

# Firm's goal: help kids make short business of school work

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Tests, homework, classwork, reading, writing and arithmetic. As the new school year begins, it can be hard for students, parents and teachers to know where the stand in the cycle of providing a quality education.

At the Institute for Learning and Development (ILD) in Lexington, Directors Dr. Lynn Meltzer and Dr. Bethany Roditi have a history of helping children, teens and adults with learning, attentional or behavioral difficulties. The institute also provides services for gifted individuals who need educational enrichment.

Meltzer and Roditi point out that ILD is not a tutoring service. ILD provides a broad range of psychological and educational services with an integrated approach linking the student with the family, the school and other professionals, according to Meltzer.

ILD was started by Meltzer and Roditi 10 years ago. At the time, Meltzer was the director of psychological services at Children's Hospital in Boston and Roditi was a consultant at the hospital.

"We felt we wanted to be more community based and coordinate services with school systems," Meltzer said.

In addition to taking a multi-

faceted approach to helping students of all ages and levels also operate the Research Institute for Learning and Development (ResearchILD). ResearchILD is a not-for-profit organization that is funded through grants and fundraising activities.

Using the lessons and strategies they have learned during their one-on-one sessions at ILD, Meltzer, Roditi and their staff have been able to plot out teaching and learning strategies that focus on understanding all aspects of learning difficulties.

Their current research addresses the test-taking difficulties which many students exhibit. Their book, *Strategies for Test Success* teaches students strategies for studying more efficiently so they can show what they know.

"Strategies are critical to learning," Meltzer said. She said strategies can teach students how, and not just what, to learn. "Strategies can empower students to be successful individual learners."

By publishing books like *Strategies for Test Success* and a planned three volume homework strategy series for parents, teachers and students, Meltzer said ResearchILD provides both theoretical and practical strategies for education.

Roditi said the key for teachers and students is to know which students will profit from which strate-



Bethany Roditi and Lynn Meltzer

gies.

Many of the strategies set forth by ILD and ResearchILD focus on the use of acronyms and visual images.

One test taking strategy involves the use of a picture of a sunset, mountain and trees and is aimed at getting students to focus on the big picture before beginning a test. Starting at the top of the mountain, students are reminded to look down, plan and check while they are taking a test.

Another strategy, Roditi said, uses a picture of a skeleton and the

ment and instruction for teachers, parents and students.

The *Strategic Learner* kit will consist of three books: one for teachers, one for parents, and a booklet of strategy questionnaires which teachers and students can use to evaluate the extent to which students apply strategies to their academic work.

ResearchILD is also fund-raising to develop a CD-ROM that will help make test-taking strategies more accessible for all students.

Dissemination of the Institute's work occurs through conferences such as the annual conference sponsored jointly by ResearchILD and the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. The conference was founded by Meltzer 15 years ago.

This year's conference, scheduled for Nov. 11 and 12 at Harvard University, will address the pressures of homework, tests, and grades on students and effective strategies for coping with the stresses of the new standards. New Lexington Superintendent of Schools Dr. Patricia Ruane is scheduled to be a panelist on a workshop addressing the necessity of homework.

As the directors of ILD and ResearchILD, Lexington residents Meltzer and Roditi have impressive credentials.

The Director of Education at

ILD, Roditi heads the educational therapy/tutoring program provided at the Institute offices and on an outreach capacity in various local school systems. Her specialization is in math learning disabilities and she has been invited to talk and consult with programs across the United States and Canada.

Roditi's background is as a high school math teacher and the Coordinator of Special Education in the Concord-Carlisle schools.

Meltzer is the director of Assessment and Research at ILD, heading the neuropsychological and educational assessment program as well as the research and development program. She is also involved in writing and teaching and is an adjunct Associate Professor in the Child Study Department at Tufts University and is an Associate in Education at Harvard University.

Meltzer's extensive publications, and professional presentations, include books, chapters and articles relating to the assessment and treatment of learning difficulties, with the importance of strategies for learning more effectively.

The staff includes a number of educational professionals including Dr. Judith Stein, the Coordinator of Counseling Services.

*The Institute for Learning and Development* is located at 5 Millita Drive in Lexington and the phone number is 861-3711.