**Written Expression (WE)**

**Development of Working Hypothesis**

Guiding Statement:

Written language disabilities co-occur with reading disabilities about 75% of the time (Katusic et. al, 2009) but they may exist separately. Current research tends to group written language disorders into three brain-based categories. The first two categories are dysgraphia (poor handwriting related to impaired orthographic memory and processing) and dyslexia (see Basic Reading Skills) (Mather & Wendling, 2011). Dysgraphia and dyslexia can be caused by deficits in phonological, orthographic, or morphological memory. Both conditions affect basic writing skills (i.e., spelling and editing). They may also affect writing speed. The third category of written language disorders is Oral and Written Language Disorder (OWL-LD) (Berninger, 2011). Students with OWL LD are sometimes made eligible for special education services under the category of Communication Disordered (CD) because their disability may affect the primary areas of language: semantics, syntax, and morphology. OWL LD students may also have difficulty with basic writing skills. Teams should be aware that other disabilities in executive functions (e.g., ADHD, ASD) might also impair students’ written expression achievement. Current federal guidelines require teams to examine only written expression as an eligibility category. However, teams are encouraged to be mindful of the components of brain-based written language categories because of their relevance to academic intervention. The basic psychological processes of written expression are language, working memory, fluid reasoning, processing speed, sensory motor, attention, and executive functions. Students with primarily dysgraphia/dyslexia indicators would benefit from explicit handwriting and spelling instruction. Phonics based instruction should be used to address phonetically inaccurate spelling errors and morphological strategies should be used to address spelling errors that are phonetically accurate. Students with an OWL SLD subtype would benefit from language based instructional strategies including semantic, morphological and syntactic awareness instruction.

Purpose:

This document is designed to be used in conjunction with the SIT process to summarize and analyze a student’s data across all tiers of support, to formulate a hypothesis of the nature of the difficulty, and assist teams with determining if a disability is suspected.

**Written Expression (WE): Check box to the right if description applies.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hypothesized Indicator Descriptions; Dysgraphia, Dyslexia** |  |
| Poor visual format (spacing, paragraphs, indentation, margins, etc.) |  |
| Poor spelling (phonological, additional syllables, etc.) spells words how they sound rather than as they should look (srkoll for circle). |  |
| Limited use of punctuation, incorrect punctuation |  |
| Incorrect or missing capitalizations |  |
| Poor decoding/reading skills |  |
| Poor letter formation |  |
| Consistently confuses similarly shaped letters (b/d, p/g, p/q, n/u, m/w) or order of letters (from vs. form) |  |
| **Hypothesized Indicator Descriptions; OWL LD** |  |
| Poor narrative (consistent style, point of view, etc.) |  |
| Demonstrates poor grammatical structure (verb tense, subject verb agreement, etc.) |  |
| Uses poor semantics (words with wrong meaning) |  |
| Does not correct mistakes (revising for content, mechanics, etc.) |  |
| Problems with vocabulary (age appropriate words, descriptive, imaginative) |  |
| Poor descriptive quality |  |
| Poor organization |  |
| **General** |  |
| Family history of learning disability |  |

Primarily handwriting and spelling (dysgraphia, dyslexia)

Primarily written expression (OWL LD)

Combination of both types

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Relative to Intellectual development** | **Check if Description Applies:** | **Psychological Processing Area** |
| Difficulty finding the right word to say or slow, labored, or limited amount of speech. Difficulty comprehending language and learning vocabulary. |  | Language |
| Frequently asks for directions to be repeated or gets lost in the middle of a problem or assignment. Tendency to lose track when working on sequential activities. Difficulty with multi-tasking. |  | Working Memory |
| Difficulty with conceptual thinking, understanding how ideas are interrelated and forming conclusions |  | Fluid Reasoning |
| Takes longer to compete tasks than others the same age |  | Processing Speed |
| Difficulty figuring out what is needed for a task, getting started, or sticking to a plan of action,  does not anticipate the time or sequence necessary for task completion. Mind appears to go blank, gets overwhelmed with difficult tasks, or can’t pay attention for long, unusual or erratic patterns of error , easily distracted from relatively mundane tasks, inattentiveness to errors, problems when focusing on more than one thing at a time |  | Attention and Executive Functions |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Instructional Intervention Implemented (Reading interventions that correspond to the proposed area of weakness should be implemented (e.g. phonological, orthographic).** | | **Dates of Intervention**  **Frequency/Duration** | **Is *progress* being**  **made when compared to**  **peers (for CLD students compare progress to CLD peers)?** |
| **Tier I** | Effective core instruction (e.g. 80% of students making sufficient gains) | 90 minutes (K-3) 60 minutes (4-12) of instruction in the essential components of reading | Yes No |
| **Tier II** | Written Expression targeted intervention | 30 additional minutes of targeted instruction daily | Yes  No |
| **Tier III** | Written Expression intensive intervention | 30 additional minutes (K-3) 90 minutes (4-12) of intensive intervention | Yes No |

**Progress Monitoring Data:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PERFORMANCE relative to Grade**  **Empirically-derived Criterion Assessments** | **Criteria for Academic Weakness** | **Administered** | **Data Indicates an Academic Weakness** |
| Repeated Written Expression CBM Probes | 4 data probes ≤ 16th %ile | 1x every 2-4 weeks | Yes No |

**State Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACHIEVEMENT relative to STATE STANDARDS Curriculum/Grade Leveled Assessments** | **Criteria for Academic Weakness** | **Administered** | **Data Indicates an Academic Weakness** |
| Oregon State Assessment – Writing | Not Met (current year)  ≤16th %ile previous years |  | Yes No |

**Report Cards/Classroom Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PERFORMANCE relative to STATE STANDARDS Curriculum/Grade Leveled Assessments** | **Criteria for Academic Weakness** | **Administered** | **Data Indicates an Academic Weakness** |
| State Writing Work Sample Rubric | Score of 3 (or 2 for 3rd grade) or below in the majority of areas |  | Yes No |
| Standards-based report card – Writing | Not yet, D, F |  | Yes No |
| Graded Writing Samples from Curriculum | Not passing or <60% |  | Yes No |