Informal Assessment:
Qualitative Measures that Enhance Your Evaluations!

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Disclosures

- Financial
  - Ms. Bader is paid a stipend for this presentation
- Non-financial
  - None

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Participant Outcomes

1. Examine and describe various informal qualitative assessment measures and how each is a valid component of a comprehensive evaluation

2. Explain how to use an interpreter during the administration of informal measures to maintain validity when evaluating students who are English Learners

3. Write an evaluation report that thoroughly documents and uniquely describes the strengths and needs of each student with cultural sensitivity

4. Identify 3 qualitative assessment measures and how these strategies lead to more informed goals and services

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Today's Agenda

- Quick Overview - SLI Eligibility and the Need for Related Services
- Know Your Students: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, including English Learners
- Qualitative Measures – Exploring your Options and the Evaluation Report
- Using Interpreters
- Strategies for Successful Assessments Using Qualitative Measures
- Putting It All Together
- Q & A

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"There are rarely right decisions or actions in our practices; more likely there are best decisions or actions."

(Pollock & Rochon, 2002)

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Speech Impairment (SI) Eligibility and the Need for Related Services

Definitions and Clarifications

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Initial Eligibility for Speech Impairment

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines speech impairment as "a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance." (34 C.F.R. Section 300.8(c)(11))

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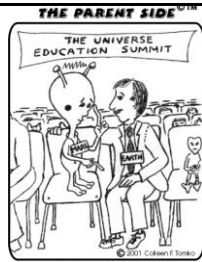## Related Services

Related services are any services that are necessary to help a student benefit from their special education program. [34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Sec. 300.34(a).] and to "...assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education" [section 300.24(a)].

To "benefit from special education" has generally been interpreted to mean making *meaningful* progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives.

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ASHA Elaborates to Help us Analyze Eligibility

Two-Pronged Approach:
1. Does the child meet the criteria associated with speech impairment *and*
2. Does the child need special education and related services as a result of this disability?

The definition of SI highlights the importance of considering the child's performance in school when making the decision about eligibility

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TSHA: SI Disability Determination Guidelines, 2020

A 3-stage process
1. Is there a communication disorder?
2. Is there an adverse effect on educational performance resulting from the communication disorder?

If based on your evaluation, the criteria have been met for the above questions then you move to the next step below:

3. Are specially designed instruction or related services and supports needed to help the student make progress in the curriculum?

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TSHA: SI Disability Determination Guidelines, 2020

- Assessment – SLPs *conduct* thorough and balanced speech, language, or communication assessments, including collecting data and gathering evidence to answer assessment questions using nonbiased tools and procedures, interviews, and structured observations.
- Evaluation – SLPs *interpret* the assessment...*clinical judgment is required to differentiate between communication difference and disorder.*

https://www.txsha.org/page/speech-impairment-eligibility-guidelines

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TSHA: SI Disability Determination Guidelines, 2020

A few more details…

- The SLP gathers informal assessment and *when appropriate* norm-referenced/standardized test data in the areas of concern.

- The SLP documents adverse effects on educational performance that result from the communication disorder.

The TSHA Disability Determination Guidelines provide options for sources of data, rather than "requirements" for using standardized tests!

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Re-Evaluations and Dismissals

3-year reevaluation due; special request by ARD committee; dismissal being considered

- Review existing evaluation data: Progress on IEP and present levels of academic achievement and functional performance; teacher data; parent data; observations of communication skills in academic and nonacademic settings; language/speech sample; checklists; SLP opinion; and, *if needed, standardized tests*

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Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Knowing Your Students: The Impact On Your Assessment Process and Decisions

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Students At Risk and English Learners

- Factors Impacting Language Development
  - English Learners
  - Socio-economic status
  - Limited prior educational experience
  - Cultural and linguistic differences

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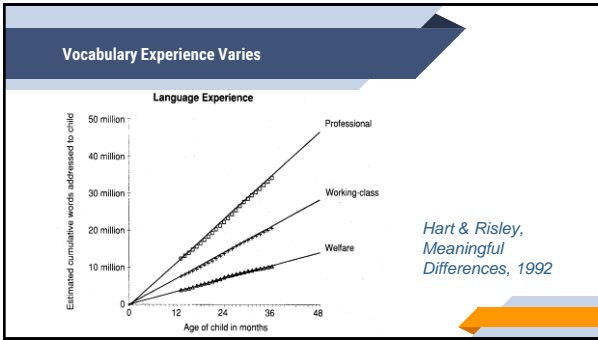## Vocabulary Experience Varies

Language Experience

Hart & Risley, Meaningful Differences, 1992

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The Vocabulary Gap

- Anne Fernald, Stanford University Psychology Professor reported that the gap is evident in children as young as 18 months of age!
- By age 24 months, there was already a six-month gap between SES groups in processing skills critical to language development.

"SES Differences in Language processing Skill and Vocabulary Are Evident at 18 Months", Fernald, Ann, March 2013

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Family Resources: Influencing our Students

- Children from low-SES families are less likely to have experiences that encourage the development of fundamental skills of reading acquisition, such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language (Buckingham, Wheldall, & Beaman-Wheldall, 2013)
- Research indicates that school conditions contribute more to SES differences in learning rates than family characteristics do (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008)
- *Researchers have argued that classroom environment plays an important role in outcomes!*

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Facts About Bilingualism

- By 2025, an estimated 25% of public school students will be ELLs (Counseling@NYU)
- In 2020/21, nearly 750,000 students in grades 3–12—approximately one in five Texas students—were English learner students. *(Nov 3, 2022)*

https://counseling.steinhardt.nyu.edu/blog/english-language-learners/
https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2023144#:~:text=In%202020%2F21%2C%20nearly%20750%2C000,students%E2%80%94were%20English%20learner%20students.

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Sequential (vs. Simultaneous) Language Acquisition

- If the second language is introduced before there is a strong foundation in the first language (at or after 6-8 years of age), the development of the first language may slow down, stop or even regress while the second language is being learned (Cummins, 1992; Schiff-Myers, 1992)

Key factor: Many EL students we assess fall into this category!

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Questions for Assessing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students – The "What ifs"

- What if the child only speaks and/or responds in English or the dominant language is English?
- What if the Home Language Survey indicates English but the child tells you he speaks another language at home?
- What if the child has not been in school before?
- What if the IEP team has evidence that the child has not been exposed to rich language background, books, etc.?
- What if the child has another disability and comes from a home where English is not the primary language?

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The US Department of Ed in an ESSA Update (2016)

- We must consider the English language proficiency of *ELs with disabilities* when deciding on appropriate assessments and other evaluation materials
- We must provide and administer special education evaluations in the child's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, to ensure that a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability-related needs
- We must not identify or determine that EL students are students with disabilities because of their limited English language proficiency

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf

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A Quick Recap on Second Language Acquisition

Children learning a second language demonstrate identified characteristics as they acquire the new language:
- Silent Period
- Codeswitching
- Transfer or Interference
- Language Loss
- BICS and CALPS

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The Silent Period

- Most students at early stages of second language acquisition focus on comprehension and do very little speaking
- The younger the child is, the longer the silent period lasts
- Students at the *preschool age and in kindergarten* may speak very little in both their first and second language!

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Codeswitching

- Used by multilingual adults and children
- The speaker alternates between the 2 languages within a phrase or sentence
- A typical, common behavior of the EL (and bilingual speakers) at all ages

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Transfer or Interference

- Students make errors in the second language that reflect the influence of the first language
- These errors can occur in syntax, morphology, phonology, semantics and pragmatics
- Transfer errors are NOT indicative of a language disorder

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Language Loss

- Many EL students begin to experience language loss when the second language becomes more comfortable
- This and other factors can lead to achievement of low test scores in both the first and second language
- Commonly seen in *early elementary age* students

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BICS - Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

- Takes approximately 2 or 3 years to develop under ideal conditions which include: continued support in the first language and consistent exposure to the second language
- Cognitively *undemanding*
- Contextual support increases ability to interact

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CALPS - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills

- Takes approximately 5 – 7 years to develop under ideal conditions, which include support in the first language and instruction in the second language
- Proficiency in cognitively demanding tasks such as:
  - Understanding academic lectures
  - Telling and writing imaginary stories
  - Using language to predict, reason, analyze, synthesize and evaluate
  - Reading and writing (literacy skills)

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Students may present with a BICS-CALP Gap

- ELs need more time to become proficient in academic English and more exposure to good English instruction
- We see deficits in students that may cause them to be erroneously identified as language disabled and labeled as "Special Education"
- Educators may assume that the student is ready to handle CALPS learning situations when they are still only capable at a BICS level!

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Language Processing

- Gillam et al, 1995 suggested that students with true language disability will have difficulty retaining the sequential order of the information
- Fazio, 1998 added that language disabled students have specific difficulties on tasks that require verbatim, immediate ordered recall

Therefore, informal (qualitative) assessments will help us differentiate between a processing disorder, language disorder and a language difference!

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What can we learn from qualitative measures?

- Language designations listed on IEP documents or school documentation may be incorrect or outdated
- What parents tell us about an EL student's language proficiency vs. what teachers tell us about an EL student's language proficiency…
  - Is there a discrepancy?
- Probe language proficiency with a child, if possible. Ask similar questions in L1 and then English and compare

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Qualitative Assessment Measures

What are the options?
Why use them?
How to assure a valid evaluation report?

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Assessment and Telepractice – ASHA's Guidance

- Select clients who are appropriate for assessment via telepractice;
- Select and use assessments that are appropriate for the technology and that take into consideration client and disorder variables; and
- Be sensitive to cultural and linguistic influences that affect the identification and assessment of communication disorders and differences in individuals receiving services via telepractice, which may include collaborating with interpreters

https://www.asha.org/slp/clinical/considerations-for-speech-language-and-cognitive-assessment-via-telepractice/

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How to Select Appropriate Assessment Procedures – Be a detective!

- Review test manuals for norm population – is this student part of the norm sample?
  - ▻ Most norming standards are for in-person only!
- Use informal measures when standardized tests are determined to be invalid or inappropriate

https://studylib.net/doc/7302728/an-update-on-larry-p.---csha---california-speech-language...

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For each student ask yourself…

What characteristics will influence the types of qualitative measures that can be utilized (remotely) for this child?

- Does the child need shorter sessions, lots of visuals, a caregiver to assist with attention and behaviors or ??
- What kinds of data and evidence will be true indicators of educational impact, service needs and goals?

For challenging dismissal situations, work with the multidisciplinary committee to assist with gathering additional student-centered data

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Qualitative Measures – Options to Consider

- Record Review and Data
- Interviews
- Checklists
- Observations
- Language Samples and Narratives
- Modifying Standardized Tests
- Dynamic Assessment – Incorporating the Curriculum
- Articulation, Fluency and Voice Considerations

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Record Review and Data

For initial evaluations, research and document:

- Developmental, cultural and language experiences
- Intervention attempts through General Education Program
  - MTSS and monitor ability and growth over short period of time
- Educational history, including exposure to pre-K learning opportunities
- Characteristics of second language acquisition

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Record Review and Data

- Thorough and culturally sensitive case history, including comprehensive language profile and educational experience
- Determine the student's language proficiency in the first language using an interpreter or bilingual SLP
- Prior observations from current or past teachers or other providers
- Document, document, document!

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Research and Include EVERYTHING on your report!

Consider the student in relation to peers from similar cultural, educational and linguistic backgrounds in the following areas:

- Educational Experience
- Instructional Strategies
- Classroom Language Usage
- School Social Interaction Problems
- Language and Learning Problems
- Environmental Influences
- Impressions from Classroom Observations

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Interviews, Questionnaires and Checklists

- Teacher may offer a portfolio of the student work and communication samples
- Use questionnaires and interviews with those who know the student (parent, teachers, aides, other professionals and family members)
- Checklists are often great tools for stakeholders who are difficult to reach in person or by phone
- Use the double interview technique to engage the students themselves and gain insight from the spontaneous nature of the social setting

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Teacher/Parent/Student Input

- Information and discrepancies attained through interview from relevant stakeholders will bolster the unique evidence you are developing for this student
- If attempts to gain information from anyone were made and unsuccessful, document attempts in the report and indicate that missing information/input will be gathered at the IEP meeting

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Observations in Daily Routine Settings Provide a Balance to Those Gathered during Treatment or Assessment

- When possible, include at least one observation in addition to describing behavior during assessment – *choose a setting that will provide the best detail for each student*
- Document date, time and setting of observations
- Write an objective description of communication and interaction
- Avoid explanations that judge child's behavior – just tell what you see
  - ► "Ran away from the computer" rather than "appeared to be scared"
  - ► "Looked out the window" rather than "did not attend to task"

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Classroom, Telepractice and School Observations

- Ideally completed during oral language lesson or when lots of interaction is happening spontaneously
- Describe the environment and how it impacts student's ability to communicate – compare telepractice to in-person when possible
- Refer to clarity of speech and response to cues
- Mention attention to teacher, parent, routine and/or instructions
  - ► *Does the student watch and imitate peers?*
- Comment on length and appropriateness of statements, questions and responses to adults and peers

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Using Narratives for Language Sampling

Wordless picture books – An Invaluable Tool!

- Using the natural context of telling a story
- Effective for all school-age students (PK – HS)
- Provide opportunity to examine syntactic complexity, lexical diversity, unintelligibility, dysfluency, and talkativeness
- Informs assessor of expressive language levels and where there are skill deficiencies
- Leads us to identify meaningful, achievable goals

"Narrative Language Sampling in Typical Development: Implications for Clinical Trials", AJSLP:2018 Feb; 27(1): 123–135. Channell et al

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Language Sample Description

- 50 Utterances (and be prepared to explain why not if applicable)
- Remember the double interview technique for older and highly verbal students
- Refer to all areas of language with greater emphasis on skills that illustrate the strengths and challenges for this child
- Include examples in your report
- A low MLU is a critical marker for language delays/disorders
- Describe functional language to readers in laymen's terms

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BREAK TIME!

We will start again promptly in 15 minutes

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Standardized Assessment Measures

- Provide quantitative data such as percentile ranks and standard scores *(which aren't legally or ethically mandated)*
- Pitfalls for telepractice, students with disabilities an/or those who are culturally and linguistically diverse:
  - Norm sample participants may not have the same characteristics or setting as your situation
  - Many Standardized tests are still developed from a Western, literate, middle class framework

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Standardized Tests assume…

Students will
- Cooperate
- Be comfortable with an unfamiliar adult and willing to talk with that person
- Be proficient in verbal display of knowledge
- Understand and successfully perform artificial, sometimes unfamiliar tasks (such as pointing to a picture or fill in the blanks)

And that you are giving the test under the same circumstances as in the norming environment

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Standardized Tests and Telepractice – ASHA's Guidance

- If the standardized test you are using has not been normed for remote administration, then the reliability and validity of the test are in question.
- Be sure to document this, including a discussion of modifications, and collaboration with an interpreter/translator or modification of prompts.

https://www.asha.org/practice/teleassessment/#speech

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Ways to Modify a Standardized Test

- Give instructions and test items in L1 and/or L2
- Rephrase confusing instructions
- Give additional examples and demonstrations
- Provide extra time for the student to answer
- Repeat items when necessary
- Omit items the student will probably miss or that don't translate well through the screen
- Test beyond the ceiling
- Repeat missed items later

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Other Ways to Modify a Standardized Test

- If the student gives a "wrong" answer, you may ask the student to explain it and record the explanation – *score it as correct if it would be correct in the student's culture*
- Complete the assessment in several sessions
- Count answers in either language as correct
- *Most importantly* – document the modifications in your written report and include a validity cautionary statement if required to report scores

(Goldstein, 2000; Wilson, Wilson, & Coleman, 2000; Wyatt, 2002)

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Factors to Consider in Interpreting Assessment Results

- Often overlooked factors include:
  - English Learner
  - Significant absences or multiple moves to different schools
  - Limited educational opportunities (must describe)
  - Standardized test modification
- These factors may influence decisions in borderline situations
- *If it isn't documented, it didn't happen!*

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Example Statement for Alternative Means of Assessment

- Due to <student's> (e.g., distance learning/Covid-19 limitations, English Language Proficiency, learning disability, limited attention span, need for sensory breaks, etc.),
  - Standardized test scores were not utilized. Alternative assessments included…
  - Standardized tests were used to gather information on strengths and weaknesses. Scores will not be reported since <the student does not match the norm sample> or <the test was not normed for telepractice administration>

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Dynamic Assessment – What, When and Why?

- What: An objective interactive method for measuring language learning potential
- When: Standardized tests aren't an appropriate or valid option to inform the SLP of the student's treatment needs
- Why: Alternative, valid approach
  - Determine a language difference vs. disorder
  - Identify the amount and type of support
  - Write meaningful, achievable goals

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How to Use Dynamic Assessment

- Look at the student's ability to learn when provided with instruction
- Pretest – Teach - Post Test format - *A highly interactive process utilizing a Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)*
- Children who make significant changes in short term teaching sessions are less likely to have a language disorder
- Children who are unable to make these changes are likely have a language impairment

One of the best informal assessment tools that can be used in person or via telepractice!

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Creating a Mediated Learning Experience - MLE

- Intentionality – Teach and create awareness in the child so s/he's an active participant in the process
- Meaning – Focus attention on task and help the child understand why it is important *from his/her perspective*
- Transcendence – Bridging concepts and events to help child think hypothetically ("Have you ever?" "What if...")
- Application – Consider how you will explain what s/he has to do?
- Competence – Help child develop a plan to participate in their own learning

https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/issues/components/
https://bilinguistics.com/dynamic-assessment/

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"Modifiability" – The Child's Response

When assessing, in addition to identifying a disorder, we are also seeking to appropriately plan intervention and goals.

We need to ask ourselves throughout the process:

- How does s/he respond to the Mediated Learning Experience? (attention, strategies used to learn, etc.)
- Transfer – can s/he apply to other contexts?
- Examiner Effort – How much and what type of support does s/he need?

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How Do We Actually Plan and Do an MLE?
Let's Look at an Example for Teaching Vocabulary

Strategy	Purpose	Example
Intentionality:	What's the goal? State the purpose of what we're teaching from the student's perspective	Today we're going to learn about special names.
Meaning:	Why are we working on this? Tell why it's important and relevant from the student's perspective	Special names are important because they help us tell things apart.
Transcendence:	*What* happens *if* the child doesn't have this skill? Develop awareness of the relevance of the skill to real life through critical thinking	What would happen if something broke on your bike? Would you need to use a special name to get help?

https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/issues/example/

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Plan Together (continued)

Strategy	Purpose	Example
Application:	Here's what you need to do. Let's try it together. Clarify expectations and give explicit instructions. Provide a model and allow opportunities for practice.	Offer opportunities to practice in various contexts, with different people and new locations
Competence:	What did you learn? Why is it important? When will you use this skill? Check for understanding of the skill and its importance for the current context and future classroom activities. Provide more opportunities to practice	We look at how well the child attended to the task, how well he understood single-word names, and how well she was able to pick up on using the new words.

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What Will You Look for in the Student's Responses?

- Differentiation in levels of support
  - With a cue, a model, or a more direct guided response?
  - Instructions rephrased, with visual demo or hand-over-hand response?
  - Slower pace, reduced or multisensory input?
  - How many repetitions does it take or does child need assistance to perform the task?

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Throughout the Dynamic Assessment Process, Ask Yourself…

- What is the area of weakness and the potential goal for treatment?
- How will you help the child understand why it's important and how s/he may use the skill in different situations?
- Can you find a way for the child to consider "What if"?
- What is your strategy for helping the child apply the skill beyond the teaching session?
- What will you be looking for in the child's response?
- Be thinking about how what you learned will inform recommendations for treatment and goals

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**Dynamic Assessment –
What else are you looking for?**

- Does she learn the new information slower than her peers, or does she perform as expected with appropriate teaching strategies (the MLE)?
- If the student continues to perform below expectations with MLE, where is the breakdown in learning?
- What are the different instructional strategies that help him learn and what is the appropriate goal?

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**Dynamic Assessment and the
Unique Needs of Your Students**

Distinguish between a language difference and a language disorder, especially for children with other identified disabilities, or those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- Children who can make significant changes in short term teaching sessions likely have a language difference
- Children who are unable to make these changes likely have a language impairment

https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/issues/outcomes/

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A Reminder: Language Learning Disability Defined

- A true language learning disability is present when the student experiences difficulties *learning* in BOTH languages
- So, dynamic assessment approaches may need to be completed in the child's primary language and in English
- It is imperative to take individual differences into account when determining whether a student has a language disability

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Summary of Dynamic Assessment in Your Evaluation Report

- Describe your methodology and the student's response in your written report
- Reflect in writing on the questions we reviewed
  - Does she learn the new information slower than peers?
  - Where is the breakdown in learning?
  - Does he require different instructional strategies than those that have been effective with similar peers?
  - Or did dynamic assessment indicate the ability to learn language skills with appropriate support?

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Describe Dynamic Assessment Procedures

"Dynamic Assessment was used to provide evidence to distinguish between a speech-language impairment and speech-language differences. Dynamic Assessment is a systematic assessment of a student's ability to improve speech-language performance as a result of *mediated learning experience* [e.g., How does student respond to teaching of a concept? Does student apply target skill from one item or task to the next? Does student apply learned strategies soon after learning them? How much support does a student need? What is the nature of the support required?]. This evidence-based assessment process yields data-based recommendations for use in classrooms and intervention plans."

Adapted from Pomona USD Assessment Report Template, 2018

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When Articulation is Assessed

- May need to record interaction completed via telepractice for review and analysis
- Dynamic Assessment
  - An excellent strategy to determine stimulability, achievable goals and potential for success
- Include a good speech sample for crucial additional evidence or lack of needs
- May compare results to virtually administered articulation test – are errors consistent? Do you have enough clarity to confirm?
- Analyze and determine whether differences are due to dialectical transfer patterns or an underlying speech disorder

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Voice/Resonance and Fluency

If Voice or Fluency are areas of concern
- Is the student able to learn techniques/strategies attempted through dynamic assessment?
- Summary and description of impact on communication in educational setting are essential
- Include variances in different settings, especially in person versus telepractice – input from other stakeholders is vital!
- For ELs who are dysfluent, include details about fluency similarities and differences in both languages

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Using Interpreters

The BID Process for Informal and Virtual Assessments

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ASHA and Ethical Considerations

"When a professional is not proficient in the language used by the client, family, or research subject, a suitable interpreter should be used…The use of interpreters and others who are proficient in the language of the persons served does not negate the ultimate responsibility of the professional in diagnosing the individual. In addition, bilingual clinicians must understand issues related to cultural and linguistic diversity, such as, second language acquisition, dialectal differences, and bilingualism."

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Follow the ASHA Code of Ethics and Guidelines

- Interpreters may be trained to administer activities and to transcribe student responses
- It is critical to prepare the interpreter for his/her role, especially for the virtual assessment situation

An interpreter who is well-prepared will provide you with the most valid information!

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Effective Interpreters will be Guided by the SLP to

Assure authentic interpretation by

- Learning and becoming familiar with vocabulary unique to special education and communication disorders
- Asking for clarification
- Providing specific accurate interpretations
- Remaining neutral
- Respecting confidentiality
- Maintaining an ongoing dialog with the SLP

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How Will this Work? The BID Process

- Briefing

- Interaction

- Debriefing

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Briefing

- Establish rapport with the interpreter!
- Provide overview of assessment purpose, session and activities
- Review student behaviors and characteristics that may impact assessment
- Discuss issues of confidentiality and its boundaries
- Discuss technical terms and vocabulary ahead of time
- Review how to translate precisely
- Explain that the interpreter will need to limit non-verbal cues

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Interaction

- Welcome student, introduce participants and establish rapport
- Inform the student (and caregiver if participating) of the role of the Interpreter and the role of the SLP
- Make eye contact directly with the student while speaking – you want it to be clear that you are the assessor!

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Interaction

- Speak in short, concise sentences and allow time for the interpreter to translate everything precisely
- *Pause frequently* to allow the interpreter to translate information
- Avoid oversimplification of important explanations
- Avoid use of idioms and slang

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Interaction

Take notes while the interpreter interacts with the student:
- Issues to be discussed during the debriefing
- Relevant student behaviors
  - Need for repetition
  - Use of gestures by student
  - Benefits of repetition, modeling, simplifying information
  - Articulation, voice and fluency

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Debriefing

- Review student responses with the interpreter
- Discuss any difficulties during the assessment and interpretation process
- Examine the language sample, narratives and dynamic assessment together. Discuss excerpts with transcription as necessary to illustrate critical elements of student's speech and language

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Seems Like a Lot!

- Yes, there are disadvantages
  - Budget more time
  - Plan ahead
  - Prepare your interpreter

Remember…the second time will be easier!!

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Most Important …

Advantages for the SLP and Your Student!
- Provides a bridge to the therapeutic and educational recommendations
- The interpretation process provides information on the student's performance in the native language, which is required by law for students who are English Learners
- Most importantly – you'll have compliant and defensible evaluations!

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Tips for Success

- Remember – there will never be the ideal evaluation or the perfect assessment situation
- Use multiple sources of information for assessment, including informal procedures
- Document what works and maintain ongoing training with your interpreter

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Strategies for Success

Qualitative Measures and Keys to Valid Assessment Reports

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6/8/2023

Comprehensive, Compliant and Valid Assessments

Use a triangulation of data to determine recommendations:

1. Standardized tests (with or without modifications, as appropriate for each student and telepractice vs. in-person situation)
2. Informal assessment procedures
3. A description of functional communication and academic impact

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Most Important!

Your Report Should Tell the Story and Create an Image of the Child for the Reader

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Make a Case For Your Ultimate Conclusion

- Add **well-chosen** examples of what the child was and was not able to do
- Include quotes that the student used during the assessment process, observations, narratives and/or language sampling
- **Don't** include examples for areas of weakness if there is no concern in a particular skill area
- Ask yourself, "Do the various measures utilized contribute to the child's story? Are there discrepancies that require an explanation?"
  - If discrepancies, how does your written narrative explain the differences and assure the right recommendation?
- *Your reader should come to the same conclusion as you do!*

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Important (but sometimes overlooked) Suggestions

- Know your timelines and plan accordingly
- Include pre-referral interventions (i.e., RtI, language enrichment) and document them!
- Be able to explain your evaluation (and services) to those without knowledge of our discipline
- Clear documentation (i.e., avoid or define jargon, meaningful, comprehensive)
- Communicate clearly how services will look
- *Build rapport with educational team and families*

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Always! Check Yourself and Each Report Carefully

- Have you utilized appropriate measures for this child?
  - Select measures that are right for this child (areas of concern, how the child understands and uses language, parent and teacher concerns, etc.)
- Don't report scores of standardized tests that were modified
- Add descriptions and examples of skills and challenges
- Is the child's name and gender correct throughout the report?

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Putting It All Together - In Summary

- You can use qualitative assessment measures for all children – and when assessing via telepractice!
- There are many strategies to gather meaningful informal data to provide a comprehensive and well-rounded picture of each child
- Use an interpreter, even when utilizing telepractice and/or qualitative measures of assessment

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Questions and Comments…

Thank you

Shellie Bader, MA, CCC-SLP
shellieslp@gmail.com

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