PSW: Lessons Learned

CASP Fall Convention 2019

Introductions

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– Danielle Edwards, Oxnard School District
– Jenny Ponzuric, jlj consulting

Agenda

– Brief overview of PSW Model for SLD Identification
– Research-based Assessment Approaches
– Training Do’s and Don’t’s
– Task Analysis
– Common Questions Answered
– Questions from Audience Members
– 3x5 cards around the room

www.vcselpa.org
Resources for Teachers and Staff
Pattern of Strengths & Weaknesses
PSW Resources and FAQ

IDEA 2004: Federal Criteria for SLD

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. 34 CFR 300.8
CA Education Code:
State Criteria for SLD

- The basic psychological processes include attention, visual processing, auditory processing, sensory-motor skills, cognitive abilities including association, conceptualization and expression. (2014 update)
- “Phonological processing” added to the list of psychological processes in 2016 update

SLD Identification

CA education code regulations allows for three different models when examining the eligibility for special education under the classification of SLD:
1. Discrepancy
2. Response to Instruction/Intervention (RtI²)
3. Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses

IDEA 2004: Federal Criteria

(1) Must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, as defined in § 300.8(c)(10)...
(3) May permit the use of other alternative research-based procedures for determining whether a child has a learning disability, as defined in § 300.8(c)(10).

CA Education Code 2014: PSW

A pupil may be determined to have a specific learning disability if...The pupil exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments, consistent with 34 C.F.R. sections 300.304 and 300.305.

Ventura County SELPA PSW Model

1. The student exhibits a pattern of cognitive or processing strengths, indicated by a pattern of abilities in the average or above ranges.
2. The student exhibits significant cognitive/processing and academic weaknesses.
3. A research-based link exists between the cognitive and academic weaknesses.
4. The student requires special education to access the core curriculum.

Making a Distinction

General Learning Difficulties versus Specific Learning Disabilities
What is it?
A tool to summarize the research on the strength (or lack thereof) of the link between the academic and processing areas.

All Brains Are Different
Clinician judgment and experience are essential in interpretation of assessment results using the COMPARES.

Two Research-based Assessment Approaches

What do both approaches agree upon?
– Based on several core research-based principles:
  – Specific Learning Disabilities are characterized by neurologically-based deficits in cognitive processing.
  – Research has demonstrated the existence of specific cognitive processes.
  – Sound tools and measures exist to assess these cognitive processing areas.
  – Research has also found links between various cognitive processes and specific areas of academic achievement.

What do both approaches agree upon?
– Comprehensive
– Organizational
– Matrix of Processing-Achievement Relations,
– Evaluating
– Significance

What do both approaches agree upon?

Having a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses does not always equate to an eligibility of Specific Learning Disability.

What do both approaches agree upon?
– A comprehensive assessment
– A pattern of cognitive strengths
– Otherwise Normal Cognitive Ability Profile (ONCAP)
– Classifications of tests and processing areas may not be the same as test manuals.
What do both approaches agree upon?

- Limit the number of test batteries you take subtests from
- Attempt to choose tests that were normed close in time
- Composite scores are stronger than subtest scores
  - With composite scores, need to examine the cohesiveness of the scores or whether the scores are unitary.

Training Do's and Don't's

Year #1: “Soft Rollout” of PSW Model: 2014-2015 School Year

- Overview Trainings
  - Site Teams
  - Assessment Team
    - TOT for SAI – October
    - TOT for Psychologists – 5 meetings
    - SLP Meeting – February
- Trainings on 2 Assessment Approaches
  - VCASP
    - Pre-referral – January
    - Debrief – May

Year #2: Trainings by Topics
2015-16: All are invited!

- Overview
- Academic Assessment
- Both Assessment Approaches
- COMPARES
- Walkthrough of Model
- Report Writing
- EL Students
- Interventions

Year #2: District Consultation

- Report Consultation
- Answering Questions
- Specific Training Needs

Year #3: More Trainings and More Consultation! 2016-17

- Overview of Approaches for Novice Psychologists
  - Academic Assessments
  - Advanced Trainings
  - EL Students – Culture-Language Interpretative Matrix (C-LIM)
  - PSW for Admin
  - SLP and Psych Collaboration
Year #4:  2017-2018

- Overview of Approaches for Novice Psychologists (separate)
- Advanced Trainings (separate for both approaches)
- EL Students and African-American Students
- PSW Discussion Panel
- Using PSW Results to Guide Accommodations and Interventions

2018-2019 and 2019-2020

- The SELPA provided 1.5 days of training (separate trainings by approach) for novice psychologists and new hires
- A full day in September
- ½ day approximately 60 days later for intermediate-level questions

The Triangle Challenge

> With your partner(s), make an equilateral triangle with three of the sticks
> Add three more sticks and make four equilateral triangles
> The solution should only have four equilateral triangles – there can be no other shapes
> You must use the entire length of each stick

How did you use the following:

- Concentration
- Remembering
- Language
- Getting Along with Others
- Keeping Track of Time/Order
- Thinking Skills
- Motor Abilities
- Using Space

Other Training Topics

- Hypothesis Testing
- Task Analysis
  - Coding (SS=4) vs Symbol Search (SS=10)
  - Rover (SS=4) and Triangles (SS=10)
  - TAPS-4 Number Memory Forward (SS=10) and Reversed (SS=4)
- SLP/Psych Collaboration Document
  - WI-COG and CASL-2 (Antonyms and Synonyms)

Be thinking about...

- Who needs to be trained?
- What are the whole group needs?
- What are some small group needs?
- How we will continue providing ongoing support?
- Administrative Support
Common Questions

• In hindsight, what was something that you would have done differently in regard to the implementation of PSW in your district?

• What was something that went really well in your implementation of PSW?

• Were there any unintended positive consequences noticed regarding the use of the PSW model?

• Have your numbers increased or decreased for SLD with the implementation of PSW?

• Have there been any legal ramifications with using the PSW model?

• How have your districts implemented PSW with students that fall under the Larry P decision?

• If you were giving advice to a district currently exploring PSW, what would that be?

• If you were giving advice to a district currently utilizing PSW, what would that be?

Thank you!
Differentiating Intellectual Disability (ID), General Learning Difficulty (GLD) and a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

Instructions for use: This information is intended to guide assessment teams and should be considered along with the team’s knowledge of the student as well as assessment data. Decisions about assessment and eligibility should not be based solely on this document.

### Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Intellectual Disability (ID)</th>
<th>General Learning Difficulty (GLD)</th>
<th>Specific Learning Disability (SLD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little variation in cognitive ability and processing profile</td>
<td>Little to moderate variation in cognitive ability and processing profile</td>
<td>Moderate to high (or statistically significant) variation in cognitive ability and processing profile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All or nearly all cognitive areas ≤ 70 standard score</td>
<td>May have normative deficits in one or more cognitive and academic areas</td>
<td>Normative deficits in specific cognitive abilities and processes; Normative deficits in specific academic area(s); Empirical or ecologically valid relationship between cognitive and academic deficits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible relative strengths in one or more processes or abilities that are not highly related to general intelligence such as phonemic awareness, simple clerical-type tasks or social skills</td>
<td>May have relative strengths in one or more processes or abilities</td>
<td>Intact functioning in many processes and abilities and possible normative cognitive or academic strengths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficits (≤70 standard score) in adaptive behavior, little variation in performance across adaptive behavior domains</td>
<td>May have one or more deficits in adaptive behavior (but not in all domains)</td>
<td>Minimal to no deficits in adaptive behavior, any deficits in adaptive behavior are likely explained by other factors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Etiology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Etiology</th>
<th>Intellectual Disability (ID)</th>
<th>General Learning Difficulty</th>
<th>Specific Learning Disability (SLD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normative cognitive deficits are explained by genetic conditions; problems during pregnancy; problems at birth; problems after birth.</td>
<td>Underlying causes of generally low average cognitive and academic abilities are typically not known</td>
<td>SLD has a neurobiological basis. The pattern of generally average or better overall cognitive ability and below average performance in related cognitive and academic areas cannot be explained by exclusionary factors (e.g., poor instruction; social/emotional factors; psychological disturbance; cultural or language differences, environmental deprivation, etc.), although one or more of these factors may contribute to weakened academic performance.</td>
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### Response to Instruction/Multi-tiered Systems of Supports/Intervention and Programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Instruction/Multi-tiered Systems of Supports/Intervention and Programming</th>
<th>Intellectual Disability (ID)</th>
<th>General Learning Difficulty</th>
<th>Specific Learning Disability (SLD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Monitoring (or other performance indicators) demonstrates very slow rate of response/learning; will not meet typical grade level benchmarks in any academic area</td>
<td>Progress Monitoring (or other performance indicators) demonstrates slow rate of response/learning; may meet typical grade level benchmarks in some, but not all, academic areas</td>
<td>Following a comprehensive evaluation and resultant provision of tailored interventions, accommodations, compensatory strategies, and/or modifications, Progress Monitoring (or other performance indicators) demonstrates rate of response/learning similar to same grade peers; may approximate or meet typical grade level benchmarks in certain areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Services</td>
<td>Tier II and Tier III interventions in General Education, Remedial Programs</td>
<td>Special Education Services; Remedial Programs; General Education Inclusion (Tier II and Tier III Interventions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Emphasis: Self-Help Skills; Functional Academics; Social Skills; Self-Esteem</td>
<td>Instructional Emphasis: Basic Academics; Vocational Training; Accommodations; Compensatory Strategies; Social Skills and Self-Esteem</td>
<td>Instructional Emphasis: Grade Level Performance; College Preparation; Accommodations; Compensatory Strategies; Self-Esteem; Self-Advocacy; Assistive Technology</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## The COMPARES Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPARES Key of Rating Symbols for Research Associating Processing &amp; Achievement Areas</th>
<th>Description of Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4                                                                                   | Strong convincing evidence.  
Research shows a strong to very strong relationship, and is consistent. Meta-analyses may confirm the correlation between this processing area and achievement area. |
| 3                                                                                   | Convincing evidence.  
One or more research studies or meta-analyses show a strong relationship, but findings may be inconsistent or contradictory. A recognized expert in the field may state in an article or a textbook that there is a significant or relevant relationship, yet current research may not focus on the explicit connection. An fMRI study may show activation of a brain area known to be associated with a particular cognitive process while engaged in a related academic task. |
| 2                                                                                   | Partially convincing evidence.  
Some research shows a moderate or relevant relationship, but findings may be inconsistent, contradictory, or preliminary. |
| 1                                                                                   | Unconvincing evidence.  
Research shows a weak relationship, and/or is anecdotal rather than quantitative, and/or lacks peer review, and/or has few or no bibliographic citations. |
| ∅                                                                                   | No research found that shows even a weak correlation as of the publication date of this document. If a study was found that shows “no relation,” this study is cited in the annotated version of the COMPARES. |
**Overview of the COMPARES**

Directions for use: The overview of the COMPARES document allows assessment teams a quick glance at the strength of the research link between the processing area and academic achievement area. Assessment teams need to examine the specific page number(s) (which are located directly to the right of the rating symbol) for the areas of question and take into consideration the other information provided within the COMPARES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processing Area</th>
<th>Processing Sub-Area</th>
<th>Basic Reading Skills (Decoding)</th>
<th>Reading Fluency</th>
<th>Reading Comprehension</th>
<th>Written Expression</th>
<th>Math Calculation</th>
<th>Math Problem-Solving</th>
<th>Listening Comprehension</th>
<th>Oral Expression</th>
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<tr>
<td>Auditory Processing</td>
<td>Phonological Processing</td>
<td>4 B11</td>
<td>5 B11</td>
<td>6 B11</td>
<td>2 B11</td>
<td>2 B18</td>
<td>3 B18</td>
<td>4 B18</td>
<td>5 B23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Auditory Memory</td>
<td>4 B11</td>
<td>5 B11</td>
<td>6 B11</td>
<td>2 B11</td>
<td>2 B18</td>
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<td>Auditory Processing Speed</td>
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<td>* B11</td>
<td>* B11</td>
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<td>Cognitive Abilities</td>
<td>Association/Memory</td>
<td>4 B14</td>
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<td>Expression</td>
<td>3 B15</td>
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<td>Processing Speed</td>
<td>4 B15</td>
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<td>Executive Functions</td>
<td>4 B16</td>
<td>2 3 B16</td>
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<td>4 B21</td>
<td>3 3 B21</td>
<td>4 3 B26</td>
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<td>Sensory-Motor Skills</td>
<td>Visual Motor, Fine Motor, Graphomotor, Sensorimotor</td>
<td>1 B17</td>
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<td>Sensorimotor Memory</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Please reference the COMPARES for specific information.

† Please refer to page B3 for additional information regarding Attention.

Updated 11/2015