EVALUATING ENGLISH LEARNERS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

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OVERVIEW

- Pre-Referral
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Evaluations
- Communication Disorder
- Specific Learning Disability
- CLD Evaluations at LBL
  - Background Information (File Review, Observation, Parent Interview)
  - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
  - Communication Testing
  - Academic Testing
  - Cognitive Testing
  - Culture-Language Interpretive Matrix (C-LIM)
- Case Studies

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE EVALUATIONS

- LBL serves 12 school districts, providing special education evaluations.
- Our Center conducts Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Evaluations.
- Who is a CLD student?
  - Students who have a language other than English in their background. The student may be:
    - Born in or outside the U.S.
    - Raised in an environment where a language other than English is dominant

PRE-REFERRAL

- Referring ELs to special education can be tricky!

  - Sometimes a language difference can look like a disability, which can lead to over-referral.

  - Sometimes it is assumed that a student's difficulty is due to language acquisition and he or she is not referred soon enough.

Pre-Referral

- When an English Learner doesn't respond to Tier 2/ Yellow Zone/ Double Dose interventions
    1. Complete a comprehensive academic "file" review and gather background information
        - Academic review should be a team effort that includes the referring teacher and ELD teacher
        - Background information gathering should involve the parents
    2. Individualize the student's intervention
    3. Document the intervention and monitor progress
    4. Use data-based decision making to determine next steps

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PRE-REFERRAL AND ELs...

Child Find and English Learners 2014
State English Learners Alliance Conference

Beth Hoecker-Martinez, School Psychologist

Leah Hinkle, ELL Support Specialist- Greater Albany P.S.

Claudia Nuñez, Bilingual Speech Language Pathologist

http://www.cosa.k12.or.us/sites/default/files/materials/events/beth_hoecker-martinez1.pdf

http://www.cosa.k12.or.us/sites/default/files/materials/events/beth_hoecker-martinez2.pdf

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SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS

- Schools refer CLD students for an evaluation after the school team determines that other factors are not likely the primary cause of the student's academic difficulties. For example:
  - Attendance, limited English proficiency, vision/hearing difficulties, etc.
- Gathering information prior to the referral is essential, as standardized testing only shows us **part** of the picture!

THE BIGGER PICTURE

- We conduct comprehensive testing that supplements the pre-referral data and reported family information in the following areas:
  - Language proficiency
  - Communication
  - Academics
  - Cognitive
- This facilitates the process of discerning a difference from a disorder and helps to rule out contributing factors.

Common Referral Questions

- Referrals for CLD students can be for any disability category, but our most common evaluations are for:

  - Communication Disorder (CD)

  - Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

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COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

- An impairment in the ability to:
  - Receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal and graphic symbol systems.

- May result in a primary disability or it may be secondary to other disabilities.

- A regional, social, or cultural/ethnic variation of a symbol system should not be considered a disorder of speech or language.
  - Accents
  - English Learners
  - Deaf Community (ASL)

Types of Communication Disorders

- Speech Disorders
  - Articulation Disorder
  - Fluency Disorder
  - Voice Disorder

- Language Disorder
  - Syntax (grammar)
  - Morphology (word structure)
  - Semantics (using and understanding language)
  - Pragmatics (social language)

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD)

- Currently there are three models of SLD identification which are allowed in Oregon:
  - Discrepancy
    - Discrepancy (usually 1.5 standard deviations) between a child's full scale IQ score and standardized academic scores
  - Response to Intervention (RtI)
    - "The student does not make sufficient progress to meet age or Oregon grade-level standards based on the student's response to scientific, research-based intervention." *OAR 581-015-2170*
  - Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW)
    - "The student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, Oregon grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability." *OAR 581-015-2170*

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SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD)

- At LBL, we use the Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) eligibility criteria combined with information from the general education pre-referral process.
  - While we do not have control of the pre-referral process in our districts, we encourage a tiered system of delivery or RtI for all students
- By using multiple measures/points of evidence that are consistent with each other, we increase confidence in identifying SLD.

SLD Eligibility

- A PSW evaluation examines seven broad areas of cognitive ability that make up general intelligence, rather than overall IQ alone.

- PSW looks for a research-based link between the area(s) of academic underachievement and the area(s) of cognitive weakness.

Seven Broad Cognitive Abilities

Processing Speed	Mental quickness. Ability to fluently/automatically perform cognitive tasks, especially under pressure to maintain concentration.
Short-Term/Working Memory	Taking in and holding information on the mental "sketchpad", then using it within a few seconds.
Comprehension/ Knowledge	Breadth and depth of acquired knowledge. Primarily verbal, language-based knowledge.
Long-Term Memory & Retrieval	Storing and efficiently retrieving newly learned or previously learned information.
Fluid Reasoning	Solving novel problems by using reasoning abilities. Recognizing and understanding relationships and patterns.
Phonological Awareness/ Auditory Processing	Perceiving, analyzing, discriminating, and synthesizing sounds. Includes abilities known as phonemic/phonological processing.
Visual Processing	Perceiving, storing, manipulating, and thinking with visual patterns. Visual memory, discrimination, and visual-spatial abilities.

RELATIONS BETWEEN COGNITIVE ABILITIES AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Cognitive Ability	Reading Achievement	Math Achievement	Writing Achievement
Processing Speed	**STRONG**	**STRONG**	**STRONG**
Short-Term/Working Memory	**STRONG**	**STRONG**	**STRONG**
Comprehension/Knowledge	**STRONG**	**STRONG**	**STRONG**
Long-Term Memory and Retrieval	**STRONG**		*Moderate*
Fluid Reasoning	*Moderate*	**STRONG**	*Moderate*
Phonological/Auditory Processing	**STRONG**		*Moderate*
Visual Processing	*Moderate*	*Moderate*	

SLD Eligibility

1. Academic skill weakness
    - *Standard score <85 (1.0 standard deviation below mean)*
    - *Also consider progress monitoring data, if available*
2. Cognitive ability weakness
    - *Standard scores <85 related to academic weakness (Refer to chart)*
3. Relative strength in other cognitive ability
    - *Standard scores >85*

WHAT MODEL IS YOUR DISTRICT USING?

- Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses?

- Response to Intervention?

- Discrepancy?

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Our Interdisciplinary Team

- School Psychologist

- Bilingual Speech/Language Pathologist

- Learning Consultant (academic specialist)

- Interpreter/Translator

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OVERVIEW OF OUR EVALUATION PROCESS

At School

Review file(s), Observe student, Talk with teachers, Begin testing

At Our Center

Parent Interview, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency testing, Communication testing (if requested), Cognitive Testing, Academic testing

At School

Review information with school team and parent

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FILE REVIEW

- Common things we look for:
  - Past interventions and progress monitoring data
  - Attendance
  - Vision and hearing screenings
  - Report cards: past achievement and teacher comments
  - State testing results
  - ELPA and other language proficiency scores
  - Previous testing
  - Medical information

OBSERVATION

- Common things we look for:
  - Behaviors that might be impeding learning
  - Student's engagement
  - Strategies student might be using to avoid working or being noticed
  - Classroom ELD strategies
  - Student's participation in class-wide and individual checks for understanding
  - Student following class-wide instructions (from verbal directions or visual cues)

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Parent Interview

o Our team interviews parents with an interpreter.

o Common things we ask about:

- Parent concerns and reported student strengths
- Acculturation/family background
- Language background
- Birth and development
- Medical history
- Behavior

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Language Proficiency

- Language proficiency refers to a person's ability to use an acquired language for a variety of purposes, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- It can be affected by:
  - Language Development
  - Language Use
  - Acculturation
- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
  - Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) ≠ CALP
  - Traditionally, it is thought that CALP takes 5-7 years to develop.
  - However, newest research has stated that 7-10 years more accurate.

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COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTING

- Use existing information including ELPA, WMLS, and other classroom data
- Additional assessments may include:
  - Bilingual Verbal Abilities Test (BVAT)
    - Translations/adaptations available in 17 languages, plus English
    - Provides CALP in English only
    - Students are re-administered missed items in their L1 to calculate a gain score
  - Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Oral Language (WJ-IV OL)
    - Provides CALP for English and Spanish, and allows comparison between the two
    - CALP in each language is tested separately
  - Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)
    - Teachers rate students' CALP based on daily interactions
- Compare ELPA/other school data, BVAT/WJ-IV OL, and SOLOM

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COMMUNICATION TESTING

- Standardized Assessments
  - Receptive & Expressive
  - Speech/Articulation
  - Social Language Skills
- Non-standardized Assessments
  - Oral Language Sample
  - Dynamic Assessments
- Assessments in native language
  - CELF-4, TELD-3 Spanish, CPAC-S, WABC-Spanish, BVAT, Oral Language Sample – SALT Analysis, Bilingual E/R OWPVT

ACADEMIC TESTING

- Assess primary areas of academic development
  - Reading, Writing, and Math
    - Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement–Fourth Edition
    - Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement – Third Edition
- If students have received language instruction in their native language, testing is conducted if possible.
  - If Spanish: Bateria III Woodcock-Munoz NU: Pruebas de Aprovechamiento
  - Academic strengths and weaknesses are established in English and compared to performance in native language
- Compare and contrast performance and language demands of academic tasks while considering language proficiency, communication skills, and progress monitoring data

Cognitive Testing

- We base our practices on the ***Essentials of Cross-Battery Assessment, Third Edition*** by Dawn P. Flanagan, Samuel O. Ortiz, and Vincent C. Alfonso
  - Samuel Ortiz is awesome!
- ELs are not adequately represented in any normative sample.
- It would be almost impossible given the variety of different EL profiles.

So what do we do?

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Cognitive Testing Options

Evaluation Method	Normed on English Learners	Measures broad range of abilities	Does not require bilingual evaluator	Does not break standardization protocol	Research on how ELs Perform
Modified or altered assessment	No	YES	YES	No	No
Non-verbal assessment	No	No	YES	YES	No
Native-language assessment	No	YES	No	YES	No
English-language assessment	**No**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**

LBL COGNITIVE TESTING OVERVIEW

- We test in English first, covering all seven cognitive areas.
- We then use the Cultural-Language Interpretive Matrix* to analyze the data and determine if the student's knowledge of English and US culture affected the data to the point where the results are not valid.
  - If the scores follow the expected pattern and range for CLD students on the C-LIM, we stop here because the student's cognitive ability is reflective of a typical EL and there is likely no disability.
- Next, we re-test the student's cognitive weaknesses in the student's L1.
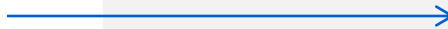 - We mostly do this in a non-standardized way.
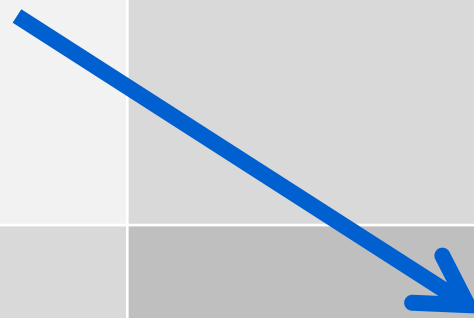
Based on the Essentials of Cross-Battery Assessment, Third Edition

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CULTURE-LANGUAGE INTERPRETIVE MATRIX*

- The C-LIM is used to determine if our cognitive assessments are a valid measure of a student's cognitive ability or if the scores are just measuring the student's language skills and knowledge of US culture.

  - Degree of cultural loading

  These subtests require more knowledge/ experience with U.S. culture

  - Degree of linguistic demand

  These subtests require more language skills

- Tests can be grouped according to their level of cultural loading and linguistic demand. Typically, scores of English Language Learners gradually decrease in value as the linguistic demand and cultural loading increase.

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CULTURE-LANGUAGE INTERPRETIVE MATRIX

Degree of Linguistic Demand			
Degree of Cultural Loading		**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
	Low	Least impacted by culture and language (expect highest scores)		Increased impact of Language
	Med			
	High	Increased impact of culture		Most impacted by culture and language (expect lowest scores)

Typically, scores of ELs decrease as the linguistic demand and cultural loading increase (from the top left to the bottom right).

Case Study A: Ana Background Information

- 4th grade girl
- Spanish is first language
  - Speaks Spanish with mother, English with older and younger siblings
- Mother disclosed mental health concerns related to verbal abuse at home
  - School referred to mental health services
- Receiving "double dose" of reading instruction since 2nd grade and is currently receiving additional reading support with System 44 and Read 180 in fourth grade.

DIBELS Next	1st Grade		2nd Grade			3rd Grade			4th Grade		
	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring
ORF	**9**	**11**	**13**	**25**	**30**	**23**	**34**	**51**	**33**	**49**	
Benchmark	*23*	*47*	*52*	*72*	*87*	*70*	*86*	*100*	*90*	*103*	*115*
Average weekly growth	**0.13 word/min**		**0.53 words/minute**			**0.88 words/minute**			**1 word/minute**		
Expected growth	*2-3 words/min*		*1.2-2.0 words/minute*			*1.0-1.5 words/minute*			*0.85-1.1 words/min*		

ANA:
ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- Test Behavior
  - Startled at loud sounds
  - Refused to state she didn't know an answer
  - Appeared nervous to ask questions in English or Spanish
- Observation during writing lesson
  - Looked at teacher when she was talking, but did not participate in class-wide checks for understanding
  - Task avoidance behaviors included looking in a dictionary, repeatedly erasing, sharpening a pencil
- Passed Vision Screening
- Passed Hearing Screening

ANA:
COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

- Still in process of second language acquisition; CALP within expected level
- Combined English and Spanish higher than English alone

Bilingual Verbal Abilities Test Cluster Scores	Standard Score *(Average Range is 85-115; Scores <85 are normative weaknesses)*	CALP Level
English Language Proficiency	76	3
Bilingual Verbal Ability	89	-

	English Proficiency Level	CALP Level
Measures		
2009 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Early Intermediate	2
2010 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Beginning	1
2011 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Early Intermediate	2
2012 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Intermediate	3
2013 English Language Proficiency (BVAT)	Intermediate	3
2013 English Broad Reading (WJ-III)	Intermediate	3
2013 English Broad Written Language (WJ-III)	Intermediate	3
2013 Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)	Early Advanced	4

ANA:
COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- Communication testing in Spanish revealed
  - Below average receptive language performance and average expressive language score
  - Only one subtest score below average
    - Recalling verbally presented information

CELF-4 Spanish Indexes	Standard Scores (85-115 = Average)	Percentile Rank	Normative Range
Core Language Score	83	13	Below Average
Receptive Language Index	80	9	Below Average
Expressive Language Index	87	19	Average

Ana:
Academic Assessment Results

- Below average scores with Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Math Concepts & Applications

Academic Subtest	Standard Scores (85-115 = Average)	Percentile Rank	Normative Range
Basic Reading Skills	91	27	Average
Reading Fluency	81	10	Below Average
Reading Comprehension	83	13	Below Average
Math Calculation	91	27	Average
Math Problem Solving	81	10	Below Average
Written Expression	95	37	Average

Cognitive Testing: Ana Culture-Language Interpretive Matrix

Degree of Cultural Loading	Degree of Linguistic Demand		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**
Low	Fluid Reasoning 111 Fluid Reasoning 90 Visual Processing 123 AVG = 108	Short-term Memory 90 Visual Processing 88 AVG = 89	
Med	Processing Speed 100 Long Term Memory 112 Visual Processing 87 AVG = 100	Long-term Memory 85 Long-term Memory 94 Short-term Memory 89 AVG = 89	
High			Comp/Knowledge 88 Comp/Knowledge 80 Comp/Knowledge 71 AVG = 80

BIGGER PICTURE: ANA

- Since there is a clear pattern, these cognitive scores are **not valid**
  - The cognitive scores become significantly lower as we move from top left to bottom right in the chart.
  - The cognitive assessment was primarily measuring her English language ability and knowledge of US Culture.
  - Since the student performed in the expected range for an EL on these tasks, it is unlikely that she has a disability.
- Making expected progress on progress monitoring since she has been receiving a different reading intervention.
- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency is in the expected range for a fourth grader.
- Communication testing does not indicate that she has a Communication Disorder.
- Information revealed during the parent interview led us and the school team to feel that mental health issues were the primary cause of her academic difficulties.

Referral B: Benicio Background Information

- 4th grade boy
- Spanish is first language
  - Speaks Spanish in the home (2 younger siblings)
  - Met developmental milestones and unremarkable medical history
- Previous interventions have included Read Naturally, small group instruction, and 1:1 support

Reading: DIBELS Next	4th Grade								
	Fall				**Winter**				**Spring**
Date	**Sept**	Oct	Nov	Dec	**Jan**	Feb	Mar	Apr	**May**
Oral Reading Fluency	**26**	35 32	44	30 39	**35** 42	42 34	37	40	34 **40**
Benchmark	*90*				*103*				*115*
Avg. growth per week	**0.4 words per week growth**								
Expected Growth	*0.85-1.1 words per week*								

Reading: DIBELS Next	4th Grade								
	Fall				**Winter**				**Spring**
Date	**Sept**	Oct	Nov	Dec	**Jan**	Feb	Mar	Apr	**May**
DAZE	**3**		4		**3**				**8**
Benchmark	*15*				*17*				*24*
Avg. growth per week	**0.2 gain per week**								
Expected Growth	*0.4-0.85 per week*								

BENICIO:
ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- Test Behavior:
  - Engaged in conversation
  - Attentive to directions
- Observation during math lesson
  - Attentive to teacher
  - Participated in class-wide checks for understanding
  - Followed class-wide directions
  - Participated in guided practice of new math concept on his own paper
- Passed Vision Screening
- Passed Hearing Screening

BENICIO:
COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

o Still in process of second language acquisition; CALP within expected level

	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	CALP Level	Proficiency Level
Oral Language - English	**91**	**27**	**3.5**	**Intermediate/ Early Advanced**
Picture Vocabulary	87	19	--	--
Oral Comprehension	100	50	--	--
Oral Language - Spanish	**68**	**2**	**3**	**Intermediate**
Picture Vocabulary	72	3	--	--
Oral Comprehension	69	2	--	--
Comparative Language Index	35/62			

	English Proficiency Level	CALP Level
Measures		
2010 IPT Oral	Beginning	1
2011 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Early Intermediate	2
2012 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Early Intermediate	2
2013 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Early Intermediate	2
2014 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Intermediate	3
2015 English Oral Language (WJ-IV OL)	Intermediate/ Early Advanced	3.5
2015 Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)	Intermediate/ Early Advanced	3.6

Benicio:
Communication Assessment Results

- Communication testing revealed limited vocabulary knowledge and ability to interpret verbally presented information
  - All other scores within the average range

CELF-4 English Indexes	Standard Scores (85-115 = Average)	Percentile Rank	Normative Range
Core Language Score	77	6	Below Average
Receptive Language Index	75	5	Below Average
Expressive Language Index	89	23	Average

BENICIO: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- Below average scores with Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Math Problem Solving

Academic Subtest	Standard Scores (85-115 = Average)	Percentile Rank	Normative Range
Basic Reading Skills	75	5	Below Average
Reading Fluency	75	5	Below Average
Reading Comprehension	72	3	Below Average
Math Calculation	89	23	Average
Math Problem Solving	72	3	Below Average
Written Expression	87	19	Average

Cognitive Testing: Benicio Culture-Language Interpretive Matrix

Degree of Linguistic Demand		
Low	**Medium**	**High**
Low Fluid Reasoning 74 Fluid Reasoning 74 Visual Processing 97 **AVG = 82**	Short-term Memory 94 Processing Speed 100 Processing Speed 100 **AVG = 98**	Short-term Memory 74 **AVG = 74**
Med Long-term Memory 85 Long Term Memory 97 Visual Processing 88 **AVG = 90**	Long-term Memory 87 Short-term Memory 74 **AVG = 81**	
High		Comp/Knowledge 87 Comp/Knowledge 100 **AVG = 94**

Degree of Cultural Loading

WHEN THERE IS NO PATTERN,
LOOK FOR COGNITIVE WEAKNESSES: BENICIO

Cognitive Abilities ------------------------------ Cognitive Subtests	Standard Score (*Average Range is 85-115; Scores <85 are normative weaknesses*)	Percentile Rank	Normative Range
Comprehension/Knowledge			
Picture Vocabulary (WJ-OL, English)	87	19	Average
Oral Comprehension (WJ-OL, English)	100	50	Average
Processing Speed			
Coding (WISC-IV)	100	50	Average
Cancellation (WISC-IV)	100	50	Average
Short-Term/Working Memory			
Recall of Digits-Forward (DAS-II)	72	3	Below Average
Recall of Sequential Order (DAS-II)	74	4	Below Average
Long-Term Memory & Retrieval			
Recall of Objects-Immediate (DAS-II)	85	16	Average
Recall of Objects-Delayed (DAS-II)	97	42	Average
Rapid Naming (DAS-II)	87	18	Average
Fluid Reasoning			
Matrices (DAS-II)	74	4	Below Average
Sequential & Quant. Reasoning (DAS-II)	74	4	Below Average
Visual Processing			
Pattern Construction (DAS-II)	97	42	Average
Recognition of Pictures (DAS-II)	88	21	Average
Phonological/Auditory Processing			
Phonological Processing	104	62	Average

Re-assess cognitive weaknesses in the student's native language: Benicio

Cognitive Abilities			
Cognitive Subtests	Standard Score (*Average Range is 85-115; Scores <85 are normative weaknesses*)	Percentile Rank	Normative Range
Short-Term/Working Memory			
Recall of Digits-Forward (DAS-II)	72	3	Below Average
Recall of Sequential Order (DAS-II)	74	4	Below Average
Number Recall (KABC-II), in Spanish	*	*	Below Average
Word Order (KABC-II), in Spanish	*	*	Below Average
Fluid Reasoning			
Matrices (DAS-II)	74	4	Below Average
Sequential & Quant. Reasoning (DAS-II)	74	4	Below Average
Pattern Reasoning (KABC-II), in Spanish	**	**	Below Average

BIGGER PICTURE: BENICIO

- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency is in the expected range for a fourth grader
- Communication testing does not indicate that he has a Communication Disorder
- Has academic weaknesses on standardized measures in Basic Reading Skills, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Math Problem Solving. This is consistent with the growth on reading progress monitoring measures
- C-LIM indicates that the cognitive scores are not primarily a reflection of his English Proficiency and knowledge of US Culture
- Cognitive scores indicate strengths in Processing Speed, Long-term Memory and Retrieval, and Visual Processing (Comprehension/ knowledge was in the expected range)
- Cognitive scores indicate weaknesses in Short-Term/Working Memory and Fluid Reasoning

QUESTIONS???

FEEDBACK?

We are always trying to improve and we would love your feedback!

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