current school reform represents a substantial change with respect to the traditional PDIs. This change was influenced by the Warnock (1978) report. The contributions of authors such as Hodgson, Clunies-Ross, and Hegarty (1984) about the changes in school curriculum for students with LD allowed the introduction of the term ACI (Giné & Ruiz, 1990). Some of the differences between the traditional PDI and the new ACI that have been established by several authors in Spain (Giné y Ruiz, 1990; González, Ripalda y Asegurado, 1993) are the following:

1. The responsibility for decision making does not totally depend on expert professionals, as it did in the original PDI associated with a technocratic conception of the curriculum and special education field; with the ACI, decision making depends on teaching staff, managing staff, EOEPs, and parents;
2. A standardized assessment directed toward the identification of deficiency in the PDI changed into a more dynamic and qualitative one that takes into account the student's potential in the ACI,

representing a constructivist approach; and

3. The ACI is developed taking into account the different elements of the curriculum as mentioned before.

Thus, the ACI can be developed through a progressive adaptation from less significant (i.e., evaluation and methodology) to more significant curriculum aspects (i.e., objectives and contents).

Three different types of ACIs facilitate access to the curriculum:

1. A *less significant* ACI does not imply any modification of prescriptive curriculum elements. This solution is applied when the teacher considers that the child has not progressed despite the use of some corrective strategies from the classroom curriculum setting. At this point, a learning disability is identified according to the Spanish model. The special education teacher does his or her work within the school in coordination with the classroom teacher to assist students with LD with transitory educational needs. When the intervention cannot be carried out in the classroom setting, the students receive remedial education in the support classroom from the special education teacher. The treatment of LD implies evaluation and educational counseling, in which the elaboration of ACIs and educational support are contemplated. The maximum number of students allowed in a support classroom is 15.
2. A *significant* ACI means that the content curriculum aspects can be exceptionally modified.
3. A *very significant* ACI implies the deletion of objectives and term contents and the use of exceptional personal and technical resources. The main purpose of this kind of ACI is to increase the personal and social autonomy of the child with LD.

At the secondary level, when the students do not achieve the general curriculum objectives, they can receive an alternative curriculum that takes into account individual differences (e.g., learning styles, vocational counseling). This modality is known as *curriculum diversification* (*diversificación curricular*). It must include

- three or four normative curriculum areas;
- 10 or 12 hours per week in specific areas (e.g., technology, language);
- 2 hours per week of tuition; and
- optional subjects until 30 hours are completed (at least 2 of them will be professional training).

The number of students allowed is 15. Moreover, those individuals with LD who do not achieve the general curriculum objectives can receive a *social guarantee program* to promote the access to a first job. The following types of programs exist, all of them having the same structure:

- specific professional training (15 to 18 hours);
- vocational counseling (2 to 3 hours);
- normative curriculum contents (6 to 9 hours);
- complementary activities (e.g., sports, cultural; 6 to 9 hours); and
- peer tutoring (1 to 2 hours).

The number of students allowed is 15.

The educational response to the children with LD with permanent needs that demand significant or very significant ACIs according to Spanish legislation is carried out through different schooling modalities. This decision is taken by the zone EOEPs in coordination with specific EOEPs and parents. These different modalities are as follows:

*Integration Schools.* These are centers for students with LD who require special resources (e.g., students with auditory or motor deficits).

*Special Classrooms in General Education Schools.* Two classrooms exist for students with LD who, although they require a very significant ACI, nevertheless could gain some advantages from social interaction in a general education setting.

*Special Education Schools.* These are centers for LD students with very significant ACIs who require personal and technical resources. This modality has an exceptional and transitory character and will always be oriented to achieving a greater level of integration.

Five questions are required for the decision-making process in regard to ACIs for LD students, taking into account the basic curriculum elements:

1. What is it exactly that the student cannot learn? The teacher has to define the objective that the student has to achieve. This decision is made in accordance with the teacher's knowledge of the subject (e.g., structure, sequence of learning), knowledge about the student, and the available resources;
2. Where should we start from? The student's curriculum competence is assessed to ascertain what the student knows in relation to the contents of teaching and what he or she is able to learn with some aids (i.e., learning potential). How the student learns also must be taken into account (i.e., learning style). This type of assessment is complemented with the information from the psychoeducational assessment made by the school counselor;
3. What is the first stage in the sequence of learning that moves towards the attainment of the objective? The first stage is to guarantee that the proposed task can be solved without difficulty by the student;
4. What methodology (i.e., teaching strategy) should we use? The

LOGSE does not prescribe any teaching method; however, it suggests the following methodological principles: the need for significant learning, the importance of the student's real-world knowledge, the modification of the student's knowledge schema, and the promotion of cooperative learning;

5. Has the remedial education been useful to achieve the educational objectives? This implies that the teacher has to test the level of achievement. The teacher has to reconsider the previous stages if the student does not achieve the objective. (*Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia*, 1992)

The ACIs for each child are included in the Individual Curriculum Adaptation Report (*Documento Individual de Adaptación Curricular*, DIAC), and the responsibility for these ACIs rests with the classroom teacher and the special education teacher. Learning is considered an interactive process in the general curriculum, where the student is the actor in his or her own knowledge construction; this depends on the involvement of the teacher during the learning process. This theoretical framework is used as a reference in designing the intervention with regard to LD. From this perspective, LD would not only be caused by intrinsic variables, but may also be affected by the mediator's actions.

### Recent Research Findings

Following the implementation of the LOGSE, there has been an interest in Spain to study the professional practices in the LD field (Peñate & González, 1995; Rus, 1996; Santana, Bethencourt, & Báez, 1992). For instance, Santana et al. (1992) carried out an analysis of counselors' professional practice from EOEPs and demonstrated that LD and vocational counseling were the areas that received the most attention compared with teacher

counseling, school climate, learning environment, family, and school. They analyzed the functions in each area and found that assessment and indirect intervention were the most frequently used in LD.

The main purpose of Peñate and González' (1995) study was to know which assessment procedures were being used most frequently by professionals. In this study, many psychologists from different public institutions participated, 53.3% of which belonged to EOEPs. The researchers found that the interview (95.6%) and the psychometric test (90%) were most used by the professionals, with curriculum-based assessment (62.2%) in third place. A similar pattern emerged when they carried out the same study with professionals working in private services.

Rus (1996) made a historical analysis of counseling in Spain and concluded that there was a disparity between the professional practices carried out by the psychoeducational teams and the lack of a theoretical framework that characterized the counseling processes. This author also studied the professional practices for LD and demonstrated that counseling was centered on the student and therapy and some preventive actions were used by the EOEPs. In summary, traditional psychological intervention in educational settings is doubly biased, toward descriptive-classifying work and toward a clinical perspective.

Other research performed in Spain (Aguilera, 1990; Escudero & Moreno, 1992; Sáenz, 1990) identified some problems related to the lack of communication and planning between teachers and the different support services that assist students with LD. For instance, Sáenz (1990) found a low participation of the teachers in the decision-making process with regard to the students with LD. On the other hand, many methodological, organizational, or curriculum decisions were made by support services, and the teacher's opinions were not consid-

ered. Moreover, the counseling guidelines and the suggestions that the professionals provided were based on a dogmatic style that provoked rejection from teachers. Finally, teachers usually kept a passive attitude when they received the counseling guidelines provided by support services.

The research carried out by Aguilera (1990) and Escudero and Moreno (1992) was centered on studying the communication and planning between teachers and the different support services to students with LD. They demonstrated that intervention within the classroom setting was characterized by a lack of communication between the special education teacher and the general education teacher.

### Teacher Training

The provision of educational services in Spain is geared toward giving a positive response to LD within the school setting, to the detriment of clinical services. However, this situation can produce severe problems because the educational infrastructure is not as efficient as would be desirable, which could reflect deficiencies in providing positive responses to LD. Teachers usually lack the right tools to deal with the special educational needs, possibly exacerbating the problems of those LD students with transitory educational needs into permanent problems. In fact, many of these students' parents have to look for assistance in private clinical services.

New alternatives must be taken into account in relation to less severe LD. Some initiatives have been promoted by the Ministry of Education and Science (*Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia*) in a university setting, as reviewed by Suárez (1995). The Law of University Reform (*Ley de Reforma Universitaria*, LRU) in 1983 introduced special subjects related to the LD field in some university studies, such as educational psychology and other specialties related to teacher training. Learning Disabilities and Psycho-

educational Intervention (*Dificultades de Aprendizaje e Intervención Psico-pedagógica*) is a main subject in the syllabus of psychoeducational studies. This means that this subject is taught at all state universities. Moreover, the subject Psychoeducational Bases of Special Education (*Bases Psicopedagógicas de la Educación Especial*) is present in the curriculum for all specialties in teacher training and includes as a main part Learning Disabilities and Special Educational Needs (*Dificultades de Aprendizaje y Necesidades de Educación Especial*). The subject Remedial Education of Reading and Writing Disorders (*Tratamientos Educativos de los Trastornos de la Lengua Escrita*) is included in the training of the special education teacher. Moreover, the subject Remedial Education of Oral and Written Language (*Tratamientos Educativos de los Trastornos de la Lengua Oral y Escrita*) is included in the Auditory and Speech Disorders specialty.

On the other hand, different autonomous regions with their own responsibility in the area of education have proposed their own teacher training programs in the LD field. However, this political decision does not satisfy teachers' demands because these programs are very short and not intensively monitored, and consequently have little effect on educational practice. Moreover, these courses are given outside of working hours, which means that the teachers are not usually motivated to attend them.

## Conclusions

In Spain, the new school reform contemplates the integration of special education into general education. The LOGSE includes a unique system of teaching in which LD students have the right to an education in the same terms as the rest of the population—that is, in the least restrictive environment. Also, the current school reform has included for the first time the concept of LD or special educational

needs. Although this concept differs from the NJCLD definition of LD, it represents a legal recognition of this term for the first time in Spain. Nevertheless, it must be said that LD, as in other countries such as New Zealand (Chapman, 1992), Germany (Opp, 1992), and Mexico (Fletcher & Kaufman de Lopez, 1995), is not considered a category of special education. Although the category of LD has received greater recognition in the United States, we found that its identification in practice, according to the review by Moats and Lyon (1993), shares some similarities with the Spanish concept described in the present article.

In Spain, the new legislation also includes the view that identifying LD should be a product of the cooperation between teachers and the different support services. With relation to certain research results (Aguilera, 1990; Escudero & Moreno, 1992; Sáenz, 1990), it has been suggested that such an objective constitutes an important challenge to be reflected in a more efficient response to LD.

Moreover, the studies on the professional practices in the LD field (Peñate & González, 1995; Rus, 1996; Santana et al., 1992) suggest that the systemic perspective proposed by the LOGSE is not yet reflected in professional practice. When we compared the model of psychoeducational assessment for individuals with LD with the research findings, we found a disparity between the legislation and the professional practice in the LD field. The research mainly identified a psychometric and behavioral approach centered on the students' deficiencies. However, Báez and Bethencourt (1997) presented a brief description of the main concerns that currently attract the attention of specialists in educational psychology by means of a summary analysis of the papers from four recent conferences held in Spain. They observed a decline of psychometric perspectives in favor of cognitive-developmental, interactionist, psychosocial, environmental, and ecological approaches.

We think that this tendency will be gradually assumed by the professionals in the near future, with the introduction of new assessment and intervention practices in the LD field. Moreover, we hope that this new situation created by the LOGSE in Spain will contribute to a greater sensitivity on the part of teachers in regard to the teaching-learning process in detecting the difficulties and, consequently, may lead them to reconsider the process. Before the LOGSE implementation, students with LD were directed to specialists when learning problems were detected. Nowadays, however, remedial attempts must be made within the educational system as much as possible, which suggests that teachers will pay more attention to permanent and transitory LD.

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This position oversees the day-to-day operation of the school, including hiring of faculty, setting the bud-

get, and fund-raising. Experience in remedial or special education, educational technology, curriculum development, and student discipline is desired.

Candidates should send a cover letter and resume, which must include salary history, to:

Executive Director Search  
PACE-Brantley Hall School  
3221 Sand Lake Road  
Longwood, FL 32791-7529

Please—no phone calls.