

An Introduction to Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

Viewer's Guide



LD@school:

An Introduction to Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

This video is intended as a professional learning resource for Ontario educators in the instruction of students with learning disabilities. It features interviews with a superintendent, a school board psychologist, a school principal, special education resource teachers, the parent of a student with learning disabilities, and students with learning disabilities. Each participant presents a unique perspective relating to how educators can help their students with learning disabilities succeed in the classroom.

This viewer's guide will give you the opportunity to reflect on your thoughts and practices relating to teaching students with learning disabilities, both individually and as a group. The viewer's guide includes the following sections:

- The *pre-viewing questions* give viewers the opportunity to reflect on their own attitudes and interactions with students with learning disabilities both before and after watching the video.

In this video, you will learn about:

- what learning disabilities are and are not
- how learning disabilities affect the student both inside and outside the school setting
- working with the parents of students with learning disabilities
- strategies and tips for teaching students with learning disabilities

- The *Mosaic* gives viewers the opportunity to work together to highlight the main ideas from the video, as well as any common ideas they may have which link to the content presented. During the video, users make notes of their own ideas which they will then share with the group. Common ideas are collected together and recorded in the centre of the mosaic.
- The first *Concept Map* allows viewers to take down ideas and key points while watching the video. This section is directed at understanding what learning disabilities are and are not. It will help to focus the viewer's attention on the key concepts highlighted throughout the video, as well as helping the viewer to activate their prior knowledge and thoughts regarding the material being presented.
- The second *Concept Map* is designed similarly to the first *Concept Map*, but focuses on how learning disabilities specifically affect students in the classroom.
- *Appendix A* identifies key messages from the video which a discussion facilitator can use to initiate additional discussions and ensure that all key concepts have been grasped.



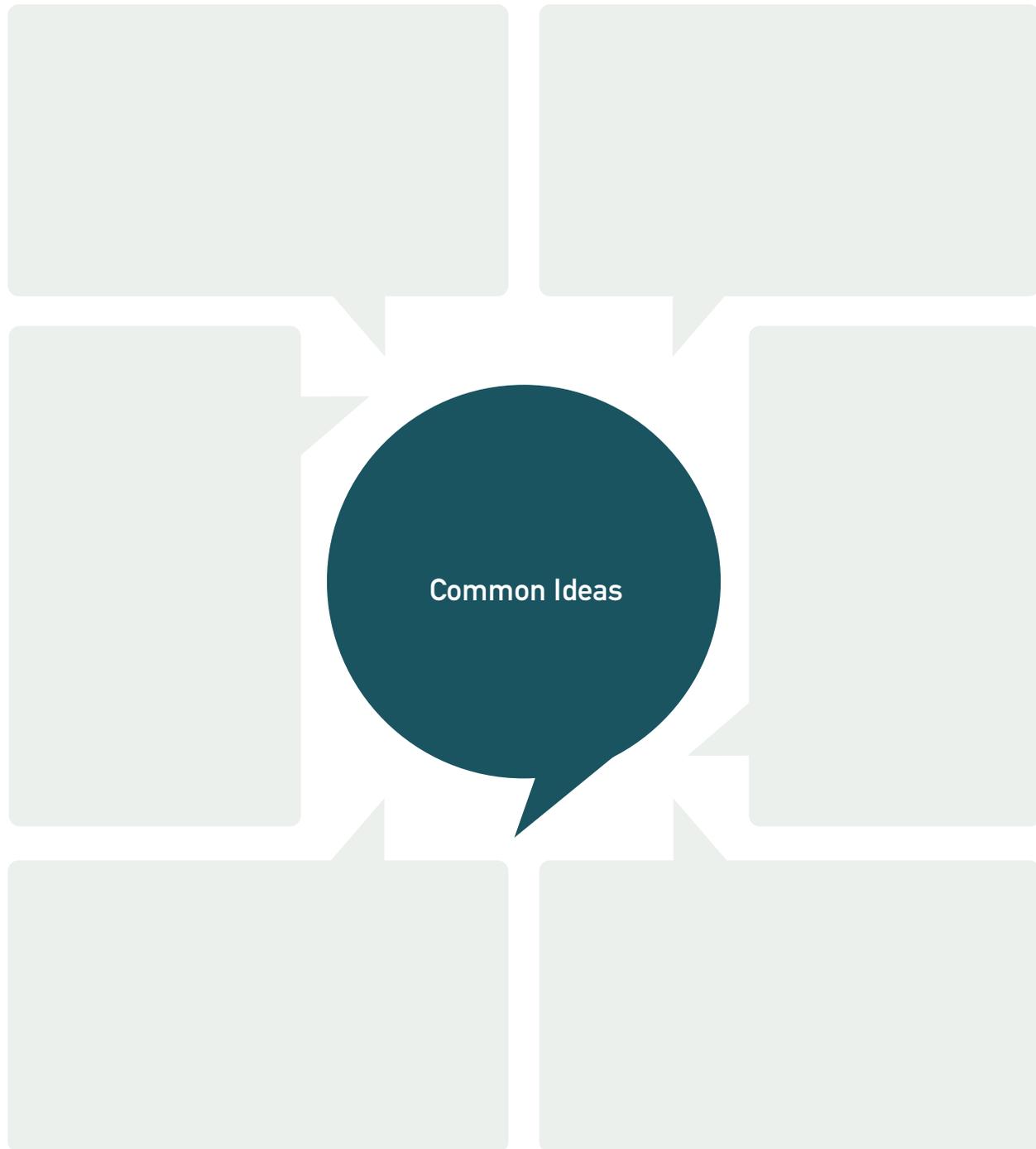
Pre-Viewing Questions for LD@school: An Introduction to Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

- Circle “Agree” or “Disagree” beside each statement below before watching the video.
- Watch the video and record any thoughts or comments you have in the space provided.
- After watching the video, reconsider the statements below. Circle “Agree” or “Disagree” beside each statement and verify if any of your responses have changed since watching the video.

Before Viewing	Statements	After Viewing
1 Agree/ Disagree	Students with learning disabilities experience difficulties only in the areas of reading, writing and math.	Agree/ Disagree
2 Agree/ Disagree	When working with students with learning disabilities, it is more important to focus on the strengths identified in their learning profile than on their weaknesses.	Agree/ Disagree
3 Agree/ Disagree	Students with learning disabilities should be able to advocate for themselves to get the learning supports that they need.	Agree/ Disagree
4 Agree/ Disagree	Prior to the start of the school year, every educator should take steps to connect with the parents of their students with learning disabilities.	Agree/ Disagree
5 Agree/ Disagree	Keeping in constant contact with the parents of a student with learning disabilities throughout the school year is important.	Agree/ Disagree
6 Agree/ Disagree	Students with learning disabilities have average to above average intellectual abilities.	Agree/ Disagree

The Mosaic for LD@school: An Introduction to Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

The Mosaic can be used to help facilitate a group discussion following the viewing of the video. Each participant should choose a section of the mosaic to record their thoughts in during the viewing. At the end of the viewing, all participants should share their thoughts and common ideas can be gathered in the center box.



Concept Map for LD@school:
An Introduction to Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

Defining learning disabilities

Description of the intellectual potential of students with learning disabilities:

Which academic skills are impacted by learning disabilities?

Cognitive skills

What are learning disabilities
NOT caused by?

Social skills development

Concept Map for LD@school:
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Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities

What academic skills or competencies can be affected by learning disabilities?

How can the whole school community contribute to the success of a student with learning disabilities?

School Team

The Student & Their Parents

Other Students



The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario has launched a new website, LD@school, which provides educators with a resource to help support the learning of students with learning disabilities. The website includes instructional strategies, approaches and practices which are evidence-based tempered by educators' experience.

We invite you to visit www.LDatSchool.ca for more information about the new LD@school website and to link to more resources related to teaching students with learning disabilities!

At this time, we would like to invite you to share your thoughts and comments relating to this introductory video. We will use any feedback we receive to create future videos and future content for the LD@school website. Please complete our short survey at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/VIDEO_intro_to_LDs to share your opinions with us!

References:

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2011). *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Draft Version)*. Available from:

▶ www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/learningforall2011.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. *Think Literacy Success: The Report of the Expert Panel on Students at Risk in Ontario, Grades 7 – 12*. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2003.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *School Effectiveness Framework: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success*. Available from:

▶ www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/Framework_english.pdf

Appendix A: Key Messages and Concepts in An Introduction to Learning Disabilities in the Classroom

- Learning disabilities affect the way individuals take in information, hold onto it, remember it, understand it, and use it in some way.
- Learning disabilities are neurodevelopmental, in that, it's just the way the brain is formed and developed.
- There are different levels of severity for learning disabilities.
- Students with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence.
- For learning disabilities to be diagnosed, it must have a significant impact on learning.
- Students with learning disabilities may underachieve academically in a manner that is inconsistent with their age and grade level, or measured intelligence.
- There are one or more areas of processing that impact a student with learning disabilities' ability to show their potential, whether it be in the classroom, in terms of their oral language, their reading, their writing, their math, their organizational skills, and their social skills.
- For students with learning disabilities, completing classwork can often require double the amount of energy or more than it takes their peers to complete the same task.
- Learning disabilities can significantly impact self-esteem and the social abilities of a student.
- It is incredibly important to ensure that parents are always present when the needs of their children are being discussed.
- Students also need to be involved in planning for their success in order to encourage them to self-advocate and identify strategies that do and do not work for them.
- It's important to remember that accommodations given to students may not just be needed in a class specific to reading, writing or math, but that they will need to be applied across the curriculum where they are appropriate.
- For students with learning disabilities, the sense of well-being as well as the feeling of being welcome within a school is very important.
- A student with a learning disability not only can learn but wants to learn.
- It is important to ask students what you can do as an educator to help them learn and succeed in the classroom.
- It is important that students understand their unique learning profile and strengths and needs in order to know how they can be successful.
- When students understand how they learn, that they have strengths, and that there's a plan for success that includes support, they will feel empowered to learn.
- Once a student with a learning disability knows that they can learn and that their teacher knows that about them, a positive change in their attitude toward learning will oftentimes be seen.

