

**SI Eligibility in Texas  
Language with Learning Disabilities  
Texas Speech Language Hearing Association**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Isn't it OK for each evaluation member to evaluate a child independently? We do not have time to collaborate.

A multidisciplinary team approach is not optional. IDEA 2004 requires the use of a multidisciplinary team to determine eligibility and develop the individual education plan. [CFR 34§300.116(a)(1)]

For students with a suspected disability in the areas of speech, language, or communication, this requirement is met with the inclusion of a speech-language pathologist on the multidisciplinary evaluation team. When the suspected disability is LD-oral expression (LD:OE) or LD-listening comprehension (LD:LC), the speech-language brings valuable insight and information to the team and should routinely be included in the evaluation process. Careful planning of the assessment is recommended so that the various members of the multidisciplinary team know what tests and subtests they are each administering. This will minimize over-testing and redundancy of testing in the various areas of the evaluation.

2. What role, if any, does language play in cognition?

The Cattell-Horn-Carroll (CHC) model of intelligence does not separate language from cognition. There are ten (10) broad areas of cognition described in the CHC model. Seven of these are considered cognitive processes and three are considered achievement processes. One of the seven cognitive processes is Gc Crystallized Knowledge. Crystallized Knowledge is heavily loaded in language skills and is defined as the breadth and depth of acquired knowledge of a culture & the effective application of this knowledge.

Since language is one of the areas of cognition, it cannot be pulled out and treated as a separate area apart from cognition.

3. What should be done if the diagnostician and SLP get conflicting scores in the area of language?

When there is conflicting assessment data, regardless of who administered or gathered the data, the multidisciplinary team needs to collaborate to analyze the discrepancy. Type of language skills, area, modality, and task demand should be explored as possible explanations of the differences. Additional testing, either

formal or informal, may be warranted to provide consistency or an explanation of the discrepancy.

4. Since learning disabilities are typically diagnosed by diagnosticians or LSSPs, should the SLP have any input on the interpretation of assessment data?

The evaluation report is a multidisciplinary team report and all members of the evaluation team should be involved in the interpretation of the assessment data. Consensus/agreement regarding the contents of the report should be reached.  
Remember: One child: One evaluation: One Report

5. What is the difference between LD in Oral Expression or Listening Comprehension versus SI with a language disorder?

The specific task and language modality will determine if the data relates to oral expression or listening comprehension. Some good sources to assist with this determination include the [www.crossbattery.com](http://www.crossbattery.com) spreadsheet and *The Achievement Test Desk Reference: A Guide to Learning Disability Identification, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* By Dawn P. Flanagan, Samuel O. Ortiz, Vincent C. Alfonso, and Jennifer T. Mascolo. Other useful resources include the subtest descriptions in the test manuals.

To determine LD versus SI, the degree or significance of the adverse effect on academic performance is very important. If the academic needs are significant enough that speech therapy alone is not sufficient to help the student make academic progress, then an LD diagnosis may be warranted. If a student needs special education instruction in place of or in addition to speech therapy, a diagnosis of LD is warranted.

6. If a student has a learning disability in oral expression or listening comprehension, wouldn't that also automatically warrant SI eligibility?

When determining eligibility for SI (language), the three stage questions need to be answered based on the assessment data. Typically, if a student is LD in oral expression or LD in listening comprehension s/he will demonstrate a language disorder as well (Stage 1 question). However, educational implications (functional or academic) need to result from the language disorder in order to answer Stage 2, yes. If the answer to Stage 1 and 2 are "yes", then answer Stage 3.

So, bottom line, a student who is LD:OE or LD:LC does not HAVE to also be SI.