Overview of School Age Language Assessment Measures (SLAM and Pre-SLAM) and Analysis

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Disclosures

► Financial disclosures:

    ► Hannah Davis is a paid employee of Chesterfield County Public Schools. Hannah received a discounted rate to attend SHAV as a speaker.

    ► Judy Kaseloo is a paid employee of Colonial Heights Public Schools. Judy received a discounted rate to attend SHAV as a speaker.

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Objectives

1. Describe various levels of SLAM cards and their intended use

2. Complete guidelines for analysis to assess narrative skills

3. Apply these evaluation procedures in accordance with the ASHA Code of Ethics

Let's get started…

► How many of you have used SLAM materials in the past?

► How many of you used them with non-native English speakers?

► Did you know they are available online, to print, and on Boom Learning?

What do you think we can target here?

Illustrated by: Tina Yeung, for leadersproject.org, SLAM, Crowley & Sundar.
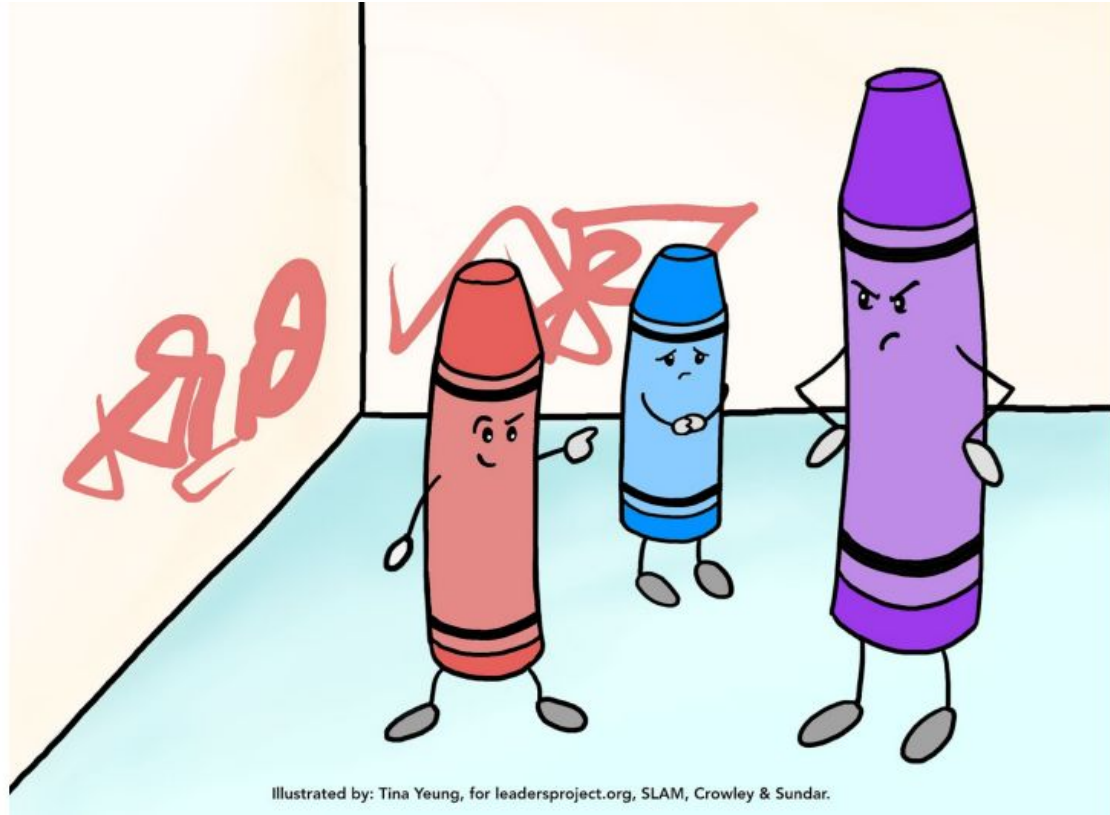
Betz, S., Eickhoff, J., & Sullivan, S. (2013). Factors Influencing the Selection of Standardized Tests for the Diagnosis of Specific Language Impairment. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 44*, 133-146.

► Most SLPs used omnibus language tests (CELF, PLS, CELF-P, etc.) and single word vocabulary tests (PPVT, EOWPVT, ROWPVT, etc.).

► When asked why the SLPs selected a certain test, publication date was the *only* test characteristic that correlated with frequency of test use.

Figure 1. Norm-referenced tests that are most frequently selected as first-choice language tests. Full test names are listed in the Appendix.
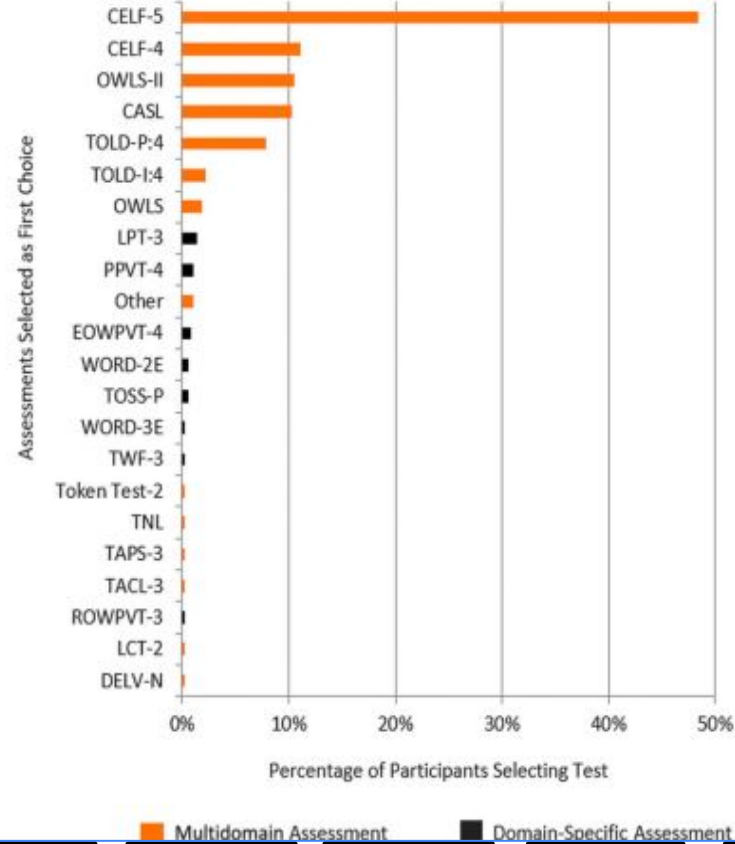
Ogiela, D. & Montzkaa, J. (2021) Norm-Referenced Language Test Selection Practices for Elementary School Children With Suspected Developmental Language Disorder. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools,52,* 288-303.

BUT. . .

Do these tests compare the student's performance with others with substantially similar linguistic, cultural, race/ethnic and socio-economic background?

NO!

So…

How should we pick a test appropriate for our students and the deficits we are targeting?

Code of Ethics

Professional Competence:
   - Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) must possess and maintain the necessary knowledge and skills to competently conduct assessments.
   - They should use current and appropriate assessment instruments and techniques.

Client Welfare:
   - The well-being of the student is of paramount importance.
   - Assessments should be conducted with sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity, and efforts should be made to ensure equitable services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**IDEA**) says assessment and evaluation materials used to measure skills for services need to be valid and reliable.

The Law and Cultural Responsiveness

Federal law (IDEA 20024)

All students are entitled to an assessment with evaluation materials that are selected and administered **so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis.**

(20 U.S.C. § 1414(b)(3))

Critical questions

1. What exposure has your child had to different languages and dialects?
2. What is the highest educational level achieved by the mother or primary caregiver?
3. Have there been any significant changes in the family structure recently?
4. Is there a family history of speech, language, and/or academic problems?
5. How do their speech/language skills compare to their siblings or same age peers?

Critical questions

6. Was the child's performance during the evaluation representative of how they usually act?

7. Is your child clumsy?

8. Ask caregiver to bring 10 examples of student's best communications and where it breaks down from scheduling the evaluation and seeing the client.

9. What does your child do that makes you know they are smart?

Pre-School Language Assessment Measures (Pre-SLAM)

These sets of language elicitation cards were designed as a tool to be used in assessing language for preschool-aged children.
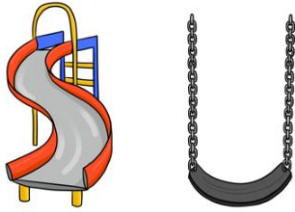
Similarity of Function
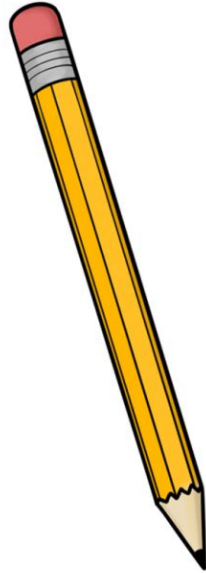

Making Meaningful Predictions

Pre-SLAM (Pre-School Language Assessment Measures) – Similarity of Function

This task assesses whether the child can learn how to infer Similarity of Function using illustrations of two objects.
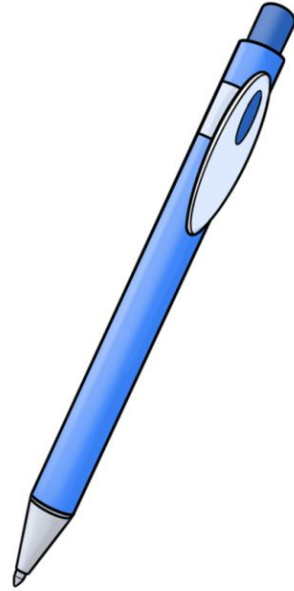
There is a dynamic assessment component to this that is described in the instructions.

Each set is offered in English and Spanish

Pencil

Pen

Instructions:

T1. Trial. **Fork + spoon** (trial, with clinician's "think aloud". Let me think. How are a fork and a spoon used in the same way? Well, a fork kind of stabs food and a spoon scoops food so they are different that way. But we use them both to help us eat, to get food in our mouths, to eat so we don't have to eat with our hands. So a fork and a spoon are used the same way because we use them to eat or we use them to get food in our mouths.")

T2. Trial **Paintbrush + crayon** (" Now it's your turn. How are a paintbrush (*point to it*) and a crayon (*point to it*) used in the same way?" If the child/student doesn't respond correctly or gives an incorrect response, say, "Yes. Let's think a little more about this. Maybe there's more to it. We use a paintbrush and a crayon to make paintings and to color those paintings. A similar "think aloud". Can you tell me how we use a paintbrush the crayon for the same thing, or in the same way?")

Continue with images 1-10 (the last two can be used if needed). **"What do we use them for?"** (Give support when needed and note whether the amount of support the child/preschooler needs reduces as they learn what is expected of them. Remember for children with a language disorder, we may need to give them more support in understanding what they are supposed to do. Note that, of course. But we also want to give them enough instruction so they can understand what the task is. That way, we can see if they can make those inferences on the two items' similarity of function.)

Similarity of Function
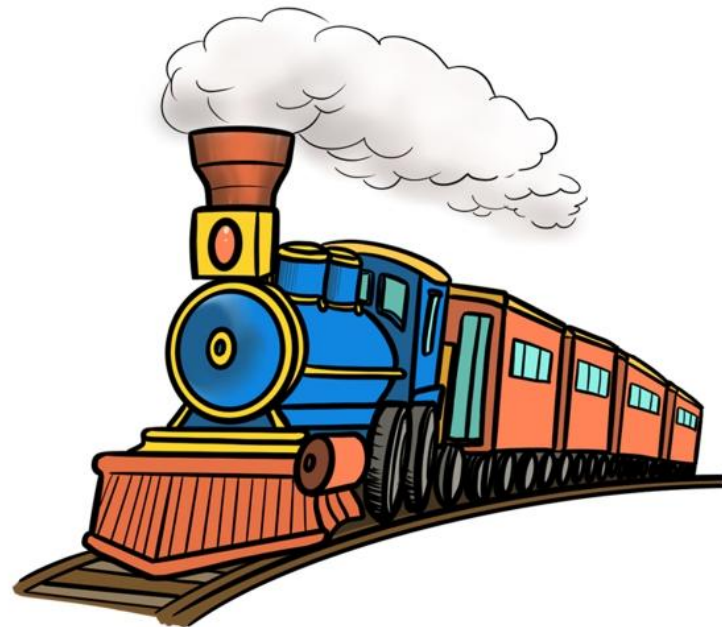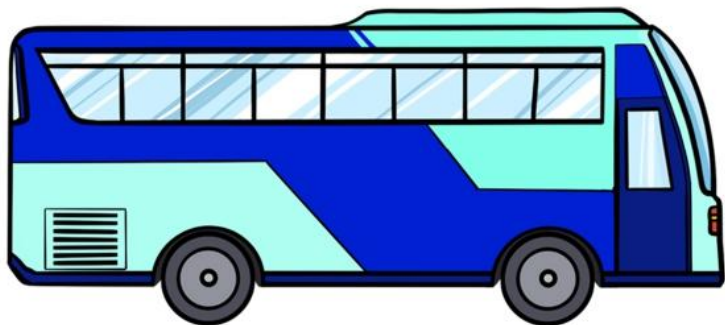
Similarity of Function

Poncho

Umbrella

Pre-SLAM (Pre-School Language Assessment Measures) – Making Meaningful Predictions

This task assesses whether the child makes meaningful predictions by looking at a single illustration of a situation.

There is a dynamic assessment component to this that is described in the instructions.

Each picture is offered in English and Spanish

Bike Pre-SLAM Making Meaningful Predictions - Dynamic Assessment Instructions

Bike no. 2: Clinician: **"Let's look at this one. There's a lot going on in this picture! What do you see?"** *Clinician shows child riding a bike looking at a passing butterfly. Clinician allows the child to reflect on what they see.*
Clinician: **"Look at this boy. What do you think will happen now?"**
If response is correct, clinician says: "**That's right! If the boy doesn't look where he is riding his bike, he will run into the tree and may get hurt (Or whatever reasonable meaningful prediction child said). That's what would happen."** Proceed to image 3.
If response is incorrect, clinician says, **"Hmmm…Let's look again"** and proceeds to Prompt 1.

Prompt 1:
Clinician shows child the same illustration and says, **"Look at the boy riding his bike. Do you see that he's looking at a butterfly and not watching where he's riding."** (*Points to the boy riding the bike and looking at the butterfly*) **"What will happen to him if he doesn't look forward and see the tree?"**
If response is correct: **"That's right! If the boy doesn't look where he is riding his bike, he will run into the tree and fall off his bike. He might even hurt himself!"** (Or whatever reasonable meaningful prediction child said) **"That's what would happen."** Proceed to image 3.
If response is incorrect, clinician says, **"Let's look again more closely"** and proceeds to Prompt 2.

Prompt 2:
Clinician shows child the same illustration but this time draws the child's attention to the boy looking at the butterfly and not looking at the tree that is in front of the bike. Clinician says *and points*, **"Look at the boy and where he is looking, at the butterfly, and he is not looking where he is going…"** Clinician says: **"What will happen to him if he doesn't look where he is going? Look at the tree. Look how close it is to the bike and he is not paying attention to it."**

If response is correct: **"That's right! If the boy doesn't look where he is riding his bike, he will run into the tree and fall off his bike. He might even hurt himself!"** (Or whatever reasonable meaningful prediction child said) **"That's what would happen."** Proceed to image 3.

If the child's response is incorrect, clinician models the correct response: **"If the boy doesn't look where he is riding his bike, he will run into the tree, fall off his bike, and may even get hurt. That's what would happen."**
- If the child does not respond correctly after prompt 2, do some reviewing and provide more prompts.
- Note what prompts they need to make inferences of meaningful predictions.

Meaningful predictions: What do you think will happen next?

Meaningful predictions: What do you think will happen next?

Language Sample

Elicitation and Analysis

What's the problem with a narrative macro-analysis to identify a disorder?

•Discourse-level analysis that describe the narrative as a whole, can vary across cultures and languages.
(Bliss, Covington, & McCabe, 1999).

•Researchers advise using **other methods** to assess narrative skills for children/students from backgrounds other than mainstream American middle-class school-oriented cultures (Champion, 1997; Crago et al, 1997; Fiestas & Peña, 2004).

The School-age Language Assessment Measures (SLAM) are evidence-based but not standardized.

- They have been administered to a number of students and using the Guidelines for Analysis that scores the responses to each question (0 incorrect response after prompts), 1 (partial response), or 2 (reasonable response) and from there the Scoring Parameters that give a general summary of whether the student's performance seems likely typical, needs further probing, or likely needs support.

The School-age Language Assessment Measures
(SLAM) are evidence-based but not standardized.

- Analysis of the student's language skills requires some basic language knowledge including sentence structure and thinking about the content of language. The content part of the SLAM were build from the Burns, et. al., 2012 dialect neutral indices of narrative development and language.

The School-age Language Assessment Measures (SLAM) are evidence-based but not standardized.

- Clinical judgment is needed in any language evaluation to increase the validity and reliability. In the case of the SLAM materials, clinical judgment developed by giving the SLAM to at least students from similar backgrounds to the student being evaluated. Those students would be ones where the teacher and parent have no concerns about language skills compared to peers.

The School-age Language Assessment Measures (SLAM)
are evidence-based but not standardized.

- The SLAM materials have been used with children from many cultures and linguistic backgrounds and modified to ensure that the content familiarity is not restricted to those from a particular culture.

Too often use narrative structure in schools to identify a disorder

- They don't have a disorder just because they have not acquired a particular way of telling stories
- Sentence complexity
- Noun clause- I wondered IT, pieces can combine into a noun
- How to elicit with what research says
  - Casual conversation
  - Expository and persuasive language

Scoring Guidelines for Analysis of SLAM Responses
School-age Language Assessment Measures
Dr. Cate Crowley

For one part of the convergence of the evidence in identifying a language disorder is using the SLAM materials. Here is the quantification that we are currently using.

SLAM Material	Likely typical	Needs further probing	Probably needs support (assumes student was engaged and focused)
Bunny Goes to School 4 thru early elementary	14-18	10-13	Below 10
Dog Comes Home 4 thru early elementary	13-16	9-12	Below 9
The Subway or **The Elevator** 3 thru high school	6-8	4-5	Below 4
The Crayons Kindergarten thru high school	7-10	5-6	Below 5
Lost Cellphone Late elementary thru high school	14-18	10-13	Below 10
Baseball Troubles Late elementary thru high school	14-18	10-13	Below 10
The Ball Mystery Early elementary thru high school	13-16	9-12	Below 9

Guidelines for Analysis

SLAM Guidelines for Analysis

Lost Cellphone - School-age Language & Assessment Measures (SLAM) (Crowley & Baigorri)
SLAM Guidelines For Analysis
Junior High – High School Language Elicitation Task

Often typically developing (TD) kids need prompts to answer some questions, so don't be afraid to give prompts. BUT do not give the answers, you might need to point to different pictures ("but what about this?", "does that make sense?") Develop your clinical judgment by doing this with at least 10 TD students of the same age you are evaluating.

|	
Point Scoring: 0 (incorrect even w/ many prompts), **1** (doesn't answer fully), **2** (provides reasonable response)	
Can you put these in order? (Most students need some prompts. Let student move the cards.).	**2** Points
Tell me the story of what happened. Narrative and clausal density. (Looking for understanding of the story, including the boy getting distracted and leaving his phone, remembering, and going back for it. Write one great sentence or overall macroanalysis)	**2** Points
How did the boy lose his cellphone? Listening comprehension. (Describing that he lost his cellphone when he got distracted by the girl, and left it on the counter. Complex or compound sentence opportunity with possible adverbial/prepositional clauses.)	**2** Points
Why did he leave his cellphone? Theory of mind, perspective taking, inferencing. Elicits complex syntax by use of "because…"	**2** Points
What made him remember he forgot his cellphone? Inferencing. (Show picture of girl using hers.) Looking for something about the girl using her phone.	

Let's see it in action
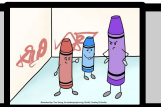
Meet Henry
4th grade student
Age: 9 years old
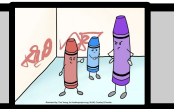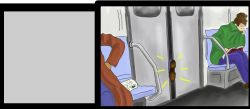Spanish is his first and home language
Has received services since pre-school
Current identification: Undergoing re-evaluation with previous disability codes of Specific Learning Disability and Speech or Language Impairment

Baseball
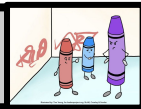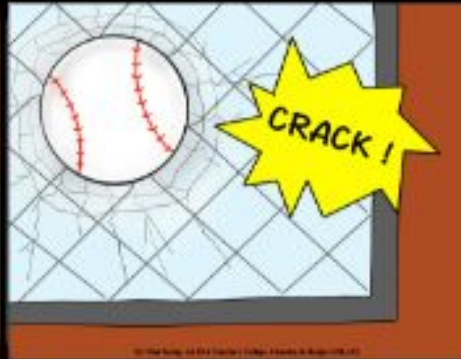
How would we rate Henry?

To summarize…

A. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Code of Ethics outlines principles and rules that professionals in the field should adhere to when working with clients, including testing students.

B. Assessments should include dynamic assessments and be appropriate for your individual student and cultural considerations

C. Use the critical questions when planning and assessing

D. SLAM cards can be used for a variety of purposes with a variety of ages and are sensitive to different languages and cultures

Thank you!

Questions?

QR codes

SLAM links

Leaders Project website

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