Planning Assessments for Students who are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds with Visual Impairments
QUESTIONS

• What tests are available for use when assessing students who are visually impaired?

• What assessments can be used with students from CLDB who are visually impaired?

• How do we assess students who are CLDB –VI?
VIDEO TIME!!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3irqd73SPe4
VALIDITY

• Special education law requires the selection of tests that are “valid” for use with an individual student.

• Many people are confused about the concept of validity versus standardization sample.

• Some have rejected tests as being “invalid” simply because the standardization sample did not include individuals with visual impairments.

• The critical value in test selection is its ability to measure what it purports to measure - VALIDITY
VALIDITY

• There are tests that are valid for children with visual impairments.

• Professional and skilled administration of the test must be accompanied by knowledge of the visual impairment and interpreted within the context of the unique patterns of learning and the emotional and behavior issues associated with visual impairments is what makes tests valid.
ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

• In contrast to traditional methods of determining learning disabilities, no single academic test is available that will adequately assess academic skills of a student with a visual impairment who is from CLDB.

• Traditional assessment practices with students could be hard to implement by the presence of a visual impairment and when the child’s native language is not English.

• A multitude of information must be gathered from various sources in order to make decisions and recommendations for these students.
BIAS IN TESTING

• Bias in testing occurs because tests can be culturally loaded or contain “cultural content or culturally specific knowledge embedded in both the test items and in the testing method that may differentially influence the ability of individuals of diverse backgrounds to perform” (Warren, 2006, p. 106).

• Students who have not had sufficient exposure to the mainstream culture in the U.S., more often than not, do poorly on traditional standardized assessments.

• School psychologists are often left with having to supplement standardized data with informal assessments.
INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

• **Utilizing informal assessments is seen as an “...attempt at meaningful assessment of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds...[and as]...a movement toward authentic, performance-based assessment techniques such as portfolio assessment”** (Gargiulo, 2012, p. 109)

• **Evaluators need to “... attempt diagnostic...testing with criterion-reference measures to find out what a child can and cannot do...”** (Gaines, 2011, p. 316).

• **Evaluators should note the importance of informal data in establishing the functioning level of students with visual impairments.**
INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

• Informal data is doubly relevant when working with students with visual impairments who are from CLDB.

• Using informal assessment procedures along with criterion-reference including curriculum-based measures is especially important for this population of students as many times, in my experience, standardized assessments tell us more about what the student can’t do and not so much about what they can.

• Information from the normed assessments might not take into consideration possible variations in dialect that could result in false assumptions that language is used in a similar way within and across languages.
Before any Diagnostic assessments are conducted, a Functional Vision Evaluation (FVE) and Learning Media Assessment (LMA) by the Certified Teacher for the Visually Impaired must be completed. This will assure that the appropriate testing accommodations and modifications are made during the Diagnostic assessments.
COLLABORATION

• Classroom teacher interview as well as collaboration and consultation with the teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) with completing criterion-reference and curriculum based assessments is invaluable.

• This approach gives the evaluator and the assessment team a sense of what the student is doing in the classroom, which is something the team may not be able to document using standardized assessments alone.
ASSESSING THE STUDENT WHO IS CLDB

• Assessments are primarily comprised of observations and checklists that can be completed most efficiently and meaningfully by interviewing or gathering data from all the professionals who work with the student.

• Interviewing the parent/caregiver or family members in the home language will provide additional insight into the ability of the student that will assist in determining the present level of performance and areas of need to be addressed in the individual education plan.

• Translate or interpret assessment documents to the student’s native language.
**ASSESSING THE STUDENT WHO IS CLDB**

- Translation of prompts will provide a measure of receptive ability and allow the evaluator to measure the skill being performed.

- The evaluator must be aware that cognitive measures do not transfer from one language to another (NASDSE, 1997).

- Data collected through translation should be reported clinically, not through the use of standard scores or overall scores, but used for informational purposes only. (also make note of the dialect being spoken)
ASSESSING THE STUDENT WHO IS CLDB-VI

• Assessment professionals should have general knowledge of the developmental patterns of children who are blind or visually impaired and the language acquisition stages of those students who are from a diverse language background.

• Consultation with the student’s bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, in addition to the TVI, is critical for the evaluator to gain information on how the student’s diverse background or language may impact test performance.
ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

- *Criterion-Referenced*

- *Curriculum-Based*

- *Norm-Referenced Assessments/Inventories*

- *Let’s look at the handout.*
Start the assessment process early.
Review all school records and begin building a case.
Review the language testing information and determine if testing in both languages is appropriate.
Include the TVI and ESL or Bilingual Teacher
Include the parent(s).
Consider information from other team evaluators (members) including rehabilitation agencies.
Secure translators and interpreters if needed.
Take lots of time administering the assessments.
Break up the assessments into daily chunks.
Make them accessible by enlarging or minimizing the prompt booklet.
Use AT.
Bra illing the assessment may or may not help depending on the braille instruction the student received in their native language.
Use the verbal and auditory subtests in-lieu of the visual /performance subtests
XX was administered a selected set of subtest from the WJ-III Cog and Bateria-III Cog that were recommended in the manual for children with vision loss. The results should be viewed with caution and in light of XX’s cultural and linguistic differences. Although XX was born in the United States, his first language is Spanish; however, at this point in time it appears that he may perform better on tests administered in English since that has been his language of instruction for many years now. All the tests administered have a moderate to high degree of linguistic demand. In general, subtests with the higher degrees of linguistic and cultural demand should be viewed with more caution and may under represent the second-language learners specific processing skill. In addition, the subtests on the WJ-III Cog and Bateria-III Cog were not normed on students with visual impairments and subtests such as listening comprehension and verbal analogies have concepts usually gained through incidental learning. Since XX is a student who has been identified as having a visual impairment, his/her IQ scores are reported within a range of scores rather as an absolute single scores as recommended by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (1995)~{LOFTIN Assessment 2004 TSBVI, pg. 6. Results must be interpreted with caution because of the lack of inclusion of individuals with visual impairment within the standardization sample. Results, however, seem consistent with observations, previous results, and overall patterns of achievement.
BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT OF BILINGUAL STUDENTS

• American Educational Research Association (AERA)

• The Council on Testing Measurements (CTM)

• American Psychological Association (APA)
1. English tests are confounding for bilingual students, therefore, alternative forms of testing must be used.

2. Language background of the student must be taken into consideration for all phases of assessment.

3. Tests developed and administered without accounting for language differences have limited validity.

4. Cognitive measures do not translate from one language to another.

5. Ability to speak English in a naturalistic situation may not predict ability to learn academic material in English.

6. Testing non-native speakers will take more time and observation.

7. Special training for bilingual communication in testing is both profitable and beneficial.
NASDSE GUIDELINES

1. Educators should assess students with visual impairments as individuals and should assess compensatory skills and educational achievements including other areas that are unique to visual impairment.

2. Evaluators of students with visual impairments must be knowledgeable about the effects of a visual impairment on learning and should collaborate with individuals, in particular the TVI, who are proficient in the student’s reading and writing medium, as well as assure that appropriate and meaningful testing has occurred so as to report the results in a meaningful and useful way.

3. The progress of students with visual impairments should be carefully monitored through a system that acknowledges the unique nature of the visual impairment.
4. Educators should recognize the need for ongoing assessment of the progress of students with visual impairments with consideration given to the interaction of functional vision, additional disabilities, environmental factors, learning strategies, unique skill needs and academic skill attainment.

5. The learning and literacy media assessment of students with visual impairment should be conducted prior to program planning.

6. Evaluations of infants, children, and adolescents should be completed through a partnership of parents and professionals and should provide parents and professionals with the information they need to make appropriate decisions for the student.
Two Questions that guided Dissertation Study:
Psycho-educational Assessments of Students who are Bilingual with Visual Impairments: An Exploratory Study

1. Are educational diagnosticians aware of guidelines and resources available to assist with psycho-educational assessments of students who are CLD-VI?
2. Are educational diagnosticians testing this population of students and how?
The results of the study indicated (n=65):

• 88.7% of educational diagnosticians surveyed reported that they have not had a course to prepare them to assess students who are bilingual with multiple impairments, one of which is a visual impairment.

• 86.1% of the participants had not received training via in-service or workshop training.

• 72.3% of participants reported that they have not assessed a student who is bilingual with visual impairments.

• A majority of the participants (80.7%) indicated that they employ the use of a trained bilingual ancillary examiner to assist with the assessment of students who are bilingual with visual impairments.
CONCLUSION

• If evaluations are being conducted by educational diagnosticians who reportedly have not received training, via university (88.7%) or personnel preparation (86.1%), in the unique complexities of assessments of students who are bilingual with visual impairments and are therefore assisting in developing educational plans and programming, access to FAPE is questionable.

• 72.3% of participants reported that they have not assessed a student who is bilingual with visual impairments. Yet these students represent a significant population (All Blind Children, n.d.; Payan & Nettles, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2008) in need of receiving a psychoeducational assessment.

• Based on the limited data from this study, it appears that educational diagnosticians may be opting not to assess this unique group of students at all (Ochoa, Gonzalez, Galarza, & Guillemand, 1996).
IMPORTANT TO NOTE…

• “Most evaluators are not trained or experienced in evaluating individuals who are blind and visually impaired…[who are also from culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds]…These evaluators must incorporate the expertise and experience of visual impairment professionals…[bilingual teachers and bilingual school psychologists]… and collaborate with them throughout the evaluation process, from preparation through report writing.” – Goodman, Evans, and Loftin (2011) [with additional comments by Landa-Vialard]
Combining all of these guidelines (AERA, CTM, APA, NASDSE) when assessing students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CLDB) is critical in planning appropriate assessments that lead to making the evaluation not only accessible, in language and learning medium, but also meaningful; so as to inform decisions regarding appropriate programming and placement for students who are CLD-VI.
WEBSITE
INSTRUCTIONAL REFERENCE

wwwvisionsofassessment.com
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Thank you!!!
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REFERENCES CONTINUED


