



Evolution of Change - LD to SLD Coeur d'Alene School District Experience

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Objectives

- How change began
- What's working and what's not
- How we make it work
- Where we would like to go from here..

CDA School District #271

- Our district serves 10,333 students:
 - one Kinder Center
 - 10 elementary schools
 - 3 middle schools
 - 3 high schools
 - a joint professional technical campus with adjoining school districts
- Our School Psychology team includes:
 - 5 full-time psychologists
 - 3 part-time and
 - 1 intern student

Role of CDA School Psychologist

- We work collaborative with our Resource Teachers, Specialists (SLP, OT, PT) on all evaluations.
- Each team member is responsible for their information in the eligibility report.
- The School Psychologist must make sure the student meets eligibility criteria.



Past ...

- Our change began September 29, 2009 with information shared in Southern Idaho (ISPA conference).

Presentations focus on the multiple aspects of psychological and accommodations and the foundational contributions of RTI.

Presenters included: Dawn Flanagan and Steven Feifer.

What is a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)?

As Defined by Idaho State Department: A specific learning disability (SLD) means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an 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.

What is a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)? (cont)

Specific learning disability **does not include** learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (34 CFR Sec. 300.8 (c)(10))

Would this student meet Idaho SLD Criteria?

○ 6th grade student enters your school with a history of academic struggles and multiple schools (in and out of state). Mom speaks only Spanish at home, dad is bilingual. According to dad, the student was delayed in several areas including not speaking in sentences until he was 3 years old. In addition, his teachers have noted concerns for his inability to complete tasks and rarely is homework completed.



R/O Lack of instruction
How: Through interventions and progress monitoring for 9 weeks

R/O Language Issues
A. ELL (English Language Learners)
B. Receptive/Expressive

R/O Attention Concerns

R/O Soc/Emotional Concerns
Stressors = multiple moves, friendship issues, family financial concerns

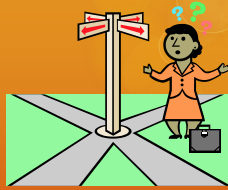
R/O Medical
How: Through developmental history/interview with interpreter

R/O Executive Functioning Concerns

R/O Slow Learner
NonVerbal IQ (UNIT)

Panic sets in..

○ There was followed up one day training in North Idaho the following March



○ Presenters

- Milton Dehn
- ID State Dept of Education
- Northern Regional SpEd Directors
- School Psychologists

Challenges

- Lack of training
- Lack of time
- Limited resources
- Sense of vagueness of key elements such as which model and how to define a weakness



What helped to support the change...

- Willingness to consider another way to define a Learning Disability
- RTI systems already in place at most elementary schools and "RTI like" systems at the secondary levels (benchmarking, etc.)



- Support of the SpEd Director
- Accountability - through data (ISAT, IRI)

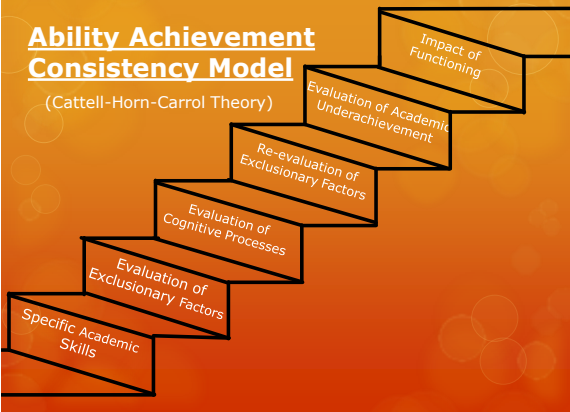
Models – Approaches to SLD Identification

- Discrepancy-Consistency Approach Using PASS Theory (Naglieri, Das, & Kirby)*
- RTI & Cognitive Hypothesis Testing (Concordance-Discordance Model) (Hall, Wycoff, & Fiorello)*
- Ability-Achievement Consistency Model (CHC Theory) (Flanagan, Alfonso, & Mascolo)*
- Milton Dehen Model (Dehn)

**Essential of Specific Learning Disability Identification, 2011*

Ability Achievement Consistency Model

(Cattell-Horn-Carrol Theory)

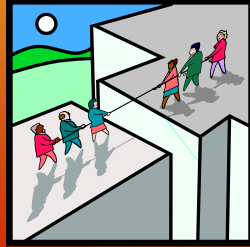


Evidence of a Processing Strength or Weakness (Milton Dehn)

- Both intra-individual and normative scores to be considered a strength or weakness
- A low score in a process is not necessarily a deficit indicative of LD, unless it's also an intra-individual weakness

Other Concerns and Limitations

- Lack of training for District Staff
- No time for training
- North vs. South
 - Dehn Model - PSW
 - CHC Model



Fidelity of the Model

- Consensus: The model used wasn't as important as the fidelity of the model in place.
- Agreed that Idaho teams would accept the eligibility decisions of different regions of the state as long as criteria was met.



Out of district IEP students...

- Sufficiency Review:
 - Review of IEP – Services
 - Review of Eligibility Report
 - Notation of Relevant Information (s/a outside eval)
- As a team (including parents) discuss eligibility
- Plan: If meets eligibility ~ W/N and continue services
 - If doesn't meet ~ Continue FAPE, gather documentation and document plan in a W/N

Challenges: District Staff Training

- School Psych Professional Development
- RTI – Elementary and Secondary Levels
 - Elementary level started in 2000 with 3 pilot schools – has grown from there
 - As a district, data decisions become more important (Title One, Level system at Elementary and Secondary level ~ Accountability)
 - Tools = Aims Web, Benchmarking, ISATs

Skill Level Demands



- Understanding CHC Model or PSW Model
- Understanding what our tests are measuring and how
- Understanding achievement deficits
- Understanding how the process is interconnected to each other
- Understanding how to connect deficits to intervention that work

Is Digit Span of the WISC IV an example of Working Memory?

(Digits forward and backwards)



What are the differences between long-term, short-term, and working memory?

- According to Cowan: **Short-term memory** "reflects faculties of the human mind that can hold a limited amount of information in a very accessible state temporarily."
- **Working Memory**: According to Miller (Miller et al. (1960)), is memory used to plan and carry out behavior.
- According to Cowan, Working Memory includes short-term memory and other processing mechanisms.

Nelson Cowan <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2657600/>

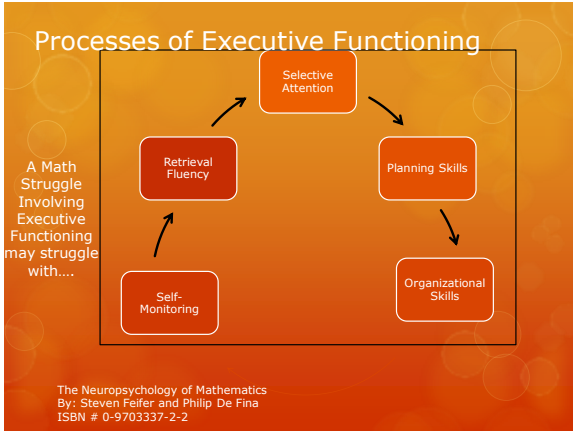
Why.....

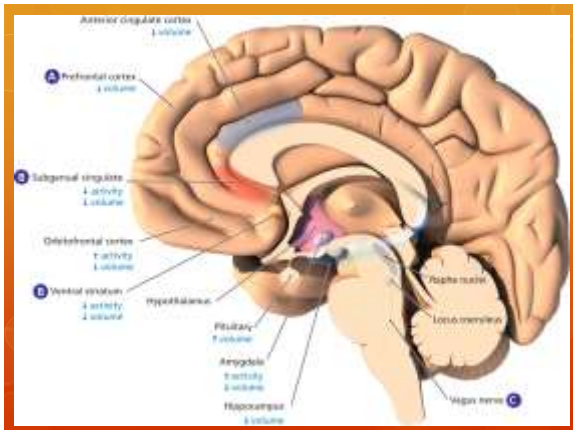


- Learning disabilities involve brain processes, not artificial delineations between aptitude and achievement
- Aptitude-Achievement discrepancy models generate little information for IEP development
- Curriculum based measurement are fluency assessment which tell *where* a student lies with respect to curriculum.. **Not why.**

Example: What is a Math Disability?

- Refers to children with markedly poor skills at deploying basic computational processes used to solve equations (Haskell, 2000). These may include deficits with:
 - ✓ Poor language & verbal retrieval skills
 - ✓ Weakness in: Working memory skills
 - ✓ Faulty visual spatial skills
 - ✓ **Weakness in: Executive functioning skills**





Selective Attention

Brain Region

Anterior Cingulate


Can present in the student as...

- Procedural/algorithm knowledge impaired
- Poor attention to math operational signs
- Place value misalignment

Planning Skills

Brain Region

Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex




Can present in the student as...

- Poor estimation skills
- Selection of operational processes impaired
- Difficulty determining salient information in word problems

Organizational Skills

Brain Region

Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex




Can present in the student as...

- Inconsistent lining up math equations
- Frequent erasers
- Difficulty setting up problems

Self Monitoring

Brain Region

Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex



Can present in the student as...

- Limited double-checking of work
- Unaware of plausibility to a response
- Inability to transcode operations such as $(4 \times 9) = (4 \times 10) - 4$


Retrieval Fluency

Brain Region

Orbitofrontal, or Anterior Cingulate, or Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex
(determined by strategy & effort)

Can present in the student as...

- Slower retrieval of learned facts
- Accuracy of recall of learned facts is inconsistent



How our state addressed challenges?

- Submission of one report from each district for review
- School Psychologists serve on peer review committee
- School Psy Symposium – Recorded Webinar and Handouts
- Academic Assessment by SLD Eligibility Areas of Concern
- SLD Eligibility report examples

<http://idahotc.com/specific-learning-disability>

Professional Development

- We have a professional responsibility to seek out and engage in professional development
- School Psychologist roles should also involve providing professional development to staff

Staff Development

- Helping staff (teachers, principals, support staff) realize why the change (SLD) and the importance of process monitoring and implementation of researched or evidence based interventions (vs. accommodations)

Staff Misconceptions

Accommodations or modification?



- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| ○ Sit near teacher | ○ Shorten assignment |
| ○ Verbally give answers | ○ Re-do assignments, quizzes, tests |
| ○ Use calculator | ○ Extra practice time with a volunteer |
| ○ Open book for quizzes and tests | ○ Allow the student to retake the test or re-do the paper |
| ○ Use multiplication/hundreds chart, number line | ○ Use graphic organizers |
| ○ Reduce work | ○ Take tests in an isolated setting to reduce test anxieties |
| ○ Repeat directions | ○ Allow the student to type answers |
| ○ More time | |

Atlas Elementary Presentation

- General Overview of Special Education
- General Overview of RTI Tier Model
- Tier Curriculum defined for Atlas Elementary
- RTI Flow Chart defined for Atlas
- Example goal writing, realistic growth
- Example graph with aim line, trend line, etc.
- Questions & Discussion



○ Looking Back.....

- ✓ A child's intelligence was defined by one number ... their IQ
- ✓ For a child to get help, they had to be identified as "Special Ed"

Special Education Manual 2007

- State Eligibilities continues to include 15 "categories" such as Autism, Hearing Impaired
- Biggest change in eligibility requirements has been with the identification of a learning disability
- Almost everything we do in Special Education is defined by Federal laws



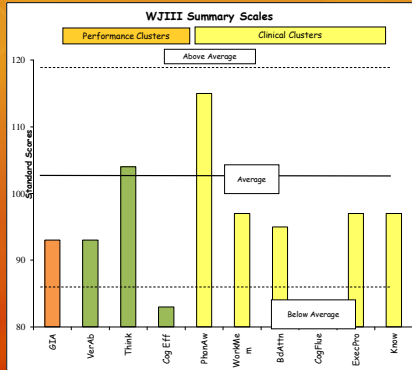
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

- Must involve a basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language
- A student is eligible for SpEd services (SLD) when:
 - They fail to respond to researched based interventions
 - There is data to demonstrate the problem is ongoing and severe (documented through intervention plans & progress monitoring graphs which includes a aimline, trendline, phaseline, and decision rules).
 - The student requires resources beyond those available in the general education
 - Specialized instruction (Special Education) is needed

Additional criteria for SLD

- Must exhibit a pattern of cognitive strengths and weaknesses in performance. Can not be a "slow learner"
- Lack of learning should not be due to:
 - Lack of opportunity to learn (such as poor attendance, moving around a lot, ineffective "home schooling")
 - Not due to vision, hearing or motor difficulties
 - Not due to a Cognitive Impairment
 - Not due to an Emotional Disturbance
 - No environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage
 - Does not have Limited English Proficiency

Cognitive Strength & Weakness Example



Special Education SLD



Is not intended to target "slow learners" (students who have limited cognitive processes in the average range).

Review of RTI Model



Core Concept of RTI..

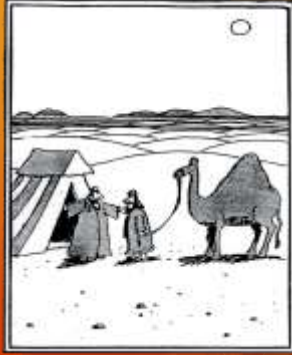
- Students receive high quality instruction in their general education setting
- General education instructors and staff assume an active role in students' assessment
- School staff conduct universal screening
- Continuous progress monitoring
- Decisions are based on data

Where are we going?



Change...

“Stop asking me if we’re almost there; we’re Nomads, for crying out loud.”

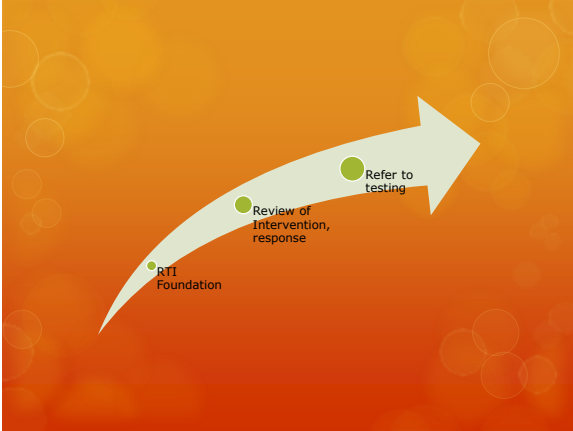




Working together to build success



Building strong foundations while working together for our children



Key ideas.....

Preponderance of Evidence to Support the Eligibility Decision

"connect the dots"... Does it make sense?

The illustration shows a large, stylized key with a red lightning bolt above its head. To the right of the key is a cartoon character of a person with glasses and a blue suit, pointing towards the key.

RTI Process Review for Atlas Elementary

- **Step 1:** Complete a "Request for problem solving" referral on the N drive.
- **Step 2:** Meet with your grade level and discuss your referral.
- **Step 3:** At your grade level, write the initial I-Plan.
- **Step 4:** The classroom teacher will be the case manager.
 - Teacher will contact parents and share I-Plan goals and interventions that have been put into place.
 - Teacher will contact the RTI calendar person. The calendar person will place the student on the calendar for the Follow-up meeting.
 - Teacher will graph weekly progress unless the student is already being progressed monitored by a different teacher.

RTI Process (contd)

- **Step 5:** The calendar person will notify the classroom teacher of the Follow-up RTI date with the RTI team.
- **Step 6:** Attend the Follow-up RTI meeting. Classroom teacher will call and invite the parent(s) to this meeting.
- **Step 7:** RTI team will either:
 - Discontinue the I-Plan
 - Write a new goal
 - Refer to MDT (evaluate for special education)
 - Other:
- Schedule another Follow-up meeting, if needed.

I-Plan Example

ATLAS ELEMENTARY I-PLAN		
STUDENT NAME:	DOB:	GRADE:
TEACHER NAME:	SCHOOL/AREA:	DATE OF I-PLAN:
GRADE LEVEL PARTICIPANTS:		
I. Identify the Concern:		
II. Define the Problem and Present Level of Performance (PLOP)		
a. Student		
b. Benchmark:		
c. Definition of Problem:		
III. Write the GOAL: _____		
IV. Act on the Plan: What will be done - List Interventions		
	When	By Whom
V. Look at Results—Progress Monitoring		
Case Manager:		
Evaluation Procedures	Schedules	By whom
VI. Notify the RTI calendar person that an I-Plan has been written.		
The Follow-up meeting, in 9 weeks, with the RTI Team will be on: _____		

Reasonable Growth Measures:

	Reading	
<i>Oral Reading Fluency</i>		
	Realistic	Ambitious
Grade 1	2.0 words/week	3.0 words/week
Grade 2	1.5 words/week	2.0 words/week
Grade 3	1.0 words/week	1.5 words/week
Grade 4	.85 words/week	1.1 words/week
Grade 5	.5 words/week	.8 words/week
<i>Maze</i>		
	Realistic	Ambitious
Grade 2	.39 words/week	.84 words/week
Grade 3	.39 words/week	.84 words/week
Grade 4	.39 words/week	.84 words/week
Grade 5	.39 words/week	.84 words/week
<i>Nonsense Word Fluency</i>		
	Realistic	Ambitious
Grade 1	1 sound/week	1.5 sounds/week

Goal Rate of Improvement Example -- Reading

Math

M-COMP (computation)

	Realistic	Ambitious
Grade 1	.5 points/week	0.7 points/week
Grade 2	.4 points/week	0.6 points/week
Grade 3	.5 points/week	0.7 points/week
Grade 4	.5 points/week	0.7 points/week
Grade 5	.3 points/week	0.5 points/week

M-CAP (concepts and applications)

	Realistic	Ambitious
Grade 2	.3 points/week	0.5 points/week
Grade 3	.2 points/week	0.4 points/week
Grade 4	.1 points/week	0.3 points/week
Grade 5	.08 points/week	0.2 points/week

Goal Rate of Improvement Example -- Math

Reasonable Growth Measures:

Writing

Total Words Written

	Realistic	Ambitious
Grade 1	0.34 words/week	0.5 words/week
Grade 2	0.38 words/week	0.5 words/week
Grade 3	0.34 words/week	0.4 words/week
Grade 4	0.32 words/week	0.4 words/week
Grade 5	0.28 words/week	0.3 words/week

Spelling

	Realistic	Ambitious
Grade 1	0.5 letters/week	0.7 letters/week
Grade 2	0.3 letters/week	0.5 letters/week
Grade 3	0.5 letters/week	0.6 letters/week
Grade 4	0.4 letters/week	0.6 letters/week
Grade 5	0.1 letters/week	0.5 letters/week

Goal Rate of Improvement Example -- Writing

Legal Cautionary Stuff...

- RTI is not a Prerequisite for Receiving Special Ed Services
- Art Cernosia, Esq., presented on Evaluation and Eligibility which highlighted relevant case law in the area. Of particular note was the *El Paso Indep. Sch. Distr. v. Richard R., 2008* decision. The court found that the district failed in its child find efforts under IDEA. The student had multiple indicators of failure on state assessments, poor marks in multiple subjects, and continued difficulty even with 504 accommodations. The court found that the school should have suspected the student had a disability. The court also found that that when the parent requested a special education evaluation, and the school claimed that local policy was not to do an evaluation at that time and instead consider other interventions prior to the evaluation, the IDEA over-rode district procedures.

Legal Cautionary Stuff... (contd)

- United States Supreme Court held that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) authorizes reimbursement for private special education services when a public school fails to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) and the private school placement is appropriate, regardless of whether the child previously received special education services through the public school.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_Grove_School_District_v._T._A

Is Comprehensive Evaluation Really Necessary?

- Supreme Court of the United States involving Forest Grove School District in Oregon (No. 08-305. Argued April 28, 2009 – Decided June 22, 2009)
- Respondent was evaluated by a school psychologist. After interviewing him, examining his school records, and administering cognitive ability tests, the psychologist concluded that respondent did not need further testing for any learning disabilities or other health impairment, including health impairment, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)."
- "The hearing examiner later found that the school district's evaluation was legally inadequate because it failed to address all areas of suspected disability, including ADHD."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_Grove_School_District_v._T._A

School Psy Professional Development

At District Level:

- CDA Collaboration every Monday
- Book Study (Cross-Battery book, etc.)
- Case examples

At the State Level:

- ISPA Conference
- Northern ISPA
- Peer Review SLD (3)
- School Psych Symposium (3)
