

TeachME Professional Development

Specific Learning Disabilities

The Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities: A Summary of Research on Best Practices

1. Specific learning disability (SLD) is the most common eligibility category through which students receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the rules and procedures by which students are identified with SLD affect a great number of students.

- A. True
- B. False

Legal Requirements for SLD Identification

2. IDEA 2004 defines the term “specific learning disability” as “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, and additional criteria were developed to ensure that low achievement was not primarily due to another factor, including each of the following EXCEPT:

- A. Sensory or motor disabilities and intellectual disabilities
- B. Emotional or behavioral disorders and economic disadvantage
- C. Cultural factors or limited English proficiency
- D. Poor school attendance or participation

2006 Regulations for IDEA

3. A child is identified as having a SLD if he or she does not achieve adequately to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas when provided with learning experiences and appropriate instruction, including written expression and basic reading skill, reading fluency skills and reading comprehension, mathematics calculation and mathematics problem solving, and:

- A. Oral expression and listening comprehension
- B. Language fluency and vocabulary development
- C. Executive functioning and organizational skills
- D. Decoding and encoding

Comprehensive Evaluation

4. A comprehensive evaluation requires standardized testing and the use of a formula as the primary requirement for SLD eligibility.

- A. True
- B. False

The Attributes of SLD Are Dimensional

5. Generally speaking, the two types of disorders are dimensional and:

- A. Conditional
- B. Categorical
- C. Determined
- D. Directional

The Reliability of Identification Is a Universal Problem

6. While reliability issues can impact SLD classification in certain circumstances, all SLD identification methods have problems with validity.

- A. True
- B. False

Frameworks for Understanding SLD-Cognitive Distiescrepancy Frameworks

7. Cognitive discrepancy frameworks for SLD hold that academic deficits among children with SLD are unexpected because of the presence of average or strong cognitive abilities or due to the presence of:

- A. Auditory processing strengths or deficits
- B. Problem-solving abilities or difficulties
- C. Specific cognitive strengths and weaknesses
- D. Higher reasoning capabilities or inabilities

How Can Competing Frameworks Be Compared?

8. Which of the following is NOT one of the topics generally addressed in school psychology and special education research?

- A. The nature of cognition and learning
- B. Effective intervention practices for all learners, but particularly those who struggle to master basic foundational skills
- C. The relationships between cognition, attention, and executive control processes, and academic achievement
- D. The academic profiles of students who experience behavioral and social difficulties

Processing Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW)

9. Advocates of PSW methods for SLD identification argue that academic interventions can be tailored to specific cognitive profiles and that a full understanding of the student's cognitive profile is necessary to design an effective intervention for the student.

- A. True
- B. False

Recommendations for SLD Identification

10. Recommendations for improving the reliability of SLD identification include using multiple data points, avoiding fixed cut points, using confidence intervals, employing high thresholds for treatment planning, and:

- A. Using tests with the same normative data
- B. Implementing summative evaluation techniques
- C. Using competency-based assessments
- D. Ensuring internal consistency

Planning for Reading Interventions

11. Students with severe reading difficulties need a comprehensive reading program that includes systematic instruction in foundational reading skills, and students with specific deficits in comprehension may require more text- and language-focused interventions.

- A. True
- B. False

Mathematics

12. Unlike reading, which develops in a more linear fashion, low performance on math computation tests could reflect problems in many areas, including fact retrieval, attention difficulties, and:

- A. Ability to manipulate numbers
- B. Visual processing
- C. Procedural knowledge
- D. Math anxiety

Evaluating Instructional Response

13. IDEA 2004 stipulates that students cannot be identified with SLD without evidence that they have received adequate instruction in reading and language skills and without teacher reports demonstrating inadequate progress.

- A. True
- B. False

Exclusionary Criteria

14. Each of the following is an accurate statement about exclusionary criteria EXCEPT:

- A. Disorders such as sensory problems, intellectual disability, or autism spectrum disorder have specific identification criteria and require interventions that address a much more pervasive impairment of adaptation than SLD
- B. Contextual factors that may interfere with achievement, such as limited English proficiency, comorbid behavioral problems, and economic disadvantage should be considered
- C. The goal of this part of the assessment is to determine whether such a condition is a primary cause of low achievement, a comorbid condition, or a result of low achievement
- D. Lack of appropriate instruction or poor-quality instruction will exclude a child from SLD consideration
