

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

LEARNING DISABILITY QUARTERLY

The *Learning Disability Quarterly* (LDQ) is published four times a year by the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD). As one of the premier research journals in the field of learning disabilities, LDQ is received by over 3,100 individuals, organizations, and libraries around the world.

The following information is designed to assist authors in preparing manuscripts for publication consideration by LDQ. Effective December 2004, this document replaces all earlier versions.

Editorial Focus: Is LDQ an appropriate journal for publishing my work?

The *Learning Disability Quarterly* publishes high-quality research and scholarship concerning children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities. Consistent with that purpose, we seek to publish articles with the potential to impact and improve educational opportunities and services. The main emphasis of each submitted manuscript should be on learning disabilities, rather than on topics or studies that incidentally include participants with learning disabilities or only indirectly relate to the field of learning disabilities.

Manuscripts with an emphasis on learning disabilities as they relate to education are sought in the following areas:

Traditional Manuscripts

- ***Reports of techniques in identification, assessment, remediation, and programming.*** LDQ will consider papers reporting specific procedures that have been applied with populations with learning disabilities, and which have application in special and/or general education settings. Descriptions of interventions must specify the underlying theoretical or empirical rationale. Evidence to support interventions without adequate controls and objective evaluative criteria is not acceptable.
- ***Reports of original research with an applied focus.*** LDQ will consider papers that present research findings. Theoretical and applied research papers should clearly specify implications for practice.

Reports of research should adhere to the 5th Edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) for the organization of manuscript

sections and reporting of data, including for preparation of tables and figures. Authors are encouraged to include brief (*e.g.*, one to two sentence) explanations for research and analysis procedures selected.

- ***Interpretive reviews of the literature.*** LDQ will consider papers that provide integrative, critical, and systematic reviews of the literature related directly to individuals with learning disabilities. Historical surveys will be considered if they present a novel or original approach to a specific topic or area of learning disabilities. Reviews should be incisive and critical from the standpoint of basic assumptions, methodology, and technique. Annotated bibliographies will not be considered.

- ***Papers advancing theory and the discussion of pertinent issues.*** LDQ will consider papers that specify developing theories or models related to learner, method, programming, or material variables relevant to populations with learning disabilities. LDQ will also consider position papers that delineate major issues or trends in the field of learning disabilities. Such papers should include an objective explanation of the various options or positions related to the specific issue, and proposed responses should be documented carefully.

- ***Papers advancing practices in personnel preparation.*** LDQ will consider papers that detail or present investigations of models for preservice and in-service education of learning disability professionals and paraprofessionals. Descriptions of training practices must specify the theoretical or empirical rationale underlying the procedure or program. Evaluation criteria and results should also be specified.

- ***Other topics.*** In addition to papers fitting into the above categories, LDQ will also publish: (a) critical reviews of child / student, professional, and teacher training materials; (b) articles oriented toward the practical needs of the learning disability practitioner; and (c) information pertaining to state and federal laws, legislation, policies, rules, and regulations, so long as their implications for practice are addressed.

Special Features

- **Commentaries.** This occasional section (its frequency will depend on submission trends) will feature one or more scholarly discussions of one-half to one full journal page (two double-spaced manuscript pages) submitted in the spirit of letters to the editor. Examples of anticipated *Commentaries* topics include perspectives of teachers and administrators on the implementation of researched practices or new special education policies, the reflections of novice scholars on research methodologies, observations on past trends in the profession, critical reflections on a body of publications not previously reviewed in the professional literature, and charges to the profession; additional topics of interest to professionals in learning disabilities are invited. To encourage on-going

dialogues among professionals, commentaries may also respond to previous *Commentaries* publications.

The *Commentaries* section will serve two important functions; it will provide a forum for participation in professional conversations for those not prepared to submit full length manuscripts consistent with *LDQ*'s standards, and it will encourage discussion among professionals on a variety of topics that are rarely addressed in journals such as *LDQ* that are dominated by research publications.

The required format for *Commentaries* submissions includes that the manuscript is well written, presents informed discussion on timely topics--which may include recent publications in *LDQ*--, and incorporates citations and references where appropriate. A manuscript that reports an author's perspective without fully presenting the theory behind that perspective or providing supporting evidence will not be published. The appropriate manuscript page length is a maximum two double-spaced, one inch margin pages. Please consult further in these *Author Guidelines* for other formatting information, number of copies, and submission procedures. All submissions to *Commentaries* will be subjected to review by the editor and may be reviewed by consulting editors when appropriate.

- **Theme Issues.** *LDQ* periodically publishes a theme issue. Individuals are invited to propose themes to the editor. Further, individuals are welcome to nominate themselves as a theme issue editor, and either identify participant authors when proposing the issue or consult with the journal editor to place an open call for submissions. (Calls for theme submissions will be posted on the CLD website <www.cldinternational.org> and in the *LDQ* when possible.)

General topic for theme issues in Volumes 28 - 30. All theme issues for *LDQ* volumes 28 - 30 (the duration of the current editorship) must correspond to the general theme topic: **Science and Learning Disabilities**. At this time in our profession science is a critically pivotal construct. Governmental and other professional efforts to regulate education practices have called for, or responded to calls for "scientifically-based research and practices"; debates on learning disabilities identification and service eligibility call into question previous sciences for LD; relatively new technologies are expanding our knowledge about the nature of LD; and evolving epistemologies for theory and research challenge scientific perspectives and practices once dominant within the profession.

LDQ seeks to foster conversations on science as it relates to LD. Broad interpretations of this general theme topic are welcome. Favor will be given to proposals that either explore a specific aspect of science and learning disabilities in-depth, or that address the aspect from multiple perspectives.

A theme issue should contain a minimum of three topic related manuscripts (five manuscripts are typically published per issue), and may include introductory and concluding commentaries by the theme editor. All submissions to *LDQ*, including solicited manuscripts for theme issues, must be subject to editor and

peer review. The journal editor will consult with the theme editor on this process.

Nominations for themes and issue editors will be considered by the journal editor, and will involve consultation with consulting editors when appropriate. Nominations will be evaluated based on timeliness and interest to the profession as well as consistency with the mission of *LDQ*, in addition to quality of the conceptualization of the proposed theme or issue, and the qualifications of all nominated participants to contribute a high quality issue within the proposed timeline. Theme editors must document a body of scholarship, including refereed publications, in the topic of the proposed theme. Decisions of the journal editor will be final.

Manuscript Preparation: What should I know about LDQ before I prepare my manuscript?

1. A critical concern in the learning disabilities field is the definition of the population. Therefore, authors are requested to operationally define the study participants in accordance with professional standards (see CLD Research Committee: Rosenberg et al. [1992] "Minimum standards for the description of participants in learning disabilities research." *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 15, 114-121. Also available, reprinted: *Remedial and Special Education* [1994], 15, 56-59). In addition, parameters of the settings in which the research took place are to be clearly delineated. Such descriptions facilitate replication and application of results. Articles that fail to specify participant and setting variables will be rejected or returned to the author for clarification before further editorial review.

2. Papers published in *LDQ* are intended to inform professional dialogues about learning disabilities. Thus, authors are requested to include information that will communicate their insights and perspectives. To this end, authors are encouraged to judiciously include brief content footnotes (not endnotes) when they will usefully inform the readership on relevant information that would not otherwise be included in the article [see *APA Manual*, 5th Ed. (pp. 202; 300-301) for guidelines on appropriate use and formatting of footnotes]. Quotation and citation references should be submitted in a list at the conclusion of the text and prior to any tables and figures.

Authors of research papers are further encouraged to include brief (*e.g.*, one to two sentence) explanations of why specific procedures and analysis methods were employed. [Note: the reporting of significance testing *v.* effect size estimates in reports of empirical research is left to the discretion of the author. Authors are advised to select the most appropriate analysis and briefly explain their decision. Peer reviewers will evaluate the appropriateness of this and all aspects of the reported study.]

3. Given the current emphasis on using research to improve practice, authors must include an "Implications for Practice" section within the Discussion section

of the manuscript. The reported implications must specifically address how the practice, research findings, position or policy, or theory presented can be used to improve educational practice for individuals with learning disabilities.

4. Manuscripts must be prepared in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. (The American Psychological Association, 2001). Manuscripts are not to exceed 35 double-spaced pages (including references, tables, figures, and appendices).

Matters of style. Authors are expected to prepare their manuscripts in adherence to the style and format guidelines described in the *APA Manual, 5th Ed.*, except as otherwise noted in this document. Certain writing style practices will enhance the readability of manuscripts:

Compose an original abstract. Do not merely repeat sentences taken from the body of the text.

Avoid anthropomorphizing documents, data and findings.

Use person-first and respectful language when making reference to persons with disabilities and other identity groups. (requested, not required)

Limit incorporation of tables and figures to those essential to conveyance of your content.

Submission Procedures: What should I know about submitting my manuscript to LDQ?

1. Five double-spaced copies (no staples) of the word-processed manuscript are required. Mail manuscript submissions to:

David Scanlon, Ph.D., Editor
Learning Disability Quarterly
Lynch School of Education
Campion Hall, Boston College
140 Commonwealth Ave.
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

2. Manuscripts must include a 100-150 word abstract summarizing the contents.

3. Each manuscript must be accompanied by a cover letter that communicates (a) that the manuscript is an original work, (b) that the manuscript is not under consideration by any other journal, and (c) any other disclosures as required by the APA (*e.g.*, ethical treatment of subjects, financial relationship disclosures).

4. Each manuscript must also be accompanied by a cover page that provides the name, affiliation, mailing address, phone number, fax, and email address of each author. All communications will be with the lead author.

Acceptance of a Manuscript for Review: What happens to a manuscript once it is received by the LDQ staff?

Upon receipt, the editor reviews each manuscript and decides whether or not to accept it for peer review. Some of the reasons why a manuscript may not be accepted for review include (a) the topic is outside the focus of *LDQ* or (b) the manuscript does not follow the guidelines for length, format, or style.

While being considered for publication in *LDQ*, manuscripts may not be submitted for publication elsewhere.

Each manuscript accepted for peer review is assigned an identification number that is used for tracking purposes through the review and publication process. Receipt of each manuscript accepted for peer review is acknowledged in a letter to the lead author (usually within two weeks of receipt) which includes the manuscript ID number.

Manuscript Review Process: What should I know about the peer review process used by LDQ?

Manuscripts submitted to *LDQ* are typically sent to three members of the editorial board using a blind review process. Reviewers, with expertise in the areas addressed by the particular paper will evaluate the manuscript on the basis of (a) importance of the topic, (b) contribution to the literature, (c) quality of the research or other procedures, and (d) quality of the writing. In addition to providing specific written feedback to the authors, the reviewers will also provide an advisory recommendation to the editor about the potential publication value of the manuscript.

Publication Decisions: What happens after a manuscript is reviewed by members of the editorial board?

The recommendations of each reviewer are forwarded to the editor. After reviewing the manuscript and the reviewers' recommendations, the editor makes a decision concerning the manuscript as follows:

(a) decline to publish, (b) request revisions with a stipulation for further peer review, (c) request revisions subject to *LDQ* staff review only, or (d) accept as is. Almost all manuscripts submitted to *LDQ*, as to most other journals, involve some level of additional revision (b or c) prior to publication.

Typically, the review and editorial decision-making process is completed within 16 weeks following submission of the manuscript. The editorial decision and rationale will be communicated in a letter to the first author, including copies of the peer reviews.

Grievance Procedure

Authors who believe that their manuscript was not reviewed in a careful or timely manner and in accordance with these published procedures are invited to bring the matter to the attention of the chairperson of the CLD Publications Committee (to locate the name and contact information for the committee chairperson, please access the officer list on the CLD home page, <http://www.cldinternational.org>).

What happens if a manuscript is conditionally accepted for publication?

If a manuscript receives favorable reviews from reviewers and the editor concurs, a tentative recommendation for publication is made. This recommendation is conditional upon specific revisions as well as submission of supporting materials (described below). The information in this section describes the process and timelines related to revisions, technical editing, production, and publication:

Revisions

A final decision to publish a manuscript is made after the satisfactory completion of revisions as outlined in the correspondence for manuscripts tentatively accepted.

When a manuscript is accepted for publication, the author(s) must provide two final-version copies of the manuscript, tables, references, and all figures.

Technical Editing

The editorial staff of *LDQ* reserves the right to make editorial changes that do not materially affect the meaning of the text. After the technical editing, the hard copy is returned to the lead author, who is responsible for making the suggested edits and subsequently submitting an electronic and a hard copy of the article.

Production

To protect the works of authors, the Council for Learning Disabilities copyrights all of its publications. Once a manuscript is scheduled for publication, the authors are notified in writing and sent an Author Agreement Form assigning literary rights to the Council for Learning Disabilities.

Authors who wish to use material, such as figures or tables, for which they do not own the copyright must obtain written permission from the copyright holder (usually the publisher) and submit it to the Council for Learning Disabilities with their accepted manuscript. Signed releases must also be submitted from all individuals appearing in photos submitted for publication.

Accepted manuscripts are copyedited and manuscripts are typeset in page proofs. Authors are asked to read proofs for errors in typesetting and other

defects. Correction of typographical errors is made without charge; other alterations are to be prepaid by authors.

Publication

Upon publication of a manuscript in *LDQ* the author receives one complimentary copy of the issue in which it appeared. In the case of multiple authors, the first author receives one copy for each author, to be distributed among the authors.

Disclaimer

The points of view expressed within *LDQ* are those of the authors themselves and do not necessarily represent the individual or collective opinion of the officers or members of the Council for Learning Disabilities. Therefore, neither the Council nor *LDQ* can assume responsibility for services, materials, or techniques presented in the journal.

Inquiries

Questions may be directed to the *LDQ* Editor, David Scanlon, at LDQ@bc.edu or 617/552-1255.

Submission guidelines are available online at <http://www.cldinternational.org>.