

Directions – Multidisciplinary Team Report / Specific Learning Disabilities DEC 3(a)

Section A – There is general agreement that information processing is thinking (Deshler, Ellis & Lenz, 1996). Focused observations note the interrelationship of the student’s ability to acquire new information, organize and remember information and express what has been learned or how new information will be used. The observation is not limited to “watching” the student but should be supplemented with an interview with the student about learning and a review of the student’s work samples. All of the information during this stage of data collection should be tempered with what the curricular demands are of all the learners in the classroom. This includes language, memory, development, attention, organization, and environmental and academic demands.

Section B – The determination of an ability-achievement discrepancy is the primary manifestation of a learning disability. Whenever possible, an intelligence test and achievement test that have the same mean and standard deviation and comparable norming populations should be administered. However, the assessment specialist may administer any reliable and valid test that provides an accurate evaluation of a student’s functioning level. Intelligence and achievement tests are appropriately selected through information in the technical and administration manuals as well as test reviews. How the test results are to be interpreted are also described in both manuals and reviews. Supportive information may be supplied from interviews, criterion-referenced tests, and informal tests. It is the responsibility of the assessment specialist to select the test instruments that will yield accurate information to answer the original evaluation question. Reviews are found in the Eleventh (1992) and Twelfth (1995) Mental Measurement Books.

Section C – If it is determined that the assessment measures did not accurately reflect the discrepancy between achievement and ability, the team shall state in writing the assessment procedures used, the assessment results, the criteria used to judge the importance of any difference between expected and current achievement and whether a substantial discrepancy is present that is not correctable without the provision of special education.

Section D – Substantial learning difficulties mean the student’s pattern of learning (acquisition, retention, expression) may require that services of special education personnel to monitor, change, or deliver instruction. The determination of a student’s substantial learning difficulty is determined through an evaluation of the data gathered during observation of the student while engaged in a learning task, the result of the two instructional interventions to improve the student’s learning, and the discrepancy between ability-achievement.

Section E – The exclusionary clause of the learning disability definition is meant to rule out other disabilities, environmental issues, cultural differences, medical conditions and other situational causes as the primary cause of the discrepancy and substantial learning difficulties.

Does the student meet the North Carolina eligibility criteria for learning disability

identification? – The learning disability areas to be checked are those meeting either A, B, D, E or A, C, D, E criteria.

Can the student’s educational needs be met without special education? – The student may be identified as having a learning disability, but the educational needs may best be met through the general education program or a 504 plan rather than special education.

Note: Observations completed as part of the RE process may not satisfy the requirements for determining LD eligibility

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These definitions will assist in completing this form.

Section A Definitions:

Acquisition Stage of Learning:

The acquiring of knowledge – declarative (concepts built from facts), procedural (simultaneous or sequential steps to carry out the tasks), and conditional (how the student uses the declarative and procedural knowledge together to learn).

Storage, Retrieval and Organization Stage of Learning:

The organization (plan) the student uses to store new information (long-term memory) and retrieve information to use (short-term working memory) for the task at hand.

Expression Stage of Learning:

The demonstration of new knowledge or information learned through speaking, writing, performance tasks, and products.

Information Processing:

The acquisition of, storage of, retrieval of, and expression of new information in a manner unique to this individual.

Processing Disorders:

The component of learning disabilities most closely allied with two general scientific paradigms – neuropsychology and information processing. The learner has difficulties in (1) control and organization of multiple mental activities, (2) switching among different strategies when it is required, (3) self-regulatory strategies such as planning, checking, and revising, and (4) knowing the range of strategies that might be used on various tasks (Torgeson, p. 146).

Section B and C Definitions:

Substantial Discrepancy:

A true difference between the ability to learn and the observed learning occurring for the student. The evaluation tools - standardized measures, curriculum-based assessments, classwork, observations, criterion-referenced tests, interviews, and informal tests – should collectively profile the student’s true difference in ability and learning.

Listening Comprehension:

The skill to understand and remember words spoken in order to (1) gain information, (2) follow directions, (3) change behavior through critical listening, and (4) appreciate listening through conversation and activities such as storytelling.

Oral Expression:

The skill to communicate about information learned and understood by peers and adults in social settings.

Written Expression:

The skill to communicate independently in writing using the appropriate form, content information, organization, and mechanics.

Basic Reading:

The skill to produce, isolate, blend and replicate sounds in the English language (phonological processing), the skill to use structural analysis for word recognition, the skill to use words according to their function and know the meaning of words (vocabulary), and the skill to read at a rate that enables comprehension of the material (fluency).

Reading Comprehension:

The skills needed to obtain meaning from all types of print including the skills to locate information, paraphrase text, sequence events and ideas, recognize comparative relationships in text, recognize similarities and differences, recognize causal relationships, and employ comprehension.

Mathematics Calculation:

The skills needed to identify the number and operation symbols, the skills to perform addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division using manipulatives, numberlines, and algorithms.

Mathematics Reasoning:

The skills needed to use mathematics concepts to problem-solve, to communicate information, and to use in other content subjects as well as daily living activities.

Section D Definitions:

Instructional Intervention:

A change in instructing the student in the area of suspected learning disability until a positive change in learning is recorded. Instructional interventions are to occur in the general education classroom and as part of the evaluative information to determine how the student learns best. Interventions are success driven, but the degree of success will differ for each student. Interventions are the most valuable when they occur over a period of 4 – 6 weeks. Instructional interventions aid in the development of the IEP if the student is later identified as learning disabled.

Substantial Difficulties:

The student's rate of learning even with successful interventions in the general education class requires the services of special education personnel to monitor, change, or deliver services on a regular basis.

Section E Definitions:

Concomitantly:

Occurring at the same time but not necessarily related to each other.

Other Disabilities:

Autistic, behaviorally-emotionally disabled, deaf-blind, hearing impaired, mentally disabled, multihandicapped, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, speech-language impaired, brained injured and visually impaired.

Environmental:

The combination of social and cultural conditions affecting the nature of the individual.

Cultural:

The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought that are characteristics of the community or population the individual is part of on a daily basis.

Economic Disadvantage:

Poverty.