## Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice & Professional Judgment

In 2004, ASHA's Executive Board convened a coordinating committee on evidence-based practice. This committee, charged with assessing the issue of evidence-based practice relative to planning needs and development opportunities for ASHA, shared the following goal:

EBP is the integration of: (a) clinical expertise/expert opinion, (b) external scientific evidence, and (c) client/patient/caregiver values to provide high-quality services reflecting the interests, values, needs, and choices of the individuals we serve. Conceptually, the trilateral principles forming the bases for EBP can be represented through a simple figure:
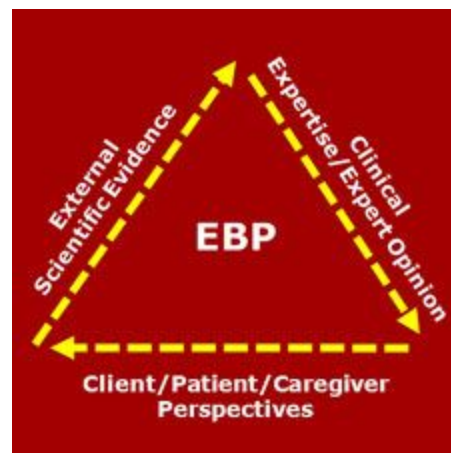


Because EBP is client/patient/family centered, a clinician's task is to interpret best current evidence from systematic research in relation to an individual client/patient, including that individual's preferences, environment, culture, and values regarding health and well-being. Ultimately, the goal of EBP is providing optimal clinical service to that client/patient on an individual basis. Because EBP is a continuing process, it is a dynamic integration of ever-evolving clinical expertise and external evidence in day-to-day practice.

(For additional information, see the ASHA LINK.)

*"As leaders, we should be setting examples of good judgment. As clinician/scientists, we should be defining and developing the discipline of good judgment. As teachers, we should expect our students to exercise good judgment."*

Montgomery, Erwin B., and Lyn S. Turkstra. "Judgment in Evidence-Based Practice." *Perspectives on Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders (Dysphagia)*, vol. 15, no. 4, 2006, p. 11., doi:10.1044/sasd15.4.11.

**NSSEO SLP Criteria - Ratings Scales**

***Professional Judgment/Observation*** based upon, but not exclusive to, medical status, socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic backgrounds, and functional performance. *A score is determined and plotted on the middle row on the related Rating Scale.*

A ***variety of sources*** must be considered to determine professional judgment, which include but are not limited to the list below:

- Review of records (consider the student's history of concerns/services, attendance, and learning curve)
- Functional Observation related to Team Input forms (consider a variety of contexts)
- Classroom Work Samples (consider the connection between language & learning)
- Dynamic Assessment (consider identification of skills and learning potential)
- Student Input (consider the student's perspective of their strengths & weaknesses)

## *Supplemental Information:*

Questions to Guide the **Functional Observation**:

What are the expectations for that lesson?
What are the educators doing?
What are the peers doing?
What is the target student doing?

**Dynamic Assessment**:

*Two Major Outcomes*

- Help distinguish between a language difference and language disorder, especially for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
  - Children who are able to make significant changes in short term teaching sessions likely have a language difference.
  - Children who are unable to make these changes likely have a language impairment.

- Results can have direct implications for intervention by examining the child's response to a mediated learning experience

A key to mediated learning experiences (MLE) is that the examiner deliberately teaches, watches how the child responds to instruction, and adjusts teaching accordingly. In this framework, it is the adult's responsibility to do whatever it takes for the child to learn new strategies that will help them continue learning. The ultimate goal of MLE is for children to become learners who are self-directed and independent.

*Basic Framework*

- Pretest
    - Assess child's current performance
- Teach
    - Using a mediated learning experience (MLE)
    - Help the child develop strategies
    - Observe the child's modifiability
- Post Test
    - Compare performance to pretest
    - Assess transfer of strategies

**Modifiability**

**Child Responsivity**

- How well does the child respond to the MLE?
- Does the child attend to the task, and maintain attention?
- Does the child demonstrate efficient learning strategies?
- Does child use skills such as looking, comparing, and verbalizing?

**Transfer**

- How well does child apply the target skills from one item to the next?
- From one task to the next?
- Does child apply learned strategies soon after learning them?

**Examiner Effort**

- How much support does the child need?
- What is the nature of the support required?

(For additional information and embedded training videos on Dynamic Assessment, see the ASHA LINK)

**Questions to Obtain Student Input:**

Older Student Probing Questions:

What is your favorite subject/activity? Why?
What is your least favorite subject/activity? Why?
What do you do when it is hard?
What helps you when it is hard?

Younger Student Probing Questions:

What do/don't you like to do at school?
What is easy/hard at school?  Expose/Probe students to question of Why?
If needed, provide choices of activities with possible responses for
'Easy/OK/Hard'.