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Conducting Culturally Responsive, Strengths-Based Assessment in Schools

Eileen Cullen

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Abstract

Special education assessment has a significant impact on the lives of children with disabilities and their families. However, traditional assessment practices have been critiqued as being deficit-based, overly focused on “labeling” students, and failing to provide a holistic understanding of the student. Assessment models such as strengths-based assessment (SBA) and culturally responsive assessment (CRA), have potential to addresses these critiques and be more appropriate for the growingly diverse school population. Despite this, these models of assessment are under studied and there is a lack of clear guidance for how practitioners should implement them.

In these manuscripts, CRA and SBA are understood and studied in tandem as CR/SBA due to their significant overlap, similar challenges, and alignment with the National Association of School Psychology’s (NASP) practice model. In the first manuscript, the Partnerships as the Path to Implementing Culturally Responsive, Strengths-based Assessment (PATP-CRSBA) implementation guide is presented. The guide is intentionally created to be used in the team-based context of special education evaluation and aligns with the model of school psychological practice that is presented by the National Association of School Psychology (NASP, 2020). A school psychologist (or special education team) can use the PATP-CRSBA to identify ways they can foster family, school, community partnerships (FSCP) to conduct CR/SBA.

The second manuscript presents a multiple-case study exploring the perspectives of practicing school psychologists who conduct CR/SBA. Each case presents how participant’s conceptualizes and uses CR/SBA in the context of their “real life” practice. Cross-case analysis reveals several themes including finding that CR/SBA is difficult to define and under development; defining features of CR/SBA; CR/SBA practices; barriers, facilitators, and the context of practice; and how CR/SBA is conducted. An initial diagram is presented that illustrates the process school psychologists use to conduct CR/SBA.

The contributions of these manuscripts suggest that CR/SBA should be further developed with a focus on refining a model that addresses the critiques of traditional assessment models and can realistically be implemented in practice. Recommendations moving forward include adjustments to training, applying findings to FSCP, studying how training informs assessment, studying assessment in the context of special education teams.

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Eileen Cullen

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Special education assessment has a significant impact on the lives of children with disabilities and their families. However, traditional assessment practices have been critiqued as being deficit-based, overly focused on "labeling" students, and failing to provide a holistic understanding of the student. Assessment models such as strengths-based assessment (SBA) and culturally responsive assessment (CRA), have potential to addresses these critiques and be more appropriate for the growingly diverse school population. Despite this, these models of assessment are under studied and there is a lack of clear guidance for how practitioners should implement them.

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Opening Commentary

School psychology is a field that, in some ways, continues to be defined by its historical enmeshment with deficit-based assessments used to "sort" students who were deemed able or unable to benefit from educational assessment. The roles and training of school psychologists have expanded beyond assessment to include consultation, intervention, and systems-level services. Still, assessment continues to make up the majority of school psychological practice (Goforth et al., 2021). Although the National Association of School Psychology (NASP) postulates a strengths-based, social justice-oriented perspective that respects and values diversity, deficit-based assessment practices continue to proliferate practice and overlook opportunities to apply the expanded skill set of school psychologists to assessment.

Assessment practices, as a part of the special education process, are of keen interest as special education assessments have significant implications for the students and families who are a part of them. Further, trends demonstrate disproportionate representation of certain groups of students, particularly an overrepresentation of Black students, in special education identification, placement, and discipline (Sullivan & Ball, 2013; Sullivan, 2017; Power et al., 2004). Additionally, families and teachers report assessment results as unhelpful and focused on what students cannot do. Moreover, families, who are legislative outlined as integral team members in the special education

process, report feeling disenfranchised by the process. This disenfranchisement is felt even more so by families belonging to historically marginalized and minoritized groups (Lo, 2008; Fish, 2006; Fish, 2008). These shortcomings of special education assessment practices have resulted in the proposition of numerous novel models of assessment. Two of which in particular aim to counter the deficit-based nature of traditional assessment: strengths-based assessment (SBA; Jimerson et al., 2004; Lopez & Snyder, 2003) and culturally responsive assessment (CmarRA; Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014).

These models have significant overlap, and although they are promising, they are not without their limitations, many of which illustrate why these models may be difficult to implement in practice. The first manuscript introduces an implementation guide, Partnerships as the Path to Implementing Culturally Responsive and/or Strengths-based Assessment (PATP-CR/SBA), which utilizes Family School Community Partnerships (FSCP) as a framework to use to implement CRA and SBA assessment practices more easily. The PATP-CR/SBA gives attention to the collaborative nature of special education assessment, often involving many school team members, and demonstrates how partnering with families builds the path to implementing CR/SBA.

Building on the PATP-CR/SBA, the second manuscript provides an in-depth account of the perspectives of four school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practice as CR/SBA.. This manuscript offers a unique contribution to understanding how practicing school psychologists conceptualize and conduct CR/SBA in their context of "real life" practice. The case study addresses the question of, how do school psychologists conduct CR/SBA? How do school psychologists define CR/SBA?

What practices do school psychologists as a part of CR/SBA? And, what acts as barriers and facilitators to using CR/SBA practices?

Multiple case study design allowed for an in-depth, nuanced understanding of each case that resulted in within-case and cross-case findings. Deductive data analysis, guided by the NASP practice model framework for school psychological services, identified aspects of the school psychologist's context that impacted their practice. The attention to context is meaningful as the NASP Practice Model, highlights the influence of contextual factors (or organizational principles) on a school psychologist's practice (NASP, 2020). Inductive analysis revealed how school psychologists conceptualize CR/SBA, what practices they use as a part of CR/SBA, other barriers and facilitators, and finally a diagram that illustrates how school psychologists conduct assessment.

When combined, these manuscripts provide unique information about how CR/SBA is conducted in schools. The manuscripts are grounded in an effort to conduct research that can be easily, and meaningfully applied to practice. In order to do so, manuscripts are purposefully grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the history and current state of school psychology and special education assessment. In manuscript one, the PATP-CR/SBA provides a clear guide for school psychologists, in collaboration with the other school professionals they work with, to implement FSCP practices to create a path to easily using CR/SBA practices. Practices in the PATP-CR/SBA align with the NASP Domains of Practice and thus align with training standards and future directions of the field. Aligned with the attempt to focus on research that can easily and meaningfully be applied to the field, manuscript two captures the perspective of practitioners in the field. This manuscripts provides an in-depth account of how school

psychologists who are implementing CR/SBA practices do so within in their natural context.

Manuscript One

Fostering Family-School-Community Partnerships to Implement Culturally Responsive Assessment and Strengths-Based Assessment in Schools

School Psychologists spend over half their time engaged in assessment activities (Benson et al., 2019; Goforth et al., 2020); however, families often report they are not authentically included in the assessment process (Chen & Gregory, 2011). Moreover, trends in special education identification reveal disproportionate representation of students across gender, race, and socioeconomic status (SES; Sullivan & Bal, 2013; Sullivan, 2011). In particular, there has been an overrepresentation of Black students in special education (Power et al., 2004). Although new paradigms of assessment have been presented (e.g., Strength-Based Assessment [SBA] and Culturally Responsive Assessment [CRA]) to improve the effectiveness of assessments, without clear implementation guides that intentionally consider family involvement and student needs, assessments continue to serve as a method for test and place rather than a tool to guide collaboration and intervention.

In this paper, the author presents the Partnerships as the Path to Culturally Responsive and/or Strengths-based Assessment (PATP-CR/SBA) implementation guide. The PATP-CR/SBA was created to guide school psychologists in implementing CRA

practices and SBA practices by fostering Family, School, and Community Partnerships (FSCP). In its current form, this guide is specific to Part B initial special education assessment and intervention planning when creating Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Although the intended audience for the guide is school psychologists, the guide can be useful for other professionals conducting special education assessments and taking part in intervention planning; a core aspect of PATP-CR/SBA is effective teaming and collaboration between school professionals such as special service providers, teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and others. Throughout the guide, the term school psychologist is used to refer to school psychologists specifically and the term professionals is used to refer to school-based professionals including, but not limited to, special education teachers, general education teachers, school administrators, case managers, school-based social workers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, family liaisons, and/or school psychologists.

To describe the foundations and need for this guide, the manuscript is divided into five parts. Part I describes the historical contexts of assessment, assessment in special education, the purpose of assessment in schools, definition of assessment, features of assessment, how assessment is perceived by stakeholders, and how assessment is currently used in education. Part II delves into the relationship between school psychologists and school-based assessment, the way the role of school psychologists is define through legislation and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), roles and responsibilities of school psychologists, including future directions of the profession, ethical foundations of school psychology, and perceptions of the profession. Part III discusses how families and students are included in assessment and intervention

planning in the IEP historically and currently. Part IV introduces current models and practices in assessment. Lastly, Part V proposes, describes, and exemplifies the PATP-CR/SBA and outlines the alignment of the PATP-CR/SBA with the NASP Practice Model.

Part I: The Testing

Assessment is referenced in education in regard to state and district accountability assessments, program assessment, and assessment of academic progress among other things (Slavia et al., 2017). For the purpose of this paper, assessment is used in reference to assessing students for special education services. Various definitions of assessment have been presented. Assessment can be psychological (focused on personality and emotions) or psychoeducational (focused on learning and academics). However, spanning both psychological and psychoeducational assessment is the purpose to identify strengths, weakness, neurological development, and mental processes. Assessment involves collecting data, incorporating that data into findings, interpreting findings, and then synthesizing and contextualizing the results (Sattler, 2018). School-based assessment definitions add that assessment is "the process of collecting information (data) for the purpose of making decisions for or about individuals" (Slavia et al., 2017, p. 3). Additionally, in schools, applications of best practices in assessment contribute to being able to provide individualized instruction with the goal to improve educational outcomes. The term "testing" is also frequently used when discussing assessment. Rather than being synonymous with assessment, testing refers to the use of specific measures and includes administering and scoring a specific measure. Therefore, when using specific measures as a part of assessment, testing is a part of assessment.

History of Assessment in Special Education

Assessment has a long history of enmeshment with disability and education (Farrell, 2010; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000; Winzer, 2009; Yell et al., 2021). The history of assessment as it relates to the development and initial purpose of the IQ test and legislation and case law will be described to demonstrate the historical foundation of current practices. Assessment has been historically tied to the creation and proliferation of the IQ test. This goes back to as early as the creation of the first IQ test by Alfred Binet in 1899. In its inception, the purpose of the IQ test was to separate children into two groups, those who would be successful in mainstream schooling and those who would not (Guillemard, 2006). The development of the IQ test had a profound effect on school psychology as a profession as well as the purposes of assessing students. At that point in history, a specific measure (testing) was conducted in order sort and place students and this practice was used widely in the United States (Ferrell, 2010).

In the inception of public education in the United States, students with disabilities were often excluded from public education and when they were included, services were often inappropriate (Yell et al., 1998; Yell et al., 2021). Case law throughout the early and mid 1900's supported that schools could exclude students with disabilities (e.g., *Department of Public Welfare v. Hass, 1958, Watson v. City of Cambridge, 1893, Beattie v. Board of Education, 1919).* A shift occurred throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as states began to pass laws that asserted students with disabilities should be included in public education; however, these laws often lacked funding for implementation (Yell et al. 1998; Yell et al., 2021; Winzer, 2009).

Case law, parental advocacy groups, and formal advocacy organizations (e.g., National Association for Retarded Citizens [now ARC] and Council for Exceptional Children [CEC]), and self-advocates were influential in advocating for the inclusion of students with disabilities in public education (Winzer, 1993; Yell, et al., 1998). The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) supreme court case determined classes of people had equal protection for public education under the 14th amendment. *Brown v. Board of Education* focused on the unconstitutional nature of separating schools based on race (1954). However, disability advocates asserted that the *Brown v. Board of Education* case should extend similarly to the rights of students with disabilities (Yell et al., 1998). Two pieces of case law were particularly influential in providing the legal basis for the rights of students with disabilities in schools. These were the *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens [PARC] v. Pennsylvania* (1972) and *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972).

Following these influential cases, a waterfall of legislation emerged that would form the foundation for educational services for students with disabilities. First, the civil rights movement in the 1960s included a movement for the rights of those with disabilities, often led by those with disabilities (Aron & Loprest, 2012) and resulted in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protected children with disability's right to public education. However, it was not until 1975 with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) that there was a piece of comprehensive legislation outlining education for students with disabilities (Gargiulo, 2015; Gerber, 2017; Martin et al. 1996; Yell et al., 1998; Winzer, 2009). EAHCA was primarily inspired by the *Mills v. Board of Education* and *PARC v.*

Pennsylvania cases. The outcomes of these two cases and its influence on EAHCA are described in Table 1. This was the first-time evaluation or testing was mention in federal legislation. After the passage of EAHCA, schools began to use assessment as a way to sort students with the intention of being able to provide different or more intensive interventions and services to positively affect student outcomes (Fagan, 2014).

Table 1.1

Case law Influence on the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (EAHCA)

Case	Influence of EAHCA
Mills v. Board of Education (1972)	Based on the Fourteenth Amendment Children with disabilities are considered a class All children with disabilities should be included in publicly supported education Established procedural due process safeguards such as the right to a hearing with representation, right to appeal, right to access records, and written notice at all stages
Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens [PARC] v. Pennsylvania (1972)	Children with intellectual disabilities (then referred to as mental retardation) can benefit from educational programming Education is not exclusive to academics but includes adaptive skills Students with disabilities should be included in free public education (in the state of Pennsylvania) Children with intellectual disabilities (then referred to mental retardation) benefit from education as early as possible (and should not be denied preschool)

EAHCA was reauthorized in 1990, 1997, and 2004 and became the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act (IDEIA, commonly referred to as IDEA). IDEA (2004) systematized assessment as a key component of special education. It mandated that students must be assessed before receiving special education services. Then, students who are determined to be eligible for special education services receive an IEP. Instructional objectives within that IEP are derived from assessment (IDEA, 2004). According to IDEA, assessment must be nondiscriminatory, administered in a child's native language, comprised of sound instruments, and tailored to assess the area of suspected need. Additionally, assessment should provide data to then be used in four

ways: (1) to determine if a child has a disability and educational needs as outlined in IDEA; (2) to determine the present level of academic and developmental functioning; (3) to determine if the child needs special education services; and (4) to determine if the student needs any modifications to services. To determine if a student is eligible for special education services, the student must demonstrate educational impact due to their disability as evidence by assessment data (IDEA, 2004).

Additional legislation references assessment in special education, such as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the 2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind Act). In 1974, FERPA was passed and mandated that families have the right to access their child's educational records, including records that are a part of assessment. FERPA also mandated that schools cannot share a student's educational records without consent from the family. Section 504 of ADA (previously the Rehabilitation Act; 1990) protects the right of students with disabilities to public education, regardless of their eligibility for special education. In reference to assessment, Section 504 of ADA outlined that if a student does not meet criteria for special education from assessment data and findings, but does have a disability, they may still receive accommodations through a 504 Plan. The last piece of legislation referencing special education, the 2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (later reauthorized as No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2001) addressed education for all students, not just special education. However, NCLB had implications for assessment and IEPs. NCLB mandated that students with disabilities should take part in state and district assessments. IDEA (2004) then outlined that students with disabilities should receive necessary

accommodations when taking part in state and district assessments. Table 1.2 outlines the ways in which assessment is referenced by special education laws.

Table 1.2

References of assessment in legislation

Law	Assessment
The Individuals with Disabilities Act Improvement (IDEIA, commonly referred to as IDEA), 2004	Students must be assessed before receiving special education services Assessment must be nondiscriminatory based on race or culture, assessment should be administered in a child's native language, assessment tools should be sound instruments, and assessment battery should be tailored to assess the area of need Purpose of assessment to determine the present level of academic and developmental functioning, determine if the child needs special education, and determine if the student needs any modifications to services Response to Intervention is a viable option to demonstrate a learning disability (as compared to IQ and achievement gap)
2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (reauthorized as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)	Students with disabilities are required to take part in state and district assessments
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974 (FERPA)	Families have the right to access their child's educational records, including assessment records Schools cannot share records, including assessment records, without consent from the family
Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and Amendments (2008)	A Section 504 Plan provides accommodations and protections for students with disabilities, even if they do not qualify for special education based on assessment data

Features of Assessment

Once assessment became codified and mandated, certain aspects of assessment were dictated. First is the belief that assessment is different than testing. Testing refers to the administration and scoring of a specific measure such as an IQ test or academic measure (Sattler, 2018). Second is that assessment should utilize a multimethod approach (IDEA, 2004; Sattler, 2018; Slavia et al. 2017). Not only should a variety of assessment tools be used, but also no single measure should be used to make a decision about a student (IDEA, 2004). A multimethod approach has four pillars: norm-referenced measures, interviews, behavioral observations, and informal assessment procedures

(Sattler, 2018). Record reviews, interviews, observations, and tests (or individual measures) are four types of data collection in school-based assessment (Slavia et al., 2017) Finally, assessment should include purposeful data collection with the goal to develop interventions. The purpose of the data should be considered before data collection and once collected, the data should be synthesized to provide meaningful interpretation and used intentionally to make inferences and decisions (Sattler, 2018; Slavia et al., 2017). In order to link assessment data to intervention, a hypothesis must be validated, and school psychologists should ensure any following interventions should align with that hypothesis (Batsche et al., 2008). Linking assessment to intervention requires a school psychologist and other professionals to consider strengths and deficits and how these might relate to each other or contribute to intervention planning (Andrews & Sydea, 2016). These features of assessment highlight the importance of an intentional, systematic approach to assessment that lends itself to generating beneficial information about a student which can be used to inform intervention.

Ethical Foundations of Assessment

NASP Ethical principles outline that assessment should be based on a variety of sources, including existing data, and should be comprehensive (NASP, 2020). This aligns with a multimethod approach and requires critical consideration of what the suspected disability is to ensure assessment is comprehensive. Next, assessment should be fair and valid. Practitioners should take into account students' developmental, cultural, and linguistic background (NASP, 2020). Lastly, assessment data should be interpreted and presented so that others can understand it to make choices (NASP, 2020). This implores that families, and students, should truly understand what information from the assessment

means, so that they can make choices regarding their child or themselves. Additionally, there is an impetus to ensure teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals who work with those students to adequately understand information gathered from assessment.

Perceptions of Assessment

In schools, assessments are often conducted by school psychologists, other service providers such as speech and language pathologists and occupational therapists, and special education teachers. If assessment conducted by these parties should be used to improve the educational outcomes of students and drive intervention, then educators, family, and student perceptions of assessment, and its utility, are important to consider. Special education teachers reported they comply with recommendations derived from assessment often, while general education teachers report they comply with recommendations derived from assessment occasionally (Gilman & Medway, 2007). Suggesting that the utility or feasibility of recommendations, or perceptions of the utility of recommendations vary among educators. Some families may find the evaluations conducted in schools as providing access to services or providing an answer to why their child has experienced difficulties (Crane et al., 2016). Conversely, some specific assessment tools used in assessments have faced considerable controversy from families, such as standardized IQ or cognitive tests (Powers et al., 2004; Synder & Rothman, 1988), and have resulted in case law (e.g., *Larry P. v. Riles, 1971*). In fact, some families have refused to consent to standardized cognitive assessment (e.g., *Upland Unified School District v. Parent, 2017*). In regard to specific disabilities, such as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), there is concern regarding the social validity of these measures from both professionals and families (Snider et al., 2020). Indeed, many

families perceive standardized measures as a way to focus on what their students cannot do, rather than what they can do (Haywood, 1997). Although the proposed purposes of assessment are to improve student outcomes, it is apparent that from the perspectives of educators and families, assessment processes, parts (e.g., IQ tests), and recommendations are not necessarily helpful. Therefore, there is a need to alter the way assessment is conducted.

Current Use and Challenges of Assessment

Currently, assessment is conducted as a part of the special education process, which involves many stakeholders. In order to describe the importance of collaboration, the role of the teams and stakeholders involved will be described. There are two legislatively outlined teams in the special education process: the evaluation team and the IEP team (IDEA, 2004). The evaluation team includes persons qualified to conduct diagnostic evaluations. The special education team is composed of parents of the student, at least one general education teacher, at least one special education teacher, someone who is a representative of the local educational agency who can interpret the results of the assessment (e.g., a school psychologist or speech language pathologist), a school administrator or representative, other people who may have knowledge or expertise related to the student, and the student whenever appropriate. School psychologists are a part of both the team conducting the assessment and a part of the IEP teams when interpreting assessment results for stakeholders.

Assessment practices have changed over time, but historic practices continue to influence current practices (Fagan, 2014; Ferrell, 2010). As stated above, assessment includes data collected from a variety of sources, one of which is standardized measures.

Standardized measures and methods of data collection frequently used will be described. In 2017, school psychologists frequently use parent and teacher rating behavioral rating scales (e.g., *Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition* [BASC-3], 2015), cognitive measures (e.g., *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fifth Edition* [WISC-V], 2014), and Curriculum-Based Measures (CMB) as a part of their assessments. Additionally, school psychologists reported conducting structured observations as a part of assessments (e.g., interval or duration recording, or antecedent-behavior-consequent observations) as well as structured developmental interviews or unstructured interviews (Benson et al., 2019). However, assessment involves more than just the administration and scoring of various measures.

After administering and scoring a measure, professionals should interpret and synthesis findings to generate meaningful information (Sattler, 2018). There are some challenges related to effectively using data gleaned from various measures. Professionals have difficulty actually using data gathered in assessment to inform intervention (Blackwell & Rossettie, 2014). Further, several studies have pointed to school psychologists using low value or questionable practices when conducting assessments, such as methods to interpreting results of standardized cognitive measures (Dombrowki et al., 2021; Farmer et al., 2020). Additionally, there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of current assessment practices, including interpretation of findings, for certain populations, such as those with IDD (Snider et al., 2021).

Moreover, assessment inherently involves decision-making, which is influenced by clinical judgment (Dombrowski, 2020; Kranzler et al., 2016; Mash, 2007). As a key part of assessment, implications regarding clinical judgement will be reviewed. Clinical

judgement can be problematic when school psychologists stray too far from what is evidenced in research (Dombrowski, 2020; Lilienfel et al., 2012). When this clinical judgement is informed more by intuition, it may contribute to disproportionate representation in special education (Dombrowski, 2020; Sullivan, 2011; Sullivan & Ball, 2013).

These challenges make clear that effective assessment practices go beyond collecting and interpreting data and that professionals require guidance as to how to use the data gathered through assessment in an evidence-based fashion. Furthermore, the utility of assessment falls short for stakeholders. All to suggest, assessment, in its current form, falls short of its promises outlined in legislation and suggested practices.

Part II: The Evaluators

School psychologists have long held the epithet of "gate keepers" to special education. In 1975, EAHCA (now IDEA) contributed to the impetus for school districts to employ school psychologists to meet the requirements of EAHCA, including identifying and assessing students for special education. This can also be considered the catalyst for growth in the field (Farrell, 2010; Reschly, 2010). While "school psychologist" is not directly mentioned in IDEA, evaluators, psychologists, and psychological services are written into IDEA as a part of assessment and service delivery (IDEA, 2004). However, the inclusion of "school psychologist" in special education law varies from state to state. For example, in the state of Colorado, the Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA 207) explicitly mentions school psychologists as a part of special education expenditures for funding, as well as a part of the multidisciplinary team for special education assessment and services. Regardless of the

exact title, the role of school psychologist has been closely associated with IQ testing and eligibility for special education services for several decades (Farrell, 2010). Moreover, teacher's perceptions of school psychologists are closely tied to the expectation for them to carry out special education assessments (Dowling & Leibowitz, 1994; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004).

Role of School Psychologists

As mentioned, school psychologist's role has historically been tied to special education assessment; however, the proposed role of school psychologists has changed over time. Initially, school psychologists primarily acted to fill the need to conduct special education assessment (Farrell, 2010). However, over time, there has been a push to expand the role of school psychologists (Fagan, 2014; NASP, 2020). School psychologist began to engage in roles and functions other than special education assessment, such as working within general education services to meet legislative requirements related to accountability assessment and preventative approaches, such as intervention, consultation, and systems-level work. This shift in roles and functions was driven by legislation, graduate training, and shifts in perspectives of role of schools to meet both mental health needs as well as academic needs (Fagan, 2014).

Despite the expansion of roles and functions over the past two decades, many school psychologists still spend the majority of their time in traditional special education assessment (Benson, 2019). Although the reasons for this may vary regionally, shortages within the field, personal preference, administrative supervisors, or the amount of time it takes to conduct alternative types of assessment have been suggested as reasons as to why

school psychologists continue to spend a great deal of time conducting traditional special education assessments (Fagan, 2014).

Considering the amount of time spent in assessment, as national organizations and the profession have moved toward a more inclusive, social justice orientation, it comes as no surprise that there has also been a push to shift the orientation of assessment from deficit-focused to strengths-based. However, IQ testing (largely considered deficit-based), is still frequently used (Benson et al., 2019). This is closely tied to the "test and place" role and algins with the medical model approach of identifying problems as a means to describe a child (Howe, 1998; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). Despite this, since the 1960s, school psychologists have endorsed strengths-based approaches to assessment (Jimerson et al., 2004) and although the field began to adopt other models of disability (as compared to the medical model), such as the social model, assessment practice remains consistent with a deficit-based understanding that intra-individual deficits are at fault (Goodley, 2011). Beginning in the 1990s, there was a greater shift from a deficit-based perspective to a positive psychology, preventative, strengths-based perspective of assessment practices (Jimerson et al., 2004). However, the lack of psychometrically sound strength-based measures and lack of research in their application in schools have made it difficult for school psychologists to implement strengths-based approaches (Epstein, 1998; Jimerson et al., 2004).

Data-based Decision Making and Collaboration

NASP offers a practice model which outlines the foundation for delivery of school psychological practice (NASP, 2020). In this model, two domains of practice permeate all service delivery, including assessment. These are data-based decision

making and collaboration and consultation. School psychologists engage in data-based decision making meaning they collect and interpret data to inform decisions as well as help others to interpret and make meaning of data to inform their decisions (NASP, 2020). Additionally, school psychologists engage in effective collaborative and consultative practices, meaning they collaborate effectively with other stakeholders and professionals throughout the assessment process (NASP, 2020). These two aspects of service delivery are integral to the process school psychologists use to conduct assessment.

Perceptions of School Psychologists

Regardless of the purposed role of school psychologists or the way the role is outlined in legislation, the perceptions of the role of school psychologist is influential on practice. Further, if collaboration and consultation permeate all practice, perceptions of the role are important. Moreover, school psychologists are often the only school psychologists in their school buildings and frequently team with other educational professionals such as special service providers, teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals during the assessment process (Fagan, 2014). A part of effective teaming and collaboration is an understanding of each other's role and training. In general, teachers and administrators perceive that assessment practices are a primary role of school psychologists (Watkins et al., 2001). However, this is gleaned from a study conducted over two decades ago. Nonetheless, this may further contribute to the role school psychologist's hold in the schools they work in. In an addition to aligning assessment with the role of school psychologists, teachers may not have an accurate understanding of school psychology. General education teachers report low

understanding of school psychology, helpfulness of school psychologist to teachers, and satisfaction with school psychological services. While special education teachers demonstrate a greater understanding of school psychology, this could be due to increased contact with school psychologists (Gilman & Medway, 2007). The perceptions of various educational professionals of school psychology, the role of school psychologists, and helpfulness of their services, support that there is possibly a gap in the proposed collaborative nature of school psychology practice and actual practice. However, because other professionals perceive the role as so closely tied to assessment, assessment may offer a key opportunity for school psychologists to build collaborative relationships with other professionals.

Part III: The Stakeholders

Students and families should be considered the most important component of special education assessment and processes as they are centered in the primary purpose, to improve educational outcomes for students. Furthermore, regardless of reform, teacher quality or approaches, family and community engagement influences about half of learning (Adleman & Taylor, 2018), demonstrating its importance. The role of families will be reviewed because of their importance to assessment and in education generally. Family engagement that occurs outside of the school environment, such as setting high educational expectations or quality parent-child interactions, is even more predictive of positive outcomes (Miller et al., 2021). However, students and families, historically, have been viewed as an addendum (Adleman & Taylor, 2018; Ametea, 2009; Christenson, 2004; El Nokali et al., 2010).

Regardless of the perspective, special education assessment and the subsequent IEP meeting should be a key opportunity for collaboration between educators and parents (Reiman et al., 2010). The experiences of parents in the special education process vary across demographic groups. Generally, parents belonging to historically marginalized and minoritized groups feel they are not heard, feel disrespected, and feel that their participation in the process is not valued (Salas, 2004; Lo, 2008). In contrast, middle to high SES, primarily White parents believe they are valued, respected, and equally a part of the decision-making process. Although legislation dictates parents be active contributors to the process, it is clear that parents, particularly parents belonging to historically marginalized and minoritized groups, believe they are not valued or respected in the process. Moreover, when parental concerns were documented in the IEP, their concerns often were either not reflected in the students' goals and services or were contradicted in the students' goals and services (Kurth et al., 2019). This demonstrates that professionals may simply be giving family perspectives and concerns lip service, but not authentically be partnering with families through the process. This aligns with the general trend that educational professionals tend to dominate the process and do not respond to the input of parents (Elbaum et al., 2016; Love et al., 2017), resulting in decisions being made more often by the school professionals than by the team as a whole (Hancock et al., 2017). This is upheld by the paradigm of expertise. School members of the team are often regarded as experts while parental knowledge and expertise is dismissed, which has been suggested to negatively impact student outcomes (Holman et al., 2021; Love et al., 2017; Ruppar & Gaffney, 2011; Sheridan & Garbacz, 2021). All of this together supports that, in general, parents are not active participants in the assessment

and IEP process due to numerous reasons. Disenfranchisement throughout the process is doubly so for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The exclusion of families and students have a historical precedent. Prior to the 1960s, schools were viewed as having full responsibility to educate children and families were viewed separately. This has been referred to as the separation paradigm (Jones, 2013). In the separation paradigm, ecological factors, such as socio-economic status (SES) and cultural backgrounds are identified as the reason why some children do not perform well in school (Amatea, 2009). With the passage of the ESEA in 1965, the paradigm shifted from separation to remediation. In remediation, a deficit perspective of children from low SES backgrounds or non-dominate culture backgrounds is perpetuated by the notion that schools have to compensate for negative experiences related to those factors (Amatea, 2009; Jones, 2013). In a remediation paradigm, teachers act as the leaders in their student's education and families have passive involvement (Amatea, 2009). Many schools now endorse a collaboration paradigm (Jones, 2013). In this paradigm, active collaboration with families and joint decision making between teachers, parents, and students are encouraged. This collaborative paradigm gives attention to the spheres of influence (Epstein, 2001), or the way family, schools, and communities all influence a child's development, and adopts a social justice perspective (Jones, 2013).

In support of this emerging partnership between schools and families, literature suggests schools and communities all influence the child and, the greater the overlap between families, schools, and communities, the greater achievement of the child (Epstein, 2001). This is particularly relevant for students and families from historically marginalized and minoritized communities. Studies suggest that students and families

from minoritized and marginalized communities have less overlap between the home and school spheres and lower family involvement (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Kohl et al., 2000). Although parental involvement has been operationalized in various ways and measures of student achievement have been measured in various ways, examples of engagement such as parent-child discussions of school-related activities, parental support and encouragement related to school activities, and involvement in homework are associated with higher achievement (Boonk et al., 2018).

Benefits of effective family, school, and community engagement extend beyond students and families and to schools and communities as well. Higher graduation rates and lower disciplinary incidence were found at schools that had efforts to collaborate with families and communities than those that do not (Epstein, 2001; Sheldon, 2016). The benefits are mirrored with individual students and teacher as teachers with strong family-school partnerships reported themselves or their students as being more engaged and well-adjusted as well (Sheldon, 2016). Moreover, staff at schools with strong family and community programs report higher job satisfaction (Brown et al., 2014).

Family engagement and partnership may be even more imperative for students with disabilities (El Nokali et al., 2010) as they frequently are an integral part of their child's life far into adulthood (Landmark, 2011). Particularly, partnerships between families and schools are essential for students with IDD (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Thus, the special education process is a critical point to foster family school partnerships for a student with a disability.

This significant evidence supports strong family, school, and community engagement as positively influential for students, schools, and families. Furthermore, the involvement of families in a students' education is dictated by educational legislation and policies (ESSA, 2015; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2001). For these reasons, practices that contribute to family, school, and community engagement are important for all professionals at a school and have the potential to permeate all areas of school psychological practice, including assessment.

Family involvement in special education is also addressed legislatively through IDEA (2004). IDEA (2004) dictates that parents should be active participants in the special education process. This means that parents are integral team members in the decision-making process related to special education eligibility, planning, and implementation. In IDEA, family involvement in assessment and special education process is defined through the legal definition of parents or guardians. However, families can bring with them other people who are supporters of the student, advocates, or mediators. Students are also encouraged to be a member of their IEP team whenever possible (IDEA, 2004). However, students are often passive in IEP meetings and may benefit from direct instruction regarding how to participate in the IEP meeting (Martin et al., 2006). Table 1.3 adds to Table 1.2 which was presented above and outlines the ways in which assessment and family and community involvement is referenced by legislation.

Table 1.3

References of assessment and family and community involvement in legislation

Law	Assessment	Families
The Individuals with Disabilities Act Improvement (IDEIA, commonly referred to as IDEA), 2004	Students must be assessed before receiving special education services Assessment must be nondiscriminatory based on race or culture, assessment should be administered in a child's native language, assessment tools should be sound instruments, and assessment battery should be tailored to assess the area of need Purpose of assessment to determine the present level of academic and developmental functioning, determine if the child needs special education, and determine if the student needs any modifications to services Response to Intervention is a viable option to demonstrate a learning disability (as compared to IQ and achievement gap)	Parents and guardians (as legally defined) are active team members in decision-making related to special education eligibility, planning, and implementation Parents have the right to due process if they disagree with results of an assessment or the content of an IEP States are required to have mediation services for families to utilize before due process if they wish
2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (reauthorized as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)	Students with disabilities are required to take part in state and district assessments	Families may move their students, including students with disabilities, from "failing schools" to other school options
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974 (FERPA)	Families have the right to access their child's educational records, including assessment records Schools cannot share records, including assessment records, without consent from the family	Families have the right to access their child's educational records, including assessment records Families must consent to schools sharing a student's educational records, including assessment records
Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and Amendments (2008)	A Section 504 Plan provides accommodations and protections for students with disabilities, even if they do not qualify for special education based on assessment data	X

Despite the current state of parental involvement in the special education process, there are many benefits to having authentic partnerships with parents throughout the process. When parent's input is meaningfully incorporated, parents are able to provide important information about their student's strengths and needs (Tucker & Schwartz, 2013) and interventions are better aligned with student need (Chen & Gregory, 2011).

Furthermore, their input from the beginning of the special education process for a student can lay the pathway for their input in transition planning to support the student's life post-secondary education (Gaertner & McClarty, 2015; Spooner et al., 2012).

As demonstrated previously, families belonging to historically minoritized or marginalized groups have been particularly disenfranchised in the process. Various considerations for partnering with culturally or linguistically diverse families have been presented in special education literature (e.g., Ong-Dead, 2009). Considerations include practices such as effectively working with families and translators by working with translators to explain the context and purpose of meetings and processes and speaking directly to the family when using a translator (Bradford & Munoz, 1993; Lopez, 2014). Other suggestions for working more effectively with families include considering when and where to hold meetings. Additionally, various frameworks and models have been presented aimed to help teachers partner with families throughout a student's educational career, such as the *5-Point Plan* (Edwards & DeFonte, 2012), or in specific processes such as transition planning and the *Transition Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation* (TPIE) framework (Talapatra et al., 2019). Furthermore, some models of consultation have also been proposed that aim to partner directly between families and schools, such as conjoint behavioral consultation (CBC; Garbacz et al., 2008). These are just some frameworks or models that have been proposed. In many of these, developing positive relationships with families is an integral part. Some aim to build partnerships such as the *5-Point-Plan* and focus on teachers working with parents, others follow a problem-solving framework and are data-driven such as CBC or TPIE. However, despite these models, frameworks, and suggestions, as noted above, many families are not

authentically included in special education processes. Thus, there is a gap in proposed practices to partner with families and communities and the practices that are actually employed, particularly during special education processes.

Part IV: Current Collaborative Assessment and Family Practices Models

As demonstrated in the review of legislation, assessment practices, benefits of family involvement, and gaps between proposed practices and what is actually employed regarding special education, it is clear that current assessment practices (including those related to partnering with families) do not live up to their purpose. The disaccord between the proposed purpose of assessment and actual outcomes is not new. Hence, various models of assessment that aim to counter the deficit-approach to assessment or enhance partnerships between families, schools, and communities have been proposed. CRA and SBA, in particular, have been proposed as possible school-based models of assessment that counter the deficit-based approach. However, although these models may address shortcomings, there may be a gap in lack of clear guidance as to how to implement these practices. Table 1.4 illustrates the assessment practices, family and communication engagement, and limitations of CRA and SBA.

Table 1.4

Recommended practices, family involvement, community involvement, and limitations in SBA and CRA

	SBA	CRA	Citations
Assessment Recommendations	Attempts to strike a balance between deficits, weaknesses, and problems and strengths and resources Considers ecological factors Standardized measures are used to identify strengths and can include measures of quality of life Considers the bias and backgrounds of practitioners	Practitioners are aware of their own bias Cultural information including values, beliefs, and routines is highly valuable High quality parent interviews that also aim to collect cultural data (e.g. Jones International Mulitcultural Interview Schedule (JIMIS; Jones, 2009), Routines Based Interview; (McWilliam, 2006) are conducted Identify cultural strengths and supports Practitioners adapt to the communication style of families Practitioners consider the interaction between their identity and the identity of families and students Identity is dynamic Practitioners considers trauma, but CRA is not formally trauma informed The limitations of standardized measures are considered and communicated and Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA) and local norms are used when possible Practitioners consider if classrooms (including pedagogy and curriculum) are culturally responsive when conducting observations and meet with teachers to share findings of classroom observations and collaborate to make interpretations	Jimerson et al., 2004; Lopez & Synder, 2003; Rhee et al., 2001 Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014
Family/Student Involvement	Resources and strengths of the family are identified and a part of case conceptualization	High quality parent interviews Practitioners and families build mutual understanding regarding roles and expectations of each other Incorporate the families perceptions of assessment findings	Jimerson et al., 2004; Lopez & Synder, 2003 Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014

Community Involvement	Ecological factors, such as community are considered, but not directly addressed	Identifies community and cultural strengths	Jimerson et al., 2004; Lopez & Synder, 2003 Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014
Benefits	Provides a more holistic view of the student; informs intervention; shifts school psychologists away from the deficit-based perspective to align with strength-based perspectives; enhances school-based consultation and collaboration	Inherently strengths-based to counter the dominate culture lens focus on deficits Culturally responsive practices are needed to work in schools that are increasingly more diverse Aims to informs intervention	Huebner & Gilman, 2004; Jimerson et al., 2004; Reid et al., 2000 Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014
Limitations	Additional research is needed to build confidence in the psychometric and predictive utility of strengths-based and quality of life measures and ability; additional research is describe the benefits of SBA; a more organized model of SBA in schools should be developed to formalize the practice	May be difficult to implement when district or state guidelines nessistate the use of standardized measures May be difficult to implement a recursive process that elicits feedback from families regarding assessment findings within the timelines set by federal legislation Developing local norms and using alternative assessment measures such as CBA may be time consuming for professionals There is little direction on how to incorporate cultural strengths in intervention planning	Huebner & Gilman, 2004; Jimerson et al., 2004 IDEA, 2004; Jones, 2014

Culturally Responsive Assessment

Foundations and Assumptions

CRA practices have been proposed in counseling and clinical psychology (Hays, 2016) as well as school psychology (Jones, 2014). Across fields, CRA practices are rooted in an ecological perspective. CRA recognizes that traditional assessment practices and tools are informed by the dominate culture and dismiss important cultural factors (Hays, 2016). In CRA, cultural information is considered not only pertinent, but central to meaningful assessment.

According to CRA, the purpose of assessment is to identify what a person needs. In order to understand what a person needs, a school psychologist must have cultural knowledge and gather cultural data. Further, according to CRA, in an attempt to shift expertise paradigms, the school psychologist works collaboratively with the student and family to identify what a person needs because CRA assumes the student and their family have insight into what they need already. Culturally responsive assessment is inherently strengths based by the nature of countering the dominate culture lens to focus on the deficits of people who have been historically minoritized (Hays, 2016).

The process of gathering information during interviews in traditional assessment practices aligns with the transactional nature of dominate culture norms. In this, psychologists directly ask and receive information from a person. Conversely, when using CRA practices, school psychologists challenge this by attempting to adapt to and respond to the preferred forms of communication of others (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014). For example, a student or family may be accustomed to casual register in which they may answer a question with a story, providing great detail. Other students or families might

find direct questioning in traditional interviews as intrusive (Hays, 2016). School psychologists can begin the assessment conversation by asking families and students to share what they feel is important and helpful. Regarding strengths, school psychologists can seek to identify cultural strengths and supports, interpersonal strengths, and spiritual beliefs or religious affiliations, which can be a source of strength (Hays, 2016).

In CRA, school psychologists aim to understand the student's unique identity and their own understanding of their identity. For example, when conducting an assessment with a transgender student, a school psychologist may seek to understand what meaning the student ascribes to their gender identity rather than assume what meaning the student ascribes to their gender identity. Practitioners should also recognize that person's relationship with their identity as dynamic, consider identity within the context of the school, and consider the interaction between a student, family, or individual's identity and school psychologist's identity (Hays, 2016).

When applying CRA practices, school psychologists should consider the systems that might impact a student and their family (e.g., access to safety and food, health care, immigration; LaRoche, 2013). School psychologists can ask families, students, or teachers what they expect from the assessment and IEP process and, in response, share what the stakeholders can expect from them. School psychologists should clearly explain their job and purpose, particularly when asking questions that could come off as intrusive. Furthermore, they should clearly communicate the bounds of confidentiality and how they are applied (Hays, 2016).

Whenever possible, school psychologists should consider how some assessment tools are culturally loaded and ensure the limitations of standardized measures are

described. CBM and local norms should be used whenever feasible (Jones, 2014). Additionally, school psychologists should consider how social-emotional, academic, executive functioning, or cognitive assessments and needs may warrant different considerations (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014).

Lastly, CRA considers trauma. Practitioners should be aware of their own assumptions related to traumatic experiences and consider trauma as collective and not just individual (Hays, 2016). While this paper will not provide an in-depth review and description of assessment related to trauma, considering the sociopolitical climate, recent racial uprising, and COVID-19 pandemic, school-based professionals should consider trauma in their assessment practices.

Application in Schools

There are many opportunities to apply CRA in schools. When conducting parent interviews, school psychologists could utilize the *Jones International Multicultural Interview Schedule* (JIMIS; Jones, 2009) or *Routines Based Interview* (McWilliams, 2006) to provide a guide to conduct interviews with families and collect cultural data (Jones, 2014). Additionally, in schools, school psychologists can consider their school climate, particularly related to school discipline policies and trends in their school when reviewing current records. When conducting classroom observations, school psychologists might consider if the pedagogy and curriculum are culturally responsive and meet with the teacher to review findings and collaborate to make interpretations (Jones, 2014).

Limitations

There are several limitations of applying CRA in schools. First, IDEA (2004) dictates timelines on the assessment process that may impeded a school psychologist's ability to take additional time to work with families. Second, the use of norm-referenced measures may be required for some assessments. For example, the use of a norm-referred adaptive measure, such as the *Adaptive Behavior Assessment System* (Harrison & Oakland, 2015) or *Vineland-3* (Sparrow, Cicchettie, & Saulnier, 2016), and a norm-referenced cognitive assessment may be required to identify a student under the category of intellectual disability. Additionally, although CRA outlines that school psychologists should consider cultural strengths, there is little direction on how to use these when planning intervention. Lastly, although CRA aims to counter a deficit-based approach to assessment, when a team determines eligibility, they must identify whether or not a student has specific deficits regardless of these being culturally relevant or valued.

Strengths-Based Assessment

Foundations and Assumptions

SBA was developed in positive psychology and fits in an ecological perspective (Lopez & Snider, 2003). In an essence, assessment rooted in positive psychology attempts to strike a balance between identifying weaknesses, deficits, or problems and identifying strength and resources. Conceptually, by identifying these strengths and resources as well as deficits, problems, or weaknesses, information gathered during assessment can be applied to planning effective intervention. This model is strikingly different than the medical model approach to identifying deficits as defining features (Lopez & Snider, 2003). SBA asserts that a student's strengths are as important to consider as deficits or problems (Jimerson et al., 2004).

School psychologists have historically promoted a strengths-based approach; however, the problem-solving framework to identify students' needs is underpinned by a deficit-model to identify deficits and difficulties to inform intervention (Jimerson et al., 2004). One shortcoming of traditional assessment processes is the neglect of attention to environmental factors, thus, assessment rooted in positive psychology, takes an ecological perspective to assuming ecological factors and environmental influences are meaningful (Wright & Fletcher, 1982). Additionally, the background values and bias of a school psychologists is key to consider throughout the assessment process rather than as an ancillary feature (Lopez & Snider, 2003). Another key defining feature of SBA is the use of standardized measures specifically aimed at identifying and capturing strengths (Epstein, 2000; Jimerson et al., 2004; Nickerson, 2007; Rhee et al., 2001). The *Behavioral Emotional Rating Scale* (BERS; Epstein & Sharma, 1998), *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CHKS; Constantine et al., 1999), *Behavior Assessment System for Children* (BASC; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992), *Developmental Assets Profile* (DAP; Search Institute, 2004), and *Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Survey* (Huebner, 2001) are some suggested standardized measures (Jimerson et al., 2004).

Application in Schools

Without authentic attention to strengths, school psychologist cannot adequately utilize an ecological approach (Jimerson et al., 2004). However, most use of strengths-based approaches in school are informal. Most psychometrically sound measures/instruments used in assessment to identify students' needs uphold a deficit focus (Epstein, 2000). Furthermore, although informal attention to strengths is a component of an IEP, typically state and federal policies require deficits to be formally

assessed while strengths are not required to be formally assessed. Data gathered from a more comprehensive assessment of strengths could better inform intervention (Rhee et al. 2000). Thus, when assessment includes the identification of strengths, it can provide a more holistic perspective of a student and more easily inform intervention (Reid et al., 2000).

Limitations

One limitation of SBA is its misalignment with processes outlined in legislation. As outlined in legislation, special education assessment includes determining if a student has a disability as defined by federal special education legislation and determining if a student is eligible for special education services (IDEA, 2004). SBA inherently does not focus on identifying deficits that may contribute to a student being determined eligible for special education. A second limitation is that until recently, most SBA methods were implemented informally or ad hoc which makes it difficult to determine the validity and reliability of these strengths-based approaches. This also makes it difficult to consistently apply strengths without comparing to a normed group strength-based approaches can be difficult to apply to determining or identifying disability in children (Jimerson et al., 2004; Rhee, 2000).

Family-School-Community Partnerships

In regard to collaborative relationships, FSCP has recently been proposed as a framework emphasizing family, school, and community partnerships as a way to foster strong, positive relationships.

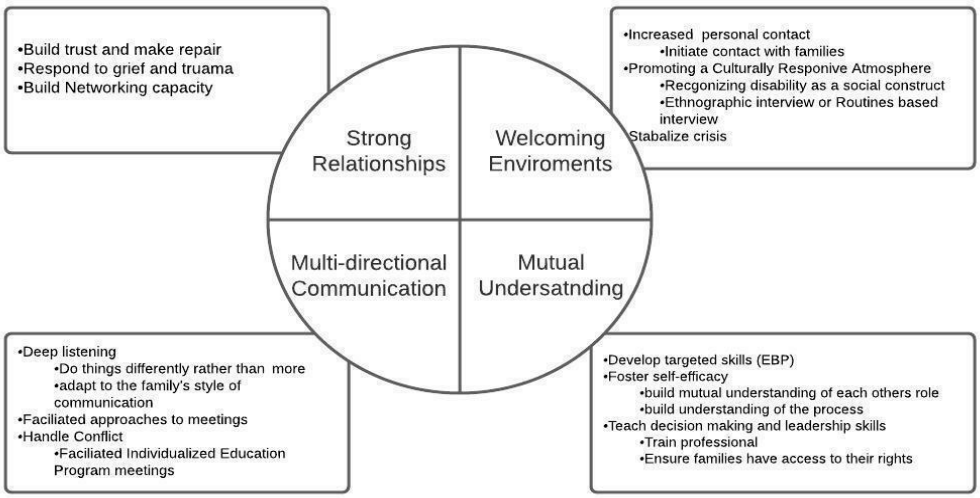
Foundations and Assumptions

FSCP is a framework through which schools, communities, and families can effectively partner with each other to support each other and students (Miller at al., 2021). Students are more likely to be successful when the "spheres of influence" of families, schools, and communities are able to overlap to guide and teacher children (Epstein, 1995). FSCP expands on this philosophy and states that individuals in families, schools, and communities each have "unique knowledge, information, experiences, and perspectives crucial to student development and learning" (Miler et al., 2021, p. 1).

FSCP is grounded by the plethora of research exploring the effect of families and communities in schools on student success and the findings that families, schools, and communities working together have a positive impact on student outcomes. In FSCP, families often include more than just the legal definition of parents. FSCP is presented in a multi-tiered model. There are four defining tenets of FSCP: strong relationships, welcoming environments, multi-directional communication, and mutual understanding (Miller et al., 2021). Figure 1.1 illustrates these tenets.

Figure1.1

Tenets of targeted-level FSCP



Application in Schools and Assessment

The application of FSCP is presented organized by the four tenets: strong relationships, welcoming environments, multi-directional communication, and mutual understanding. Although FSCP has application in schools at a universal level, its application in schools in this paper is focused on its application at a targeted or intensive-level and application to assessment. Assessment, as the process of collecting, interpreting, and synthesizing data to give context and meaning to understanding a person's strengths and weakness in order to inform intervention and recommendations (Sattler, 2018; Salvia et al., 2017; IDEA, 2004) would benefit from the inclusion and integration of the unique knowledge and information from persons in families, schools, and communities.

Strong Relationships. In FSCP, relationships between individuals in families, schools, and communities should be based on trust, respect, appreciation, acknowledgement of each other's integral roles, with the assumption that all parties are interested in student wellbeing and success (Miller et al., 2021). Within the FSCP framework, school teams promote trusting relationships through reliability, sound judgement, confidentiality, and promoting confidence in others (Miller et al., 2021). Building basic emotional trust and engaging in "crucial conversations" pave the way to resolving differences and engaging in healthy dialogue. This then builds opportunity to have difficult conversations if or when they arise (Minke & Anderson et al., 2008; Patterson et al., 2012). Cultural sensitivity and humility permeate all of FSCP and practice generally but are particularly important when forming trusting relationships (Miller et al., 2021). Trusting, respectful relationships underpinned by the assumption

that all parties are interested in a student's well-being while fostering opportunity to have difficult conversations also lend themselves to more authentic partnerships with families in special education processes.

Additionally, related to strong relationships, grief and trauma as it relates to a family's reaction to learning about a child's disability is also addressed by the FSCP framework. Within the FSCP framework, school psychologists respond to grief or trauma from families related their child's disability as a part of forming strong relationships. This is particularly salient to professionals conducting assessments at an intensive level. School teams should consider the variety of reactions and perceptions families may have when their child is identified as having an educational disability (Miller et al., 2021). Some families may not display any sort of grief or shock and could feel validated. Others may feel anxious or in disbelief. These ideas of grief and reactions to a child being identified as having an educational disability informs the notion that having a strong relationship with families and providing resources in the community to families to cope with the feelings related to an identification is a part of targeted FSCP. However, it is important that professionals consider that reactions can vary greatly family to family (Miller et al., 2021).

Lastly related to strong relationships, professionals connecting families to community supports and resources lends itself to enhancing the networking capacity of families (Miller et al., 2021). Enhancing the networking capacity of families of children with disabilities can build capacity of caretakers and promote their competence and confidence and (Trivette & Banerjee, 2015). Resources such as Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) as well as

local groups foster a sense of community and support (Miller et al., 2021). The special education assessment may be the first time a family is learning of a child's disability and thus a key opportunity to enhance their network capacity.

Welcoming Environments. Welcoming environments is the next tenet of FSCP. Schools with welcoming environments "foster perceptions of safety, warmth, friendliness, and caring that persons from all backgrounds and cultures are values and important to a school's mission" (Miller et al., 2021, p. 21). Increasing personal contact, promoting a culturally responsive atmosphere, and stabilizing crisis are welcoming environment FSCP practices at a targeted level (Miller et al., 2021).

However, professionals should acknowledge that families may have had frustrating experiences with schools which can affect their relationships with schools for years in the future (Turnbull et al., 2022 as cited in Miller et al., 2021). Thus, professionals initiating positive contact with families while using patience and time to develop partnerships (Miller et al., 2021). This may be particularly salient to professionals conduct assessments with families who may have gone through the special education processes before.

As a part of FSCP and creating welcoming school environments, professionals employ culturally responsive practices such as accepting a family's routines and practices and using those when planning intervention, rather than enforcing a dominate culture routine or practice as a part of intervention. Cultural mediators or brokers could also be utilized to build understanding of both the culture of the school and the family (Miller et al., 2021). This is salient to collecting cultural data as a part of assessment and integrating that data into assessment findings.

Multi-directional Communication. Multi-directional communication is meaningful back-and-forth communication between families, schools, and communities. Multi-directional communication as defined in the FSCP framework adds that communication should be in the preferred language, style, and modality of the family (Miller et al., 2021). For example, informal phone calls related to assessment may be preferred by some families, while more formal emails related to assessment may be preferred by others.

Additionally, deep listening, facilitated approaches to meetings, handling conflict, asking for input, and respecting opinions of families to be able to understand a situation and move forward are key components of multi-directional communication at a target level (Miller et al., 2021; Minke & Vickers, 2015; Sheridan & Kim, 2016). Communication skills and strategies such as active listening, paraphrasing, humor, and summarizing can be helpful. Professionals should also consider their posture and use of eye contact (Miller et al., 2021). Deep listening helps teams understand concerns and priorities through the family's perspective, rather than their own (Minke & Vickers, 2015). Part of this might include seeking to understand how families view their role in their child's formal schooling or how families view mental health or behavioral services. When conducting assessment, professionals should also seek to understand how a family first became aware of potential difficulties a student is having. This all can inform a professional understanding of the family's perspective and help to ensure the family is a meaningful member of the decision-making team during the process.

When families and professionals have different perspectives on assessment results and services, there may be conflict (Miller et al., 2021). Professionals should address

conflict by eliciting discussion to understand the perspectives of various parties (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Professionals should consider deep listening skills throughout conflict resolution and consider utilizing Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) meetings (Mueller & Vick, 2019).

Shared Understanding. Shared understanding at a targeted level focuses on "the development of targeted skills, strives to foster self-efficacy, and finds ways to teach decision making and leadership skills" (Miller et al., 2021, p. 23) and promotes team decision making that authentically involves team members across backgrounds or roles (Miller et al., 2021).

School psychologists use evidence-based practices (referred to as targeted skills in the FSCP framework) related to building strong FCSP as well as using evidence-based practices when planning intervention for specific students (Miller et al. 2021). Evidenced-based programs that aim to foster partnerships between families and schools generally contain foundational principles such as collaborative interactions between families and schools, promoting shared responsibility of student development, setting up an expectation of sharing work between both families and schools, and intervention efforts being across both the home and school (Garbacz et al., 2015). Additionally, professionals aim to build the self-efficacy of families, youth, and community members to support their students and participate in special education processes (Manz et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2021). For example, professionals can positively influence a family members self-esteem related to their parenting and the way they support their child (Hohlfeld et al., 2018). Inviting family members to bring liaisons and advocates to their meetings can promote a family's sense of efficacy in participating in the special

education process (Miller et al., 2021). Lastly, to foster decision making for families, families should have access to their rights and resources in a format they prefer and can easily consume (Miller et al., 2021).

Limitations

FSCP offers a plethora of practices professionals can implement; however, they must have adequate training and time to implement these. Furthermore, FSCP practices are best implemented with strong collaboration between school-based professionals, including during assessment. Therefore, professionals may need additional time and training to implement practices and build collaborative relationships. Lastly, different family's hold varying perspectives on having collaborative relationships with school professionals, who may be viewed as expertise as a sign of respect (Miller et al., 2021). Thus, although FSCP offers a variety of practices, professionals must consider the values and perspectives of each family when implementing FSCP (Miller et al. 2021).

In summation, assessment continues to fall short of its proposed purpose and perpetuates its historically deficit-based foundations. Additionally, there is a gap in research regarding the general utility of assessment and how school psychologists use assessment data to inform intervention (Dombrowski et al., 2021; Lilienfeld et al., 2012; Shaw, 2016; Sullivan et al., 2017). As evidenced by the perceptions of teachers, recommendations from psychological reports are not always implemented and sometimes are perceived as unhelpful (Gilman & Medway, 2007). Further, despite family involvement having such a positive influence on student outcomes and intervention success (Miller et al., 2021), families, particularly families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, are disenfranchised by the assessment and IEP

process (Lo, 2008; Salas, 2006). As the U.S. population grows to be more and more diverse (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021), it is even more important that school psychologists adjust their practice to empower and partner with families to facilitate active participation in the process. Various methods and models for assessment have been proposed in an attempt to shift the deficit paradigm and increase the utility of assessment (e.g., CASC, Snider et al., 2021; SBA, Jimerson et al., 2021; CRA, Jones, 2014). Additionally, other suggestions and models have been proposed to increase parent engagement in the assessment and IEP process (Blackwell & Rossettie, 2014; Chen & Gregory, 2011; Edwards & Da Fonte, 2012; Epstein, 2001; Garbacz et al., 2008; Hancock et al., 2017; Kohel et al., 2000; Martin et al., 2006; Reiman et al., 2010; Ruppar & Gaffney, 2011; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). School psychologists are required to meet timelines and other requirements of federal and state legislation as well as district guidelines while also balancing calls for role expansion and a lack of time (IDEA, 2004; NASP, 2020). The proposition of these models is without use when there is a lack of clear guidance as to how to implement them within the context school psychologists currently work. Although effective FSCP ideally begins at the universal level (Miller et al., 2021) school psychologists can initiate or foster, meaningful FSCP beginning at the targeted level through the special education assessment and initial IEP planning process. Fostering these partnerships offer a pathway to implement aspects of SBA and CRA and could lead to better outcomes for students, offer a pathway to role expansion in consultation, and align directly with the NASP practice model and therefore future direction of the profession of school psychology.

Proposed Implementation Guide: PATP-CR/SBA

As introduced above, FSCP can be leveraged at a targeted level through the special education assessment and initial IEP planning process in order to implement strengths-based and culturally responsive assessment practices. However, this would simply be another proposed model without guidance for implementation. The PATP-CR/SBA offers specific guidance for how to foster FSCP to implement CRA and SBA. The PATP-CR/SBA is founded on the framework of FSCP which is grounded in an ecological perspective (Miller et al., 2021) and integrates components of CBA and SBA. Based on extant research regarding FSCP, the PATP offers guidance on initiating and fostering partnerships with families at both a universal level and targeted or intensive level such as special education. The framework, components, application, implications for practice, and considerations and limitations will all be discussed below. Along with this discussion, a guide for the PATP-CR/SBA (found in Appendix A) is offered which guides school psychologists and their special education team through the process. The guide takes school psychologists through the special education assessment and IEP process, identifying where and how they can implement SBA and CRA by leveraging FSCP. In its current form, this guide is specific to Part B initial special education assessment to inform interventions in the IEP, including generating goals, services, and plans for progress monitoring.

Framework

FSCP is the framework for PATP-CR/SBA as effective partnerships with families and communities can be leveraged so that school psychologists can more feasibly implement CRA and SBA for several reasons. First, strong partnerships, trust,

and mutual understanding with families facilitate professionals understanding of and ability to authentically incorporating cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes. Second, integral to CRA and SBA is linking assessment to intervention and family, school, community engagement promotes student well-being and contributes to positive outcomes in both academic and social emotional domains (Miller et al., 2021). Third, school psychologists are qualified and trained in domains that make them ideal professionals to implement FSCP. FSCP align directly with the domains of NASP domains of practice and therefore directly with future directions of the field of school psychology (NASP, 2020).

Components

CRA and SBA are the components of PATP-CR/SBA. CRA and SBA are described in depth above. The reader can refer to Table 1.4 for a review of key components of CRA and SBA. Their applications in the guide will be described. Then, the rationale for being incorporated into PATP-CR/SBA and importance will be provided.

Culturally Responsive Assessment. CRA is included in the PATP-CR/SBA for several reasons. First, schools are growing to be more and more diverse (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021) and professionals must align their practices to meet the needs of the changing population. Second, there is disproportionate representation of students across gender, race, and SES, particularly Black, male students, in special education services (Power et al., 2004; Sullivan & Bal, 2013; Sullivan, 2011). This suggests that some part of current assessment practices may not be appropriate. Third, legislation asserts that students have a right to non-discriminatory evaluations in special

education (IDEA, 2004) and CRA can facilitate school psychologist's ability to uphold that right. Fourth, CRA aligns directly with the NASP domains of practice and a social justice orientation of school psychology (Jones, 2009) and therefore align directly with future directions in the field of school psychology (NASP, 2020). Lastly, despite these benefits of CRA assessment, it can be difficult to implement in schools (Jones, 2014). Using FSCP as a framework through which to implement CRA provides school psychologist with a pathway to implement practices differently than if they attempted to implement CRA alone.

Strengths Based Assessment. SBA is included in the PATP-CR/SBA for several reasons. First, the history of the profession of school psychology is closely tied with deficit-informed assessment practices focused on "sorting" students (Ferrall, 2010; Reschly, 2000). SBA informs intervention and helps school psychologists to shift from a "test and place" role to conducting assessment to inform meaningful intervention (Jimerson et al., 2004). Second, school psychology as a field has adopted a strengths-based perspective (NASP, 2020) and implementing SBA can inform more authentic incorporation of strengths (Jimerson et al., 2004), thus further aligning practices with postulated perspectives. Third, when assessment includes the identification of strengths, it can provide a more holistic perspective of a student (Reid et al., 2000). Lastly, SBA directly aligns with NASP domains of practice and social justice orientation to school psychology and therefore align directly with future directions in the field of school psychology (NASP, 2020).

Application

Critical components of FSCP, such as culturally responsive practices, building strong relationships through deep listening, and increased personal contact (Miller et al., 2021) are implemented early in the special education process during the referral and review of current data to lay a pathway to implementing CRA and SBA. In its current form, the PATP-CR/SBA acts as a generic guide for the process. However, some parts of the process may vary greatly depending on the suspected disability and student's needs (Slavia et al., 2017). For example, the process may involve many more team members and be more complex for a student with multiple suspected disabilities than a student with a suspected reading disability. Therefore, the PATP-CR/SBA should be considered as the starting place for school psychologists who should use their training and clinical judgement as they move through the process.

Application of the PATP-CR/SBA to assessment and informing intervention are integrated throughout the description of the process. Additionally, the PATP-CR/SBA guide can be found in Appendix A for teams to utilize. These documents also incorporate examples throughout the process. Table 1.5 serves as a quick reference guide with specific suggested specific resources that could be implemented with the PATP-CR/SBA. Table 1.6 illustrates each aspect of FSCP, CBA and SBA at each step, the role of school psychologists or special educators, role of students and families, and community involvement.

Table 1.5

Quick reference guide for specific resources aligned with the PATP-CR/SBA

Framework/Component	Practice or Resource
FSCP	Ethnographic Interview (Wesby, 1990) Facilitated Individuated Education Programs (FIEP) meetings
CRA	Use local norms Use CBA or CBMs JIMIS Interview (Jones, 2009)

	Routines-based Interview (McWilliams, 2006)
SBA	*Behavioral Emotional Rating Scale* (BERS; Epstein & Sharma, 1998) *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CHKS; Constantine et al., 1999) *Behavior Assessment System for Children* (BASC; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992) *Developmental Assets Profile* (DAP; Search Institute, 2004) *Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Survey* (Huebner, 2001)

Table 1.6

Aspects of CRA/SBA and FSCP in the PATP-CR/SBA at each step of special education assessment

Overview	Step 1: Referral	Step 2: Review of Current Data	Step 3: Consent
Assessment (CRA/SBA) components	X	Consider ecological factors such as school climate, school discipline trends, student trends over time Identify strengths as well as deficits Consider if pedagogy and curriculum is culturally responsive	Clearly communicate the role and purpose of the professional Explain what families and students can expect from the process Ask families what they expect of the process Clearly communicate the bounds of confidentiality
FCSP Critical Components	Multi-directional Communication Increase personal contact Begin to build strong relationships Engage in deep listening	Increase personal contact	Multi-directional Communication Build self-efficacy
School Psychologist and Special Educators Roles	Initiate contact with teacher to provide information regarding the process moving forward and plans to implement FSCP Initiate contact with family and clarify their preferred modality of communication and language <u>Family as referral source:</u> Initiate contact to clarify reason for referral <u>School as referral source:</u> Discuss with teacher to identify any previous communication and relationship with family	Other members of the team reach out to initiate contact with the family and introduce themselves briefly in the preferred modality of the family Consider ecological factors (if available, consider school trends in discipline, achievement, and absenteeism; consider if pedagogy and curriculum is culturally responsive) * Consider historical events (e.g., COVID-19 related closures or shifts in services)	Foster trust with families by building mutual understanding of the processes Ask families what they expect from the process Foster sense of self-efficacy for families as a member of team by building mutual understanding of the consent process Families have access to their rights in an easy-to-understand format

Student and Family Roles	Family can be the referral source	Opportunity to meet members of the team	Consume information regarding family rights
Community Involvement	X	X	X

Overview	**Step 4: Conduct Evaluation**	**Step 5: Determine Eligibility**	**Step 6: Plan IEP**
Assessment (CRA/SBA) components	High quality parent/caregiver interviews (JIMIS, routines-based interview) and identify interpersonal and cultural strengths Adapt to the communication style of families or students Consider ecological factors Use CBM and local norms when possible Use standardized measures to identify strengths whenever possible When conducting observations, consider if pedagogy and curriculum is culturally responsive and meet with the teacher to review findings and collaboratively interpret	Review and ensure families understand their rights Build understanding of expectations for the meeting and process Consider the holistic perspective of the child, including strengths	Incorporate cultural, family, school, and interpersonal strengths into intervention planning Assessment data informs intervention
FCSP Critical Components	High quality parent interviews (Ethnographic Interview or Routines-based Interview) Build networking capacity Build trusting relationships Promote self-efficacy	Consider grief or trauma Build networking capacity Facilitated approaches to meeting Deep listening Conflict resolution Promote self-efficacy	Intensity, complexity, and comprehensiveness of services Build networking capacity Facilitated approaches to meeting Welcoming environments

		Welcoming environments	
School Psychologist or Special Educators Roles	High quality family interviews (deep listening, Ethnographic Interview, Routines-based Interview) * Provide family with what to expect in the interview Consider grief or trauma in response to assessment results* In tandem with findings of assessment, share with family that you intend to connect with resources in the next steps* Offer to hold pre-meetings with family to review assessment findings	Consider grief or trauma in response to assessment results* Provide family with connections to resources such as Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs), Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), and other local groups* Professionals are aware of and reflect on their posture and other non-verbal communication Consider Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) meetings If conflict arises, elicit discussion to understand perspectives of various parties, use deep listening, consider mediators* Promote family bringing liaisons or advocates If appropriate, meet with student to discuss IEP process and provide instruction for participation Consider time and location of meeting Share agenda and topics with the family ahead of time Begin by identifying student strengths	Consider the intensity, complexity, and comprehensiveness of services necessary to plan communication with family and other providers moving forward* Provide or follow up with family regarding connecting to resources such as Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs), Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), and other local groups* Professionals are aware of and reflect on their posture and other non-verbal communication Consider Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) meetings Promote family bringing liaisons or advocates If appropriate, meet with student to discuss IEP process and provide instruction for participation Consider time and location of meeting Share agenda and topics with the family ahead of time
Student and Family Roles	Student takes part in assessment tasks Family engages in interview and other assessments	Identify a liaison or advocate if desired (could also be a community member) Learn about the IEP process and participation	Identify a liaison or advocate if desired (could also be a community member) Learn about the IEP process and participation
Community Involvement	Consider community members who may spend considerable time with	Identify a liaison or advocate if desired (could also be a community member)	Identify a liaison or advocate if desired (could also be a community member)

	the student or know the student well who offer information on the students' strengths and difficulties	
		Consider spaces and environments the student spends time in outside of school (e.g., if a student plays on a soccer team outside of school which focuses on team building, intervention can include informally opportunities to practice social skills at practices)

* indicates this is a role specifically for school psychologists. Because the specific administrative roles and functions of school-based professionals, such as school psychologists, school social workers, and special educators, vary school to school, some roles are interchangeable. An asterisk used to indicate if the role is specific to that of school psychologist or if it is suggested it be done in tandem with a school psychologist.

The specific roles and functions of education professionals (e.g., school psychologists, special education teachers, school social workers) may vary at schools. Some suggestions are specific to the training of school psychologists (e.g., cognitive assessments, planning social emotional intervention, offering review of evidence-based practices). Other suggestions can or should be done by any member of the school team (e.g., gathering a family's preferred modality for communication, engaging in bi-directional communication, building trust).

Following is a description of how the PATP-CR/SBA can be used in a sequential manner to facilitate assessment practices. Each step is introduced, and a vignette illustrating how the PATP-CR/SBA might be implemented can be found in Appendix B.

Pre-evaluation. School teams hoping to implement the PATP-CR/SBA should engage in a pre-meeting to discuss the guide, roles, intentions, and functions. Teams can use the document in the guide (Appendix A, pp. 1-3) which provides a brief overview of PATP to build understanding of the guide, its utility, and applications. Then, the PATP-CR/SBA teaming form (Appendix A, p. 4) should be used to establish assumptions and roles. This teaming form is based on tenets from FSCP and other best practices in school teaming (Codding et al., 2014). This part of the guide may be completed at the beginning of the school year and reviewed whenever necessary throughout the year. Teams can additionally use the section of this page with names, roles, and picture to share with families. Teams review the assumptions of Codding et al., 2014 and discuss their intentions. Discussing intentions prior to evaluations help teams consider their mindsets which inform their practices. Next, the initial team form (Appendix A, p. 5) is completed by the team. On this form, the team identifies universal, school, and community

ecological factors and resources as well as district and state resources. By identifying universal ecological factors and resources once, teams are able to reference the continually guide in individual assessment. Particularly, identifying universal culturally responsive practices is a concrete step school teams take to reference later in the process when interpreting existing data. Next, the school team reviews the PATP-CR/SBA Team Responsibilities Form (Appendix A, pp. 18-20). This form will be completed throughout each evaluation process, particularly those involving many team members, to determine what each professional will do. "School psychologist" is already denoted as the team member for practices that lend themselves to the training of school psychologists.

Step 1. Referral. During the referral (found in Appendix A, p. 6) step of evaluation, teams should implement as many of the follow suggested practices: (1) initiate contact with the family (Miller et al., 2021); (2) identify the preferred communication language and modality of the family (Miller et al., 2021; Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014); (3) clarify the reason for referral and concern of the family or teacher; (4) build mutual understanding of expectations and the process with the family (Miller et al., 2021; Hays, 2016); and (5) meet with the teacher to understand the nature of partnership between the school and family and build mutual understanding of the process and roles moving forward. Teams should determine who will engage in which tasks based on the roles the typically hold (e.g., who typically contacts families), what relationships are already established (e.g., does a team member have a strong relationship with the family or teacher, what was the family's role in any previous "assessment" expierences), and what the concern is (e.g., if concern aligns with SPED teacher or school psychologist's typical domain of assessment). In order to collect this information, teams should leverage

relationships with general education teachers and other school team members to gather information. It may also be helpful to ask the family themselves what their previous experiences have been.

Step 2. Review Current Data. After the referral, the team reviews current data Appendix A, p. 7). In this step the team should use the PATP Reviewing Current Data Form (Appendix A, p. 8) to (1) explicitly identify the reason for referral; (2) identify what data is to be reviewed; (2) review students' strengths and deficits across domains, aiming to strike a balance (Jimerson et al., 2004); (4) consider ecological factors (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014; Jimerson et al., 2004); (5) identify what data the team needs to gather. To consider ecological factors, when a professionals reviews data (e.g., state academic testing or office referrals) they should consider universal trends (e.g., what are trends in state academic testing or office referrals for students similar to this student; Salvia et al., 2017) and curriculum or environmental factors (e.g., is the academic curriculum culturally responsive for this student or could this student have missed significant amounts of instruction due to office referrals, or non-normative events occurring such as COVID-19 closures or a school crisis that impacted this student; Hays, 2016). A team might use this information to express when data should be interpreted with caution.

Step 3. Consent. If it is determined that a student should be evaluated for special education, the team moves to the consent process (Appendix A, p. 9). The team should employ as many of the suggested practices as possible including: (1) intentional and collaboration with the family, whenever possible, in determining the assessment battery (Jones, 2014; Sattler, 2018); (2) if cognitive testing is a part of the battery, the school psychologist meets with the family to build mutual understanding of the purpose (Jones,

2014; Miller et al., 2021); (3) the point of contact team member reaches out to the family regarding consent using their preferred language and modality of communication (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014; Miller et al., 2021); (4) encourage the family to bring a trusted liaison, advocate, or supporter to discuss the consent process with (Hays, 2016; Miller et al., 2021); and (5) ensure the family has information for state-provided mediation services and due process in an easy-to-understand format (Jones, 2014; Miller et al., 2021). The consent step offers a key opportunity that the team and school psychologists can use to shift the expertise paradigm by encouraging the family to bring a supporter, ensuring they have information to make an informed-decision, and begin to foster a family's sense of efficacy and autonomy in the process albeit it may take more time. However, the time poured into this step, creates a pathway strong trust and relationships that will be beneficial later in the process.

Step 4. Conduct Assessment After the consent process, the team conducts the assessment (Appendix A., p. 10). This is likely the most highly individualized step and therefore will vary greatly student to student. However, the trust, mutual understanding, and multi-directional communication that had been initiated and fosters throughout previous steps lays the groundwork for school psychologists to implement SBA and CRA. The area of concern and existing data inform many aspects of conducting the assessment. At this point, various team members conduct assessment in their respective scope of practice. Whenever possible a school psychologist should implement the following suggested practices: (1) consider various hypotheses that explain a student's presenting difficulties and remain open-minded when presented with data that might contradict an original hypothesis (Hays, 2016; Lopez & Synder, 2003); (2) use the PATP-

CR/SBA Standardized Measure Considerations form (Appendix A, p. 11) to consider purposes, benefits, and limitations of standardized measures (Jimerson et al., 2004; Jones, 2014); (3) conduct high-quality parent interviews while implementing micro skills and adjusting to the family's communication style (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014; Miller et al., 2021); (4) ask families and students about their connection with their community (Hays, 2019; Miller et al., 2021); (5) consider culturally responsiveness of pedagogy and curriculum while conducting observation and collaborate with the teacher to build interpretation (Jones, 2014); (6) sort strengths data into the PATP-CR/SBA Strengths matrix on (Appendix A, p. 12; Hays, 2016; Jimerson et al., 2004; Lopez & Synder, 2003; Miller et al., 2021); (7) consider trauma and deviate to an authentically trauma-informed assessment approach if appropriate (Hays, 2016); and (8) whenever possible, review strengths found by other special service providers in their assessment data (e.g., speech-language pathologists or occupational therapists; Miller et al., 2021). In some cases, the school psychologists, a school-based social worker, and special education teacher's assessment scope of academic and social-emotional assessment may overlap. In these cases, these professionals should complete the forms together and find time to review data.

Step 5. Determine Eligibility. After the assessment is completed, the entire IEP team including the family, general education teacher, and possibly student meets to determine special education eligibility (IDEA, 2004). At times, this meeting is held at the same time as Step 6, IEP Planning. However, the two will be described separately. At this time, the team should implement the following suggested practices whenever possible (Appendix A, p. 13): (1) school psychologist offers a pre-meeting with the family to

discuss findings of assessment (Jones, 2014; Miller et al., 2021); (2) ensure families have information for state-provided mediation services and due process in an easy-to-understand format (Jones, 2014; Miller et al., 2021); (3) encourage families to bring a liaison, advocate, or supporter (Hays, 2016; Miller et al., 2021); (4) if student is involved, provide instruction to student regarding how to participate in the meeting (Miller et al., 2021); (5) briefly share findings with the general education teacher and ensure the general education teacher feels prepared for the meeting (Miller et al., 2021); (6) share the agenda with the family in the family's preferred language and modality (Miller et al., 2021); (7) connect the family to community and school resources to build networking capacity (Miller et al., 2021); and (8) begin and end the meeting by reviewing the holistic view of the child and their strengths using the PATP-CR/SBA Strengths Matrix (Appendix A, p. 12).

Step 6. IEP Planning. As mentioned above, IEP planning may take place in the same meeting as eligibility determination. Regardless of if the meetings take place separately or together, once the team moves into IEP planning, the team should implement the following suggested practices whenever possible (Appendix A, p. 14): (1) check in with general education teacher regarding service planning, their understanding of the proposed services, and their perspective of the services; (2) utilize community members and spaces identified in assessment; (3) consider wraparound services in the community (Miller et al., 2021); and (4) discuss how the family can support the student within their family routines (Miller et al., 2021; Hays, 2016). Utilizing community members and spaces identified in assessment might include providing the family information about how to explain a goal the student is working toward to a student's

sport coaches or other community group leaders. Although not a formal service outlined in the IEP, establishing this connection between a student's school environment and community interactions could offer opportunities for student to practice skills across context. An example of this might be helping families share that a student is working to initiate positive peer interactions and that whenever possible, the student could be paired with another player for a drill or game to provide an opportunity for the student to initiate peer interaction. Another example related to accommodations could be helping a family discuss with a religious youth group leader that the student benefits from being provided instructions one step at a time and that whenever possible, they should give instructions one task at a time. Although these types of community involvement are not formally outlined in an IEP, they may foster a family's sense of efficacy in utilizing assessment findings in their child's life as a whole and meaningful incorporate community spaces and members important to the family and student.

Feedback and Reflection. Engaging in critical reflection and eliciting feedback contribute to practitioners continually growing and building critical consciousness in practice (Watts et al., 2011). Further, an initial special education evaluation and IEP planning process are often the beginning of an intensive partnership between schools and a family that could continue throughout a student's entire K-12 educational experience. Therefore, it is important to continue to build trust and making repair for any disruptions of trust. There are several options for feedback and reflection in the PATP-CR/SBA (Appendix A, p. 15). First, school teams should use the reflection guide (Appendix A, p. 16) to facilitate reflection of their implementation of FSCP throughout the process. This reflection guide acts as a jumping off point for teams to assess what they have done well

and what they might do differently next time. Although it would be helpful to complete this reflection as a team, team members can also use it independently. Second, the PATP-CR/SBA offers the PATP-CR/SBA School Team and Family Reflection form (Appendix A. p. 17). This checklist is to be completed by families and offers the opportunity for school teams to accept feedback from families and continue to foster partnerships. However, professionals should use caution when deciding whether or not to implement this. Cultural values and norms may assert that providing this type of feedback is disrespectful to school teams. Other families may not feel comfortable sharing feedback with school teams for fear of negative actions taken later due to power differentials. Therefore, there may be very few instances in which this form would be appropriate to use.

Alignment with the NASP Practice Model

The NASP practice model lays the foundation for future directions in the field (NASP, 2020). Both the role of school psychologists in special education and with families and communities are addressed in the NASP practice model. The standards are broken into two parts – the first describes 10 domains of practice that are delivered within the context of the educational systems in which school psychologists are employed and the second describes 6 responsibilities of organizations that employ school psychologists. School psychologists can only engage in activities described in domains of practice as much as the organizations they work in adhere to organizational principles (NASP, 2020). Table 1.7 demonstrates the alignment of the PATP-CR/SBA with the NASP Practice Model.

Table 1.7

PATP-CR/SBA Alignment with NASP Practice Model

NASP Practice Model	Alignment with PATP-CR/SBA
Domains of Practice	
Practices that Permeate All Aspects of Service Delivery: Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration	School psychologists collect data to identify both strengths and needs Data is utilized to drive intervention PATP-CR/SBA gives attention to the various team members included in the assessment and special education process and offers opportunities to clearly define rolls and responsibilities School psychologists using the PATP-CR/SBA have multiple opportunities to initiate and foster collaborative relationships they can leverage in the future to engage in role expansion (e.g., consultative services with teachers)
Direct and Indirect Services for Students, Families, and Schools: Domain 3: Academic Interventions and Instructional Supports Domain 4: Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Interventions	School psychologists use information gathered through assessment to inform evidence-based, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate strategies aimed to address academic and mental and behavioral health deficits School psychologists consider and promote family-school collaboration when planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions for both academic and mental and behavioral health needs
Systems-Level Services: Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning Domain 6: Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools Domain 7: Family, School, and Community Collaboration	School psychologists give attention to ecological factors Family, School, Community partnerships are centered in the PATP-CR/SBA
Foundations of School Psychological Service Delivery: Domain 8: Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations Domain 9: Research and Evidence-Based Practice Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice	By utilizing the PATP-CR/SBA school psychologists lay a pathway to more culturally responsive assessment The PATP-CR/SBA is developed with an understanding of legal, ethical, and professional practice and practices that are a part of the PATP-CR/SBA move school psychological practice closer to uploading legal and ethical practice The PATP-CR/SBA promotes the implementation of evidence-based practices
Organizational Principles Organization and evaluation of service delivery Climate, physical, personnel, and fiscal support systems	The context of service delivery is influential in the feasibility and process through which school psychologists might implement FSCP, SBA, and CRA Time, space, and resources to conduct assessment are influential on the extent to which a school

Professional communication Supervision, peer consultation, and mentoring Professional development and recognition systems	psychologist could implement the PATP-CR/SBA School climate is influential on collaboration among professionals (which is integral to the PATP-CR/SBA) Professional development is necessary for school psychologist to continue to grow the skills necessary to implement the PATP-CR/SBA

Regarding domains of practice, data-based decision making and consultation and collaboration additionally reinforce that effective collaboration between school psychologists and other school-based professionals are integral in special education assessment and IEP planning, reinforcing the relevance of the PATP-CR/SBA (which gives attention to teaming) to the field (NASP, 2020). Tenets of direct and indirect services for students, families, and schools directly align with practice in the PATP-CR/SBA and illustrate that school psychologists can use the PATP-CR/SBA to move their practice closer to alignment with using culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate methods prompt family-school collaboration. Regarding systems-level services, the PATP-CR/SBA offers concreate guidance as to how to apply this knowledge of FSCP to special education assessment and IEP planning. Furthermore, this paves the way for strong FSCP in the future and offers school psychologists opportunities to expand their role in partnering with families. Lastly, school psychological practice is underpinned by the domains of foundations of school psychological service delivery and by offering guidance as to how to implement evidence-based practices, culturally responsive practices, and foster family partnership throughout the special education assessment and IEP planning process, the PATP-CR/SBA offers opportunity for school psychologists to uphold these foundational domains.

Regarding organizational principles, the context of service delivery influences how feasible it may for a school psychologist and the professionals they work with to implement the PATP-CR/SBA. Although having all of these organizational principles in place may remove barriers to a school psychologist working within all 10 domains of practice, it is not likely that all principles will be present (NASP, 2020). Instead, school psychologists should consider the context in which they work to identify the strengths and barriers to effective practice. The PATP-CR/SBA is proposed with the understanding that school psychologists likely have both barriers and facilitators to implementing the suggested practices. Therefore, the PATP-CR/SBA should be implemented intentionally and collaboratively to build on facilitators in an attempt to address barriers.

Considerations and Limitations

This guide is created as a starting point for professionals. When implementing the PATP-CR/SBA, school psychologists should give great attention to the context of their practice. For example, a school psychologist working at a 1:500 school psychologist to student ratio, who provides direct intervention, and works in a building with a robust MTSS processes should have different considerations than a school psychologist working with many schools who will conduct the assessment and help plan the IEP, but not deliver intervention. However, there are opportunities to implement the PATP-CR/SBA regardless of context.

There are some limitations of this guide. First, this guide does not deeply integrate authentic trauma-informed practices. Second, although this guide considers how to work differently rather than do more work in assessment practices, this guide does not directly address some current barriers to effective school psychological practice, such as

shortages and lack of resources. Third, though this guide can still be used when assessing emerging bilingual students, school teams should additionally implement appropriate assessment practices for emerging bilingual students. Fourth, assessments for different areas of concern or suspected disability may vary greatly and require professionals to have additional expertise or training that the PATP-CR/SBA does not address. Lastly, the PATP-CR/SBA is a theoretical guide and requires additional research to assess its effectiveness and efficacy.

Conclusion and Call to Research

Special education provides modified, individualized instruction to students. Assessment of students is an important part of special education as its purpose is to determine eligibly and inform intervention. IDEA (2004) dictates that families should be an integral partner in the process. Parent input in the special education process additionally has meaningful impact even as far into planning to support the student's life post-secondary education. However, families, particularly those from historically minoritized groups, often do not feel they are authentically included partners (Chen & Gregory, 2011).

Despite long time calls from role expansion (Fagan, 2014), the role of school psychologists has been closely tied to assessment and continues to be a large part of their practice (Benson et al., 2019; Goforth et al., 2020). However, school psychologists have a unique skill set that positions them to play an influential role meaningful shifting the way special education assessment and intervention planning is conducted. Additionally, as the profession has claimed a strengths-based, social justice orientation (NASP, 2020), the field should also continue to adjust their practice to live up to that claim. If school

psychologists can utilize their unique skill set through a strengths-based, social justice orientation they could impact a have meaningful, positive effects on families and students' lives.

Methods and models of assessment, such as CRA and SBA, that attempt to shift the deficit-based paradigm that has underpinned assessment practices. These give attention to culture and identity, recognize ecological factors as meaningful, and assert that assessment should drive intervention (Jimerson et al., 2004; Hays, 2019; Jones, 2009). However, these practices are often difficult to implement. The PATP is proposed as an implementation guide to guide school psychologists and other professionals in using FSCP as a framework through which to implement CRA and SBA in the special education process.

Although the processes and practices suggested in PATP are well support by research, FSCP, CRA, and SBA, there is a need to better the process school psychologist currently use to partner with families and communities in assessment. In particular, previous research and legislation give little attention if or how communities should be incorporated in special education, particularly in initial processes. Although models such as CRA and SBA have been suggested and described, there is also little research explore the fidelity with which school psychologists claiming to use these practices are implementing them in schools. Additionally, there is a history of disproportionate representation of students (Sullivan & Bal., 2013; Sullivan, 201) particularly Black students (Power et al., 2004) in special education services. As school psychologists claim to shift to social justice perspectives, there is little research exploring how school

psychologists consider social justice or disproportionality in their own assessment practices.

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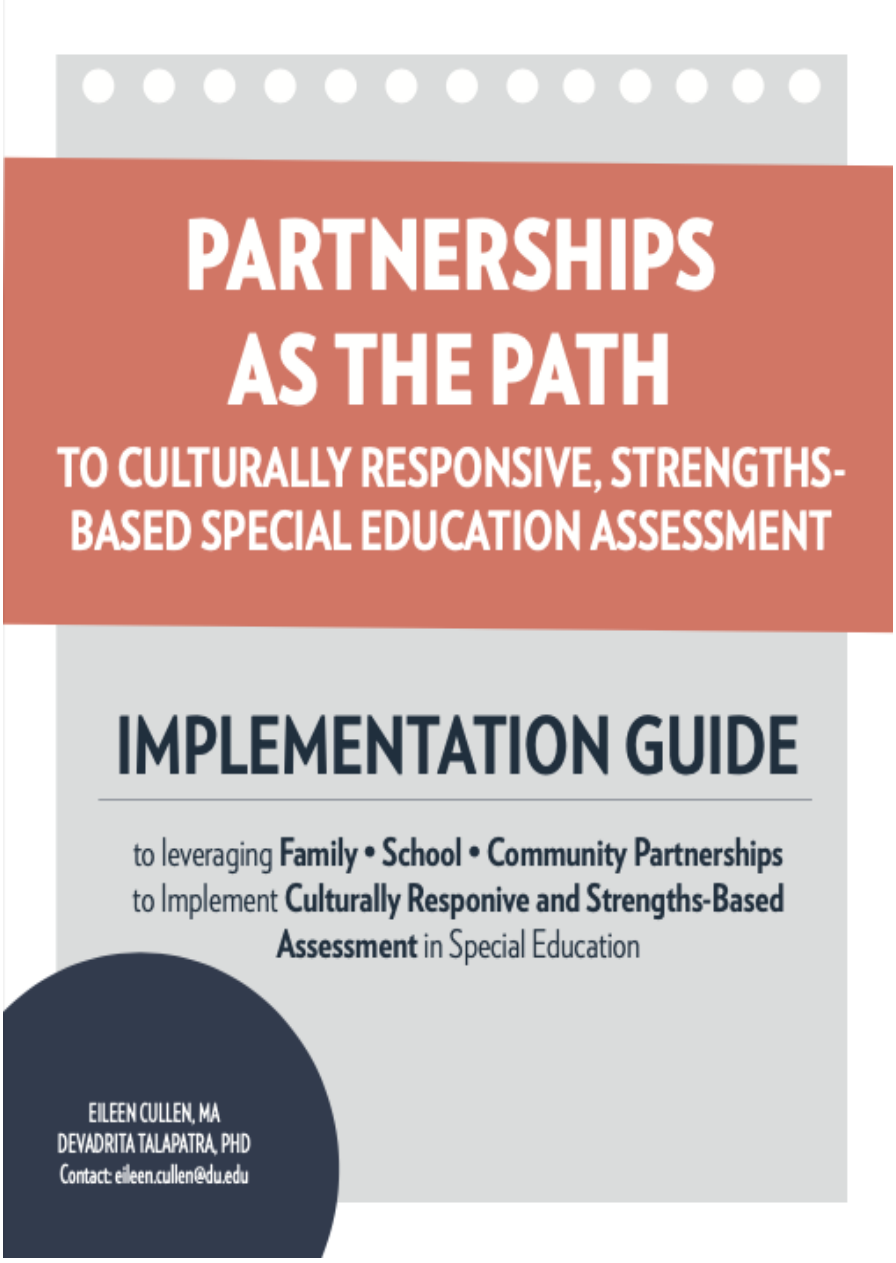
Appendices
Appendix A



PURPOSE & USE

PURPOSE: To center Family • School • Community Partnerhips (FSCP) throughout the special education process to implement culturally responsive and strengths-based assessment to better support students and improve student outcomes.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE: This guide is based on tenets of FSCP. The guide includes forms for special education teams to use at various steps of the initial special education evaluation process including assessment and intervention/service planning. The forms intend to provide concrete steps teams can use to center family partnerships. This guide is created for consumption by school psychologists and special education professionals with the intention that school psychologists are acting as collaborative team-members on special education teams. In order to implement this guide, teams should become familiar with FSCP by reviewing page 3. Then teams can use the associated forms to conduct a teaming meeting with school-based team professionals and associated documents throughout each step of the process. The associated documents at each step are outlined on the next page.

Teams should consider this a jumping off point, and intentionally consider the context within which they work. The Teaming Responsibilities Form on pages 18-20 should be used throughout.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FSCP OVERVIEW

FAMILY • SCHOOL • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (FSCP) has four tenets:
Strong Relationships, Welcoming Environments, Multi-Directional Communication, and Mutual Understanding.

Practices in these four tenets can facilitate special education assessment and planning intervention that is more culturally responsive and strengths based. View these tenets below.

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS	WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS

• Build trust and make repair
• Respond to grief and truama
• Build Networking Capacity
	• Increased personal contact
	  • Initiate contact with families
	• Promoting a Culturally Responsive Atmosphere
	  • Recognizing fisability as a social construct
	  • Ethnographic interview or Routines based interview
	• Stabilize crisis

MULTI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATION	**MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

• Deep listening
  • Do things differently rather than more
  • Adapt to the family's style of communication
• Facilitated approaches to meetings
• Handle Conflict
  • Facilitated Individualized Education Program meetings
	• Develop targeted skills (EBP)
	• Foster self-efficacy
	  • Build mutual understanding of each others' role
	  • Build understanding of the process
	• Teach decision making and leadership skills
	  • Train professionals
	• Ensure families have access to their rights

3.

PATP

Eileen Cullen, MA

INITIAL TEAMING FORM

NAME/ ROLE	*Eileen Cullen, School Psychologist*	[PICTURE]	**NAME/ ROLE**		[PICTURE]
NAME/ ROLE		[PICTURE]	**NAME/ ROLE**		[PICTURE]
NAME/ ROLE		[PICTURE]	**NAME/ ROLE**		[PICTURE]

ASSUMPTIONS:

1. Families, schools, and communities play a critical role in student development.
2. All members of families, schools, and communities have the student's well-being and best interest in mind.

TEAM INTENTIONS:

e.g. authentically partner with families throughout the process, value the expertise of parents, etc.

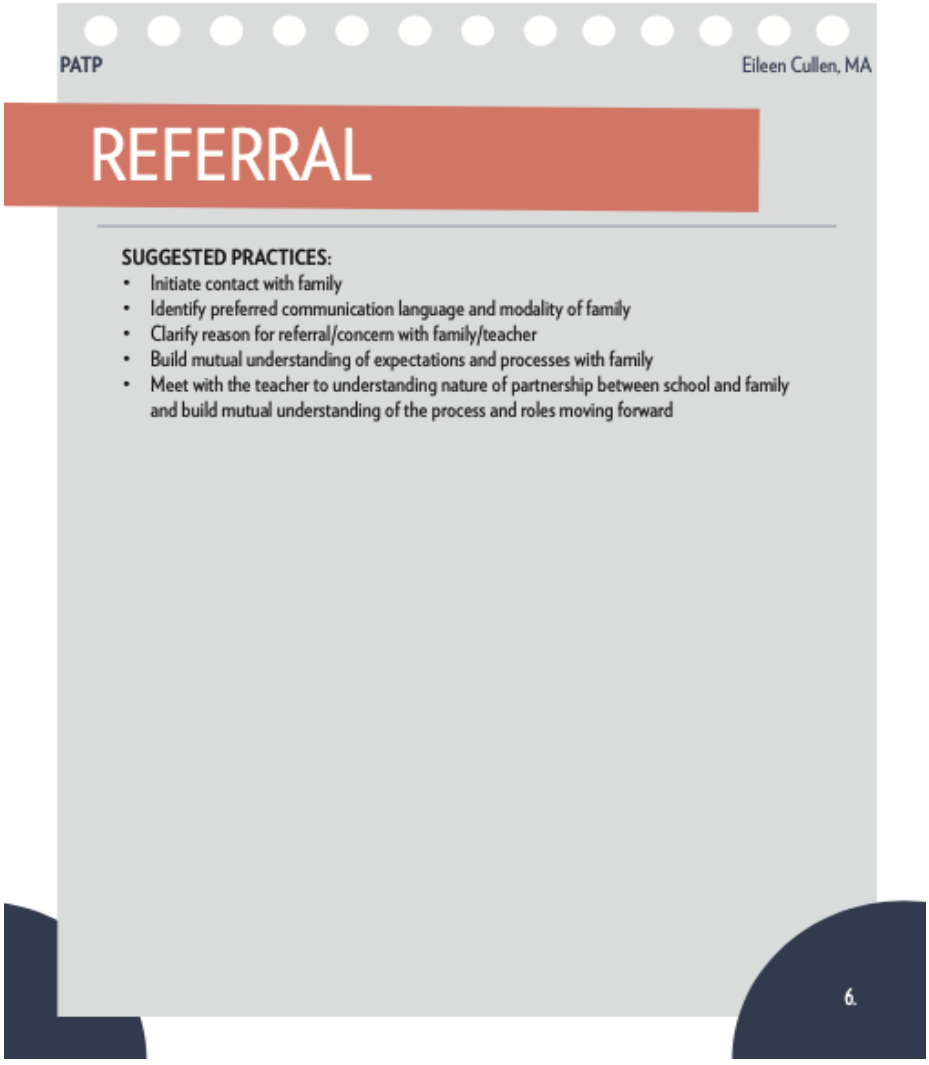
4.

INITIAL TEAMING FORM

Teams should assess their school and community ecological factors and resources as well as state and district resources that can be considered throughout assessment and service planning.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL FACTORS AND RESOURCES ASSESSMENT:	
ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:	
ESTABLISHED UNIVERSAL FAMILY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES:	
ESTABLISHED UNIVERSAL CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES: *e.g. pedagogy, curriculum, discipline practices, etc.*	

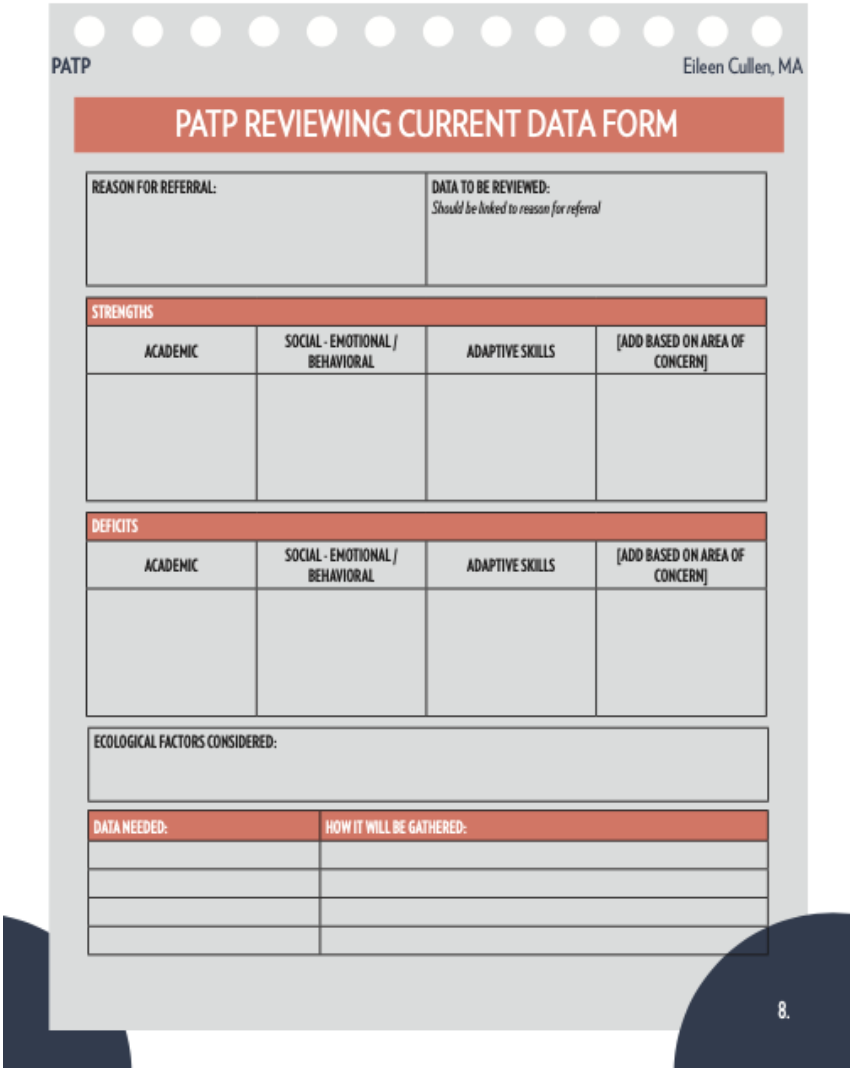
DISTRICT AND STATE RESOURCES ASSESSMENT:	
RESOURCES FOR UNIVERSAL FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS:	
RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS:	
RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:	


PATP
Eileen Cullen, MA
REFERRAL
SUGGESTED PRACTICES:
• Initiate contact with family
• Identify preferred communication language and modality of family
• Clarify reason for referral/concern with family/teacher
• Build mutual understanding of expectations and processes with family
• Meet with the teacher to understanding nature of partnership between school and family and build mutual understanding of the process and roles moving forward
6.

REVIEW CURRENT DATA

SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

- Offer context of ecological factors with school-wide data (*e.g. school discipline trends, pedagogy, curriculum, etc.*)
- Utilize the 'Review Current Data' form on page 8 to include student strengths in review and determine what additional data is needed.


PATP
Eileen Cullen, MA
PATP REVIEWING CURRENT DATA FORM
REASON FOR REFERRAL:
DATA TO BE REVIEWED:
Should be linked to reason for referral
STRENGTHS
ACADEMIC
SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL / BEHAVIORAL
ADAPTIVE SKILLS
[ADD BASED ON AREA OF CONCERN]
DEFICITS
ACADEMIC
SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL / BEHAVIORAL
ADAPTIVE SKILLS
[ADD BASED ON AREA OF CONCERN]
ECOLOGICAL FACTORS CONSIDERED:
DATA NEEDED:
HOW IT WILL BE GATHERED:
8.

CONSENT

SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

- Determine assessment battery
- If cognitive testing is a part of the battery, the school psychologists meets with the family to build mutual understanding of the purpose
- Point of Contact reaches out to the family regaring the consent process using their preferred language/modality
- Encourage families to bring a trusted liason, advocate, or supporter to discuss the consent process with
- Ensure the family has information for state-provided mediation serives and due process in an easy-to- understand format

CONDUCT EVALUATION

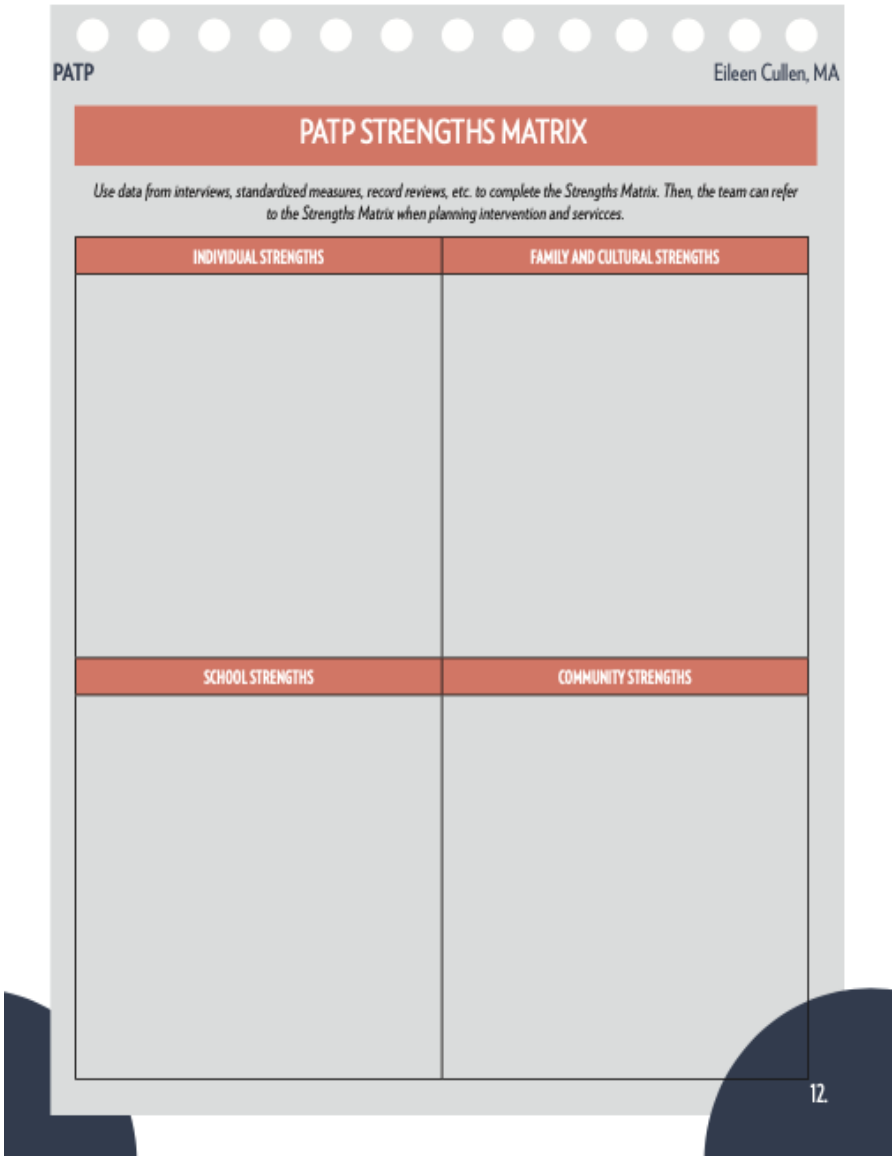
SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

- School team members conduct assessment in their respective scope of practice
- School psychologists and special educations should use the Standardized Measure Considerations form on page 11 to consider purposes, benefits, and limitations of standardized measures to align with culturally responsive and strengths-based practices
- Teams should use the Strengths Matrix on page 12 to identify individual, family and cultural, school, and community strengths for case conceptualization and service planning
- Consider various hypotheses that explain a student's presenting difficulties and remain open-minded when presented with data that might contradict an original hypothesis
- Use the PATP Standardized Measure Considerations Form on page 11 to consider the purposes, benefits, and limitations of standardized measures
- Conduct high-quality parent interviews (e.g., Routines-Based Interview; McWilliams, 2006; Ethnographic Interview; Wesby, 1990; Jimis Interview; Jones, 2009) while implementing micro-skills and adjusting to the family's communication style
- Ask families and students about their connection with their community
- Consider culturally responsiveness of pedagogy and curriculum while conducting observation and collaborate with the teacher to build interpretation
- Sort strengths data into the PATP strengths matrix on page 12
- Consider trauma and deviate to an authentically trauma-informed assessment approach if appropriate
- Whenever possible, review strengths found by other special service providers in their assessment data (e.g., speech-language pathologists or occupational therapists)

PATP STANDARDIZED MEASURES CONSIDERATIONS

School psychologists should use the following table to consider the use of and purpose of standardized measures.

DATA/INFORMATION NEEDED	POSSIBLE STANDARDIZED MEASURES	POTENTIAL INFORMATION GATHERED FROM MEASURE	LIMITATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS
Information regarding the child's behavior related to executive functioning at home	*BREIF-2, parent report*	*Parent's perspective of child's behavior related to executive functioning; child's behavior related to executive functioning in the home setting*	*Only offers the behavior perspective; cultural expectations at home may not align with prompts of BREIF-2*


PATP
Eileen Cullen, MA
PATP STRENGTHS MATRIX
Use data from interviews, standardized measures, record reviews, etc. to complete the Strengths Matrix. Then, the team can refer to the Strengths Matrix when planning intervention and servicces.
INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS
FAMILY AND CULTURAL STRENGTHS
SCHOOL STRENGTHS
COMMUNITY STRENGTHS
12.

PATP

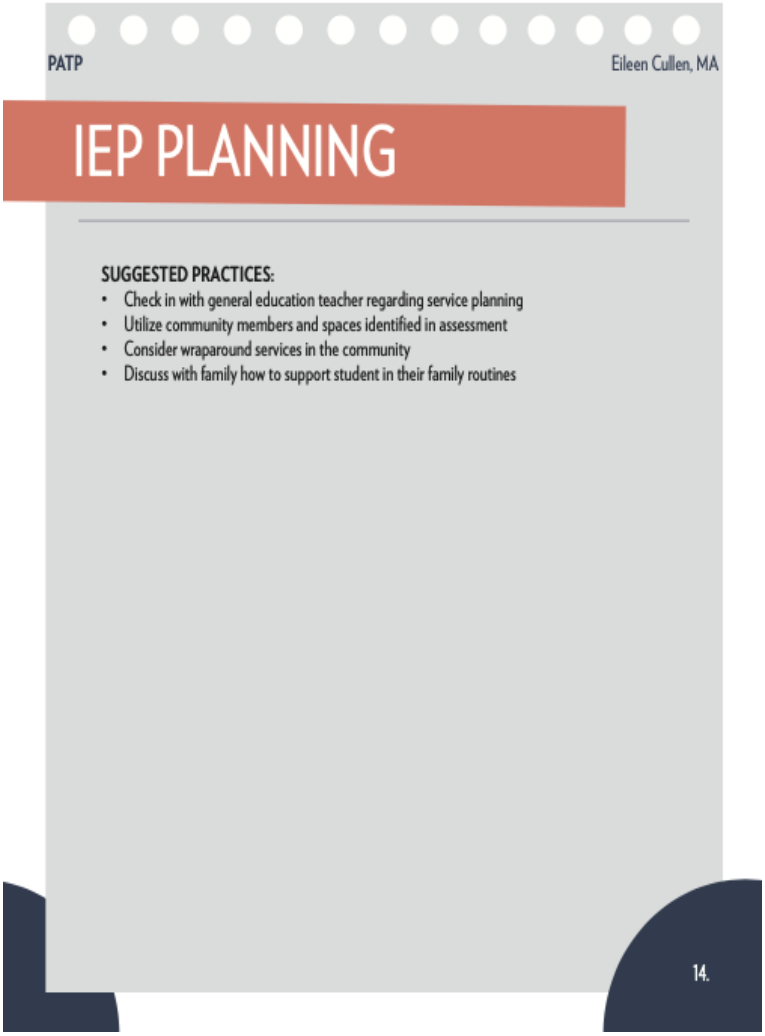
Eileen Cullen, MA

DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

- Offer pre-meeting with family to discuss findings of assessment
- Ensure families have information for state-provided mediation services and due process in an easy-to- understand format
- Encourage families to bring a liaison, advocate or supporter
- If student is to be involved, provide instruction to student regarding how to participate
- Briefly share findings with general education teacher and ensure general education teacher feels prepared for the meeting
- Share agenda with family in the family's preferred language/modality
- Connect family with resources to build networking capacity
- Begin and end meeting by reviewing the holistic view of the child and their strengths using the Strengths Matrix

13.


PATP
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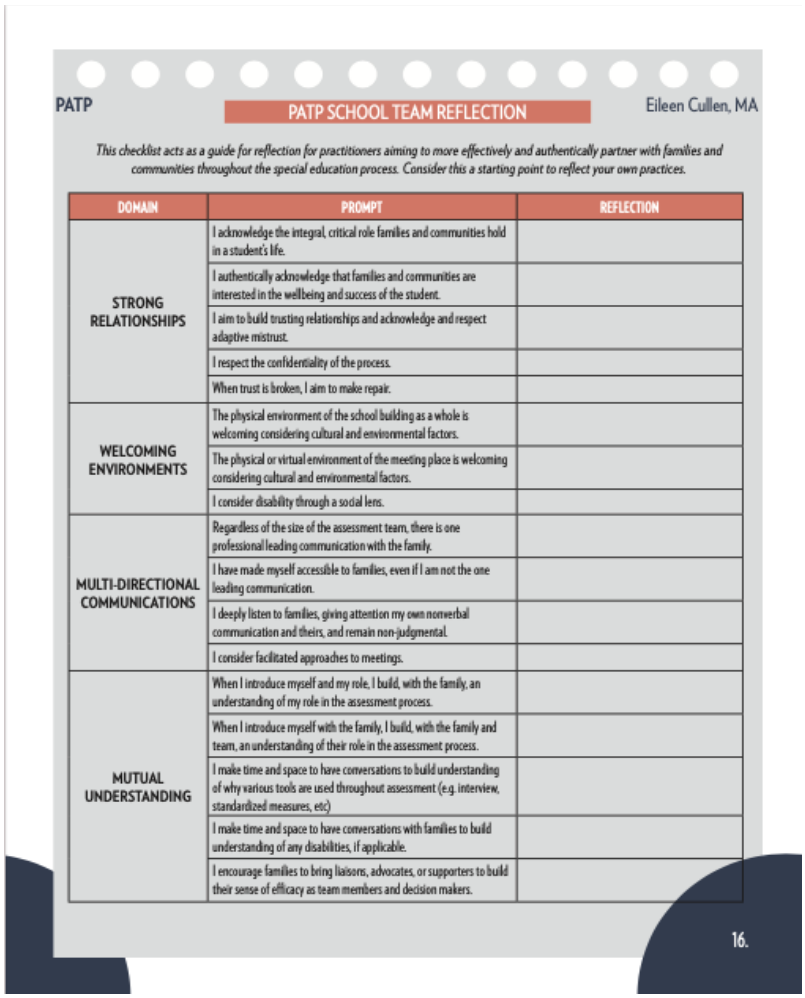
IEP PLANNING
SUGGESTED PRACTICES:
• Check in with general education teacher regarding service planning
• Utilize community members and spaces identified in assessment
• Consider wraparound services in the community
• Discuss with family how to support student in their family routines
14.

SCHOOL TEAM REFLECTION AND FAMILY FEEDBACK

SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

- School teams can use the Reflection Guide on page 16 to reflect on their implementation of FSCP through the process
- As initial special education assessment and IEP planning are often the beginning of intensive partnerships between families and schools, school teams should consider eliciting feedback from the family to continue to build trust as schools and the family partner throughout the rest of the K-12 education career of the student
- School teams can start a conversation with families guided by the Reflection Guide on page 17, however teams should be mindful that some families may not feel comfortable offering feedback



PATP

PATP SCHOOL TEAM REFLECTION

Eileen Cullen, MA

This checklist acts as a guide for reflection for practitioners aiming to more effectively and authentically partner with families and communities throughout the special education process. Consider this a starting point to reflect your own practices.

DOMAIN	PROMPT	REFLECTION
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS	I acknowledge the integral, critical role families and communities hold in a student's life.	
	I authentically acknowledge that families and communities are interested in the wellbeing and success of the student.	
	I aim to build trusting relationships and acknowledge and respect adaptive mistrust.	
	I respect the confidentiality of the process.	
	When trust is broken, I aim to make repair.	
WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS	The physical environment of the school building as a whole is welcoming considering cultural and environmental factors.	
	The physical or virtual environment of the meeting place is welcoming considering cultural and environmental factors.	
	I consider disability through a social lens.	
MULTI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS	Regardless of the size of the assessment team, there is one professional leading communication with the family.	
	I have made myself accessible to families, even if I am not the one leading communication.	
	I deeply listen to families, giving attention my own nonverbal communication and theirs, and remain non-judgmental.	
	I consider facilitated approaches to meetings.	
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING	When I introduce myself and my role, I build, with the family, an understanding of my role in the assessment process.	
	When I introduce myself with the family, I build, with the family and team, an understanding of their role in the assessment process.	
	I make time and space to have conversations to build understanding of why various tools are used throughout assessment (e.g. interview, standardized measures, etc)	
	I make time and space to have conversations with families to build understanding of any disabilities, if applicable.	
	I encourage families to bring liaisons, advocates, or supporters to build their sense of efficacy as team members and decision makers.	

16.

PATP

PATP SCHOOL TEAM & FAMILY REFLECTION

Eileen Cullen, MA

This checklist acts as a guide for reflection for families and practitioners to use together. This is an opportunity for school teams to accept feedback from families, repair any trust broke, and continue to foster partnerships.

DOMAIN	PROMPT	REFLECTION
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS	The school team valued my input and perspective.	
	I felt there was a trusting relationship between the school team and family, or trust is being built.	
WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS	The physical environment of the school building as a whole is welcoming.	
	The physical or virtual environment of the meeting place is welcoming.	
	The school team initiated contact with me.	
MULTI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS	Communication was clear and helpful.	
	Even if they were not the main point of contact, I felt I could reach out to any team member.	
	School staff listened to me.	
	The set up and process of meetings was clearly communicated.	
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING	I understood everyone's role, including my own.	
	The findings of the assessment were communicated clearly so that I could use that information to make decisions.	
	Staff encouraged me to bring a liaison, advocate, or support to build their sense of efficacy as team members and decision makers.	

17.

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

School teams should use the following form to determine what professionals should take on which tasks to improve teaming and collaboration. Some practices are suggested.

PRACTICES	TENET/ COMPONENT	TEAM MEMBER	STRATEGIES
REFERRAL			
Initiate Contact Identify preferred communication language and modality	Strong relationships; Welcoming environments		Positive contact; build trust
Clarify reason for referral/concern Build mutual understanding of expectations of the process	Multi-directional communication; CRA		Empathy; deep listening
Meet with teacher to understand nature of partnership between school and family and build mutual understanding of the process and roles moving forward	Mutual understanding; FSCP		Build collaborative relationships; consider systems-change theories (e.g., Concerns-Based Adoption Model); clearly define roles
REVIEW CURRENT DATA *team members review data pertinent to their scope; refer to appendix C*			
Offer context of ecological factors of any school-wide data	CRA	School Psychologist	Review available data related to school discipline trends, school climate, attendance, etc.
OBTAIN CONSENT			
Team members decide on assessment batteries and what is necessary for the consent process	CRA; SBA		Utilize Reviewing Data form and Standardized Measure Consideration form
If cognitive testing- school psychologist meet with family to build mutual understanding of the purposes	Multi-directional communication; strong relationships; CRA	School Psychologist	Avoid jargon; deep listening; build family's sense of efficacy as decision makers
Point of contact reaches out to family regarding the consent process using their preferred language/modality	Welcoming environment; Multi-directional Communication; CRA		Build trust; build family's sense of efficacy as decision makers; avoid jargon
Encourage families to bring a trusted liaison, advocate or support to discuss the consent process	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as decision makers

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

PRACTICES	TENET/ COMPONENT	TEAM MEMBER	STRATEGIES
OBTAIN CONSENT *continued*			
Discuss expectations of the process	Mutual understanding; Welcoming environments; CRA		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members; build trust; build understanding of each other's roles; avoid jargon
Ensure families have information for state-provided mediation services and due process in an easy-to-understand format	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
CONDUCT EVALUATION *Refer to page 10*			
DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY			
Offer pre-meetings for families to discuss findings of assessment	Mutual understanding; Strong relationships	School Psychologist	Build family's sense of efficacy as team members; build trust; consider grief and trauma reactions of families; avoid jargon; build contextual meaning of findings
Ensure families have information for state-provided mediation services and due process in an easy-to-understand format	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
Encourage families to bring a liaison, advocate, or supporter	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
If student is to be involved, provide instruction to students regarding how to participate	Mutual understanding	School Psychologist	Build student's sense of efficacy

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

PRACTICES	TENET/ COMPONENT	TEAM MEMBER	STRATEGIES
DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY *continued*			
Briefly share findings with general education teacher and ensure general education teacher feels prepared for meeting	Mutual understanding		Build collaborative relationships; build teacher's sense of efficacy as a team member; deep listening
Determine if a facilitated meeting or approach should be used	Multi-directional communication		Utilize state/district resources
Share agenda with the family in the family's preferred language/modality	Multi-directional communication; mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
Connect families with resource to build networking capacity	Strong relationships	School Psychologist	Build family's sense of efficacy; utilize community resources
Begin and end meeting by reviewing the holistic view of the child and their strengths	CRA; SBA; FSCP		Utilize formally and informally identified strengths
IEP Planning *build upon practices in determining eligibility*			
Check in with general education teacher regarding service planning	Mutual understanding		Build collaborative relationships; build teacher's sense of efficacy as a team member; deep listening; consider systems-change theory (e.g., Concerns-Based Adoption Model)
Utilize community members and spaces identified in assessment	Mutual understanding; CRA; FSCP		Value the perspectives of family members
Consider wraparound services in the community	Welcoming environments; CRA; FSCP		Consider identified community resources
Discuss with families how to support student in their family routines	Mutual understanding; multi-directional communication; CRA; SBA		Deep listening; avoid jargon; value the perspectives of family members; build family's sense of efficacy

Appendix B

PATP-CR/SBA with Vignette

This vinaigrette provides an example of how a school psychologist and special education team might implement the PATP-CR/SBA; however, the specific needs of each student and family, make-up of the team, and contextual factors should influence how the PATP-CR/SBA is implemented.

PURPOSE & USE

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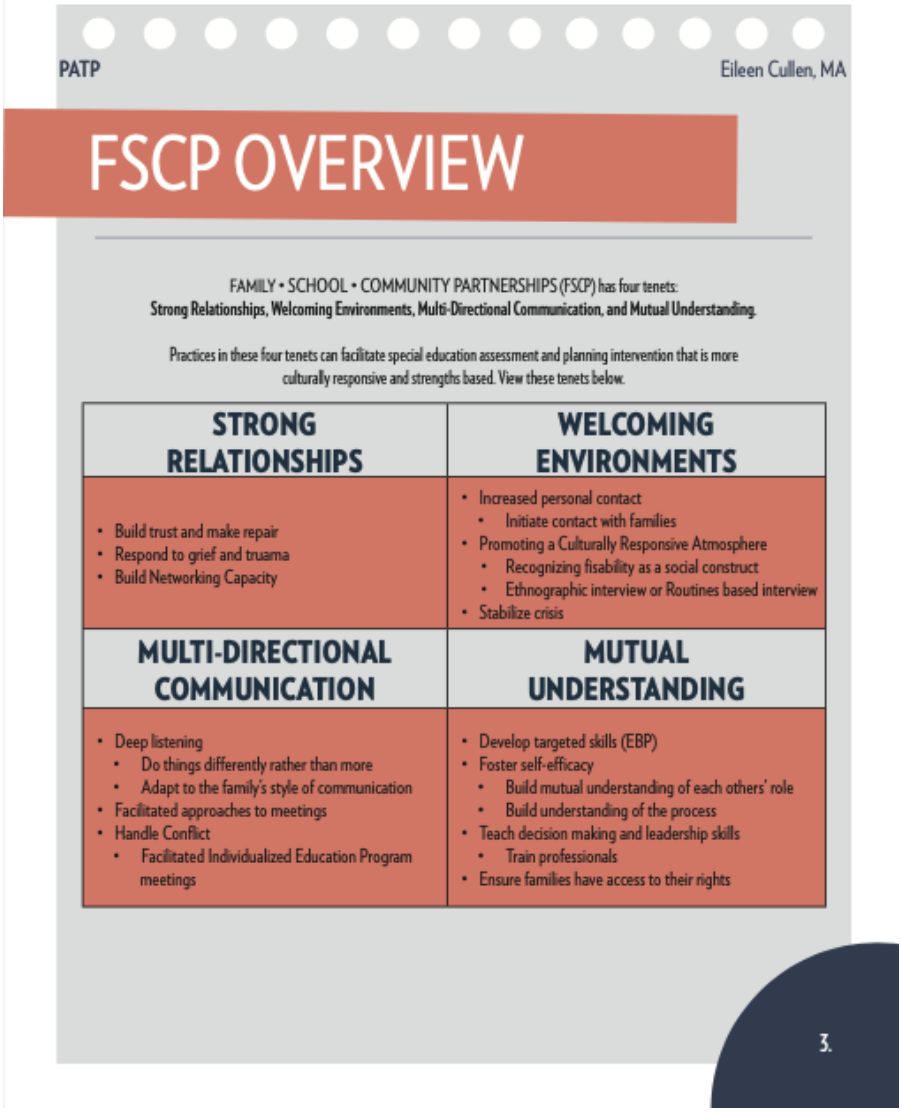

PATP

Eileen Cullen, MA

FSCP OVERVIEW

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	  • Recognizing fisability as a social construct
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	• Stabilize crisis

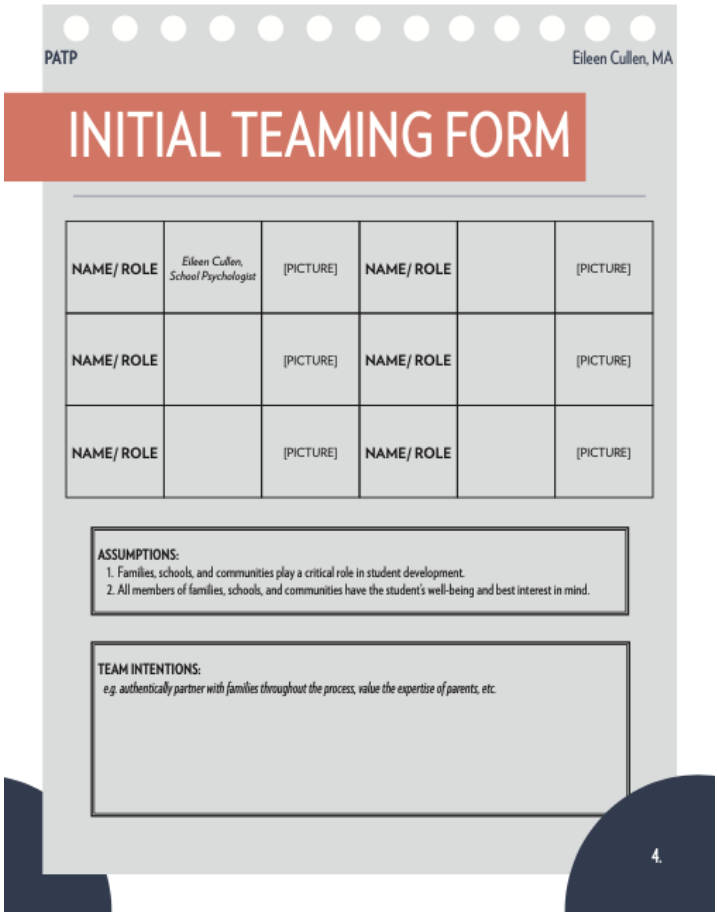
MULTI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATION	**MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

• Deep listening
  • Do things differently rather than more
  • Adapt to the family's style of communication
• Facilitated approaches to meetings
• Handle Conflict
  • Facilitated Individualized Education Program meetings
	• Develop targeted skills (EBP)
	• Foster self-efficacy
	  • Build mutual understanding of each others' role
	  • Build understanding of the process
	• Teach decision making and leadership skills
	  • Train professionals
	• Ensure families have access to their rights

3.

The school psychologist and other special education team members convene for their weekly meeting. This school year, they would like to improve their partnerships with families and aim to implement more culturally responsive and strengths-based practices. They have decided to use the PATP-CR/SBA. As a team, they review tenets of FSCP described above. The team realizes they each have some sort of training related to practices in the tenets of FSCP and recognize their strengths and areas to grow as a team.

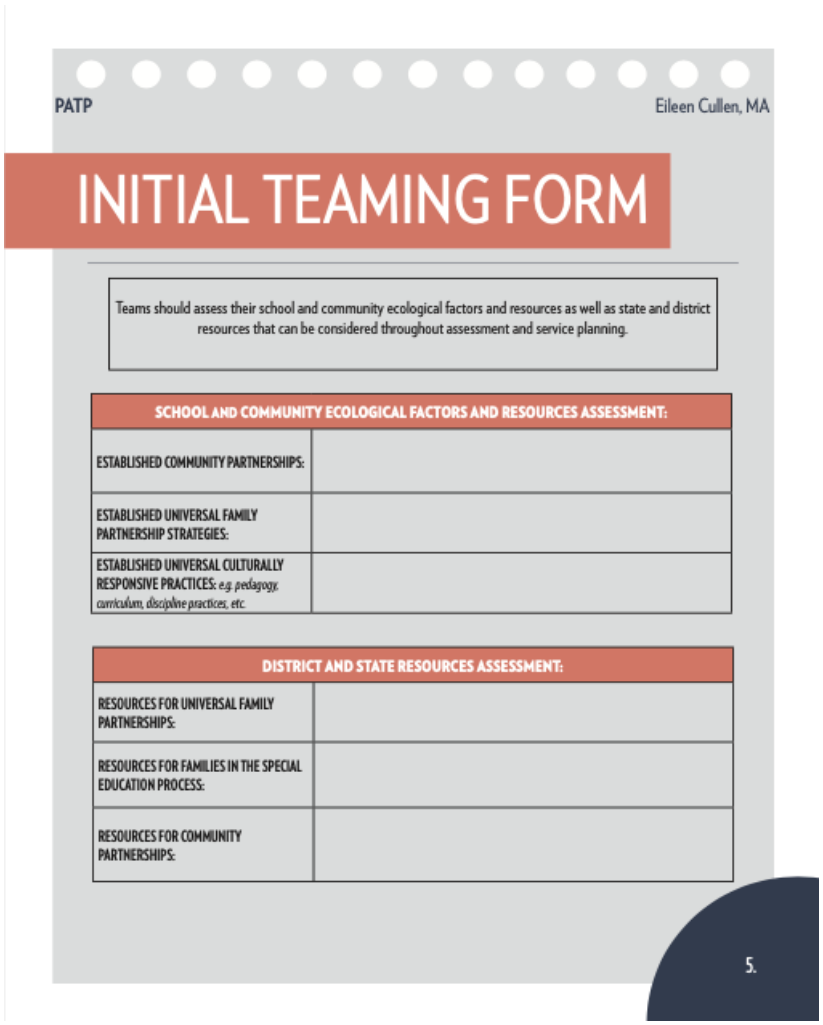
Later in the process, the team shares this page with the general education teachers they work with and administrators to provide some background on their intentions to center FSCP in their special education assessments.



Team names, roles, and photos are added. This is continually shared with families throughout the year so that they have an idea of who is on the team!

Next, after reviewing the tenets of FSCP on page 3, the team reviews the assumptions of the PATP-CR/SBA. They agree that understanding and believing these assumptions is important to their practice.

Then, the team collaborative discusses their overall purpose and goals for their own work throughout the process. This team intends to authentically partner with families and value the expertise of parents. They decide that they will help each by providing feedback when have seen a team member do this well and seek consultation from the team when they are having difficulty with this. The school psychologist specifically discusses their intention to ensure strengths are not only identified but are incorporated into intervention. Other team members may share their specific intentions as well.



PATP

Eileen Cullen, MA

INITIAL TEAMING FORM

Teams should assess their school and community ecological factors and resources as well as state and district resources that can be considered throughout assessment and service planning.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ECOLOGICAL FACTORS AND RESOURCES ASSESSMENT:	
ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:	
ESTABLISHED UNIVERSAL FAMILY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES:	
ESTABLISHED UNIVERSAL CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES: *e.g. pedagogy, curriculum, discipline practices, etc.*	

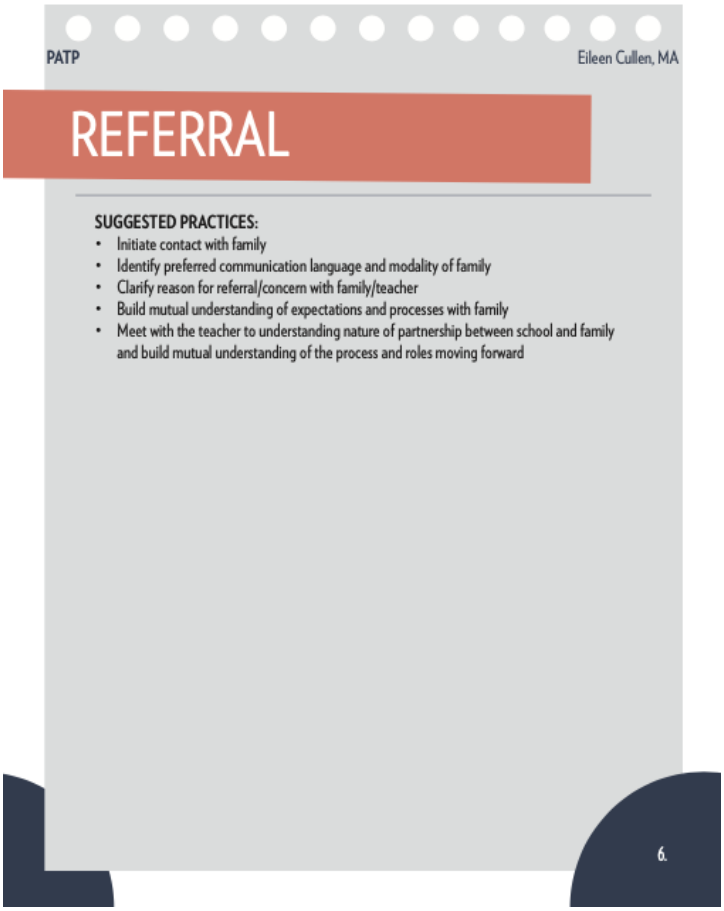
DISTRICT AND STATE RESOURCES ASSESSMENT:	
RESOURCES FOR UNIVERSAL FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS:	
RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS:	
RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:	

5.

Next, the team identifies ecological factors of their school and community to consider later during individual evaluations including while conducting assessments and planning interventions. By completing this form once, the team is able to refer to it throughout the year. They also are able to build upon the strengths and resources the school and community already has.

Then, the team identifies state and district resources to consider. This team decides to contact their direct special education director to see if there are any resources, they are unaware of. The school psychologist and another special service provider, the speech therapist, offer to ask their colleagues in the district if they know of any resources. The team identifies that the state has a liaison for family partnerships, and they find their district's resources for families regarding the special education process.

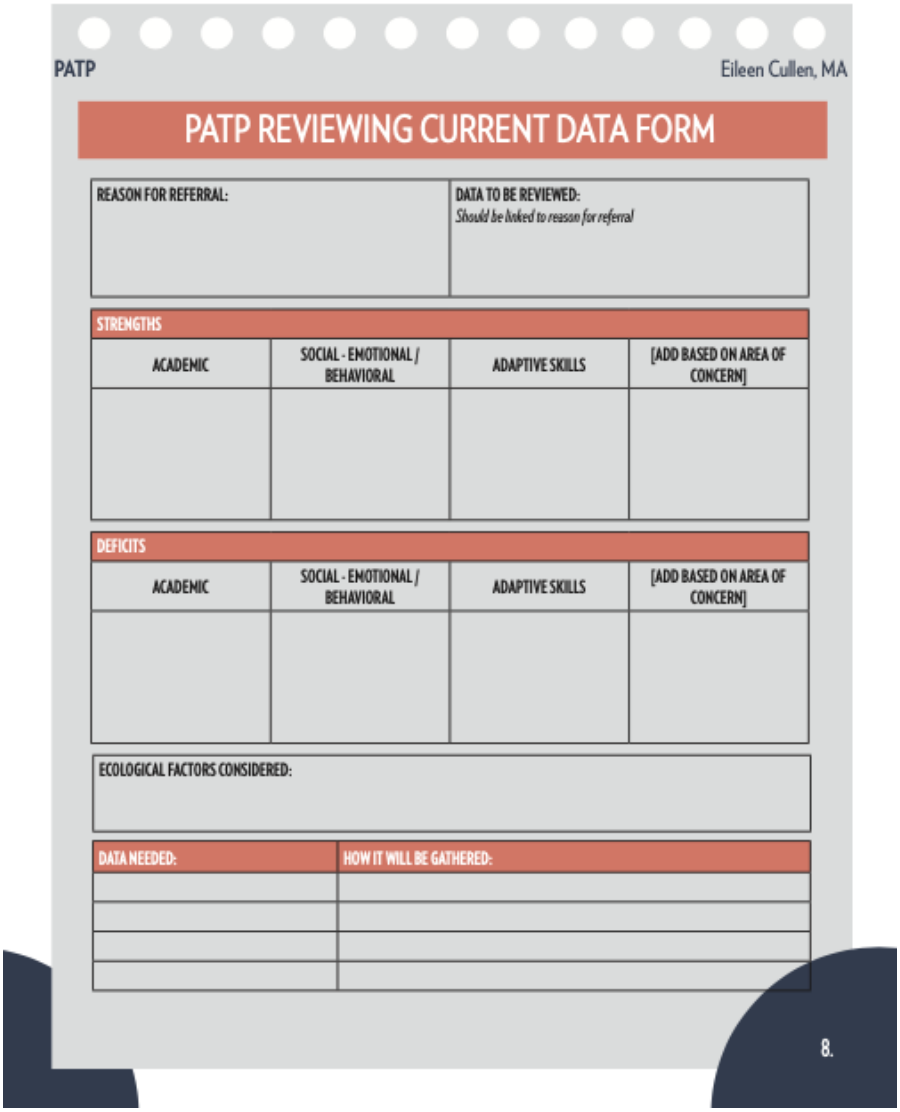
Now that the team has completed these forms, they briefly review the rest of the PATP-CR/SBA.



The team has now had their first special education referral of the year. They review the documents they have already completed. Then, the special education teacher, who has a strong relationship with the general education teacher who referred the student, clarifies the reason for referral. The special education teacher also shared page 3 of the PATP-CR/SBA with the teacher and introduces their intention to center family partnerships. They ask the teacher what their relationship with the family is like thus far. The school psychologist already has a relationship with this family from working with their other student, so the school psychologist initiates contact with the family, identifies their preferred language and modality of communication, discusses what the next steps will be, and asks the family what their expectations are.

The team refers to the Teaming Form on page 18 to determine who will fill what role. The team generally has roles set, but by using the form, the team is able to leverage each member's strengths and resources, such as strong relationships with other stakeholders.

Next the team reviews current data using the Review Current Data form on page 8, they also refer back to ecological factors they have already identified.



PATP

Eileen Cullen, MA

PATP REVIEWING CURRENT DATA FORM

REASON FOR REFERRAL:	DATA TO BE REVIEWED: *Should be linked to reason for referral*

STRENGTHS			
ACADEMIC	SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL / BEHAVIORAL	ADAPTIVE SKILLS	[ADD BASED ON AREA OF CONCERN]

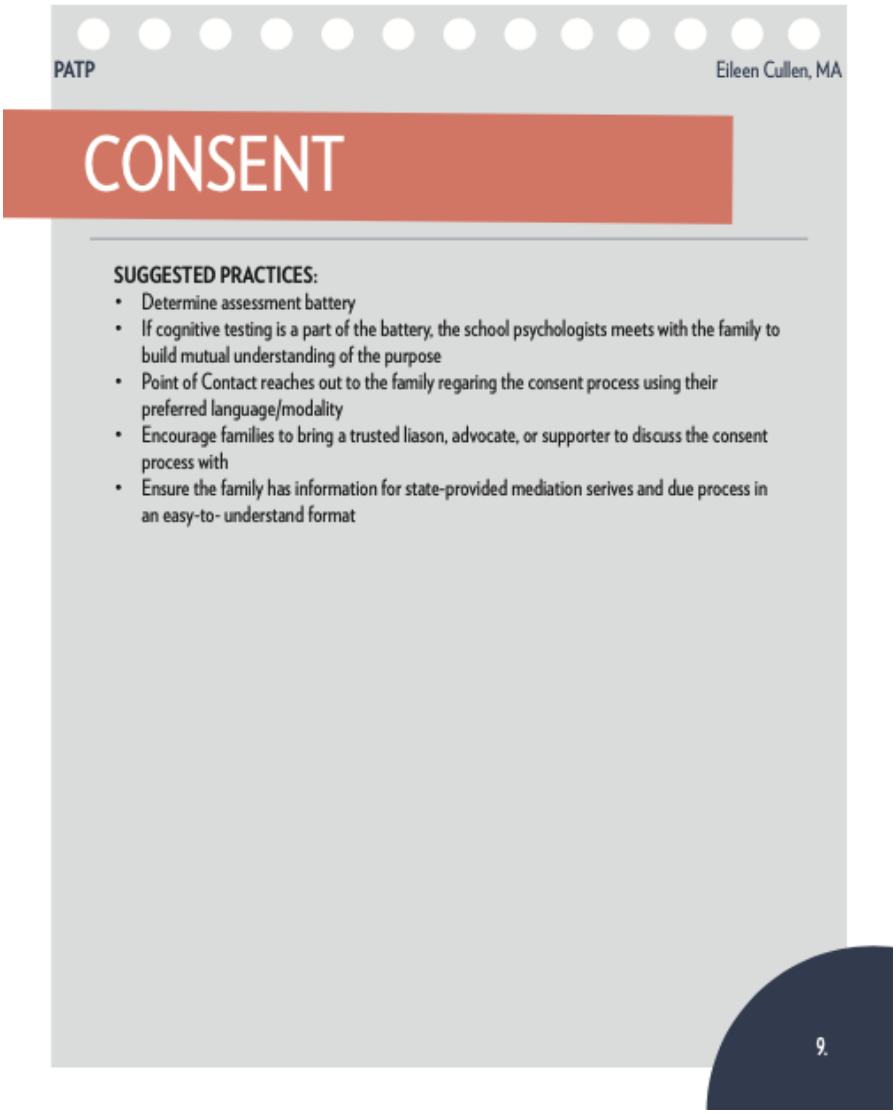
DEFICITS			
ACADEMIC	SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL / BEHAVIORAL	ADAPTIVE SKILLS	[ADD BASED ON AREA OF CONCERN]

ECOLOGICAL FACTORS CONSIDERED:

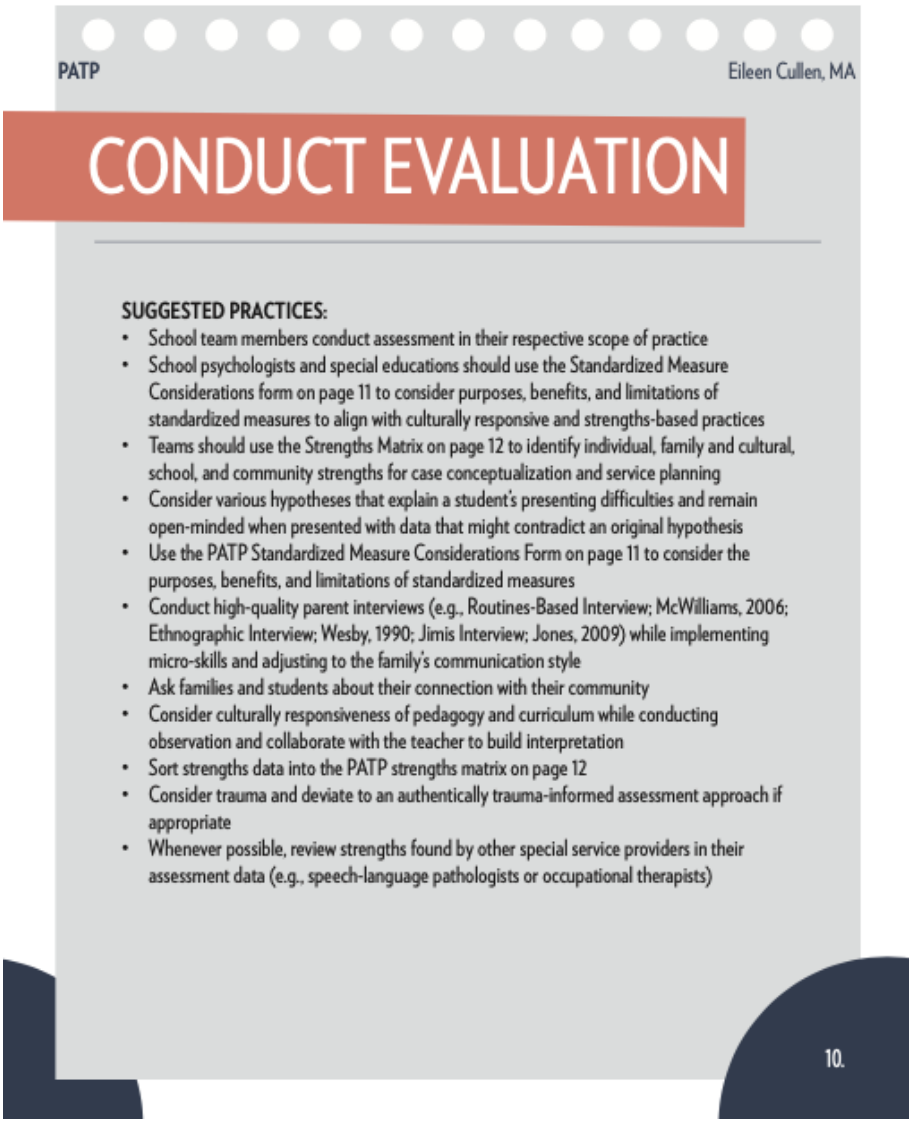
DATA NEEDED:	HOW IT WILL BE GATHERED:

8.

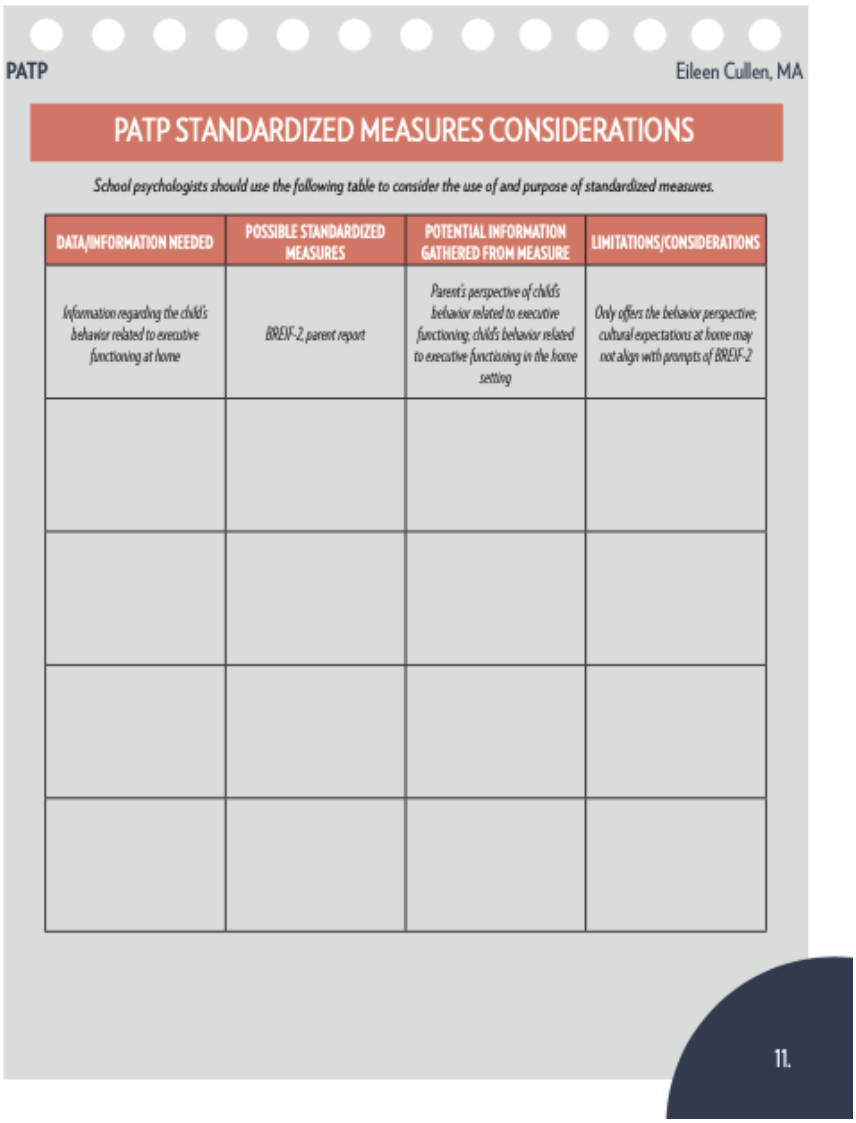
In this case, the concerns are primarily related to behavior and academics. The school psychologist and special education teacher are decided to be the two members heading up the evaluation. So, they complete the form with any data. Some ecological factors they consider are lapse in instruction due to COVID-19 precautions. Additionally, their school adopted a new reading curriculum this year, so they decide it might be beneficial to additionally look at the student's progress the year before with the old curriculum. They decide an CBM measuring basic reading skills and reading comprehension are help data to be collected. The school psychologist decides a Functional Behavior Analysis of the specific behavior may be helpful, along with some additional observations, and a behavior rating scale.



Once the team has determined the battery, the special education teacher reaches out to conduct the consent process. The special education teacher is who typically holds this role in this team; however, the family has a strong relationship with the school psychologist, so the school psychologist offers to be available as well. The family is encouraged to bring a liaison or trusted person to help them make a decision if they would like. The family is a single father who bring the student's grandmother to the meeting because the student's grandmother is a large part of the student's life. The family is provided with their due process rights and information for state-mediated services in paper format and it is discussed verbally over the phone.



Next, the team conducts the assessment. The school psychologist uses the Routines-based Interview with the student's father and grandmother, conducts a semi-structured interview with the student, the family and teacher completes an appropriate behavioral ratings scale, and the school psychologist conducts an FBA. The special education teacher administers CBM related to the reading concerns. Throughout these processes, they identify strengths and resources and sort them into the PATP-CR/SBA Strength Matrix. Both team members reflect on their own personal bias, attitudes, beliefs, and identities, and how these function in relation to the assessment.



PATP

Eileen Cullen, MA

PATP STANDARDIZED MEASURES CONSIDERATIONS

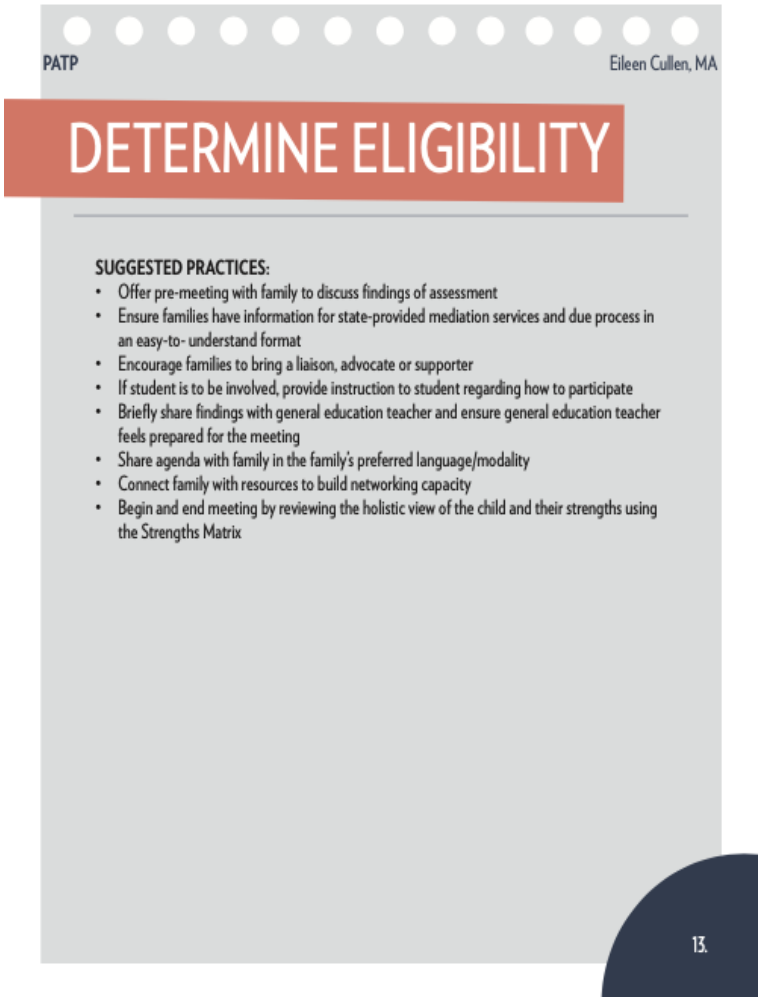
School psychologists should use the following table to consider the use of and purpose of standardized measures.

DATA/INFORMATION NEEDED	POSSIBLE STANDARDIZED MEASURES	POTENTIAL INFORMATION GATHERED FROM MEASURE	LIMITATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS
Information regarding the child's behavior related to executive functioning at home	*BREIF-2, parent report*	*Parent's perspective of child's behavior related to executive functioning; child's behavior related to executive functioning in the home setting*	*Only offers the behavior perspective; cultural expectations at home may not align with prompts of BREIF-2*

11.

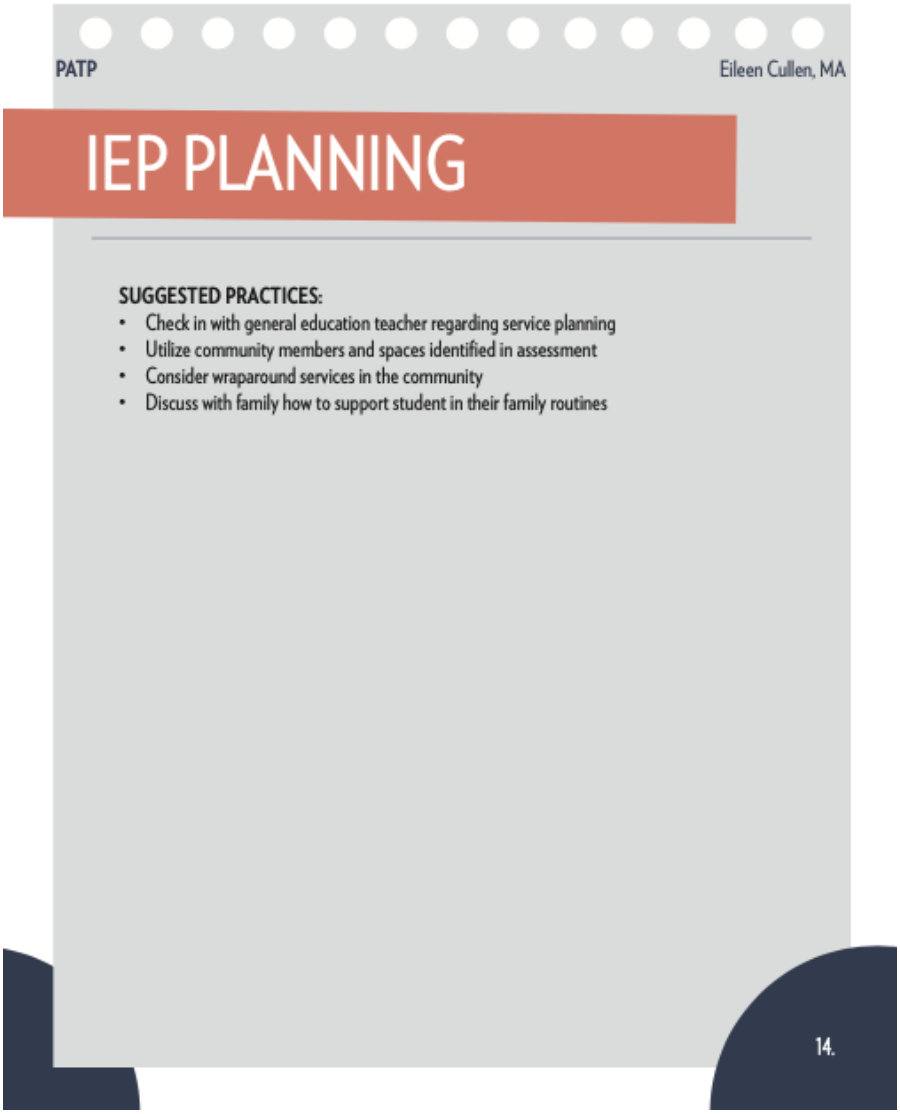
The school psychologist, who used a behavioral rating scale, completes the PATP-CR/SBA Standardized Measure Considerations form. They determine it is helpful data. They looked at the norming information for the measure to determine if it was representative of the student.

The PATP-CR/SBA Strengths-Matrix is completed by team members throughout the evaluation. This document continues to grow after the assessment as the family, general education teacher, student themselves, and any other team members have the opportunity to add to this during subsequent meetings.



The school psychologist and special education teacher offer to meet with the student's family before the eligibility determination meeting; however, they decline. The special education teacher, acting as the point of contact, ensures the family still has access to their due process rights and opportunity to access state-provided mediation services. The meeting takes place at a time convenient for the family and the special education teacher has shared the agenda for the family. Additionally, the special education teacher briefly met with the general education teacher to ensure they felt prepared. The general education teacher expressed they felt stressed with time and could not meet long, so the special education teacher gave a brief summary (less than 5 minutes) and encouraged them to reach out if they have any questions before the meeting.

The team begins and ends the meeting with the PATP-CR/SBA Strengths-Matrix and ensure everyone present at the meeting has the opportunity to add. Results are shared in an easy-to-understand why that helps other team members use data to inform their decisions, then the team determines the student is eligible for special education services.

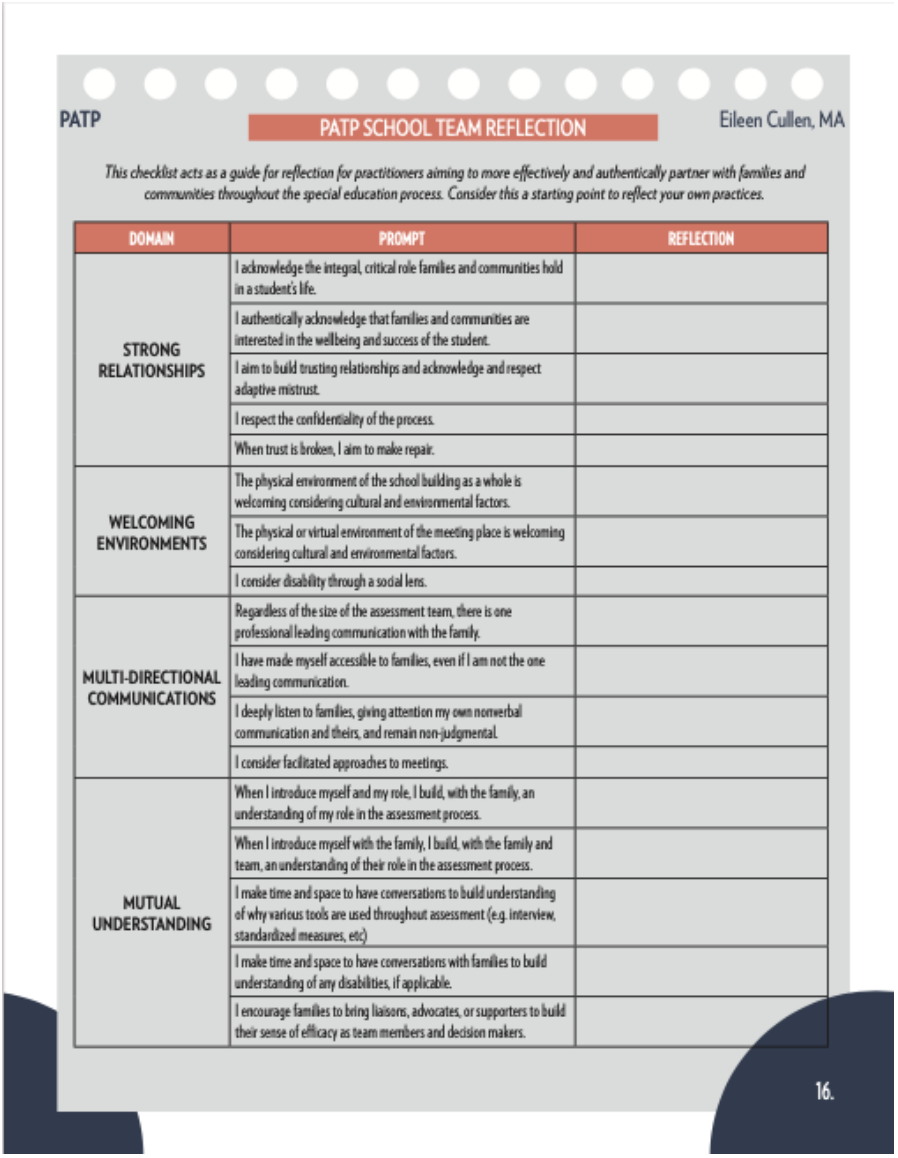


In this case, the IEP meeting was held separately from the eligibility determination meeting. Again, the special education teacher, who has a strong relationship with the general education teacher, expresses that the team wants to ensure they feel services are salient and helpful and again encourages them to reach out with any questions before the meeting. The team uses data from assessment to inform intervention. The student does not receive any services in the community, but the school psychologist reviews possible ways to support the student within their family routine. The team additionally connects the family with various community resources.

SCHOOL TEAM REFLECTION AND FAMILY FEEDBACK

SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

- School teams can use the Reflection Guide on page 16 to reflect on their implementation of FSCP through the process
- As initial special education assessment and IEP planning are often the beginning of intensive partnerships between families and schools, school teams should consider eliciting feedback from the family to continue to build trust as schools and the family partner throughout the rest of the K-12 education career of the student
- School teams can start a conversation with families guided by the Reflection Guide on page 17, however teams should be mindful that some families may not feel comfortable offering feedback



PATP

PATP SCHOOL TEAM REFLECTION

Eileen Cullen, MA

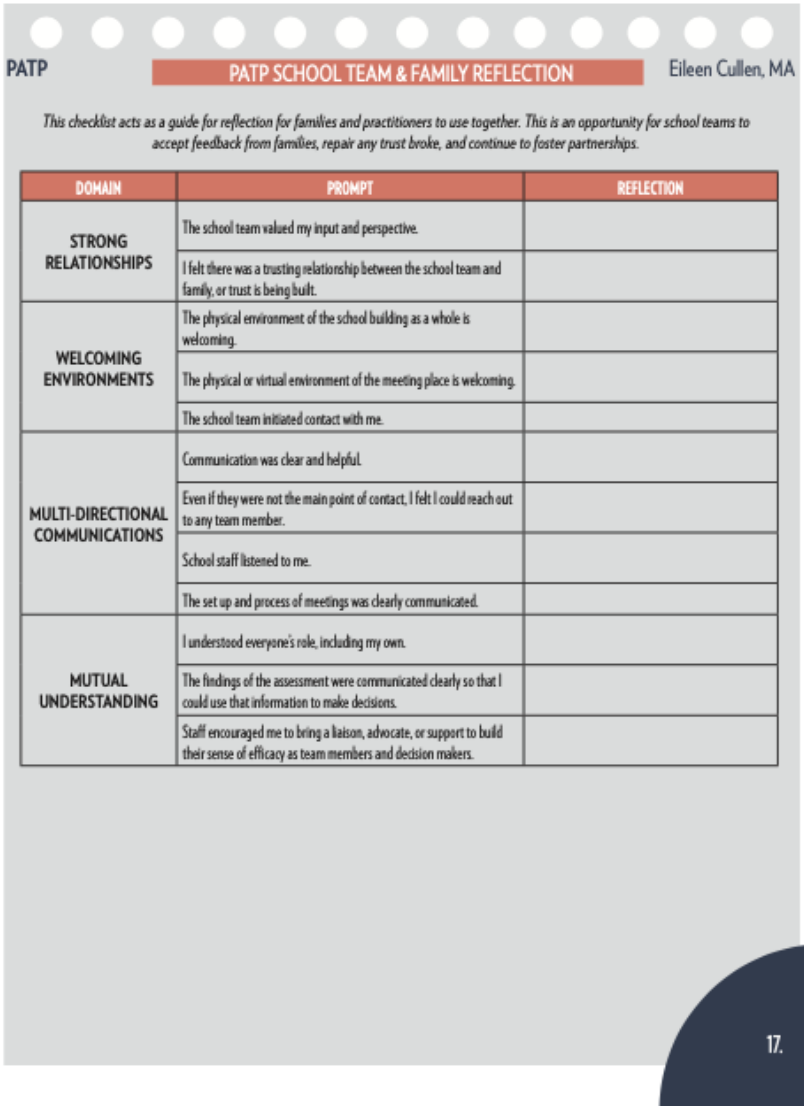
This checklist acts as a guide for reflection for practitioners aiming to more effectively and authentically partner with families and communities throughout the special education process. Consider this a starting point to reflect your own practices.

DOMAIN	PROMPT	REFLECTION
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS	I acknowledge the integral, critical role families and communities hold in a student's life.	
	I authentically acknowledge that families and communities are interested in the wellbeing and success of the student.	
	I aim to build trusting relationships and acknowledge and respect adaptive mistrust.	
	I respect the confidentiality of the process.	
	When trust is broken, I aim to make repair.	
WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS	The physical environment of the school building as a whole is welcoming considering cultural and environmental factors.	
	The physical or virtual environment of the meeting place is welcoming considering cultural and environmental factors.	
	I consider disability through a social lens.	
MULTI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS	Regardless of the size of the assessment team, there is one professional leading communication with the family.	
	I have made myself accessible to families, even if I am not the one leading communication.	
	I deeply listen to families, giving attention my own nonverbal communication and theirs, and remain non-judgmental.	
	I consider facilitated approaches to meetings.	
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING	When I introduce myself and my role, I build, with the family, an understanding of my role in the assessment process.	
	When I introduce myself with the family, I build, with the family and team, an understanding of their role in the assessment process.	
	I make time and space to have conversations to build understanding of why various tools are used throughout assessment (e.g. interview, standardized measures, etc)	
	I make time and space to have conversations with families to build understanding of any disabilities, if applicable.	
	I encourage families to bring liaisons, advocates, or supporters to build their sense of efficacy as team members and decision makers.	

16.

The team had many referrals and high caseloads, thus completing this together following the referral was not possible. So, the instead team decides they will complete this twice throughout the year. They additionally advocate to their administration team that on any available work times, they feel they would benefit from additional time to reflect on their practice and possible make adjustments.

The school psychologist completes this form independently. They decide they want to learn more about facilitated approaches to meetings to determine if they might be helpful in the future. They also identify they would like to consider how they could make the space they hold meetings in more welcoming.



PATP

PATP SCHOOL TEAM & FAMILY REFLECTION

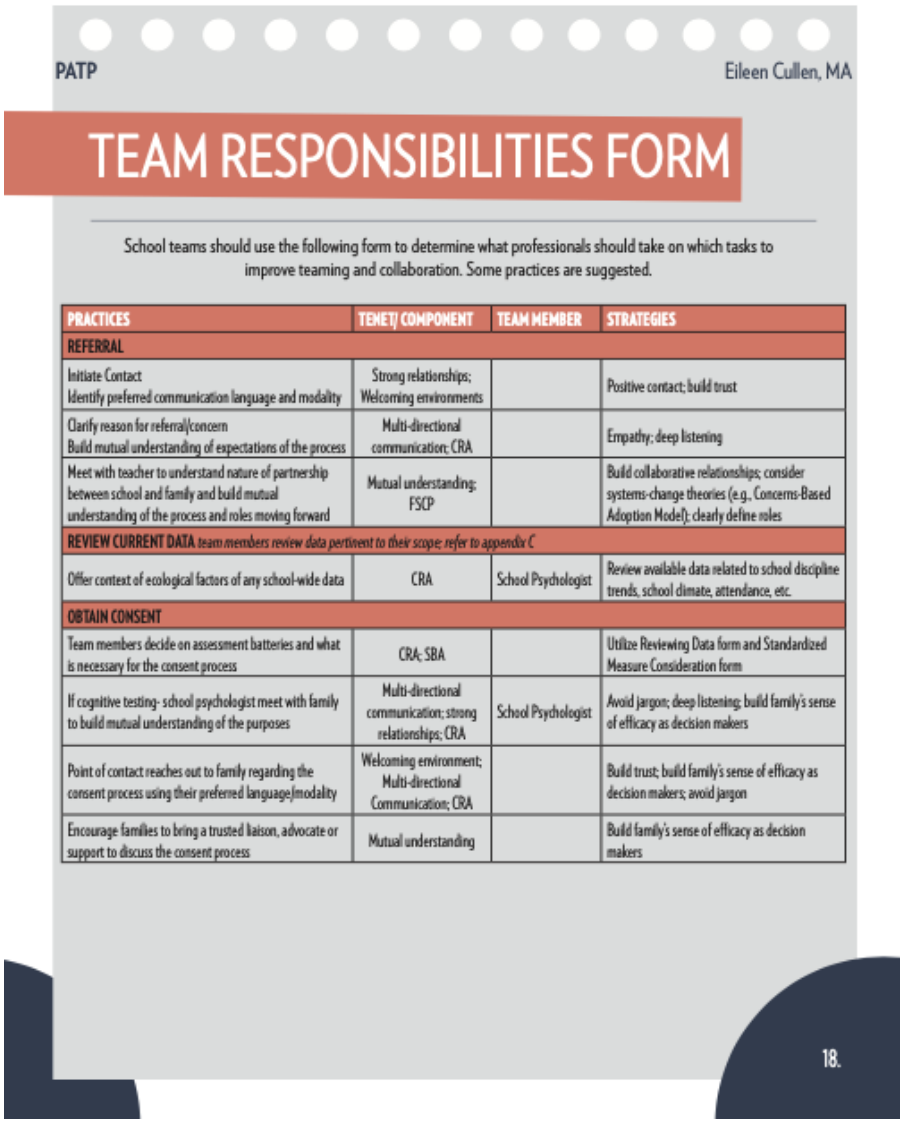
Eileen Cullen, MA

This checklist acts as a guide for reflection for families and practitioners to use together. This is an opportunity for school teams to accept feedback from families, repair any trust broke, and continue to foster partnerships.

DOMAIN	PROMPT	REFLECTION
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS	The school team valued my input and perspective.	
	I felt there was a trusting relationship between the school team and family, or trust is being built.	
WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS	The physical environment of the school building as a whole is welcoming.	
	The physical or virtual environment of the meeting place is welcoming.	
	The school team initiated contact with me.	
MULTI-DIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS	Communication was clear and helpful.	
	Even if they were not the main point of contact, I felt I could reach out to any team member.	
	School staff listened to me.	
	The set up and process of meetings was clearly communicated.	
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING	I understood everyone's role, including my own.	
	The findings of the assessment were communicated clearly so that I could use that information to make decisions.	
	Staff encouraged me to bring a liaison, advocate, or support to build their sense of efficacy as team members and decision makers.	

17.

The team decides it may not be appropriate to use this form, but instead decides to review it when they review their reflection to determine if they can find any areas of growth for themselves.



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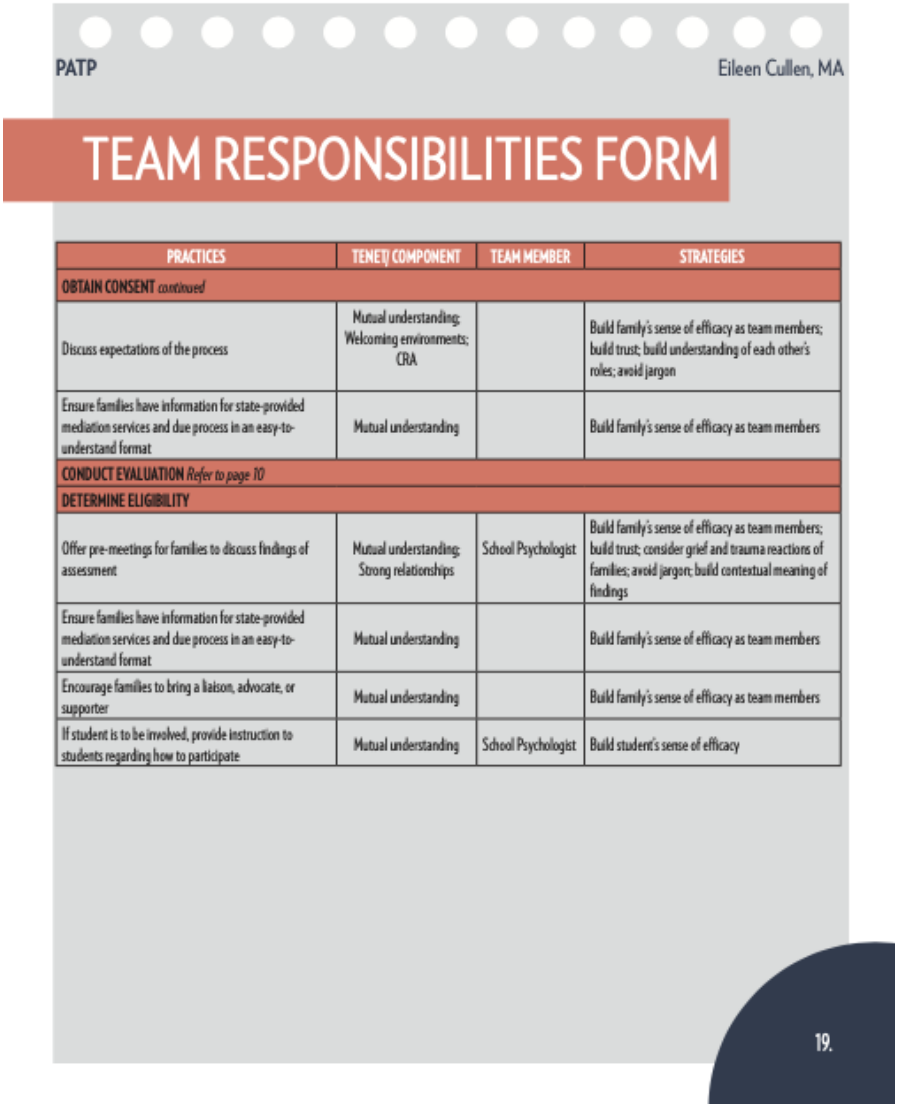
TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

School teams should use the following form to determine what professionals should take on which tasks to improve teaming and collaboration. Some practices are suggested.

PRACTICES	TENET/ COMPONENT	TEAM MEMBER	STRATEGIES
REFERRAL			
Initiate Contact Identify preferred communication language and modality	Strong relationships; Welcoming environments		Positive contact; build trust
Clarify reason for referral/concern Build mutual understanding of expectations of the process	Multi-directional communication; CRA		Empathy; deep listening
Meet with teacher to understand nature of partnership between school and family and build mutual understanding of the process and roles moving forward	Mutual understanding; FSCP		Build collaborative relationships; consider systems-change theories (e.g., Concerns-Based Adoption Model); clearly define roles
REVIEW CURRENT DATA *team members review data pertinent to their scope; refer to appendix C*			
Offer context of ecological factors of any school-wide data	CRA	School Psychologist	Review available data related to school discipline trends, school climate, attendance, etc.
OBTAIN CONSENT			
Team members decide on assessment batteries and what is necessary for the consent process	CRA; SBA		Utilize Reviewing Data form and Standardized Measure Consideration form
If cognitive testing- school psychologist meet with family to build mutual understanding of the purposes	Multi-directional communication; strong relationships; CRA	School Psychologist	Avoid jargon; deep listening; build family's sense of efficacy as decision makers
Point of contact reaches out to family regarding the consent process using their preferred language/modality	Welcoming environment; Multi-directional Communication; CRA		Build trust; build family's sense of efficacy as decision makers; avoid jargon
Encourage families to bring a trusted liaison, advocate or support to discuss the consent process	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as decision makers

18.

This is used throughout as noted earlier to organize who will be responsible for each practice.



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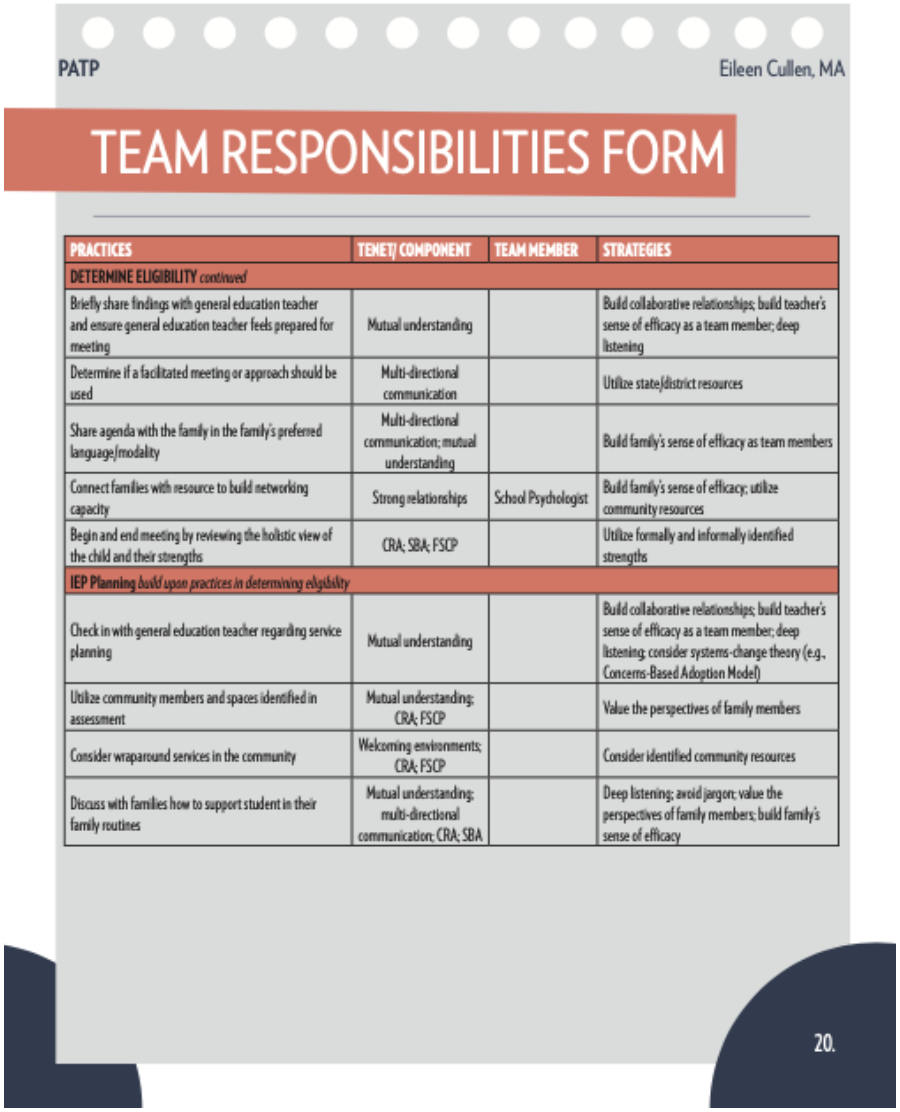
TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

PRACTICES	TENET/ COMPONENT	TEAM MEMBER	STRATEGIES
OBTAIN CONSENT *continued*			
Discuss expectations of the process	Mutual understanding; Welcoming environments; CRA		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members; build trust; build understanding of each other's roles; avoid jargon
Ensure families have information for state-provided mediation services and due process in an easy-to-understand format	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
CONDUCT EVALUATION *Refer to page 10*			
DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY			
Offer pre-meetings for families to discuss findings of assessment	Mutual understanding; Strong relationships	School Psychologist	Build family's sense of efficacy as team members; build trust; consider grief and trauma reactions of families; avoid jargon; build contextual meaning of findings
Ensure families have information for state-provided mediation services and due process in an easy-to-understand format	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
Encourage families to bring a liaison, advocate, or supporter	Mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
If student is to be involved, provide instruction to students regarding how to participate	Mutual understanding	School Psychologist	Build student's sense of efficacy

19.

This is used throughout as noted earlier to organize who will be responsible for each practice.



PATP

Eileen Cullen, MA

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

PRACTICES	TENET/ COMPONENT	TEAM MEMBER	STRATEGIES
DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY *continued*			
Briefly share findings with general education teacher and ensure general education teacher feels prepared for meeting	Mutual understanding		Build collaborative relationships; build teacher's sense of efficacy as a team member; deep listening
Determine if a facilitated meeting or approach should be used	Multi-directional communication		Utilize state/district resources
Share agenda with the family in the family's preferred language/modality	Multi-directional communication; mutual understanding		Build family's sense of efficacy as team members
Connect families with resource to build networking capacity	Strong relationships	School Psychologist	Build family's sense of efficacy; utilize community resources
Begin and end meeting by reviewing the holistic view of the child and their strengths	CRA; SBA; FSCP		Utilize formally and informally identified strengths
IEP Planning *build upon practices in determining eligibility*			
Check in with general education teacher regarding service planning	Mutual understanding		Build collaborative relationships; build teacher's sense of efficacy as a team member; deep listening; consider systems-change theory (e.g., Concerns-Based Adoption Model)
Utilize community members and spaces identified in assessment	Mutual understanding; CRA; FSCP		Value the perspectives of family members
Consider wraparound services in the community	Welcoming environments; CRA; FSCP		Consider identified community resources
Discuss with families how to support student in their family routines	Mutual understanding; multi-directional communication; CRA; SBA		Deep listening; avoid jargon; value the perspectives of family members; build family's sense of efficacy

20.

This is used throughout as noted earlier to organize who will be responsible for each practice.

Manuscript Two

Practitioner Perspectives of Culturally Responsive, Strengths-based Assessment

Individual assessments are conducted in schools to determine if a student is eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, more commonly referred to as IDEA; 2004). These assessments are conducted by professionals such as school psychologists, special educators, speech and language pathologists, and occupational therapists with families (whose involvement is central to the legal and ethical framework of school-based assessment). These assessments are important as they have the potential to heavily influence the educational, and life, trajectories of students with disabilities and their families (by providing an understanding of an individual's strengths and weakness, possible early identification and early intervention, linking individuals to appropriate interventions, and allowing families to access appropriate resources). Due to the potential significance of an assessment on the trajectory of a student, these assessments, and the special education evaluation process assessments are part of, are frequently are investigated by researchers, continue to be a central topic for training for school psychologists (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2020), and are addressed by legislation (IDEA, 2004) and case law (e.g., *Larry P. v Riles, 1979, Diana v. California State Board of Education, 1970, Guadalupe v. Tempe, 1997*).

Assessment cannot be studied without understanding both its critiques and the important way it provides access to supports students with disabilities. The disproportionate representation of certain students in special education has been investigated extensively and is frequently identified as a major concern (Ahram et al., 2021) and assessment likely contributes in some way to this concerning trend (Blanchett et al., 2009; Sullivan, 2017). This disproportionate representation can be harmful as it is tied to lower teacher expectations, limited opportunities, negative stereotyping (Brown et al., 2019). Other critiques of assessment include traditional assessment practices being short-sighted of the holistic view of the child (Terjesen et al., 2004), focused on identifying deficits (Jimerson et al., 2004, Lalvani, 2012, Zeitlin & Curcic, 2013), being informed by the dominate culture (Hays, 2014), and aiming to label students, rather than designing interventions aimed at improving outcomes (Rhee et al., 2001; Epstein, 2000). Some of these critiques suggest that traditional assessment practices also do not align with the strengths-based, culturally responsive perspective postulated as being integral to the field (Lambert, 1964; NASP, 2020). However, assessment is an important part of educational equity for students with disabilities. Assessments, as a part of the special education process, provides access to interventions and accommodations that allow students with disabilities to benefit from free and appropriate public education just as their peers do (IDEA, 2004). Assessment conducted in a meaningful and individualized way can positively influence families (Tharinger et al., 2007; Tharinger et al., 2011). Legislative aspects of special education assessment are intended to protect the educational rights of students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). Further, students with disabilities go through assessments at various points in their life that impact their

outcomes outside of the educational sphere, such as qualifying for and determining community supports and supports in adulthood (this process typically varies state to state; the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (ODDD) webpage is just one example that gives some examples of what this might be used for; ODDD, n.d.). Ultimately, assessments inherently must include identifying what is challenging for a student in order for them to qualify for services and receive the support they need to learn. Optimistically, the importance of assessment and its critiques suggests that school psychologist have the opportunity to conduct assessments that are meaningful, equitable, and promote dignity for students with disabilities and their families.

Several models of assessment that aim to counter the deficit-focused, dominant culture-informed nature of traditional assessment have been proposed. Strengths-based assessment (SBA) and culturally responsive assessment (CRA) are two of those proposed models. Practices that fostering family-school partnerships through the special education process may offer ways to effective implement CRA and SBA in practice (Miller et al., 2021; author, in preparation). Despite these models being introduced to the field of school psychology as much as nearly one (CRA; Jones, 2014) and two decades ago (SBA; Jimerson et al., 2004; Rhee et al., 2001), and ongoing calls to better partner with families (NASP, 2019), there is limited of research regarding how school psychologists implement these models and their perspectives of these models including any possible partnership with families. The study presented explores how school psychologists conduct culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment (CR/SBA) in special education assessments.

Review of Literature

In order to provide a basis for exploring how school psychologists conduct SBA and/or CRA, the field of school psychology, including its history with assessment, aspects of training and assessment, and aspects of current practices and assessment will be briefly reviewed. The historic relationship between the field of school psychology and assessment, training standards and trends related to assessment, the NASP practice model as it relates to assessment, and family involvement in the special education process provides a foundation to understand where assessment practices are coming from to provide context to practitioners' perspectives of assessment now. Then, CRA and SBA and how they can be studied together as culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment (CR/SBA) is presented to provide a foundation for the current study.

School Psychology and Its Assessment Past and Present: An Abbreviated History

The first formal school psychology training programs began in the early to mid 1900s. Training programs were unregulated until the 1960s and the first training guidelines were presented by NASP in the 1970s (Newell et al., 2010; Reschley, 2000). NASP, formed in 1969, governs national licensure, training, ethics, and generally represents and supports the profession of school psychology (NASP, 2020; Newell et al., 2010). The formalization of the field of school psychology can be attributed to the growing public push for specialized education services for students with disabilities in the 1960s (Yell et al., 1998; Ferrell, 2010). However, the popularization of the field, and impetus for public schools to hire school psychologists, can be attributed to the first piece of special education law passed in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (EAHCA, what is now IDEA).

Before special education was codified, the field of school psychology was closely tied to the IQ test (Farrell, 2010; Guillemard, 2006; Reschley, 2000). Initially, the IQ test was used to "sort" students in a test and place model in which some students were deemed unable to benefit from education (and therefore were excluded), while others were deemed "educable" (Guillemard, 2006; Howe, 1998). Currently, the IQ test is an aspect to assessments for many students. In this case, the IQ test is a part of special education evaluations that aim to ensure students with intellectual disabilities have the necessary accommodations and intervention to benefit from free, appropriate, public education. School psychology's long-standing relationship with the IQ test (whether it be used to exclude or to support access) has morphed into the field's established relationship with assessment, broadly, in schools (Fagan, 2014; Ferrell, 2010; Reschley, 2000).

As the field of school psychology adjusts to the needs of students and families, NASP, in response, presents updated training guidelines and official policies about comprehensive service delivery. A model for service delivery was presented in 1978, 1984, 1992, 1997, 2000, 2010, and most recently in 2020 (NASP, 2020). The NASP Practice Model of 2020, also referred to as the Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services, provides guidance for the delivery of school psychological services and the organizations in which school psychologists work. This model is intended to be consumed in conjunction with the NASP 2020 Principles for Professional Ethics and state and federal legislation (NASP, 2020).

The NASP Practice Model can be broken into two parts: organizational principles and domains of school psychology practice. Domains of practice are the practices school psychologists engage in and organizational principles outline suggested practices and

resources to be present in the schools and other settings school psychologists work in. The NASP Practice Model specifically acknowledges "the degree to which school psychologists engage in activities described within this document may be predicated on the degree to which local education agencies (LEA) adhere to the organizational principles" (NASP, 2020, p. 2); thus, the presence (or absence) of organizational principles influences a school psychologist's ability to practice in the ten domains.

Although the model for professional practice has changed over time, one topic has remained constant across models: assessment. Indeed, many of these proposed domains of practice relate to various aspects of special education assessment (NASP, 2020), and assessment related activities continue to comprise the majority school psychologist's practice (Farmer et al., 2021). The domains particularly salient to assessment include: data-based decision making, collaboration and consultation, and family, school, and community collaboration. In order to effectively engage in assessment activities, it is important to consider the context within which assessment is conducted. Given that, considerations for organizational principles and the context within which assessment is conducted will be a defining feature of the study presented in this manuscript. Table 2.1 describes how the domains of practice and organizational principles relate to assessment.

Table 2.1

NASP Practice Model and Assessment

NASP Practice Model	Relation to Assessment
NASP Practice Model Domain of Practice	*School psychologists are trained to practice in each domain, some of which are salient to all practice*
Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making	Assessment is the collecting, interpretation, and synthesizing of data Data gathered in assessment drives intervention School psychologists help others (e.g., teachers, parents, administrators) make meaning of data so that they can use it to inform their decisions
Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration	School psychologists do not conduct assessment alone and often collaborate with other service providers, teachers, and family members
Domain 3: Academic Interventions and Supports	Understand and use appropriate methods to assess and plan intervention related to academic skills
Domain 4: Mental and Behavioral Health Services	Understand and use appropriate methods to assess behavioral and psychological domains Support resilience and positive behavior and adaptive skills in intervention
Domain 5: School-Wide Practice to Promote Learning*	Not directly related to assessment; however, school-wide practices may influence ecological factors that could influence a particular assessment
Domain 6: Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools*	Not directly related to assessment; however, school-wide practices may influence ecological factors that could influence a particular assessment
Domain 7: Family, School, and Community Collaboration	Collaborate with parents as important team members in making educational decisions in special education assessment Families are often informants during assessments Community providers may be additional sources of data when conducting an assessment When students receive services from community providers, intervention may be coordinator with outside providers
Domain 8: Equitable Practices for Diverse Populations	Acknowledge factors related to diversity and their impact on learning, behavior, and development when conducting assessment Respect for diversity and advocacy for social justice underpin assessment practice
Domain 9: Research and Evidence-Based Practice	Apply knowledge of data collection, measurement, and analysis when conducting assessment
Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice	Adhere to ethical standards for assessment Adhere to legal standards for assessment
NASP Practice Model Organization Principles	*The presence of aspects of each principle influences a school psychologist's ability to practice within the above domains and therefore their ability to apply aspects of each domain to special education assessment*

Organization and Evaluation of Service Delivery	School psychologists who conduct assessments are appropriately trained and licensed Educational organizations support the organized delivery of services including assessment
Climate	School climate that promotes collaborative relationships between school professionals and between school professionals and families may facilitate a school psychologist's ability to foster collaborative relationships throughout assessment
Physical, Personnel, and Fiscal Support Systems	Presence or absence of various team members (e.g., school-based social worker) Access to specific tests or measures Access to professional development related to assessment
Professional Communication	Policies regarding student records such as test protocols and other assessment records
Supervision, Peer Consultation, and Mentoring	May include an educational agencies allowance of time for school psychologists to seek consultation or supervision regarding assessment cases or practices generally
Professional Development and Recognition Systems	Access to professional learning communities or training related to assessment practices School psychologists develop annual professional development plans that could include development related to assessment

Trends in Assessment Training Practices

The practice model can be understood as the "ideal" for practice; before a school psychologists practices, they receive training. In 2020, NASP published updated standards for graduate preparation of school psychologists as a part of the professional standards of NASP (NASP, 2020). The purpose of these standards is to "develop effective school psychology services by identifying critical graduate education experiences and competencies needed by candidates preparing for careers as school psychologist" (NASP, 2020, p. 15). School psychologists are trained in either specialist-level or doctoral-level programs. The standards for graduate preparation are broken into five areas including: program context and structure, content knowledge, supervised field experiences, performance-based program assessment and accountability, and program support and resources (NASP, 2020).

An aspect of program context and structure includes recognition of human diversity and social justice as strengths to ensure all children and youth are valued (NASP, 2020, p. 18). As this relates to assessment, school psychologist trainees should receive instruction to "understand and utilize assessment methods for identifying strengths and needs" (NASP, 2020, p. 19). In addition to identifying strengths and needs, school psychology trainees should have competency to be able to

> Systematically collect data from multiple sources as a foundation for decision making at the individual, group, and systems level, and they consider ecological factors (e.g., classroom, family, and community characteristics) as the context for assessment and intervention (NASP, 2020, p. 19).

Thus, school psychologists trained in NASP accredited programs should complete their training with competency in assessment methods, systematic data collection, and how to meaningfully consider ecological factors.

School psychology trainees learn and apply these concepts through both content knowledge opportunities and supervised field experiences. Although the standards for graduate preparation outline broad competencies trainees should possess as they matriculate through a training program, specific trends in training practices related to assessment have emerged. Training programs place less emphasis now on projective measures as they had previously. Rating scales, measures of academic achievement, curriculum-based measures (CBMs), and measures to identify Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are promoted. What has not changed since the 1990's is the prioritization on cognitive assessment (Wilson & Reschley, 1996; Lockwood et al., 2022) and the under-emphasis on issues related to assessment of diverse learners (Wilson & Reschly, 1996; Lockwood et al., 2022).

Considering the long-standing relationship of school psychology and the IQ test, school psychology training related to cognitive assessment is not surprising. Several studies have been conducted examining the syllabi of school psychology training cognitive assessment courses (see Bumpus et al., 2022, Lockwood et al., 2022). When examining the learning objectives of cognitive assessment courses, researchers noticed that instructors focused primarily on administration and test selection while often leaving out objectives related to integrating assessment results and linking assessment results to recommendations (Bumpus et al., 2022). About a quarter of syllabi did not reflect addressing issues of assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse students

sufficiently (Miller et al., 2020); although, another study found trainers place a greater emphasis on considerations for cognitive assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse students *than they had previously* (Lockwood et al., 2022; more generally, multicultural training in school psychology has advanced, but continues to have room to grow; Newell et al., 2010). Instruction related to interpretation of cognitive measures focused heavily on Cattell-Horn-Carroll theory (Miller et al., 2020). When syllabi were examined for the topic of eligibility decision-making for specific learning disabilities, it was found that there were variations across training programs, across courses within training programs, and across regions (Barrett et al., 2015). However, this only describes training that occurs within courses and not field experiences.

As supervised field experiences are an integral part of school psychology training (NASP, 2020), the authors conducted a search through the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) and the American Psychological Association's (APA) PsycINFO databases to identify extant research regarding school psychology training, assessment, and field placement experiences or supervision; it yielded no results. This is a gap in research. While trainees may learn assessment methods in course work, field experiences offer trainees the opportunity to implement and receive feedback related to psychoeducational assessment (NASP, 2020); despite the role of field-based experiences in assessment-related training, trends and issues in assessment training in field-based experiences are largely unknown due to limited research.

Another study, conducted by Wilcox & Schroeder (2015), yielded important implications for assessment, training programs, and field placement experiences. School psychologists can make a variety of errors in clinical reasoning when conducting

assessment due to heuristics and cognitive bias. Clinical reasoning is "iterative and involves the systematic testing of hypotheses through the collection, interpretation, and integration of clinical data" (Wilcox & Schroeder 2015, p. 652). In regard to school psychology training, clinical reasoning should be systematically integrated throughout program curriculum and be given *specific* attention in supervision experiences (Wilcox & Schroeder, 2015).

Given that school psychology training is critical to increasing competency and familiarity with various measures or models of assessment, graduate programs should regularly engage in performance-based program assessment and have access to various program supports and resources to support effective training. Changes in the assessment practices promoted by training programs and other issues in school psychology training and assessment have been studied for the last two decades (Lockwood et al., 2022). However, searches conducted through Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) and the American Psychological Association's (APA) PsycINFO databases did not yield results specifically about assessing trainee and program effectiveness or program supports and resources as these topics related to assessment training. The standard for graduate preparation identifies that field and university supervisors and trainers effectiveness in preparing trainees to conduct assessment and the resources available to support field supervisors, trainees, and trainers as it related to assessment training as parts of graduate preparation; these may be worthy topics of study as the study of training expands.

Trends in School-based Assessment Practices

In 2020, 88% of school psychologists who were NASP members reported "evaluation tasks" take up "quite a bit" or "a great deal" of their time, making up a substantial part of their practice. The mean number of initial special education evaluations conducted by one school psychologists was 16 (Farmer et al., 2021).

As assessment continues to be highly intertwined with the profession, the assessment practices of school psychologists are researched frequently. A recent survey indicated the *Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition* (BASC-3) and *Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fifth Edition* (WISC-V; 2014) were the two most frequently used instruments by practicing school psychologists (Benson et al., 2019). These were followed by curriculum-based measures (CBMs), developmental history interviews with caregivers/parents, unstructured interviews with students, the *Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Third Edition* (KTEA-3; 2014), *Weschler Individual Achievement Test, Third Edition* (WIAT-III; 2009), *Woodcock Johnson-IV Test of Achievement* (WJ-ACH-IV; 2014), observations, problem-solving interviews with teachers, the *Conners-3* (2008), and *Adaptive Behavior Assessment System, Third Edition* (ABAS-3; 2015; Benson et al., 2019). Similar to trends in what is taught in training programs, school psychologists continue to use cognitive assessments frequently while there has been a decrease in the use of projective measures (Benson et al., 2019; Goh et al., 1981; Reschely, 1996).

Other research regarding assessment practices explores what practices school psychologists use to assess for specific referral concerns. In 2020, the most common types of assessment's school psychologists engaged in were those of referral related to

suspected specific learning disabilities (25%), followed by Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (18%), ASD (10%), language disorders (9%), emotional disturbance (9%), developmental delay (9%), behavioral or conduct problems (7%), low incidence disabilities (3%), and traumatic brain injuries (1%; Farmer et al., 2021). When students are referred for social/behavioral/emotional problems, school psychologists rely on structured interviews, direct observation, and behavioral rating scales; however, this conclusion is derived from a survey conducted over two decades ago and therefore may not reflect current practice (Shapiro & Heick, 2004).

When assessing for possible intellectual disability, school psychologists use standardized intelligence measures, rating scales, and observations. In addition to those, school psychologists often used adaptive rating scales when assessing for suspected intellectual disabilities (Snider et al., 2020). Interestingly, it has also been found that school psychologists who were licensed clinical psychologists or early career professionals reported using broad social-emotional rating scales when assessing individuals with or suspected as having intellectual disabilities (Snider et al., 2020). Knowledge of particular assessment practices (Snider et al., 2020), familiarity with and confidence in one's ability to interpret findings from various measures (Haney & Evans, 1999; Lidz, 1992), competence working with specific populations (e.g., students with intellectual disabilities; Graesser, 2014), as well as attitudes toward certain practices in service delivery may be predictive of service delivery (Castillo et al., 2017).

Other studies investigated the practices used when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, such as English Language Learning students (ELLs). This is an important topic in assessment practice; in 2020, 72% of school psychologist

reported working with ELL students (Farmer et al., 2021). School psychologists frequently used interpreters when assessing ELL students and employed practices such as behavioral observation and interviews with students, teachers, and parents. However, this conclusion is derived from a study that was conducted over a decade ago and therefore may not reflect current practice (Ochoa et al., 2004).

Although most research regarding the assessment practices of school psychologists is quantitative in nature, one (and only one) study utilized a purely qualitative methodology to investigate assessment practices. Rueter and colleagues (2018) explored how clinicians decide to use specific measures. The study included seven educational diagnosticians and one licensed school psychologist. Findings revealed clinicians select instruments based on any previous experience as classroom teachers, their understanding of the breadth and depth of instruments, the needs of the child, culture and climate of the district to insist upon use of "gold-standard" measures (e.g., Woodcock Johnson measures), and the availably of instruments. Although this study did not specifically study the process of school psychologists, the themes that emerged highlight the influence of individual factors (e.g., experience of the clinician, needs of the child) and contextual factors (e.g., culture and climate of the school district) on decision making (Rueter et al., 2018).

Similar to trends in training practices, school psychology assessment practice has changed over time in some ways (e.g., less frequent use of projective measures; Benson et al., 2019; Goh et al., 1981; Reschely, 1996) but remained consistent in others (e.g., use of cognitive measures; Benson et al., 2019; Bumpus, et al., 2022). There are also trends in practice related to specific referral concerns and suggested predictors of assessment

practices, but generally a lack of research regarding how school psychologists conduct assessment. Particularly, there is a lack of research regarding how school psychologists conduct assessment utilizing specific models and how they use assessment data to drive intervention. Additionally, there was only one purely qualitative study conducted regarding assessment. There is a general gap in research regarding the assessment practices of school psychologists studied within their natural context, despite the NASP practice model highlighting the influence of context (presence or absence of organizational principles) on practice.

Family and Special Education Assessment

Family, school, community collaboration is a domain of practice that relates to assessment. In order to understand family involvement in assessment, an important distinction must be made. Family involvement in special education is legislatively outlined as involvement in giving consent for assessment and being a partner in educational decision making (IDEA, 2004). However, there is not distinctive legislative mandate for families to be a part of the assessment. Further, interpretation of family involvement and partnership in the processes varies across districts and assessment conducted in Part B or C of IDEA (2004). This study focuses on Part B evaluations.

Preceding a comprehensive federal piece of special education legislation (EACHA, 1975), parents of students with disabilities were advocates for their children's inclusion in public education. Case law (e.g., *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens [PARC] v. Pennsylvania*, 1972 and *Mills v. Board of Education*, 1972) set the precedent that families have procedural due process safeguards throughout all stages of a student's special education evaluation and any possible subsequent services. EACHA,

and its subsequent reauthorization as IDEA, set the legislative groundwork that solidified parents (by the legal definition) as a team member in their children's educational decisions with a right to due process safeguards (EACHA, 1975; IDEA, 2004). For an in-depth review of the legislative basis for family involvement in their child's special education decisions refer to Author (in preparation).

Beyond being legislatively mandated in special education, partnerships and engagement between schools and families generally has demonstrated a variety of positive effects for students, educational professionals, such as teachers, and communities at large (Bouffard & Weiss, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Pushor & Murphy, 2004; Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, for students with disabilities, family-school collaboration is even more imperative (El Nokali et al., 2010; Landmark, 2011). Despite the well documented positive influence of family partnerships, emphasis on its importance for students with disabilities, and legislative mandate, family involvement in special education has been generally regarded as ancillary throughout the special education process including assessment. Family-school partnerships or engagement generally has been well researched. Research regarding family-school partnerships for families of students with disabilities generally focuses on two primary topics, parent experiences in the special education process and number of practices to foster partnerships.

Parental involvement in eligibility determination and IEP meetings is well documented, and many studies point to the conclusion that the legislatively mandated vision of parental involvement is not realized (Brown et al., 2014; Garriott et al., 2001; Lo, 2008; Love et al., 2017; Mueller, 2009; Salas, 2004; Salembier & Furney, 1997; Sheldon, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). Dissimilar to research regarding assessment

practices, much of the research regarding parents and the IEP process is qualitative (Burke & Goldman, 2015; Lo, 2008; Salas, 2004).

In general, there has been a trend of professionals dominating the process, leaving out parent's concerns and valuable input (Elbaum et al., 2016; Love et al., 2017). Family members (along with general education teachers) may be more apprehensive to express their opinions within the IEP meeting (Ruppar & Gaffney, 2011; Martin et al., 2004). Some studies point to parents not necessarily feeling satisfied or dissatisfied with the meeting, but consistently reporting they believe there was a power imbalance and even reported feeling bullied, coerced, and shamed by professionals (Choiseul-Praslin et al., 2021). The experiences of families in the special education process varies across groups. White, middle to high socioeconomic class (SES) parents have been found to believe they are valued throughout the process and are equally a part of the decision-making process for special education evaluations and higher income families were more likely to go through due process when dissatisfied (Burke & Goldman, 2015). Conversely, parents belonging to historically marginalized and minoritized groups have been found to believe they were not valued or respected and were often silenced in meetings (Fish, 2006; Fish, 2008; Salas, 2004; Lo, 2008; Voulgardies, 2021; Weis, 1993). One study documented a school district in which White, affluent parents used privilege to access greater protections and services for their students with disabilities (Voulgardies, 2021). This study described school personnel who, despite their hesitation, complied with the requests of White, affluent parents due to fear of litigation (Voulgardies, 2021).

Special education, in general, is a highly litigious process (Mueller, 2009). Some parents reported feeling the IEP process is more a formality, focused on satisfying

bureaucracy, rather than an authentically collaborative process with the goal of promoting their students learning and wellbeing. Further, parents report that the IEP process, including its associated paperwork (which includes the psychological report of assessment results), is not only a formality, but also is deficit-based and difficult to understand (Harry et al., 1995; Mueller & Buckley, 2014; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2013). Readability of IEP documents, and psychological reports within them, is also a concern from parents (Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014; MacLeod et al., 2017) and consideration for professionals including school psychologists (e.g., Lichetenstein, 2013).

Some practices school professionals use can be helpful to including families. Findings from a phenomenological qualitative study underscore the importance of school professionals *authentically* believing a parent has a great deal of knowledge about their child and rejecting the more traditional viewpoint of parents as highly subjective, less reliable informants (MacLeod et al., 2017). Parents who participated in one study expressed they believed there was a more collaborative relationship between themselves and professionals in the meeting when educational professionals focused on strengths (MacLeod et al., 2017). A focus on strengths leading to more collaborative outcomes could be related to the perspectives parents and educators hold regarding disabilities. A study exploring the perspectives of teachers and parents on disability in schools generally revealed teachers may hold beliefs consistent with a deficit-based, medical model understanding of disability. Conversely, parents of students with disabilities ascribe more closely to a sociocultural paradigm (Lalvani, 2015). This is consistent with other findings suggesting that parents are anxious regarding the negative perceptions of disability that an educator may hold (MacLeod et al., 2017).

Lastly, only one study was identified investigating family-school partnerships after the IEP process. Specifically, the study investigated parent involvement in school categorized into home-based involvement (e.g., supporting students with homework at home) and school-based involvement (e.g., volunteering for school events). Generally, parents, particularly those belonging to historically minoritized or marginalized groups, increased their home-based involvement following a student receiving an IEP (Kirksey et al., 2022). Despite the lack of research, the nature of family-school partnerships following the IEP process may be particularly important as some students with disabilities may rely on greater support from their families throughout their lives (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, 2016) and that the initial IEP process is only the first of many special education (and other educational decision making meetings such as transition planning) meetings a family and school will engage in together.

Recommended Practices in Family-School Partnerships

At the intensive level of special education, there are numerous recommendations for professions to foster family-school partnerships, some of which highlight either strengths-based approaches, culturally responsive practices, or both (e.g., Burke & Hodapp, 2014; Carlson et al., 2020; Christenson, 2004; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Edwards & DaFonte, 2012; Fialka et al., 2012; Haines et al., 2017; Hanson & Lynch, 2013; Henderson et al., 2006; Huscroft-D'Angelo, et al., 2021; Gestwicki, 2015; Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012; Miller et al., 2021; Minke & Anderson, 2008; Rush et al., 2020; Turnbull et al., 2015). Some recommendations for practice highlight the IEP meeting as a unique opportunity to rebuild partnerships (Mueller & Vick, 2019). Other

recommendations go beyond family-school partnerships to include communities (Miller et al., 2021). Family-School-Community Partnerships (FSCP), a term coined by Miller and colleagues (2021, 2021) describes an extensive set of practices aimed at building and fostering FSCP at a universal and targeted level (Miller et al., 2021). At the targeted level, practices are broken into four tenets and captured in Table 2.2. Examples of how implementation of these practices can be found in Miller and colleagues (2021) and the PATP-CR/SBA (author, in preparation). Throughout research regarding family and the special education process, there is a clear thread for a call to shift attention to student strengths and consider cultural factors. Thus, FSCP practices are presented here as they attempt to take both a strengths-based and culturally responsive perspective (Miller et al., 2021).

Table 2.2

Family-school-community partnership practices at a targeted level

Tenet	Focus	Recommendations for Practice
Strong Relationships	Build trust and make repair Respond to grief and trauma Build networking capacity	Be reliable Uphold confidentiality Build basic emotional trust Employ cultural sensitivity and humility Consider potential grief or trauma reactions from families Connect families to community supports and resources
Multi-directional Communication	Deep listening Facilitated approaches to meetings Handle Conflict	Communicate with family in the preferred language, style, and modality of the family Utilize facilitated approaches to meeting when appropriate Handle conflict Active listening Seek to understand a family's perspective
Welcoming Environments	Increased personal contact Promote a culturally responsive atmosphere Stabilize Crisis	Acknowledge a family's potentially negative experiences with schools in the past Initiate positive contact with families Accept family routines and practices when intervention planning Use cultural mediators or brokers when necessary

Shared Understanding	Develop targeted skills (evidence-based practices) Foster self-efficacy Teach decision making and leadership skills	Use evidence-based practices Appropriate training for professionals regarding FSCP Promote the self-efficacy of families, youth, and community members Invite families to bring liaisons, advocates, and trusted supporters to meetings Ensure families have access to their rights in a format they prefer

Culturally Responsive and/or Strengths-Based Assessment

Data-based decision making and equitable practice for diverse populations are practice domains that also align with assessment. Assessment should be adherent to strengths-based and culturally responsive practices, which have been called for, and even proclaimed as underpinning of, all school psychology practices (NASP, 2020). Thus, CRA and SBA, and the argument for being studied simultaneously, will be briefly reviewed; however, a more in-depth review can be found in Author (in preparation). Table 2.3 has been adapted from Author (in preparation) and describes assessment practices, benefits, and limitations of each model.

Table 2.3

Recommendations, benefits, and limitations of SBA and CRA

	SBA	CRA	Citations
Assessment Recommendations	Attempts to strike a balance between deficits, weaknesses, and problems with strengths and resources considers ecological factors standardized measures are used to identify strengths and can include measures of quality of life considers the bias and backgrounds of practitioners Resources and strengths of the family are identified and a part of case conceptualization	Practitioners are aware of their own bias Cultural information is highly valuable including values, beliefs, and routines High quality parent interviews that also aim to collect cultural data (e.g. Jones International Mulitcultural Interview Schedule (JIMIS; Jones, 2009; Routines Based Interview; McWilliam, 2006) Identify cultural strengths and supports Practitioners adapt to the communication style of families Practitioners consider the interaction between their identity and the identity of families and students Identity is dynamic Practitioners consider trauma, but CRA is not formally truama informed The limitations of standardized measures are considered and communicated, Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA) and local norms are used when possible Practitioners consider if classrooms (including pedagogy and curriculum) are culturally responsive when conducting observations and meet with teachers to share findings of classroom observations and collaborate to make interpretations Practitioners build mutual understanding of each other's expectations throughout the process Family's perceptions are incorporated into assessment findings Identifies community and cultural strengths	Jimerson et al., 2004; Lopez & Synder, 2003; Rhee et al., 2001 Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014

Benefits	Provides a more holistic view of the student; informs intervention; shifts school psychologists away from the deficit-based perspective to align with strength-based perspectives; enhances school-based consultation and collaboration	Inherently strengths-based to counter the dominate culture lens focus on deficits Culturally responsive practices are needed to work in schools that continue to become more diverse Aims to inform intervention	Huebner & Gilman, 2004; Jimerson et al., 2004; Reid et al., 2000 Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014
Limitations	Additional research is needed to build confidence in the psychometric and predictive utility of strengths-based and quality of life measures and ability Additional research is need to describe the benefits of SBA A more organized model of SBA in schools should be developed to formalize the practice	May be difficult to implement when district or state guidelines necessitate the use of standardized measures May be difficult to implement a recursive process that elicits feedback from families regarding assessment findings within the timelines set by federal legislation Developing local norms and using alternative assessment measures such as CBA may be time consuming for practitioners There is little direction on how to incorporate cultural strengths in intervention planning	Huebner & Gilman, 2004; Jimerson et al., 2004 IDEA, 2004; Jones, 2014

Strengths-based Assessment

SBA is rooted in positive psychology and differs from a medical-model use of identifying deficits as defining features (Lopez & Snider, 2003; Jimerson et al., 2004). There are some defining features of SBA. These are (a) SBA works through an ecological framework (Jimerson et al., 2004); (b) SBA attempts to strike a balance between strengths and resources and problems, weakness, or deficits (Lopez & Snider, 2003; Jimerson et al., 2004); (c) strengths and resources of the family and student are integrated into case conceptualization (Lopez & Snider, 2003); (d) standardized measures are used to identify strengths (including quality of life measures; Jimerson et al., 2004; Rhee et al., 2001; Huebner, 2001); (e) assessment should inform intervention (Lopez & Snider, 2003; Jimerson et al., 2004; Reid et al., 2000); and (f) practitioners engaging in SBA consider their bias and backgrounds (Jimerson et al., 2004, Lopez & Synder, 2003; Rhee et al., 2001).

There are some limitations of SBA. First, there is still a need for research to examine the psychometric and predictive utility of strengths-based standardized measures (Jimerson et al., 2004; Reid et al., 2000; Rhee et al., 2001;). Second, more research is needed to describe the benefits of SBA (Jimerson et al., 2004; Rhee et al., 2001). Third, there is a need for a more organized model for implementing SBA in schools (Jimerson et al., 2004). To be adequately prepared to employ SBA in schools, school psychologists may need to seek professional development in the areas of SBA, specifically, or in positive psychology. It has been recommended school psychologists hoping to employ SBA should start by understanding sources of strength at a community level and beginning IEP meetings with a review of student strengths (Jimerson et al., 2004).

Culturally Responsive Assessment

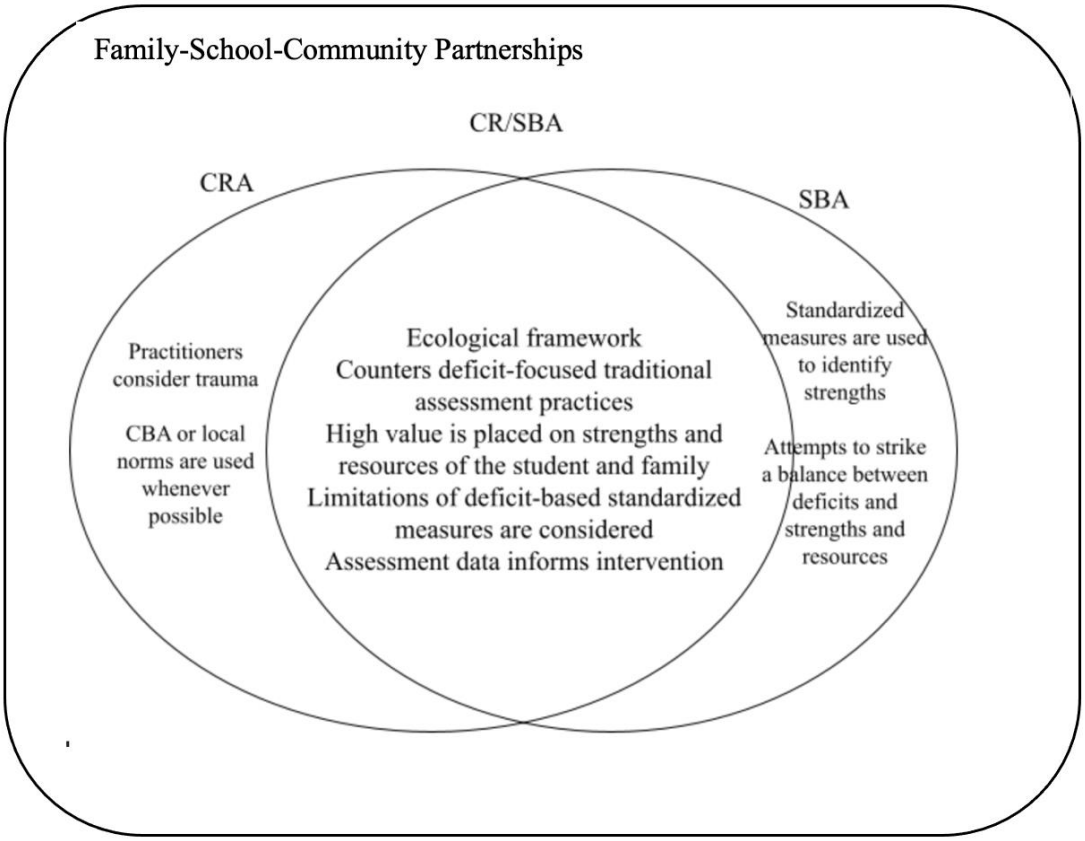
CRA recognizes traditional assessment practices as being informed by the dominate culture and therefore pathologizing for those who do not belong to the dominate culture (Hays, 2019; Jones, 2014). CRA has been discussed in counseling psychology (Hays, 2019) and school psychology (Jones, 2014). There are several defining features of culturally responsive assessment. These are (a) cultural information is integral to assessment (Hays, 2016); (b) professionals employing CRA consider their identity and how it may interact with the identities of others (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014); (c) practitioners continually reflect on their bias (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014); (d) practitioners build mutual understanding of the assessment process and expectations with families and students (Hays, 2016); I CBM and local norms are used whenever possible (Jones, 2014); (f) high quality parent interviews are conducted (Jones, 2014) that collect cultural data (Hays, 2016); (g) when conducting classroom observations, pedagogy and curriculum are considered and interpretations are built collaboratively with the teacher (Jones, 2014); (h) practitioners consider trauma (however, CRA is not trauma-informed; Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014); and (i) the purpose of collecting data is to inform intervention (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014).

Like SBA, CRA has some limitations. First, some practices may be difficult to implement due to state and federal guidelines and mandates. Second, developing local norms and using alternative assessment methods may be time consuming for practitioners (Jones, 2014). Third, there is little direction on how exactly to incorporate cultural strengths in intervention planning.

Culturally Responsive and/or Strengths Based Assessment

In combination, CRA and SBA align well with the NASP practice model and may, collectively, offer a path to aligning practice closer to the future ideal of assessment practice (NASP, 2020). Figure 2.1 illustrates the overlap in features of CRA and SBA and illustrates to these are neatly situated within FSCP.

Figure 2.1
Illustration of CR/SBA



Given the (1) overlap of the models, (2) lack of specific and organized steps for individual model implementation in schools, and (3) failure to provide a clearly identifiable and strongly bounded description of what each model is and is not, the author believes that CRA and SBA should be considered in tandem as culturally responsive and/or strength-based assessment (CR/SBA). Taken collectively, through an ecological framework, CR/SBA practices place high value on strengths and resources of the student

as well as the family, consider the limitations in deficit-based standardized measures, and inform intervention. Rather than simply an approach, CR/SBA is a specific way to conduct assessments. Thus, practitioners who engage in CR/SBA consider their own bias and background and how that influences their perspectives and their professional assessment practice.

For school psychologists, although it may be beneficial to understand and study these two models together because of their significant overlap and shared frameworks, it has not yet been done. Consequently, there is no standardized understanding of what CR/SBA looks like in practice, together or individually. A school psychologist who wishes to engage in CRA and/or SBA may not know how. They may be engaging in purely CRA or SBA, a combination of the two, or just partial components of the models. For example, a school psychologist could employ a strengths-based approach but not engage in strengths-based assessment necessarily. This study hopes to shed light on how school psychologists conceptualize CR/SBA.

Current Study

Despite NASP's declaration that culturally responsive and strengths-based practices must be a foundation of all school-based practices, there is little to no research regarding how school psychologists apply this in assessment. This study fills that gap by exploring how school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practices as CRA or SBA conduct assessment.

Significance of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the process used by school psychologists to conduct special education assessment and subsequent IEP planning (when necessary).

More specifically, the study explored the process used by school psychologists who self-identified their assessment practice as CR/SBA. Currently, there are proposed models for special education assessment, research identifying what assessment practices school psychologists use, and research about how families are involved in the process; however, there is a lack of literature exploring the process by which school psychologists conduct assessment. This understanding of the process school psychologists employ provides insight into "how" school psychologists utilize certain practices and what barriers and facilitators contribute to implementing CR/SBA.

Research Questions

The study aimed to address the following research questions:

(1) How do school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practice as CR/SBA conduct special education assessment?
    a. How do school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practice as CR/SBA define CR/SBA?

(2) What practices do school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practice as CR/SBA use to facilitate CR/SBA special education assessment?
    a. How do these practices align or differ from CR/SBA practices suggested in literature?
    b. What acts as facilitators to utilizing CR/SBA practices?
    c. What acts as barriers to utilizing CR/SBA practices?

(3) What graduate training experiences inform school psychologist's implementation of CR/SBA practices?

Methodology

Qualitative methodology was utilized to explore this topic. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to perform an in-depth exploration of not only what practices school psychologists employ but also "how" they use them, which is integral to the uniqueness of this study. Specifically, multiple case study design was chosen for the ability to research a phenomenon in an in-depth fashion while in its natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2018). Multiple case study design is regarded as more robust than single case study designs (Heriott & Firestone, 1983). However, multiple case study design can be an extensive undertaking for a researcher (Yin, 2018); therefore, considerations for the study's feasibility are identified throughout the research design. The intent of this qualitative study is not to provide generalizable results, but to contribute an in-depth, rich account of "how" school psychologists conduct CR/SBA in their natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 2006).

Sample

The sample for this study consists of cases and participants. Cases are constructs that are defined by the researcher (e.g., a school psychologist's assessment practice) and determined to be worthy of studying to answer research questions about a topic. Importantly, cases exist within their real life context and therefore the context of a case should be examined as well in order to reap the benefit of this research design (Crewswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 2005; Stake; 2006). In this study, participants are individuals who able to describe the case (e.g., a school psychologist who conducts assessment).

Cases

For this study, a case was the assessment practices of a school psychologist who self-identifies their assessment practices as CR/SBA. Assessment is defined as it is in school psychology literature. Assessment refers to individual psychological assessment or psychoeducational assessment conducted in a school setting for the purpose of special education evaluation. Assessment practices include the collection of and incorporation of data to be synthesized into findings, and interpretation of those findings in context to make decisions about an individual by identifying strengths, weaknesses, neurological development, and mental processes. Assessment practices additionally include linking assessment data to intervention (Sattler, 2018; Salvia et al., 2017). When conducting multiple case studies, Yin (2014) recommends that researchers not include more than four or five case studies within a single study to maintain feasibility for the researcher to conduct the study while gathering an appropriate amount of data to provide a rich account of each case.

Each case was bound by the time within which participants conducted assessments that aligned with CR/SBA (determined by participants' self-report). As the context of practice is an important reason why case study was chosen, the context within which the participant practices was a part of the case. The context included district guidelines for assessment, access to resources (physical such as measures and non-physical such as time), the school psychologist's caseload, school and district climate and culture, community climate and culture, etc. These factors were also important to include because these factors are a part of the NASP Practice Model (2020) which outlines contextual factors (referred to as "organizational principals" in the practice model) that

impact a school psychologist's practice. By aligning this study with the NASP Practice Model, implications are more meaningfully applied to the field.

Participants

This study included four participants. Table 2.4 illustrates inclusionary and exclusionary criteria. Each participant was: (a) a licensed school psychologist in their state, (b) currently employed as a school psychologist in a public school at least part-time, (c) had been practicing as a school psychologist in public schools for at least three years, (d) graduated from a NASP accredited graduate program, and (e) conducted at least 13 assessments a school year. This number was determined by considering the median number of assessments (16) school psychologists conduct over the year nationally (Farmer et al., 2021) with flexibility considering global circumstances that might reduce the number of assessment school psychologists conducted (i.e., COVID-19). A definition was provided for assessment; however, because there are not clear, widely accepted definitions of CRA or SBA (as previously reviewed; Hays, 2016; Jimerson et al., 2004; author, under review), participants defined CR/SBA themselves in an initial screening survey (see Appendix B).

Exclusionary criteria included the inability or unwillingness to participate, not practicing in a school at least part-time, having practiced in a school for less than three years, lacking a state license, having conducted less than 13 assessments a year, or not self-identifying assessment practices as CR/SBA.

Table 2.4

Inclusionary and exclusionary criteria

Inclusionary Criteria	Exclusionary Criteria
Licensed school psychologist holding license in their state	Does not hold a license as a school psychologist

Currently employed as a school psychologist in and by a public school at least part-time	Does not practice in a public school setting at least part time Not employed by a school district
Has been practicing as a school psychologist in a public school for at least three years	Practicing as a school psychologist in a public school for less than three years
Graduated from a NASP accredited graduate program	Graduated from a program that is not NASP accredited
Conducted at least 13 assessments in the 2021-2022 school year	Conducting less than 13 assessments in the 2021-2022 school year
Self-identifies their assessment practice as CR/SBA	Does not self-identify their practice as CR/SBA
	Inability or unwillingness to participate

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through three state school psychology organization listservs. State organizations were chosen based on membership engagement for efficacy and financial feasibility (some state organizations required a fee to advertise). A link to the screening survey was advertised through these organizations. As stated above, the screening survey was used to determine the inclusionary and exclusionary status of interested school psychologists (including if they self-identify their assessment practice as CR/SBA). This survey also collected demographic information such as race, gender, degree-level, and school level (ECE, primary, secondary).

Participant Sample, Selection, and Attrition. Sixteen potential participants completed the screening survey, seven of whom met criteria for the study per the screening survey. All were invited to participate via email. A more diverse group of participants was prioritized (i.e., BIPOC participants were given priority in an effort to elevate the voices of school psychologists who have historically been left out of or denied access to engaging in research). Participants were selected and emailed; four participants responded. All participants completed all aspects of the study. Table 2.5 includes participant demographics and includes participant's alias.

Table 2.5
Participant demographic information

Alias	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Degree	License	Years of practice
Monica	White/Caucasian	Woman	PsyD	State licensed school psychologist; Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP)	3
Abby	White/Caucasian	Cisgender Woman	EdS	State licensed school psychologist; NCSP	7
Alex	Two or more races/ethnicities	Woman	MA	State licensed school psychologist; NCSP	3
Emily	White/Caucasian	Woman	EdS	State licensed school psychologist; NCSP	7

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of two semi-structured interviews and self-report information with additional member checking interview and feedback opportunities. Interview questions focused on the participants' assessment practices in general terms; on the second self-report form, they were asked to choose a recent initial special education evaluation to answer questions and this was used as a "jumping-off" point for the second interview.

Interviews

The study included two interviews for each case. After data collection was complete, participants were given the opportunity to participate in a third member-checking interview (one participant participated in the member-checking interview).

Interview Pilot. Prior to the launch of this study, an interview pilot was conducted to ensure social validity and foster robustness. School psychology interns, chosen because they have similar understandings of basic concepts of assessment and engage in similar practices but do not meet inclusionary criteria and were easily

accessible to the researcher, provided critical feedback for refining the final interview used with actual participants. The pilot resulted in two specific format changes: using a specific assessment as a "jumping off" point to ground participant context and organizing questions by school for the first interview to ensure the researcher could ask reference back for follow up questions. The pilot confirmed that each interview, including consent, answering any questions, and wrapping up took approximately 50-60 minutes. Finally, the researcher became more mindful of how to avoid double questions, build confidence in the interviews by clarifying appropriately, and build rapport with participants.

Interview 1 and 2. The first interview focused more broadly on the participants' assessment practices. In case study interviews, the questions asked should directly address the research questions (Yin, 2018). To obtain data related to the context within which each school psychologists engages in CR/SBA, a portion of the first interview included questions about their general job responsibilities and context of practice. Subsequent interview questions addressed each research question. Appendix D includes the interview protocol and illustrates the alignment of research questions with each interview question. In addition to following the interview protocol, follow up, probing, specifying, and interpreting questions were also asked (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 2006).

The second interview used a specific initial evaluation assessment as a "jumping-off" point to capture their "process" more broadly. Given that the pilot study revealed that participants had difficulty verbally recalling what they did at each step of assessment in a general sense, in the second interview, the researcher and the participant used a specific assessment to co-construct a flow chart that visually represented the participant's assessment process. The flow charts were created using Google Jamboard, allowed

editing, and permitted the researcher to ask the participant, at several points, if they believed the flow chart was an accurate representation of their assessment process. In this study, flow chart refers to the visual created by the participant and researcher in the second interview.

Member-checking interview. Participants were given the opportunity to engage in an optional member-checking interview after they completed all data collection. This occurred during the data analysis process. All participants were invited to participate in a 10-minute zoom interview to share their reflections; one participant engaged in the member-checking interview.

Self-report Forms

Self-report forms included the screening survey described above and one other self-report form. The screening survey was used to collect information related to inclusionary criteria, demographic information, and a definition of CR/SBA from the participant. This information was used in the interview and used to provide context to their cases.

Each participant also completed a self-report survey about CRA, SBA, and FSCP practices (as outlined in literature). In the survey, participants indicated if they implemented each practice in the evaluation they had described in the second interview. This survey was completed after the second interview. This provided additional data about what practices they implement from these models (lending to triangulation of data to foster rigor of the study) and gathered data to address research question 2a. This can be found in Appendix E and was created based on the Partnerships as the Path to Leveraging Family, School, Community Partnerships to Implement Culturally Responsive and

Strengths-based Assessment in Special Education (PATP-CR/SBA; Author, in preparation).

Data Analysis

Participants were given alias. Then, interviews were transcribed using OtterAi resulting in a rough transcription which the researcher edited for accuracy. Similarly, flowcharts created as a part of the second interview were edited for readability. This helped the researcher become more familiar with the data. Word and Excel were used to organize and analyze data. First, the researcher "played" with the data (p. 167, Yin, 2018) to become more familiar and search for patterns and insight.

Memoing and Journaling

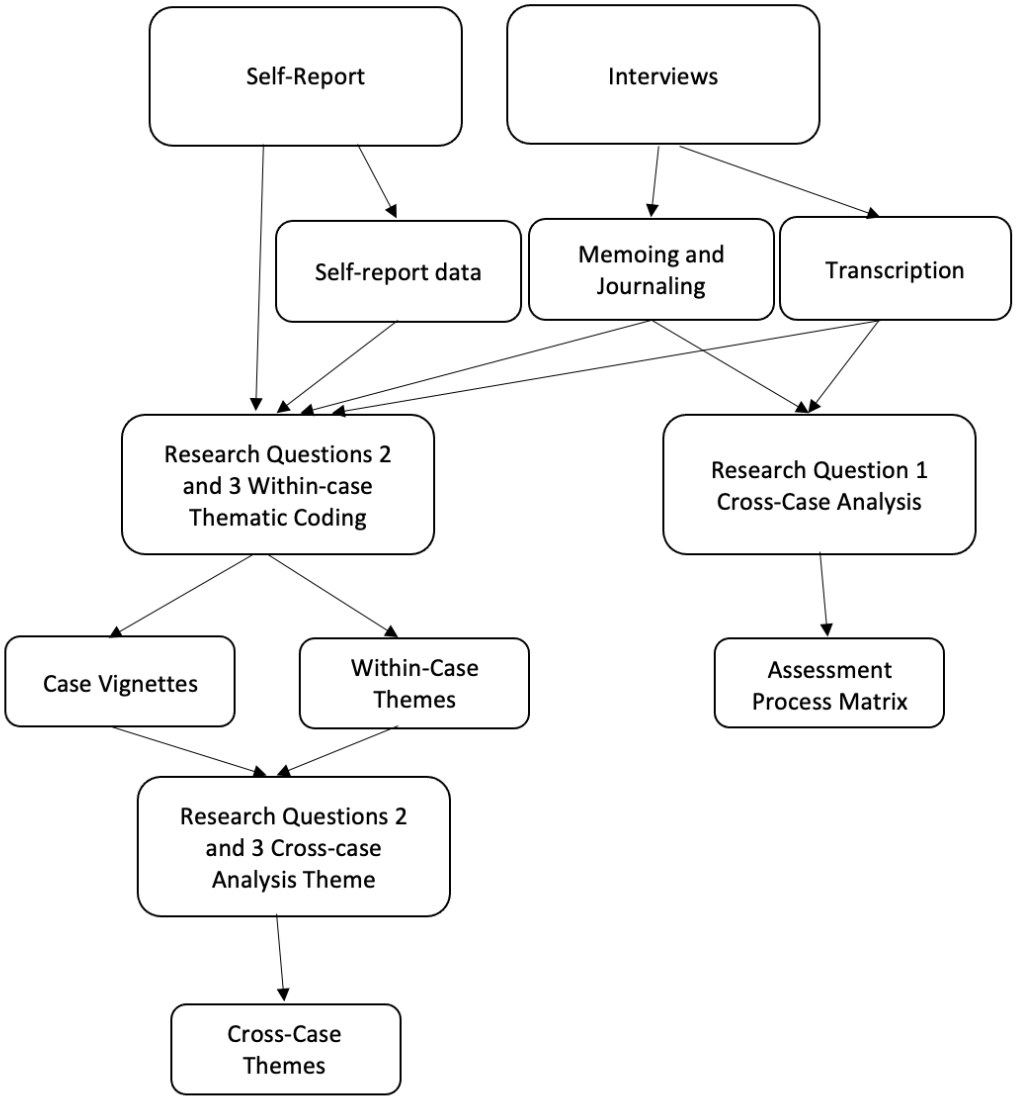
Throughout analysis, the researcher engaged in memoing and journaling to ensure high-quality analysis. Memo writing, is a strategy frequently used in grounded theory approaches (Corbin & Stauss, 2007; Corbin & Stauss, 2015; Yin, 2018). Memo writing included reflective note taking in which the researcher reflected on what they know about the data, what they are curious about, and what they want to know. Attention was given to attending to all evidence, investigating plausible alterative interpretations, addressing the most significant aspect of the cases, and looking for contradictory information in the data (Yin, 2018). This included both theoretical memoing (i.e., reflections on the content of data and meaning) and methodological memoing (i.e., reflection on the methodological process). Memoing supported a systematic, transparent process of data analysis (Tracy, 2010). A table with decisions made based memoing and brief rational can be found in Appendix G.

Codebook

A codebook was created and used for analysis. Some codes were *a priori* (organizational principles as defined in the NASP practice model). Other codes were inductive, meaning that the codes were generated through a systematic, iterative process of reviewing data and memoing and journaling. A coding tree illustrating the final themes, categories, and codes that resulted from deductive and inductive coding can be found in Appendix H. The code book was then used to code data to answer research questions that asked "what" (R2 and R3; "what" questions being more appropriately answered through thematic coding). On the other hand, analysis to address "how" questions (R1) was relational and resulted in a framework of the process, necessitating a certain approach to data analysis. Due to the research questions requiring a different analysis, analysis is described by research question following description of codebook validity.

A second coder was used to validate the code book. In order to determine the reliability of the codebook, a second-coder coded a randomized set of 10% of the data using the code book. The intercoder reliability of all codes was 90%. This was calculated by taking the total number of agreed upon coding decisions and dividing it by the total number of codes (Neuendorf, 2017). The interrater reliability of only inductive codes was also calculated (i.e., without organizational principles) was also calculated (see Appendix G for memoing decisions and rationale). The interrater reliability of inductive codes was 92%. 90% agreement indicates that the codebook is adequately reliable.

Figure 2.2
Data analysis process



Research Question One Analysis

Data analysis to address research question 1 followed a process similar to the coding process used in grounded theory presented by Corbin and Strauss (2015). Cross-case analysis was conducted to identify similarities between the processes of each case. This process gave attention to the relationship and, at the broadest level of analysis,

resulted in a diagram (Creswell & Poth, 2018; hereon, diagram is used to refer to the product of this analysis). This type of analysis allowed the researcher to use data to illustrate "how" school psychologists conduct assessment (the process). For this analysis, one *a priori* code was central to the phenomena (the process of conducting an assessment), and all other codes emerged from the data. Flowcharts were "cleaned" for ease of reading ("raw" and "cleaned" flow charts can be found in Appendix F). This diagram was then triangulated with interview data. Member checking was used to ensure participants believed their process was accurately reflected; one participant participated in member checking.

To answer research question 1a, participants provided a definition of CR/SBA in the screening survey. Across cases, participants listed practices as the entire (or a significant part) of the definition. As the inductive and iterative process of data analysis unfolded, thematic codes and categories revealed "defining features" of CR/SBA. Therefore, analysis did not result in a "definition" of CR/SBA but did result in a set of defining features. Definitions provided by participants can be found in within-case findings and defining features are described in cross-case findings.

Research Question Two Analysis

Deductive and inductive coding processes were used to answer research question 2. For deductive coding, *a priori* codes were defined as they are in the NASP practice model. NASP presents organizational principles as environmental factors provided by or cultivated by the local educational agency that employs school psychologists to create a setting in which school psychologists can practice in all domains of practice (2020). This answered questions 2b and 2c (facilitators and barriers).

Inductive codes emerged from the data itself. Patterns in these codes revealed categories and themes. The researcher specifically looked for codes that were contradictory to other codes and codes that contradicted their beliefs to create a more rigorous, credible code book and to challenge the researcher's assumptions and bias. The inductive coding process was iterative; codes, categories, and themes were organized in various ways until a final organization. In the process, the researcher continually returned to the research question and to the definition of assessment that bounded the cases.

Next, the self-report form and interview data was used to address research question 2a. The self-report form listed practices suggested in literature to provide an initial indication of what practices aligned and differed. Then, data from interviews and flowcharts were used to triangulate and the researcher identified what aligned with practices suggested in literature. To foster rigor and ensure that analysis does not over or underrepresent how practice aligned, findings include practices that are supported by triangulation, mentioned across all cases, and strongly align with practices in literature.

Research Question Three Analysis

To answer research question 3, participants were asked about their training experiences. The researcher engaged in inductive thematic coding to generate findings. As analysis unfolded, the code "unreliable retroactive self-report of training" was created for data that indicated a participant could not remember or describe their training. This code appeared frequently across participants and therefore it was determined that the data was insufficient to address research question three (further discussed in limitations).

Author Positionality

Qualitative research does not seek to provide an objective interpretation of data and findings, but instead "acknowledges that the writings of a qualitative text cannot be separated from the author, how the author receives it, and how it impacts the participants and sites under study" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 228). As the researcher, my cultural, personal, and professional identities and experiences influenced the way I engaged in research and inform my perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes. This positionality statement illuminates how the interpretations and conclusions were reached (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I am a White, queer woman. I was raised in a middle to upper class, two-parent household with three sisters in the Southeast. Before pursuing a degree in school psychology, I worked in therapeutic camp settings with children with serious, chronic, or life-threatening illness and disabilities and their families. This work sparked an interest in adapting environments to meet the needs of children with complex needs and excitement and partnering with their families. This experience, in combination with my undergraduate education in Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, solidified my ecological perspective. I became interested in how schools meet the needs of children with complex needs and how the systems people interact with afford or deny them certain privileges.

I am a school psychologist in training and researcher. I value authentic partnerships with families and deeply believe in their importance in a child's life. I take an ecological perspective. Additionally, critical reflection and thought deeply shapes the way in which I conduct professional responsibilities and interpret data and information. My privileged identity, as White and cisgender has shaped my experience in K-12

education and therefore the lens through which I view it. My queer identity also shapes my unique experiences in K-12 education because it is an identity that others are often unaware of. While this identity does not always influence how I am perceived by others, it does influence the way I perceive the world.

In relation to the subject of study, assessment and special education evaluation, as a school psychologist in training I have taken numerous courses in topics related to assessment, the special education process, disability, school systems, and professional practice. I have also engaged in approximately four years of field-based experiences in school and clinical settings. In these settings I have engaged in assessment and the special education evaluation process. Assessment is a clinical interest of mine, and I believe that high quality, socially valid assessment has the potential to positively influence a child and family's trajectory. I am also aware of the harm of deficit-based pathologizing assessment.

Unlike the proposed participants in this study, I have not practiced for three or more years and am not currently employed in public schools; however, I have many close professional and personal relationships with public school employees and am aware of and empathetic toward the frustrations with a general lack of resources and societal respect associated with their jobs. All these factors influence my interpretation and understanding.

Within-case Findings and Case Vignettes

In this study, the assessment practice of four school psychologists who engage in CR/SBA was studied to produce within-case and cross-case findings. First, within-case findings are presented. Each case is presented with the context of the case including the

participant's training and information about the district and school(s) they work in. Then, their conceptualization of CR/SBA is described as well as barriers and facilitators to CR/SBA. Following the presentation of these four cases, cross-case findings include five themes identified across all four cases.

Case 1: Monica's assessment practice

Monica received a Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) in school psychology from a NASP-accredited program and received specific Spanish-English bilingual training. She has been practicing in schools for 3 years. Prior to graduate training in school psychology, Monica received a master's degree in sports psychology which provided her with a strengths-based and positive psychology foundation. Her school psychology graduate training included topics about culturally responsive and strengths-based practices generally and specifically in assessment. She also completed field placement experiences in Spanish-English bilingual settings with supervision from Spanish-English bilingual psychologists. She credits her training experiences as giving her a strong foundation that she has been able to build upon as her practice as evolved. She said,

> [I]n grad school and at first, it's different when you're still learning how to administer [different measures] and that's all you're going to focus on, but that seems to get a little more natural, but I think in graduate school they instilled in us that [this] was going to happen, and I don't think I was using as many culturally responsive assessment practices until probably this year.

Since graduate training, Monica has received psychology-specific professional development including topics such as assessing autism in girls and behavioral

interventions and non-psychology specific professional development about culturally responsive educational practice and bilingual education. She also receives ongoing supervision to obtain a second professional license.

Context of practice

Monica works in a school district that spans suburban and rural areas in the Western United States. She works in a state that strives for a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) model and part of her role is growing the MTSS framework at her schools. Monica's district has been identified as having a significantly disproportionate number of English language learning (ELL) students identified as having specific learning disabilities as compared to their non-ELL peers. Monica works in two elementary schools and is on the district's bilingual assessment team. Both schools that she works at have dual Spanish-English language programming. Her primary role is to support students qualified for special education services through assessment, consultation, and intervention.

Her district has organized processes to request support from district-level school psychology specialists, early childhood special education specialists (ECSEs), board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs), and other special service providers. She explained,

> [W]e have all the resources in this district, it's so easy to get resources, any assessment materials, whatever you want, anytime, that whole system, they're really open to [getting resources and training]; however, sometimes it is challenging to access those resources or additional training with limited time.

Monica spends one day a week at School A and three to four days a week at School B (she spends one day a week working on the bilingual assessment team when needed). All of the teachers and staff, aside from some paraprofessionals, practice in Spanish and English. Monica has strong relationships with her coworkers at both schools but is more embedded in the school community of the school she spends more time at (i.e., School B). When I met her, she greeted and briefly chatted with every school employee we walked by and afterward remarked, "it's a really cool school to work [at]." She added that at School A, she has trusting relationships with coworkers, but "since I'm only there one day a week, I'm not as involved in the school system as much." Culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogical practices and linguistically appropriate practices are priorities at both schools. She said,

> [O]ne of the reasons I really love this school is all the teachers are huge advocates of seeing things through a cultural lens, so it's a big part of the community and approach to teaching [and] working with these kids.

She is a member of two teams: the special education team that includes special education teachers/resource teachers, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and case managers; and the social emotional learning team comprised of the school counselor, mental health advocate, social emotional learning specialists, and assistant principal.

Half of the students Monica works with are native Spanish speakers. Some families are recent immigrants. The socioeconomic status of the students varies greatly. She described that school B is very much embedded in the larger community. Administrators, teachers, and the family liaison work to connect families with resources

(such as food and housing) and facilitate family relationships with community supports such as churches.

Assessment Role

In order to understand how Monica conceptualizes and engages in CR/SBA, it is helpful to understand her role in assessment. Monica conducts assessment for emotional, behavioral, and academic concerns. Referrals for assessments come from the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) process or from parent requests. Her caseload is primarily male students with educational identifications of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). She conducts many functional behavior assessments (FBAs) as both a part of special education evaluations and to provide consultation to teachers. ESCEs or special education teachers act as the case managers and she works with speech and occupational therapists for many assessments. Almost all of her assessments are for students who are primarily Spanish speakers or Spanish-English bilingual. Monica explained that because her role varies at each school (and on the bilingual assessment team), she may adjust how she conducts assessment based on her role (e.g., gathering information in more frequent, shorter interactions with a teacher when she is at the school frequently or blocking out a longer time to gather information from a teacher when she is at a school infrequently).

Conceptualization of CR/SBA

Monica believes that CR/SBA "comes down to knowing the kid, their environment, and their culture, building an understanding of the student's environment" and "understanding and applying cultural social nuances to the interpretation of results." She provided this definition of CR/SBA:

> Utilizing materials that have been adequately normed for the populations I serve (to the best of my ability). With a bilingual assessment, a part of my job is determining language of administration for both students and parents. Understanding and applying cultural social nuances to the interpretation of results. Interpreting both strengths and areas of growth and highlighting strengths in reports. Trying to utilize strengths to determine methods of intervention and recommendations moving forward. Reporting strengths first and determining/explaining how strengths and lesser strengths can be developmentally congruent and how to best approach intervention moving forward. Building an understanding of the student's environment and family system in interpreting the data.

Monica conducts many assessments with bilingual students and has specific training in bilingual assessment. As such, she conceptualizes this as a major part of her approach to assessment but makes the distinction that considering language alone is not synonymous with culturally responsive assessment practices. Monica explained that she conducts CR/SBA, and that she believes CRA and SBA can be used simultaneously. Although this is her understanding of CRA and SBA, she also explained that these models are difficult to define, and several times expressed it was challenging to articulate how to use CR/SBA practices.

Monica provided several practices and concepts in her definition of CR/SBA, and several other ideas are important parts of her conceptualization of CR/SBA. These include an ecological orientation and value of relationships and community, a culturally

responsive school climate, a "mixed-methods" approach to interpretation, advocacy, and a commitment to ongoing learning.

Ecological Orientation and Value of Relationships and Community. Her conceptualization of her role and view of assessment is grounded in the interconnectedness, and multidirectional impact of the school, staff, students, family, and community. Monica values relationships with families and relationships with other educators. She shared that using CR/SBA, "is not difficult because it's such a huge part of the community I work in" and "the place that I work also involves people that I work with." And that she could not engage in CR/SBA without "being able to know about the people you work with and know those cultural pieces" and learning "just hearing from families other staff and even kiddos about them."

Culturally Responsive School Environment. Monica believes that a culturally responsive school environment (including culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy) is a major part of conducting assessment. She said,

> [I]t's not necessarily my role, but the school is pretty unique in terms of the general education curriculum is extremely culturally relevant, there's a lot that goes into it. They're constantly having grade level meetings. Teachers are advocating for things that they learn about, and they know about, and we have specialists on the team who have analyzed different curriculum.

She trusts and values the teachers and staff's efforts to ensure that students receive instruction in a way that reflects their cultural and linguistic needs. Therefore, she is able to interpret assessment data with the understanding that the instruction the student has

received reflects their cultural (and linguistic) needs. She explained, when she is considering significant disproportionality and the assessments she conducts, “I know the kids got a culturally responsive teaching.” With this, she is able to determine if a student is not accessing the general education curriculum due to a possible disability (rather than linguistic or cultural barriers). Additionally, Monica believes that tier II level intervention (preventative, targeted interventions before special education services) are necessary before beginning an assessment and provide helpful information.

“Mixed-methods” Interpretation. Monica values quantitative information gathered from standardized measures and other formal tools and qualitative, sometimes informally gathered, information when making interpretations. While discussing one case, she said that

> [E]ven though this formal data is telling us one thing, our experiences with this kiddo, talking to his mom, knowing him in a classroom, that's telling us something different. So, I think realizing that you need both of those in order to advocate for the kiddo.

She also may rely on other educators with strong relationships with families to supplement this information. She highlighted that all of this information is important when conceptualizing the case,

> [A] lot of these assessments, it is kind of cut and dry how the numbers come out, but then the interpretation and what you do with that information [is] where you can really highlight a kid’s strengths and take the culture into consideration as to why the numbers might be saying what they're saying.

When gathering formal data through the use of standardized measures, she examines and utilizes the most appropriate measures available and then interprets findings in the context of that student's culture and environment.

Advocacy. Monica believes that CR/SBA is a form of advocacy and ethical duty. The purpose of conducting an assessment is to support the student and their family (rather than only identify or label). She explained, "at the end of the day it's important to [determine eligibility identification] because we have to, but we are trying to advocate and plan how we help the kiddo." And that, "it's about collecting the data, and also then relaying it in a way that's not too subjective in terms maybe a negative impression on the kid." Therefore, understanding the student's strengths and interests is integral to assessment, as it is integral to planning intervention.

Ongoing Learning and Learning from Others. Monica values ongoing learning and learns from others. She said, "I feel like it's [CR/SBA] something that I'm still obviously growing, and I'll always be growing in." For Monica, this growing and learning involves professional development and training, self-reflection and awareness, and learning from the families and other educators she works with. For example, she shared this story of a time she learned from another educator and how she applies that to her assessment practice.

> I [use] this great book of interventions, and there was one about social skills with friends, and it was really straightforward how it's supposed to be implemented, these are things you do and these things you don't do and one of the things was that you should not [do is] yelling with friends … but I went over it with the counselor [and they] said sometimes, [in] my

> culture that's the thing you do. I didn't use that intervention strictly anyway, but I wouldn't have caught that. And so then in the assessment, being really aware of maybe those differences and being aware of the things that you're using to see if that implicit bias is in these instruments. It made me re-look at everything I'm using, to see if I use it as it's meant to, or if maybe it's not being fair.

Barriers and Facilitators

Monica described several factors that pose as barriers or facilitators to using CR/SBA. Strong foundational assessment skills, organization, effective teaming, and working with other educators who highly value culturally responsive practices support her ability to use CR/SBA practices. She learns from her coworkers and from the families and students she's works with about their cultural values, different ways of thinking, and when she is making assumptions. Although some of this happens outside of the assessment process, she applies what she learns to the assessments she conducts.

Lack of time makes it challenging to use CR/SBA practices. Although her district has most any measure she would need, it can be challenging to access them with limited time. Similarly, her district supports her seeking professional development, but sometimes she does not have the time to attend. Additionally, legislatively dictated aspects of the special education evaluation process (i.e., specific eligibility categories, lengthy paperwork forms) can make it challenging to use some CR/SBA practices, particularly partnering with families in a genuine way.

Monica explained that although it is not explicitly a barrier or facilitator, depending on her role, she adjusts how she goes about conducting assessments. When she

conducts assessments at the school she is at most days of the week, she is able to gather information in many, shorter interactions. Conversely, when she conducts assessments on the bilingual assessment team, she schedules out larger blocks of time to gather information and is not able to be as flexible with teachers and families.

Case 2: Abby's assessment practice

Abby graduated with an Education Specialist Degree (Ed.S) in school psychology from a NASP-accredited program and has been practicing in schools for seven years. Her graduate training included topics of culturally responsive practices, but she explained that it tended to be unclear as to how to actually implement these practices. In her graduate training, the term "strengths-based" was not specifically used, but some concepts that fall under a strengths-based framework were covered. Abby felt there was a disconnect between coursework and her field experiences. In coursework, there was an emphasis on gathering and using family input and the child's strengths in the assessment process; however, this was not reflected in practice. Outside of expected coursework and experiences, Abby sought out research experience with bilingual students, and learned more about language development and understanding cultural assets. Abby believes that her graduate training gave her strong foundational skills when she entered the field.

Since graduating, Abby has received psychology-specific professional development related to culturally responsive assessment. Abby spends time set aside in her professional duties and personal time reading literature about culturally responsive assessment practices. She has attempted to seek out additional mentorship and thought partners about culturally responsive and strengths-based assessment. She explained that she has had mentorship and thought partners about bilingual assessment practices that

have had some additional relevancy to culturally responsive practices. However, she has struggled to find mentorship and thought partners specifically about culturally responsive and strengths-based assessment. Additionally, Abby speaks conversational Spanish but does not have professional proficiency.

Context of practice

Abby works in a suburban school district in the Western United States. She works in a state that strives for a MTSS model. In the district she works in, there is an emphasis on using a patterns of strengths-and-weakness (PSW) model for assessment. Although it is not explicitly dictated, Abby perceives a pressure to use standardized measures and write reports in a specific way. Her district has been identified as having a significantly disproportionate number of Hispanic students identified as having specific learning disabilities and significantly disproportionate number of Asian students not being identified as having disabilities. Abby works in one high school. Her primary role is in assessment, consultation, and intervention and she spends most of her time working with students who are qualified for special education.

Abby's district has an organized process to request support for assessment and has regularly scheduled psychology meetings in which there are opportunities to consult about cases. There are several Spanish-English bilingual school psychologists in the district who she consults with when appropriate. Her district is open to acquiring new assessment measures and tools. Her district provides financial resources for professional development but does not have protected time. When talking about professional development, Abby said, "I feel really supported, but I have to seek it out."

Abby works at one high school, five days a week. She has worked there for several years and has developed relationships with other educators. At her school, she works with a family engagement coordinator and consults with them about family relationships and partnerships. Abby is a part of two teams at her school: the special education team and a tier II intervention team. The tier II intervention team is led by the school counselors and made up of an administrator, school psychologist, interventionists, and student's family. The special education team is comprised of two speech language pathologists, a school psychologist, and special education teachers. When needed, an occupational therapist, physical therapist, or adaptive physical education teacher are a part of the process. There are also several marriage and family therapists who are available for mental health support to all students. Abby explained that her school has a focus on equity, and she receives support from her principle and coworkers to engage in CR/SBA. She said,

> I know that my principal is very supportive of me trying out different things. She doesn't know a lot about school psychology, or a special education, but ethically she [says], I hear you, I'll support you, what do you need? [that] support helps a lot.

Abby works with some coworkers as cultural brokers. She asks coworkers who may have cultural or lived experiences that could be similar to that of the students she is working with about any possible cultural considerations. With this, she explained, "their lived experiences are obviously very different [than the student and family's], but I think that they have more knowledge than I do" and "they have offered to talk to me about the cultural pieces, which is important, that's an important thing."

The majority of student's at the school identify as Pacific Asian or Latine. About 10% of the students are considered English language learners, but many students are bilingual, and a variety of languages are spoken by students and families at the school. About a quarter of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Many of the student's parents are recent immigrants. The majority of students at the school live in the city that the school is in, but a small portion do not.

Assessment Practice

In order to understand how Abby conceptualizes and engages in CR/SBA, it is helpful to understand her role in assessment. Abby primarily conducts assessment for emotional and behavior concerns, and sometimes conducts assessments for academic concerns. Almost all special education evaluation referrals come from the SST (or tier II intervention process), and therefore students have received intervention prior to the evaluation process. Special education teachers act as case managers. Although many of the students she evaluates are not identified as ELL, many of them are bi or multilingual.

Conceptualization of CR/SBA

Abby believes that to conduct CR/SBA is to, "make the assessment process [and] focus all the tools I use [on] answering the questions I'm asking and my lens to be focused around the students experiences and that whole picture." Additionally, she believes that "to be culturally responsive, special education should be a response to intervention model, I want to see, have things been tried and how did it work?" Abby provided this definition of CR/SBA:

> Culturally responsive requires integrating culturally sensitive attitudes and knowledge into our assessment practices. Strengths-based assessment

> means to center students' social-emotional, cognitive, academic, interpersonal, and cultural strengths, center their voices, and celebrate students' and families' and their communities' values and assets. These go together. For me, that means to consult with cultural brokers, partner with caregivers, use culturally-responsive interviews, problem solve with families and students, gather extensive background information, pre-meet and debrief with families, align my report with student goals, and gather evidence to disprove a hypothesis.

Although she provided this conceptualization and definition of CR/SBA, Abby also explained that it is challenging to describe CR/SBA and that there are several practices that are unclear. When discussing how she uses information she learned from cultural brokers, she said,

> I'm really cautious of making broad generalizations, or sounding really generic, so I have a hard time of expressing that I'm taking certain things in consideration without painting things with a broad stroke or overgeneralizing, that's hard to balance and I'm not sure how other people do that. I guess I don't know how to share out the information I got.

Abby provided several practices and major concepts in her definition of CR/SBA, and several other ideas are important parts of her conceptualization of CR/SBA. She understands CR/SBA as an ecologically-grounded, evolving, reflective process, and believes preventative intervention, self-awareness, the family and student's experience, and interviews are important parts.

CR/SBA as an Ecologically-Grounded, Evolving, Reflective Process. Abby believes that CR/SBA prioritizes understanding the ecology of the student, is individualized to the specific student and family and requires continual learning and reflection from practitioners as well as from the field of school psychology as a whole. As a practitioner, Abby explained, "I know [conducting CR/SBA] is going to be a lifelong journey" and is something that requires her to continually seek out the perspectives of others and additional learning. CR/SBA is something that the field as a whole should continue to reflect upon and evolve moving forward. She said,

> I hear students and I hear people of color saying that [pause] that our educational system has done a lot of harm [emotional inflection in voice], and so I think it's really important, as practitioners, to reevaluate what the evaluation process could look like.

This ongoing reflection and ecological focus are reflected throughout Abby's use of CR/SBA.

Preventative Intervention. Abby conceptualizes tier II intervention (or response to intervention; RTI) as a part of CR/SBA. She said, "to be culturally responsive, special education should be a response to intervention model, I want to see, have things been tried and how did it work?" In the context of her practice in which most referrals come through a tier II intervention process, some aspects of an assessment may begin in the tier II process such as creating a partnership with the family and gathering their input.

The Family and Student's Experiences. The experiences of the family and the student are central to CR/SBA. In her definition, she wrote that part of CR/SBA is to "celebrate students' and families' and their communities' values and assets" and "problem

solve with families and students, pre-meet and debrief with families." She said, "for any parent, this [evaluation] process is really overwhelming and new, but especially for parents or caregivers that aren't from the US, all the laws pertaining to special education is very unique to the US." While discussing an evaluation she conducted, she said,

> I think well, I personally believe I have the best intentions, but our education system has done a lot of harm. I want the parent to feel empowered, I don't want her just to put the trust in me, I want her to also feel like she has the understanding and the knowledge to make an informed decision.

She focused on the experiences of the family and the student throughout her use of CR/SBA.

Interviews. In Abby's conceptualization, interviews are critical. She said, "I think interviews are probably my biggest tool." This is also reflected in her definition. This includes interviews with the family, student, and informal conversational information gathering with other educators. Aside from the specific questions asked in an interview, she also uses interviews with other educators as an opportunity to reframe any possibly negative perceptions of a child or behavior. She adjusts the format, modality, and other aspects of interviews to be most accessible and comfortable for the family and student. This first-hand information, particularly from the family and student, aligns with the concept of centering the voices of family and student's and celebrating their community's values and assets.

Self-awareness. Lastly, self-awareness as practitioner is a key aspect in Abby's conceptualization of CR/SBA. While discussing her understanding of CR/SBA and how

she uses CR/SBA practices, she often reflected upon and acknowledged her own identity, experiences, and position. This included self-awareness in the position of school psychologists. She acknowledges the harm the educational system has inflicted and believes it is an ethical duty to continue to re-evaluate how school psychologists conduct assessment.

Barriers and Facilitators

Abby described several factors that make it easier or more challenging to use CR/SBA practices. Organization, foundational assessment training, effective teaming, learning from other educators, support from her administrators who value culturally responsive practices, and resources make it easier to engage in CR/SBA. Abby has worked at her school for several years and has relationships with her coworkers. She understands her role on teams and the roles of others. This allows her to work easily with others and learn from her coworkers. In particular, she explained she is able to engage with some other educators as cultural brokers because she has relationships with them, and they are open to sharing with her. Abby explained that her district is open to getting any measures she requests and provides financial support for professional development that has helped in use CR/SBA practices.

On the other hand, lack of time and case load, perceived pressure to conduct assessments and write reports in certain way, and lack of mentorship and profession-specific thought partners make it challenging to use CR/SBA practices. With limited time and many assessments to conduct, it can be challenging to seek out additional resources and research to help her conduct an assessment. For example, she described a case in which she wishes she had spent more time researching measures and interviews that

would have been more appropriate for that student and family. Additionally, Abby described that she works in a litigious district and therefore she feels pressure from her district to write reports in a specific way to be legally defensible. Similarly, she perceives a pressure to conduct assessments using a PSW model and utilize many standardized assessments that do not align with her conceptualization of CR/SBA. As described above, Abby is sometimes unsure of what exactly to do with cultural or ecological information or how to document it. She explained that lack of clear guidance as to how to use this information makes it challenging. Lastly, Abby shared that it has been challenging to find mentorship and thought partners to continue to grow with and rethink what assessment can look like. She has thought partners for thinking about bilingual assessment practices, and sometimes this incorporates aspects of CRA; however, she has found it challenging to find thought partners about CR/SBA specifically.

Case 3: Alex's Assessment Practice

Alex graduated with a Master of Arts (MA) in school psychology from a NASP-accredited program and completed an internship experience. She has been working in schools for 3 years. Her graduate program and internship had an emphasis on RTI, which informs the importance she places on preventative intervention practices. Culturally responsive and strengths-based assessment practice topics were embedded across her coursework. She believes her graduate training gave her foundational assessment skills and a strong sense of a how RTI relates to assessment that she has been able to build upon. She has engaged in professional development related to assessment, but no professional development specifically focused on strengths-based or culturally-responsive assessment.

Context of practice

Alex works in a school district in an urban area of the Western United States. She works in a state that strives for a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) model. In the district she works in, there is an emphasis on using a patterns of strengths-and-weakness (PSW) model for assessment and Alex aligns her assessment practice with the PSW model. Her district is litigious and provides guidance to school psychologists about conducting legally defensible assessment. Her district has a full inclusion model for students with disabilities and prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. She works in two elementary schools in her district. Her role involves providing assessment and consultation services for students at the tier II level and students qualified for special education services. At one school (i.e., School A), she is also involved in the RTI process, the school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) system, and providing in-services for staff and families.

Her district has access to additional mental health professionals who can be brought into schools to provide additional mental health services to students. There is a team of school psychologists in her districts that can provide consultation and support to each other regarding assessment. Lastly, she shared that the district spends resources examining their school discipline rates and makes efforts to implement more equitable school discipline.

Alex spends two and a half days a week at each elementary school she works at. Alex has worked at School A for several years, she explained "that allowed me to build more relationships with the staff." School A has a robust RTI model with a team including several interventionists, the principal, school psychologist, an RTI coach, and a

family liaison. They have regularly scheduled RTI meetings in which they systematically examine data and present cases to facilitate collaborative, team-based decision making and ongoing learning. The special education team is made up of the special education teacher, school psychologist, speech language pathologists, and occupational therapist. Alex began working at School B virtually due to pandemic precautions. She primarily engages in assessment at School B and works on the special education team with a special education teacher, speech pathologists, and occupational therapist. School B is currently developing an MTSS model.

Some aspects of the two schools Alex works at are similar. Most students are monolingual, English speakers. However, the two schools vary in other ways. School A has approximately 500 students. At School A, there is a large gap in SES and generally students are either high SES or low SES. Many students are bussed in from a different area. Approximately half of the students are White and half are Black or African American. School B has approximately 800 students. Students at School B range from low SES to middle SES. Students at School B belong to a more diverse range of races, but overall, the school is made up of predominately White students.

Assessment Practice

It is helpful to understand Alex's role in assessment in order to understand how she conceptualizes and engages in CR/SBA. Alex primarily conducts assessments for social, emotional, and behavioral concerns and sometimes for academic concerns. At School A, referrals come from the RTI system and special education teachers act as case managers. At School B, referrals come from teachers or parent requests. Roles on the special education team are less distinctly defined, so she and the special education teacher

alternate acting as a case manager depending on their availability. At both schools, she works with the special education teachers and speech therapist for most assessments. Alex expressed that the differences in her role in assessment at each school influences how she goes about assessment.

Conceptualization of CR/SBA

Alex believes that to use CR/SBA practices, preventative intervention and universal practices must be understood as a part of assessment. Alex provided this definition of CR/SBA:

> -Incorporating Bronfenbrenner's ecological model throughout interactions/interviews/data collection in order to conceptualize the student within the context of their environment (e.g., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem).
>
> -Encompassing a multi-informant, multi-setting, multi-method approach to data collection
>
> -Analyzing student's access to evidence-based prevention and intervention supports, including the student's responsiveness to the services/interventions.
>
> -Making note of the student's strengths as identified through records, interviews (including student interview), observations, interactions, and testing (including behavioral approaches during testing as well as standardized results).

-Initiating meetings with educators/families by noting the student's strengths and how they may relate to the student's success in the classroom and beyond.

-Offering a visual of the identified processing strengths and weaknesses while highlighting the value of the student's identified strengths (at that point in time) and ways in which these strengths may help leverage the identified weaknesses (including ways in which educators/families can use strength-based supports/accommodations/interventions).

-Building relationships with family and student and being transparent throughout the process

-Tying strengths into the interventions

-Considering previous interventions and ongoing progress monitoring

Alex provided a list of several practices and considerations and said that is challenging to further define CR/SBA. She struggled to articulate some aspects of her understanding of CR/SBA. She explained, “there's so much more, I'm sure how to say it how to capture it in words.” It was clear that universal practices and preventative intervention (e.g., RTI, MTSS) are an important part of her understanding of CR/SBA. Other important parts included an ecological orientation and value of relationships, transparency and promoting sense of agency for the family, and using assessment to inform intervention.

Universal practices and RTI as an integral part of CR/SBA. Universal practices at the wider district, school, and classroom levels are a part of her understanding of CR/SBA and are particularly important for students who belong to historically marginalized groups. Alex said,

> [W]hat it [assessment] really comes down to is that prevention and intervention piece. Especially for students who might have a history of being marginalized, it's us wanting to make sure that we're doing our due diligence for having the appropriate practices in place before we get to that step for doing assessments. It's looking at office discipline referrals, because there is disproportionality in that data… we really need to look at, what are the classroom based practices? And even within the intervention piece, are we doing culturally appropriate intervention?

Alex believes that preventative intervention practices are imperative before assessment, but that ongoing progress monitoring and keeping family's connected with progress is also a part of assessment. She said,

> [T]hat intervention piece in [the definition], that's huge. When I'm initiating assessment, making sure we're doing our due diligence to have the kid access whatever is most appropriate for them, and ongoing progress monitoring, even after the IEP is in place and keeping the family informed on that.

The definition of assessment used for this study (informed by extant literature in school psychology) did not include these pieces as a part of assessment, suggesting a broader conceptualization of what assessment is.

Ecological Orientation and Value of Relationships. As reflected in her definition, Alex believes that CR/SBA is grounded in an ecological orientation. She said, "I'm really trying to understand the student within the system of all of the influences that

can be affecting them in their day to day life, home, how they are functioning at home and across different settings."

This ecological orientation went along with a value of relationships including relationships with students, families, and other educators. She said,

> [W]e have a family liaison, [who is] very big on [relationships], seeing her work gives me insights on what I can do better, but I think a lot of it [relationships] is just, I don't know if intuitive is the right word.

Alex explained that her value of relationships is informed by her own cultural values and that she learns more about building relationships with families through relationships with other educators.

Transparency and Promoting Sense of Agency for the Family. When discussing consent with families, she stressed the importance of "having discussions about assessment and pros and cons and just being very transparent about it." While describing an assessment case she explained,

> [I]t was very important to be transparent, so the family understood the process, so it's not a punitive process, we're not there to be stigmatizing. [so we] lay out all of the data, actual data from RTI to showcase our thought process [to the parents] and the parents understanding that and being an active role was a big part of that.

She explained that this is informed by her own cultural values and upbringing and acknowledgement of the history of school psychology,

> I know in my own life [and] cultural upbringing, people aren't very aware of what psychologists or school psychologists do, and there's a lot of

> mystery around it all and not only that, but also the history of this field as well, it's very obvious that it has some pathologizing roots.

This is an integral part of CR/SBA according to Alex.

Using assessment to inform intervention. According to Alex's conceptualization, assessment is used to inform intervention and be helpful. She said, "[C]ulturally responsive assessment should be helpful and to link things like the relationships and the prevention to see what's helpful, if assessment is for being helpful then it should be culturally responsive." As reflected in her definition, strengths should also be incorporated as a part of planning how to support the student in the future. Therapeutic assessment strategies can also be used, such as trying out and identifying strategies that work for the student while conducting the assessment and then including those in the recommendations and interventions moving forward. As a part of this, she also makes the assessment useful for the family by offering the family evidence-based suggestions for strategies to try at home.

Barriers and Facilitators

Alex described several barriers and facilitators to using CR/SBA practices. Working in a district and school with coworkers who value and strive for culturally responsive practices, effective teaming, and building relationships with her coworkers and learning from them all make it easier to use CR/SBA practices. Alex believes that the training she has received from her district to use the PSW model has helped her engage in CR/SBA because she believes the PSW model aligns with CR/SBA.

Several contextual factors pose barriers to using CR/SBA such as a lack of time and high caseload making it challenging to find additional time to build relationships

with families. Similarly, some aspects of how special education evaluations are dictated (i.e., timelines) contribute to this. Alex added that overall, the complexity of the special education evaluation process makes it challenging for families to understand and therefore challenging to for them to engage in as a true partner.

Case 4: Emily's assessment practice

Emily received an Ed.S. degree in school psychology from a NASP-accredited program and has been practicing for 7 years. Her graduate training program covered the topic of multiculturalism in a variety of courses, but not specifically in assessment courses. She explained that she and her peers in her cohort initiated conversations related to culturally responsive and strengths-based practices in their courses. Additionally, they had many conversations about strengths-based practice and cultural responsiveness amongst themselves outside of courses.

Since graduate training, Emily has engaged in on-going learning (professional development and reading) about specifically culturally responsive and strengths-based assessment and culturally responsive practice more generally. She said, "NASP does the book, where you read the book [referring to annual social justice NASP book], so some of it is my own professional development, not necessarily." She said this type of learning has been helpful. Emily also provides some professional development in her district about cognitive measures with less cultural load and nonverbal cognitive measures.

Context of practice

Emily works in a district that spans suburban and rural areas in the Western United States; she is primarily working at schools in suburban areas. She works in a state that strives for a MTSS model. She is in an itinerant position and works at four schools

(with their early childhood and kindergarten students) and is a consultant for 10 schools in the district for assessment support as needed. Emily also supports the district's child find team; however, this case only includes her assessment practice under IDEA Part B evaluations.

Emily works to support school teams with high assessment needs and therefore joins teams at new schools as needed. The district she works in does not have Spanish-English bilingual mental health providers but does have Spanish-English bilingual speech language pathologists. She has access to translators through the district, but it is challenging to schedule and ensure a translator will be available. The district recently purchased additional testing kits; however, they are not always available when needed.

The four schools Emily primarily works in are early childhood through 5th or 8th grades and the amount of time she spends at each school varies based on need. Some of the schools that she works in have well developed MTSS or RTI models, while others have more informal preventative intervention strategies. At each school (or when she joins a team as needed), she is a part of the special education team. The special education team's composition varies slightly from school to school, but generally teams are comprised of a school psychologist, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, and special education teacher.

Emily works with a wide variety of students. At most schools, the students represent a diverse group of racial identities, although one school she works at is made up of predominately white students. Many of the students are in lower to middle SES. There are not many ELL students, but about half speak a second language other than English at home or are bilingual.

Assessment Practice

In order to understand how Emily conceptualizes and engages in CR/SBA, it is helpful to understand her role in assessment. Emily conducts assessment for early learning, behavioral, and social emotional concerns. Referrals for assessments come from the MTSS process or from teachers. She conducts many assessments for children with recent medical diagnoses of ASD. At each school, the special education teams have varying roles and different ways of working together. However, typically the special education teacher or speech language pathologist acts as the case manager. Due to the unique nature of her role, Emily explained that the absence or presence of effective collaboration and teaming practices has a significant influence on conducting the assessment.

Conceptualization of CR/SBA

Emily believes that conducting CR/SBA is about creating a picture of the whole child. She said, "when I think of doing a culturally responsive strengths based assessment, I want somebody to be able to read [the report] and I want them to have a picture of what this child looks like." Along with this picture of the child, she also said, families are an important partner and empowering families is a part of CR/SBA. Emily provided this definition of assessment:

> Culturally responsive and strengths-based assessments include looking at [the] whole child in order to determine with tools to utilize for standardized measures. It also includes engaging in non-formal assessments as well. These can include observations, teacher/parent/student interviews, behavior data collection, record

> reviews, academic information, etc. Looking at the assessment results from a strengths based perspective instead of a needs based to highlight how the student's strengths can support their current needs. Having the time and relationship with the parent to understand what they see and what they want.

While describing CR/SBA, Emily said, “It is a hard questions, it is, and it's [CR/SBA] very involved, there's a lot of pieces.” Most of the practices and concepts in her definition align with her view that relationships with families and a holistic understanding of the child are important parts of CR/SBA; these include other important parts of how she understandings CR/SBA such as building relationships with families, understanding her own positionality, building upon strengths, critically examining how you gather data, and understanding how culture helps to make sense of assessment data.

Relationships with Family. Emily continually described the importance of establishing a relationship with families so that they feel comfortable sharing. A part of establishing these relationships with families is to acknowledge her positionality. Emily said that it is important that she understands how her identity and position in the special education process may be perceived with the family. Emily described that it is important to be understanding that a family may need time to establish trust because of these factors. When discussing trusting relationships, she said,

> If you can have that relationship where [the family] can trust that the team isn't going to do anything negative with that, we're not going to create harm by knowing that information, and our intent is positive, and our

intent is to be supportive, then it can really make a difference in how much our students grow, and how our families feel at the end of the process.

She shared about situations in which it was challenging to determine how to support the child when she did not have a trusting relationship with the family when conducting the assessment. Then, after the family became comfortable in the school and built relationships with other educators, the family shared important information with the special education team that helped them adjust the student's support. In these situations, Emily noticed that more often the family became more comfortable with educators who they saw frequently (e.g., teachers, front desk staff) or held shared identities. Emily conceptualizes these relationships with educators in the school (not just with the school psychologist) as important for the assessment process. Having a relationship with the family is an important part of CR/SBA because the family is regarded as the expert of their child and are a major part of their development. She said, "[students] are spending so much time with their families that our impact is minimal compared to what that parent impact looks like."

Emily conceptualizes the relationship with the family as an important part of assessment because families are the experts of their children and have a valuable perspective of their child that helps to develop a whole understanding of their child. Developing this understanding of the child includes building upon a student's strengths, critically examining how you gather data, and understanding how culture can help make sense of assessment data.

Building Upon a Student's Strengths. Emily believes it is important to identify the student's strengths and what they do well and then to use that to inform meaningful

intervention to support the student's growth. A student's culture is also a part of their strengths. She said, "I want [someone reading an IEP] to understand how their culture is a strength for them, and how we can use the skills that they do have to enhance the areas where they're needing that additional support." She said that this begins at a universal level, by encouraging parents and families to share about their families, values, and traditions in the classroom.

Critically Examining How Data is Gathered. A part of gathering a holistic understanding of the student includes critically examining how you gather data. With standardized measures, Emily examines and uses the most culturally appropriate and useful measures. Emily provides supervision to a school psychology trainee and when they discuss CR/SBA, they reflect on if the measure they are planning to use is really useful to understanding the student. Emily said, "we do a lot of conversations around culturally responsiv[ness], mostly is this tool, a tool that would be useful?" She focuses on what information she would gather from a standardized measure and, when a standardized measure is not appropriate, uses alternatives to capture that information. Emily said that if there is not an appropriate measure to capture a specific skill, she may ask the family to share a video of the child using that skill at home or "we try to manipulate within the classroom environment to see whether or not they're able to do it."

Understanding Culture to Make Sense of Assessment Data. A part of a holistic understanding of the child is using culture to make sense of assessment data. Emily said that it is important to understand and consider how culture may help make sense of why a student does not use some skills or socializes with some peers differently than others. She said,

> [Y]ou have to find out from the parent if they're not doing the skill, because that's what's culturally accepted, and if it is, then are they really low adaptive[ly] or not? because that's not what they're expected to do at home.

She said this is particularly salient with her work with younger children who are learning many daily living skills as a part of development.

Barriers and Facilitators

Emily described several factors that make it easier or more challenging to use CR/SBA practices. Working with a special education team who is also striving for CR/SBA, being in a district that values and strives for culturally responsive practice and working with teachers and other educators who have strong relationships with families make using CR/SBA practices easier.

As described, due to the nature of Emily's role, she frequently joins new teams. She explained that when teams do not have effective teaming practices, such as a lack of understanding of each other's role and poor communication, it can be a significant barrier to using CR/SBA. Additionally, some legislatively dictated aspects of special education evaluations can pose as barriers. She said that it can take multiple meetings for form trust with the family. She said, "Sometimes we (Emily and the family) have to meet multiple times in order to build that relationship as well. They're going to share more with me the more times that we meet." However, limited timelines make it challenging to form trusting relationships with families. Therefore, working with other educators who have spent time building trusting relationships with families prior to an evaluation is valuable. Complex, lengthy documents and forms with many steps can make it challenging for

families to understand and be true partners. She said, “[I] don't know that it's really very supportive for our families from different cultures, I think that the way that the IEP process, the SPED process is presented can seem really daunting.”

On the other hand, Emily acknowledged that in some ways having a shared set of eligibility categories can lead to more effective teaming among special service providers. Lastly, Emily’s district provides some guidance for how school psychologists conduct assessment and she said that in some ways the guidance can be helpful, but in other ways it can be limiting or create confusion among special service providers.

Cross-case findings

Cross-case analysis reveals the following themes: CR/SBA is difficult to define and under development, defining features of CR/SBA, CR/SBA practices, contextual factors, barriers, and facilitators to CR/SBA, and the process used to conduct CR/SBA.

Theme 1: CR/SBA is Difficult to Define and Under Development

Several ideas across cases suggest CR/SBA is difficult to define and requires further development. First, although all participants called their practice CR/SBA and were interested enough in the topic to spend time discussing it at length in this research study, they all had difficultly defining CR/SBA. When asked if she could further define CR/SBA, Monica said, “I don’t think so, it’s so hard” and when asked what her definition means in practice, she attempted to explain then said, “it’s a hard question.” All participant’s made similar comments. Some parts of CR/SBA were unclear. Each participant said they integrate cultural and ecological information in their case conceptualization. However, Abby said she “keeps [ecological and cultural factors] in

mind" during the assessment, but that it is unclear how to genuinely integrate this information and even more unclear how to document it in reports.

There were also inconsistencies across cases; some practices were used by all participants, but other practices were only used by one or two participants. Other times, their practices contradicted each other. Abby and Alex work in districts that emphasize a PSW model. Alex believes the PSW model aligns with CR/SBA while Abby believes there is not enough empirical support to use this model as a part of CR/SBA.

Additionally, it was unclear how linguistically appropriate practices and CR/SBA are related. On one hand, cases included practices that relate only to culture or strengths and not to language. For example, Emily gathers information about cultural expectations for daily living skills. And participants made statements that demonstrate that language and culture were distinctly different. Abby said,

> I don't really feel like I have good mentorship in this area. I don't have any thought partners about strengths-based assessments and culturally responsive assessments. My bilingual school psychology colleagues, I can really lean on [to] talk through a case and they're also really interested in English language development, and EL research, and that's really cool, but [pause] I guess my vision of what cultural responsive assessment and strength based assessments is, is different than theirs.

However, interestingly, participants consistently discussed linguistic considerations and assessment cases of ELL students (although almost all of Monica's assessments are with ELL students so her discussion of language is unsurprising). All participants mentioned linguistically appropriate practices, translators, and lack of linguistically appropriate

measures. Alex, Abby, and Emily also said the ability (or inability) to consult or collaborate with a bilingual provider was a facilitator (or barrier). Overall, linguistically appropriate assessment and CR/SBA were not synonymous across cases, but the connection between these two is unclear.

Lastly, participants all said they continually reflect on and adjust their use of CR/SBA. Abby said "I think it's really important as practitioners to reevaluate what the evaluation process could look like" due the history of marginalization in the educational system, including in the special education process. Inconsistencies and challenges to define this assessment model is unsurprising (see review of literature); in combination with the idea that CR/SBA is an evolving practice, there is opportunity to further develop CR/SBA.

Theme 2: Defining Features of CR/SBA

CR/SBA should continue to be studied to generate a complete definition that is shared by scholars and practitioners. Because of the issues described, a complete definition for CR/SBA was not found through analysis and therefore is not offered here. However, several defining features of CR/SBA were consistent across cases. In CR/SBA, (1) the input, experiences, and relationships with families and students are valuable; (2) the school psychologist trusts, values, and learn from other educators; (3) CR/SBA cannot be separated from universal and preventative practices and school culture; (4) the model is grounded in an ecological orientation; (5) the purpose is to support and empower students; (6) conducting CR/SBA requires a commitment to humility and ongoing and evolving learning. Defining features describe the assumptions, priorities, and parts of CR/SBA that guide decision making while conducting CR/SBA. Although

the practices school psychologists use as a part of CR/SBA are reflective of these defining features, these defining features capture how school psychologists think about CR/SBA, not just the actions they take as a part of it. Table 2.6 shows a frequency count of the number of statements coded with each defining feature for each case.

Table 2.6
Defining Features of CR/SBA Frequency Count

	Values input, experiences, and relationships with family and student	Values, trusts, and learns from other educators	Grounded in ecological orientation	The purpose of CR/SBA is supporting and empowering students	CR/SBA cannot be separated from universal and preventative practices, school climate, and school culture	Conducting CR/SBA requires a commitment to humility and ongoing and evolving learning
Monica	9	19	8	6	13	8
Abby	12	20	13	2	5	14
Alex	28	8	11	7	12	3
Emily	36	9	10	10	3	6

The Input, Experiences, and Relationships with Families and Students are Valuable

This defining feature was reflected in practices across cases, such as building relationships with families, asking for student input, and making the process accessible and comfortable for the student and family. All participants said that ideally the family and school have a trusting relationship before the assessment process- even if that relationship is not specifically with the school psychologist. They build off the relationships that other educators already have with families, especially when their time is limited. Participants often identified educators who interact with the family more frequently (such as teachers and front office staff) and educators who share identities

with families as being able to connect with families in a way that the psychologists sometimes cannot. In one case, Emily struggled to form a trusting relationship with a family while conducting an initial evaluation. Due to her role, she did not interact with the family frequently after the assessment was complete. However, over the next few years, the student's teachers and parents built a trusting relationship and the family shared important information about the student and their family. Although she wished they had that trusting relationship from the start, she acknowledges that it is hard for families to trust unknown professionals (especially in the overwhelming and confusing process of special education evaluations). Monica said that, whenever possible, a team member who already has a relationship with the family leads communication with the family to simplify the process for parents.

This defining feature is also reflected in all participant's high regard for the family and student, their identities, culture, and beliefs, their belief that families are the experts of their children, and their acknowledgment that the special education evaluation process and assessment can be overwhelming for the parents. Alex said, "I like to take a moment just to validate the parents on the wonderful job they've done raising their kid, and really just encouraged them to stop and ask questions that they need to." She hopes that these statements help parents feel empowered and believe they are a part of the decision-making team. While describing a case, Abby said, "I'm grateful and I'm so glad to have a partner in that [student's mother] trusts us, but I want to earn that trust, I guess." She does not take the trust that parents put in her lightly, so even when she has a trusting relationship with the family, she makes efforts to maintain and honor that trust.

Relationships with families and students and honoring their input and experiences are integral to CR/SBA.

The School Psychologist Trusts, Values, and Learns from other Educators

Although assessment has been highly intertwined with the identity of school psychologists, these participants approach their work with the attitude that they can learn from everyone. Monica shared stories of times when she learned things from her coworkers that she would have never thought of before. She also said, "I can only do my part, I can only do what I know, but we all come together and have the same view of the cultural part." She credits the people she works with as a part of how she uses CR/SBA.

Other participants also learn from other educators. Abby's coworkers sometimes act as cultural brokers. However, this would not be possible without the trusting relationships Abby has with her other educators. All participants believe CR/SBA is not done alone. Although they strive to form relationships with families, the context of their job, their various roles, and time make it challenging. Many of Abby's referrals come from the RTI process; through the RTI process, other team members become familiar with the student and their family. Trusting and working collaboratively with those educators creates a more seamless transition between the RTI to special education evaluation process. School psychologists rely on the other educators they work with who have relationships with families.

Emily, who works on many teams, does not often work with one team for a long period of time. She said that trust and respect between educators, particularly among special education team members, are a part of CR/SBA. Even if one or two members of

the team take a CR/SBA approach to the assessment, it is not as cohesive and effective as the whole team taking this approach.

The perspectives and input of other educators from other disciplines facilitates learning in a way that discipline-specific input does not. Alex said,

> I think the more helpful piece is actually the multidisciplinary team and having biweekly meetings with them to really dive deep on a particular case and get everybody's feedback, and just putting our heads together. I think other people I work with just have the perspectives that I don't and I don't see what [they] can think of.Although it can be helpful to consult with other school psychologists, there may not be time to seek out a psychologist who works at a different school, and consulting with educators and other special service providers gives new perspectives.

This study only includes the perspectives of school psychologists; it is clear that according to these participants, in CR/SBA school psychologists trust, value, and learn from other educators. This concept should be studied from the perspectives of other team members.

CR/SBA Cannot be Separated from Universal and Preventative Practices and School Culture

Across all participant's conceptualization of CR/SBA, school-wide practices and preventative practices cannot be disentangled from the assessment model. This includes the school culture and school-wide practices and preventative intervention models (i.e., RTI/MTSS). Monica said that conducting CR/SBA is natural for her because she works with other educators who highly value and strive for culturally responsive curriculum,

pedagogy, and school culture. Abby believes that CR/SBA must be an RTI model. Participants shared the sentiment that to authentically conduct CR/SBA, the school culture and practices must be aligned. However, this is somewhat unclear. Participants characterized school culture and school practices as both a facilitator for using CR/SBA and as a part of CR/SBA itself. Considering something to be a part of CR/SBA and a facilitator to using CR/SBA falls into circular reasoning.

However, the meaningful insight from understanding school culture and universal and targeted practices as a part of assessment is that this suggests that CR/SBA cannot be feasibly implemented only by school psychologists (or special education teams). The input of community members, families, and students and expertise of all school staff (teachers, administrators, interventionists, special service providers, and other staff) is necessary to cultivate an inclusive, responsive culture and use culturally responsive, effective universal and targeted practices. Participants credited other educators for implementing these universal and targeted practices. Abby said, "my principal in my school has been really focused on culturally responsive teaching practices, and being equity centered." Similarly, Monica said, "it's not necessarily my role, but the school pretty unique in terms of the general education curriculum is extremely culturally relevant, there's a lot that goes into it." Emily and Abby also believe that other staff members contribute significantly to the universal practices of the school in a way they cannot.

This notion also aligns with an ecological orientation and understanding the multidirectional relationship between the student and their environment. Interestingly, this defining feature focused more so on culturally responsive universal practices. No

participants explicitly referred to strengths-based universal practices or intervention. Still, the issue of circular reasoning should continue to be explored as this model is developed and clarified. It is important to note, that all participants in this study practice in states that strive for an MTSS model.

Grounded in an Ecological Orientation

All participant's conceptualization of CR/SBA is grounded in an ecological orientation. This is evident in how they collect data and conceptualize the case. When Abby conducts assessments, she said she aims to understand the child in their environment, including how the environment and child impact each other. In her definition, Alex wrote, "incorporating Bronfenbrenner's ecological model throughout interactions/interviews/data collection in order to conceptualize the student within the context of their environment (e.g., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem)." When conducting observations and examining if and why tier II interventions may or may not have been sufficient, Monica said she is "thinking about the people around the student because [they] are a part of the environment." Similarly, Emily considers if and how a student may interact differently with peers who have similar or different identities or speak the same or different languages when observing how a student interacts with their peers.

In some ways, using an ecological framework to inform what they do in assessment is unsurprising as an ecological framework is popular in the field of school psychology. However, the overarching value of relationships and belief that CR/SBA cannot be disentangled from school-wide practices are also reflective of this ecological

orientation. In alignment with the way CR/SBA is described in literature, an ecological orientation is a defining feature of CR/SBA.

The Purpose of CR/SBA is Supporting and Empowering Students

Participant's conceptualizations shared that CR/SBA is focused on supporting and empowering student through assessment. All participants described that when conducting CR/SBA the focus should not simply be to label the student. Monica explained that she and the team spend time to determine what identification best describes the student's needs because it is a required part of the process, but that regardless of eligibility identification, the focus is on how to support the student based on information gathered in the assessment. She said, "at the end of the day it's important to say what [the identification] is because we have to, but we are trying to advocate and plan how we help the kiddo." Emily also discussed how special education identifications are helpful but not the focus. The special education categories allow for shared understanding among providers, but the purpose of assessment is to determine how to support the student.

All participants discussed supporting and empowering the student as a collaborative practice, and Emily added that it can be challenging to ensure the student has appropriate supports if providers work separately. She said, "[if] it's not necessarily that team conversation, sometimes [the student] has too many or not enough accommodations." Monica also supports teachers as they implement classroom supports. Lastly, participants described that they want families to feel that the purpose of the assessment was to support and empower the student. Alex said she talks about this with the family because she wants them to understand that "it's not a punitive process, or we're not there to be stigmatizing." These ideas contribute to the defining feature that the

purpose of CR/SBA is to support the student, which aligns with the purpose of CR/SBA described in the literature.

Conducting CR/SBA Requires a Commitment to Humility and Ongoing Learning

Lastly, across all cases, a commitment to humility and ongoing learning is a defining feature of CR/SBA. Participants believe that continuing to learn and acknowledging that you may not be able to truly understand a family or student's experience is integral to CR/SBA. Further, they all said that using CR/SBA is an ongoing or lifelong commitment to reflection and learning. This includes professional reflection, growth, and development. Participants reflect on what practices they have used in the past and adjust as appropriate. They learn from others, seek new information, and believe this is a life-long process.

This includes personal awareness and reflection. Emily said that she must acknowledge that her identity as White and belonging to the dominate culture may make some families wary of trusting her initially. Abby described that although she can speak conversational Spanish and may be able to use the same language as some families, she is not bicultural and is White and that positionality influences her practices. Monica has professional fluency in Spanish and similar to Abby she does not conflate this with understanding the cultures and lived experiences of others. Alex said that her cultural values and her identity as multi-racial inform her value of relationships and ensuring the process is transparent for families.

Theme 3: CR/SBA practices

Practices used across all four cases were compared to CRA and SBA practices suggested in literature. In this study, assessment practices are actions that the school

psychologists take as a part of CR/SBA. Interestingly, across cases, practices that participants use as a part of CR/SBA also align with targeted-level FSCP practice recommendations. Therefore, practices are also compared to targeted-level FSCP practices suggested in literature. Table 2.7 illustrates the practices participants use that align with practices suggested in literature.

Table 2.7

Participant's CR/SBA practices that align with practices suggested in literature

Participant's practice	Practice suggested in literature
Adjusts to the needs of the family	Adapt to the communication style of the family
Gathers information about trauma and major life events	Considers trauma
Interprets assessment data in the context of the student's environment and culture	Considers if pedagogy and curriculum are culturally responsive
Examines and uses most appropriate and useful standardized or formal measure	The limitations of standardized measures are considered and communicated
When standardized measures are not entirely appropriate but necessary, psychologist makes adjustments and communicates limitations	
"Mixed methods," holistic data interpretation	Presents a holistic perspective of the child, including strengths
	Attempts to strike a balance between deficits, weaknesses, and problems and strengths and resources
Utilizes data to inform intervention and recommendations	Utilizes data to drive goal generations and intervention
	Incorporates the student's cultural, familial, school, interpersonal, and intrapersonal strengths into intervention

Participants used practices that align with targeted-level FSCP practices, but they did not use practices that were related to community (only family-related practices). All participants adjusted to the communication style of the family which aligns exactly with what is suggested in both FSCP and CRA. They also used the following practices that

align closely with FSCP: simplified consistent communication with the family, making efforts to ensuring the family understands the process, and explicitly asking for and incorporating the family's input in IEP/Eligibility Determination meetings. These practices are not exactly what is suggested in the literature but are similar. For example, across cases, participants and/or their teams adjust to the needs of the family in a variety of ways including the language and modality of communication, interviews, and meetings whenever possible, but they do not ask the family for their preferred modality and language of communication as suggested in FSCP literature. Additionally, all participants value and build upon the relationships that other educators have with families by including that educator in parts the evaluation and working with that educator to communicate with the family. This is not a specific targeted-level FSCP practice; however, this practice is similar to the FSCP recommendation that family partnerships begin at the universal level.

Participants also described some practices they use to collect, interpret, and share findings that align with practices in literature. Participants ask about trauma and major life events in interviews, similar to the CRA recommendation to consider trauma. Also, they interpret assessment data in the context of the student's environment and culture-including considering the cultural responsiveness of classroom pedagogy and curriculum as suggested in CRA.

CRA and SBA recommend presenting a holistic perspective of the child that strikes a balance between deficits and strengths. Participants also strive for a holistic perspective. In case conceptualization, participants use a "mixed-methods" approach in which they equally value quantitative and qualitative, formally and informally gathered

information to ensure they capture all perspectives. Additionally, participants integrate ecological, cultural, and strengths-related information; however, one participant also said that there is not clear guidance as to how to do this. Similar to what is recommended in CRA and SBA, participants use data, including strengths and cultural expectations, to inform interventions and recommendations. However, CRA and SBA literature suggests that cultural, familial, and school strengths should be used in intervention planning, and these were not used consistently across cases.

Regarding the use of standardized measures, participants examine and use the most appropriate and useful standardized measures. If the measure is not entirely appropriate but necessary, they either make adjustments or communicate limitations (similar to the CRA practice of considering and communicating limitation of standardized measures). However, using CBMs and local norms is recommended in CRA literature and participants did not use these across cases; when CBMs were used they were used by other team members (i.e., not the school psychologist). In SBA, using standardized measures to identify strengths or quality of life measures is suggested and considered a distinctive practice of SBA. No participants used standardized measures to gather strengths or a quality of life measure; they gathered information about strengths through interviews, informal experiences with the child, observations, and record reviews.

Some practices used across cases are not specifically recommended in CRA, SBA, or FSCP literature. Participants engaged in interdisciplinary work and used effective teaming practices as a part of CR/SBA. They also use reframing strategies. When talking to other staff members or families they reframe possibly negative

perceptions or beliefs. Other practices that they all use that were not mentioned in literature include: identifying and considering the student's primary language, gathering information about previous interventions, and building relationships with students. Lastly, all participants conceptualized intervening before the evaluation as a part of CR/SBA.

Overall, participant's practices aligned more with practices suggested in CRA and FSCP than SBA. Although they gathered information about strengths and attempted to strike a balance of strengths and deficits, no participants use a standardized measure to identify strengths (a practice that in some ways defines how SBA can be applied to schools).

Theme 4: Contextual Factors, Facilitators, and Barriers

There were several factors that acted as barriers or facilitators to using CR/SBA practices, as well as several contextual factors that influenced how school psychologists went about conducting assessments. Some contextual factors, barriers, and facilitators are captured in NASP organizational principles (2020). The Organization and Evaluation of Service Delivery (Organizational Principle 1), describes that school psychologists should have received graduate preparation consistent with NASP standards, and that school psychological services should be delivered in an organized fashion that considers the needs of all stakeholders. Participants had difficulty remembering their training experiences, but they all described that they believe they came into the field with foundational assessment skills that they have since built upon. Also, they adjust their assessment process based on their role and how service delivery is organized. Alex, Monica, and Emily, who work on more than one team, described how they adjust based

on where they are conducting the assessments because the way services are delivered varies. Emily and Monica (when working with the district's bilingual assessment team) said that when they are not at a school as frequently or conducting an assessment in a school they are entirely unfamiliar with, organization and a timeline are even more important. It is more challenging to be flexible with families, teachers, and students when there is limited time to gather all of the information needed. Abby, Monica, and Alex who work more consistently with the same teams are able to rely on relationships at the schools more easily which influences the way they approach the process.

Related to adjusting to the way service delivery is organized, the climate of the school system was a contextual factor described in each case (Organizational Principle Two: Climate). More specifically, all participants believed that the school system prioritizing culturally responsive learning environments facilitated CR/SBA. They also said that working with a special education team who is also striving to use culturally responsive and strengths-based practices made it easier to use CR/SBA. Participants said that guidance about assessments from the districts they work in plays a role. This guidance ranged from providing a format for reports to ensure they are legally defensible to promoting a PSW model. Across participants there was not agreement about if this guidance is necessarily a barrier or facilitator, but they all believed it impacts how they go about the process.

Physical, Personnel, And Fiscal Support Systems (Organizational Principle 3) describes that there should be enough employees to meet the needs of the system, financial support to fund the system, access to resources, and personal benefits such as professional development. Access to consultation and support from other professionals,

such as district-level psychologists, special educators, or behavior analysist, help participants conduct CR/SBA. They also said access to (or lack of access to) specific assessment measures is a barrier or facilitator. Additionally, participants all described cases of working with bilingual students and noted the access (or lack thereof) to linguistically appropriate resources as a barrier or facilitator.

Supervision, Peer Consultation, and Mentoring (Organizational Principle 5) and Professional Development and Recognition (Organizational Principle 6) refer to discipline specific supports, mentorship, and professional development. All participants said that consulting and collaborating with other school psychologists can be helpful; interestingly they believed that the opportunity to learn from others who were not necessarily school psychologists was as beneficial or more beneficial. Mentorship (or lack thereof) also was a facilitator (or barrier).

The concept of having enough time and a manageable caseload is captured in more than one organizational principle. This was a frequently discussed facilitator or barrier to using CR/SBA practices. A manageable caseload and enough time contributed to the amount of time they are to spend with a family, and their ability to access other resources (such as professional development or physically getting a measure).

A few other facilitators and barriers were not captured in organizational principles. Relationships with coworkers (or lack thereof) was a facilitator (or barrier) to collaboratively using CR/SBA practices as a team. Relational learning from and with other educators, families, and students was also a facilitator to using CR/SBA practices. Motivation to engage in CR/SBA as an intra-individual factor (rather than contextual factor) was a facilitator for all participants; this was unsurprising as all participants were

willing to spend their time discussing this topic in depth and therefore likely have a particular interest in the topic.

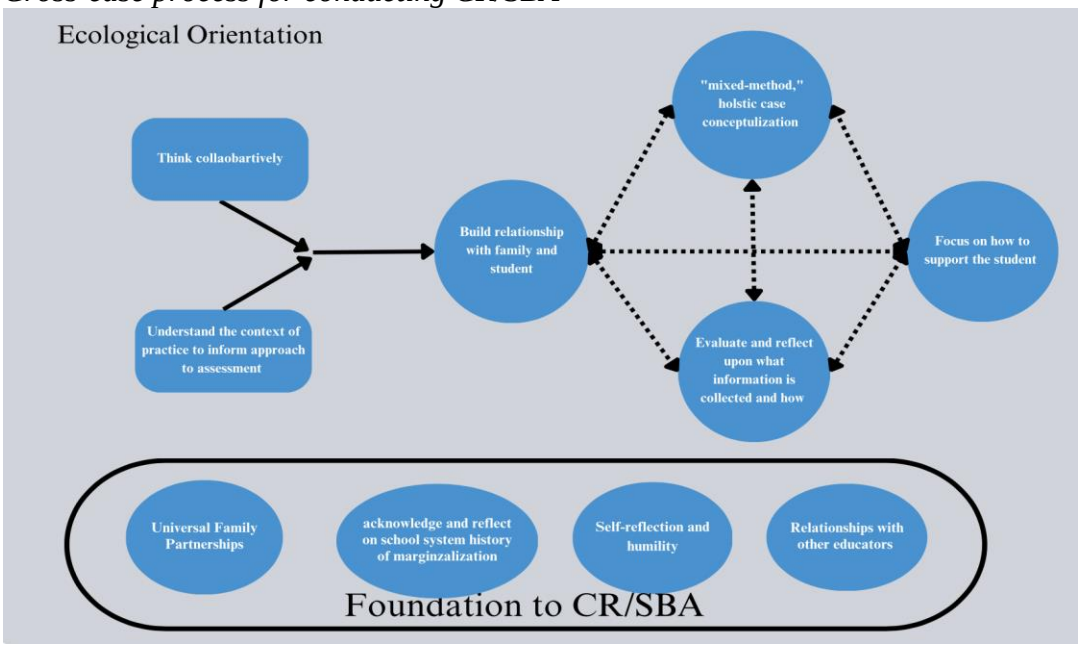
Lastly, all participants believe some legislatively dictated aspects of special education evaluation is a barrier to families being meaningful partners in the process. Interestingly, this aligns with the critique that some aspects of CRA are not feasible to authentically implement schools because of some of these legal guidelines. Participants said that attempting to complete an assessment in a limited timeline can pose challenges when it takes longer to build trust with a family. They also said that in general, the process is confusing to parents and often involves lengthy paperwork written in a way that is difficult to understand. These legally dictated aspects of the processes, although intended to protect the educational rights of students, can also be barriers.

Theme 5: How is CR/SBA conducted?

The last cross-case finding presents the process school psychologists use to conduct CR/SBA. Grounded theory approaches to analysis generated an initial diagram that illustrates this process (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3

Cross-case process for conducting CR/SBA



Some factors were foundational to the process, such as universal family partnership practices, acknowledging and reflecting upon the school system's history of marginalization, self-reflection and humility, and relationships with other educators. It also was evident that the entire process of using CR/SBA is guided by an ecological orientation. With this foundation, and with the guidance of an ecological orientation, participants all followed the process illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Participants used their understanding of the context of their practice and (e.g., what resources were available to them, what relationships they already had, what they know and what they needed to learn more about, time) collaborative thinking to make decisions in the process. They adjust to the context of their practice and are responsive to the individual needs and circumstance of the student and family in other ways as well. For example, if they have never met the student, they approach the process differently than if they were familiar with the student. All participants indicated that the referral,

review of current data, and sometimes consent steps are often captured in an RTI process. Because of this, sometimes other members of the RTI team (not the school psychologist) lead these steps. Their roles contributed to their approach. For example, Abby works with a school counselor who leads the RTI team and a front office administrator who schedules meetings and moderates home-school communication. So, these professionals are familiar with the student and, before she does anything else, Abby collaborates with them to understand where they are in the process and the best way to move forward together. On the other hand, Alex is on the RTI team and is familiar with students and their families when the assessment begins; if the student is going to be evaluated, she uses the time she spends with families in the RTI process to provide information about special education assessment. This difference in their roles informs their decision making.

They focus on collaboration when considering their context. Monica collaborates with teachers to implement interventions put in place in the RTI process as a result of the evaluation. She said this is much more feasible to do at schools that she spends more time at and with teachers she already has relationships with. At the school that she only spends one day at, she works with other school team members to support the teacher (e.g., administrator, speech therapist). Emily collaborates with school administrators and other professionals that a family is familiar with or has met before to conduct interviews because she may not spend much time in each school she conducts assessments in. They both understand their roles and context and use that to decide how they will collaborate to facilitate the assessment process.

With an understanding of their context and an idea of who they can collaborate with, they then work to build relationships with the family and student, evaluate and reflect upon what information is collected and how it is collected, use a "mixed-methods," holistic case conceptualization strategy, and focus on how to support the student moving forward. These four non-sequential steps help guide decision making. For example, if they do not have the resources they hope to have, they have to decide where to go next and rely on these four non-sequential steps to make decisions. Monica shared an example of how incorporates these steps to make decisions:

> An issue that we have here a lot, especially with the young kids is lack of Spanish language specialized programs. We have kiddos on the spectrum that have never heard English before, and we don't have a Spanish language specialized program. And I mean, granted with the behavior support in the specialized programs, a lot of it is more visual and touch in nature. But we also have parents who want them in the Spanish-language environment. So, then we have to make really tough decisions, is it better to keep them in Spanish language or get them in somewhere where they can get ABA? We work together to decide.

These parts of the process may occur at various points in the linear steps of a special education evaluation and are interconnected. This diagram illustrates the process used by these four school psychologists and illustrates an initial diagram for the field. This allows scholars and practitioners to think beyond "what" to do in assessment but understand how to apply this in a "real life" context to make decisions as the process unfolds.

Additional Findings

As the study unfolded, some findings were identified that did not fit clearly into themes or did not have sufficient data to credibly explore but are meaningful. As the researcher engaged in memoing, it was identified that it would be helpful to understand how each participant defined culture. This question was added to the member checking interview; one participant participated. The participant's response algin with how culture has been defined in school psychology and in CRA literature (Hays, 2016; Jones, 2014). Related to this, throughout interviews, participants use a variety of terms related to equitable assessments or referring to cultural considerations (e.g., "multiculturalism," "cultural humility," "culturally sensitive," "culturally appropriate," "culturally responsive," "equitable,"). In educational scholarship, the use of these terms and specific definitions have changed over time. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) is an example of the discussion of and distinction of these terms in educational scholarship; Lopez and Bursztyn (2013) is an example of shifting in terms and defining terms in school psychology specifically. It appeared participants may have used some of these terms interchangeably or used the terms that have been frequently used during their training.

Throughout data collection, participants frequently referenced applying CR/SBA to work with students and families who were not White or did not speak English. It is possible that practitioners believe this model applies to students and families who identify with historically marginalized groups; however, the researcher was unable to specifically ask participants what students and families they use CR/SBA with and/or if they use it for all assessments so a credible conclusion cannot be drawn.

Discussion

While discussing implications of findings, it is important to consider who these findings are derived from. These findings describe the perspectives of four school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practice as CR/SBA.

Theme One Discussion: CR/SBA is Difficult to Define and Under Development

The difficulty defining CR/SBA and contradictions in understanding CR/SBA is likely reflective of CRA and SBA lacking a clear, agreed upon definition of its use in schools. Contradictions between participants are likely reflective the ongoing debate of various assessment practices (see McGill et al., 2018; Flannagan et al., 2018) and different practices used in the field (Benson et al., 2019). Findings also indicate that it may be unclear how and if these can be used simultaneously with CR/SBA or if CR/SBA aligns with other models of assessment. If practicing school psychologists find these models unclear, the models should be further refined, and practitioners may benefit from clear guidance of how to implement them in practice. This refined model and guidance for implementation should be a part of assessment in training in coursework and field based experiences. Participatory research methods with practicing school psychologists and school psychology researchers could be used to ensure the perspectives of scholars and practitioners are a part of refining this assessment model.

Theme Two Discussion: Defining Features of CR/SBA

There are several implications of the findings from theme two including the importance of relationships and collaboration in equitable educational practices and individual humility and reflection. Assessment-related research and training may be more impactful if relationships with families and other educators are a part of how assessment

is understood. Trainers and supervisors should collaborate to integrate assessment-related coursework and field experiences to train practitioners to build and foster relationships in assessment practice. Specifically, family partnership practices should be integrated into assessment coursework (e.g., applying family partnership practices to clinical interviewing). The field also may benefit from interdisciplinary scholarship and training (e.g., trainers identifying ways to integrating aspects of school psychology training with aspects of teacher training programs or other special service provider graduate preparation programs) and research (e.g., special educator researchers and school psychology researchers conducting research together). Findings indicate that the efforts to provide equitable educational services across may be more meaningful when done with other educational disciplines. Rather than training focusing on how school psychologists should specifically promote equitable practices, training programs may consider shifting to focus on how to collaborate with other educators to support equitable practices across all professionals. This could even start with ensuring school psychology trainers and trainees understand and appreciate the knowledge and expertise that other educators have by ensuring classes have guest speakers from a variety of disciplines. Findings also indicate that school psychologists might benefit from guidance as to how to conduct CR/SBA if equitable educational practices are not present (or not entirely present) at a universal level.

Despite not being asked about family-partnerships in interviews, all participants believed relationships with students and families was a defining feature of assessment. Research about how school psychologists work with other educators to foster family partnership (rather than how they do so independently) may be more meaningful. It

would be helpful to understand who in the school easily forms these types of relationships with families; a study should be conducted to explore which professionals families feel they have the closest relationships with at their child's school (e.g., the teacher, the front office staff, the counselor) and investigating why (e.g., repeated interactions, shared identities, professional role, cultural or reciprocal sharing, relationships in the community). Extant literature documents that many families, particularly families identifying with historically marginalized groups, had adverse experiences in the special education process; still, these participants all believed their participation was important and frequently shared the efforts they make to include families. Interestingly, participants also identified that they were not always sure if their efforts were meaningful for the family. This indicates that practitioners may desire to partner with them, but this hope may not be realized. Participatory research with families and school psychologists may be a meaningful step forward in advancing meaningful assessments (e.g., school psychology researchers and family-led educational advocacy groups conducting research together). It may be challenging to truly research this through self-report (due to the tendency to present oneself in a positive light); however, studying this through the perspectives of families and practitioners together could identify salient barriers and beliefs.

Lastly, the defining features indicate that across scholarship and practice school psychologists need opportunities to reflect on and acknowledge their own positionality and assessment practice. This can start in training and should continue throughout career. Trainees should engage in reflection in training, and also be taught how to continue to evaluate and reflect on their practice and positionality throughout their career. This is not

possible without trainers who value and engage in reflection of their positionality and practices themselves. Training programs should support trainers in engaging in this important work. Some unique points of reflection based on these findings include reflection on assumptions about families, assumptions about other educators, and about the history of marginalization in our educational systems and what that means for practice now.

Theme Three Discussion: CR/SBA Practices

In this study, the practices used across all four cases aligned more with practices suggested in CRA and FSCP than SBA (use of a standardized strengths-specific measure was absent). This indicates that as these models are further defined, it could be possible to understand CRA and FSCP as being inherently strengths-based rather than attempting to implement a strictly strengths-based model. Findings in theme three also support that assessment-related graduate training, professional development, and research may be more meaningful if it is interdisciplinary some practices were used by another professional or use with another professional. Lastly, findings in theme three suggests that it may be beneficial study how community partnerships are used in schools at a targeted level as a part of FSCP.

Theme Four Discussion: Contextual Factors, Barriers, and Facilitators

Findings in theme four support the importance of schools and districts that employ school psychologists providing resources for and cultivating an environment for effective school psychological practice (as suggested by the NASP practice model; 2020). As with most professional issues, efforts to address the critical shortage of school psychologists continue to be important and are important for ensuring school

psychologists have the time and caseloads to conduct CR/SBA. Findings in theme four also uniquely suggest NASP may consider integrating interdisciplinary learning and learning from other educators in addition to profession-specific professional development. Further research should be conducted to understand whether or not interdisciplinary professional develop is offered, who it includes, and its efficacy.

Theme Five Discussion: The Process Used to Conduct CR/SBA

The diagram (Figure 2.2) should continue to be refined and studied to investigate if this fits the process used by other school psychologists. Future research should include a Delphi study (with school psychologists who conduct many assessments using this model as experts) to further refine the diagram. Other future studies should include more participants to foster rigor and understand how and if this diagram illustrates the process used by many school psychologists. This could be done by participant's documenting their thought process in a structured journal while conducting an assessment and analyzing how the diagram fits (or does not fit) with their process. Additionally, findings suggest that moving forward it is beneficial to study assessment (and the diagram that illustrates the process school psychologist's use) as a team-based practice.

Participants made decisions as the process unfolded and considered the context of their practice and a variety of data sources (i.e., holistic "mixed-methods" data interpretation) as a part of their decision making. This raises an important concern for the field about clinical reasoning or clinical judgement that apply to the process of assessment (regardless of CR/SBA model) that some scholars have discussed before (see Dombrowski, 2020; Flanagan & Schneider, 2016; Kranzler et al, 2016; Wilcox &

Schroeder, 2015). Ensuring school psychologists make decisions and integrate data while mitigating the impact of heuristics and cognitive bias' or "intuition" is important.

Standardized measures allow us to understand and be confident in the empirical reliability and validity of information yielded from these measures. Participants in this study all use standardized measures and they also value the nuanced, qualitative information they learn from families and students themselves. In reality, data-based decision making includes qualitative data (e.g., a parents description of a child's communication skills, a teacher's description of how a child behaves in the classroom, a child's description of how they feel about math, qualitative observation information) and quantitative data (e.g., cognitive scores). This opens a larger discussion on what constitutes valid, reliable, and credible assessment data and interpretation and how can we ensure that we use qualitative information in a rigorous way. Future studies should investigate if and how strategies used to foster rigor in qualitative and mixed-methods research (such a reflexive journaling; Ortlipp, 2008) can be applied to the integration of quantitative and qualitative data in assessment. These strategies could potentially be used to ensure that the use of qualitative information is not based on intuition alone- particularly in ambiguous situations (such as using potentially unclear practices like considering ecological and cultural factors when making interpretations). Trainers may consider using some of these strategies as trainees learn to conduct assessment. Trainees could journal about their thought process and decision making while conducting assessment to promote self-reflection and ongoing learning.

Discussion of Additional Findings

Additional findings indicate that it may be helpful to further explore the understanding and impact of different vernacular with both practitioners and scholars. Scholars often have access to updated literature which tends to place importance on the nuanced differences of similar terms (e.g., differences between culturally responsive and "culturally sensitive"). However, the saliency or meaningfulness of using specific terms (as compared to understanding their meaning) for practitioners is unknown. As the field continues to evolve, professional conferences may offer an opportune space for scholars and practitioners (and trainees) to build consciences on the meaning of terms and what is salient in practice and scholarship (e.g., conducting a study at the conference location that includes practitioners and scholars).

The frequent references to students and families who are not White or do not speak English indicates that the field may need to clarify who CR/SBA is intended to be used for. In memoing, the researcher identified that it was their assumption and belief that this practice is applicable to all families and students, including those belonging to the dominate culture, but that these practices may be more important for students and families who identify with historically marginalized groups. As this model of assessment continues to be refined, this is a topic that should be explored.

Methodological Implications and the Study of Professional Practice

Findings that document how practice unfolds in real-life context may be beneficial for other aspects of practice that have been difficult understand how or if they are implemented. This type of study design could be used to conduct meaningful research about other important professional issues such as the use of trauma-informed practices, strengths and areas of needed support for early career professionals, or effective

supervision. Similar approaches have been applied to the study of consultation (see Newman et al., 2022). This study was primarily inductive (i.e., CR/SBA was defined by participants); however, this design could be adapted to study more clearly defined topics or practices (e.g., how several school psychologists implement a specific trauma-informed framework after receiving training on that framework).

Limitations and Appropriate Interpretations

Like all studies, this one has limitations. Generalizability has been regarded as a limitation of qualitative research in many spaces, including school psychology scholarship (Sabnis et al., 2023). However, the purpose of qualitative research is not to produce generalizable results. Therefore, the limited sample size of four cases limits the generalizability of the study's findings; however, it allowed for an in-depth and nuanced analysis. When interpreting and applying findings, if this study is interpreted appropriately (i.e., within the scope of what it truly captures) the limited sample size is not a limitation. These findings, particularly the diagram illustrating the process school psychologists use to conduct CR/SBA provides, an initial understanding for a process that has not otherwise been documented. This framework should continue to be studied through investigating how and if this fits the process used by other school psychologists and how or if this fits in the process used by school psychologists who work in various settings (e.g., rural settings) or with specific roles (e.g., school psychologists working with psychometricians to conduct assessments for an entire district). This study also only included the perspectives of school psychologists and as indicated in the findings, the lack of perspectives of other team members may be a limitation.

Due to the homogeneity of cases, these findings represent the practices of school psychologists who work in similar settings. All participants practice in states that strive for an MTSS framework (although one participant specifically indicated that they do not believe this is realized at a school or district level) and three of the four participants spend a good deal of time in the schools they conduct assessments in. Three of four participants were White, and all participants were women. Additionally, although selecting participants who belong to groups that have historically not represented in school psychology (or school psychological research) was prioritized, most participants were White and identified as women. More intentional efforts for recruiting a wide variety of participants should be made in the future. Also, the shared factor that all participants were willing to dedicate their time to discussing this topic at length suggests they all have some sort of interest in the topic.

On the other hand, participants held a range of graduate degrees (i.e., PsyD, EdS, and MA) and years in practice. When examining the ordinariness and uniqueness in each case (Stake, 2006), the case of Emily was a unique case, strengthening the cross-case findings.

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is not objectivity; still, the subjectivity described through the methodology could be considered a limitation. In order to challenge the assumptions, bias, and beliefs of the researcher, frequent memoing was used. The researcher specifically looked for evidence that contradicted their beliefs and assumptions and dedicated additional time questioning why and how they made decisions through the research process (Tracy, 2010). Additionally, this study relied on the self-report of participants. This allowed the researcher to understand their perspective on how

this is used in a real-life context. Still, participants may strive to present themselves in a positive light in self-report in research (Paulhus, 2002). All participants made statements identifying instances that they did not know something or that they believed they could have done something better, suggesting participants may have presented a more balanced representation. However, special education assessment is historically litigious, which may have caused participants to be mindful of what they shared about how they conduct assessments (consciously or subconsciously). Further, this represents what they believe about assessment but does not confirm what they do in practice. The subjective accounts of their conceptualization of CR/SBA are meaningful to understanding practitioner's perspectives but should be interpreted through this scope.

In the initial study design, observations of the participants conducting assessments (namely meetings with families, students, and other school staff) were a part of data collection. However, due to the timeline of this study, district restrictions, and consideration of the demands of the study on participants, this was not used. While this information could have been used to triangulate information about what practices participants used, the researcher took the following steps to strengthen the rigor of the study: triangulation between information gathered in each interview and in the self-report forms, intentionally looked for contradictory evidence, presenting only cross-case findings about the practices school psychologists used, and framing findings as documenting the perspectives of practitioners. Future studies examining naturalistic assessment practices should consider observations as a key component of their study and build the time and effort required to engage in this measure in advance into the study design.

Lastly, this study was not sufficient to answer questions about how training influences the school psychologist's practice. However, this concept should be studied through a cohort model of studying the practices of school psychologists who have the same graduate training. Or this could be studied by examining the perspectives of trainers and trainees from a variety of disciplines who are a part of special education teams. This future research is important because training informs the future direction of the field.

Conclusion

The practitioner perspectives documented in this multiple case study indicate CR/SBA, an assessment model that could address some critiques of traditional assessment, should continue to be refined. Families, relationships with other educators, and a "mixed-methods" holistic data interpretation process as defining features that are not typically referenced in school psychology assessment literatures indicate there may be aspects of assessment that are salient to practitioners are not given as much attention in scholarship. Other findings such as using an ecological perspective and understanding that the context of practice impacts how a school psychologists conduct assessments align with assessment scholarship and the NASP practice model. Assessment will likely continue to be a nuanced topic in school psychology as it remains a part of typically practice and has many facets in scholarship (e.g., study of specific measures, study through the lens of specific disabilities, study through the lens of the processes as a whole); assessment will also continue to be a practice that has many important impacts on the lives of students with disabilities and their families and is not without its critiques. As the field continues to refine and advance how assessment is conducted, the efforts and

input of scholars and practitioners (as well as families and other educators) are important to providing feasible, meaningful psychological assessment in schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Principal Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Exploring how school psychologists conduct school-based assessment

IRBNet #:

Principal Investigator: *Eileen Cullen, MA*

Faculty Sponsor: *Devadrita Talapatra, PhD*

Study Site: *University of Denver*

Sponsor/Funding source: *Morgridge College of Education Student Association*

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not you may want to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will describe the study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give your permission to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the process school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practice as culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment use to conduct special education initial evaluations. If you participate in this research study, you will be invited to engage in two to three open-ended interviews as a part of this study regarding how you engage in assessment in the context of special education evaluations, what practices you employ to facilitate culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment, and what acts as facilitators and barriers to employing culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment practices. You may also be asked to provide information regarding the school(s) and community(s) you practice in.

The expected duration of the study may vary regarding when you conduct an initial special education evaluation. However, the two to three approximately 60 minutes interviews and observations will take place in the fall through winter of 2022 to 2023. In order to participate, you must complete the online screening survey via *Qualtrics* that includes demographic and professional questions (e.g., license, duration of practice, number of assessments conducted a year). Interviews will take place in the place of your

preference (your school building/office, via zoom, etc.). You may refuse to answer any question or items.

Risks or Discomforts

Participant names and identification of their sites will not be included in the final report; however, there is potential risk or discomfort of speculation of a participant's identity. Participants will have the opportunity to review recordings and transcription and delete any portions.

Benefits

The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are contributing to an understanding of how school psychologist's conduct culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment in their real-world work settings. We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study.

Source of Funding

The study team and/or the University of Denver is receiving funding through dissertation funding grants with the College of Educations Student Association at the University of Denver.

Confidentiality of Information

All data in this study will be collected and analyzed solely by the researcher (Eileen Cullen), with supervision of the faculty sponsor (Dr. Devadrita Talapatra) and participant's names will be de-identified through the use of a code name. Your responses will be assigned a code name. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in an encrypted and password protected file. Only the researcher will have access to the file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Once, transcribed, audio recordings will be destroyed. Transcripts will be stored in a password protected laptop. The individual identity of participants will be kept private when information is presented or published.

Limits to confidentiality

All of the information you provide will be confidential. However, if I learn that you intend to harm yourself or others, including, but not limited to child or elder abuse/neglect, suicide ideation, or threats against others, we must report that to the authorities as required by law. Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

Incentives to participate

Concluding the last interview, each participant will receive an $80 Visa Gift card.

Consent to video / audio recording / photography solely for purposes of this research

This study involves audio recording. If you do not agree to be recorded, you cannot take part in the study.

_____ YES, I agree to be audio recorded.

_____ NO, I do not agree to be audio recorded.

Questions

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact Eileen Cullen at eileen.cullen@du.edu. You also may contact the faculty sponsor of the study, Dr. Devadrita Talapatra at devadrita.talapatra@du.edu.

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Denver (DU) Institutional Review Board to speak to someone independent of the research team at 303-871-2121 or email at IRBAdmin@du.edu.

Participation in-person

I have read this form, and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form**.**

Printed name of subject		**Signature of subject**		**Date**

Appendix B
Potential Participant Screening Survey

Page Break

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q2 This survey is a screening survey to determine if you are eligible to participate in a qualitative study exploring the process school psychologists use to conduct assessment in special education within the context of their real-world practice. This study is in no way evaluative and will not be evaluating your assessment practices. If you are eligible and decide you no longer want to participate, you may do so with no repercussions. If you have any questions please contact myself at Eileen.Cullen@du.edu or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Devadrita Talapatra, at Devadrita.Talapatra@du.edu

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Block 1

Q3 For the purpose of this survey the following definition of assessment is provided:

Assessment: Assessment refers to individual psychological or psychoeducational assessment. Assessment practices include the collection of and incorporation of data to be synthesized into findings and interpretation of those findings in context to make decisions about an individual by identifying strengths, weakness, neurological development, and mental processes. Assessment practices additionally include linking assessment data to intervention (Sattler, 2018; Slavia et al., 2017). This is often done within the context of special education assessments in schools.

No definition is provided for culturally responsive assessment, strengths-based assessment, or culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment. You may define for yourself what this type of practice means for you.

Q4 Email: (if you are determined to be eligible you will be contacted using this email regarding potential participation)

_____

Q6 Are you a practicing school psychologist?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you a practicing school psychologist? = No

Page Break

Q8 Have you been practicing as a school psychologist for three or more years in a public school setting?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Have you been practicing as a school psychologist for three or more years in a public school sett... = No

Page Break

Q5 Please select what credentials you hold:

- ☐ State licensed school psychologist (1)
- ☐ Nationally Certified School Psychologist (2)
- ☐ Other: (3) _____

Page Break

Q7 Are you currently employed as a school psychologist in a public school setting at least part-time?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Are you currently employed as a school psychologist in a public school setting at least part-time? = No

Page Break

Q10 Did you graduate from a NASP accredited graduate training program?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Page Break

Q14 For the purpose of this survey the following definition of assessment is provided:

Assessment: Assessment refers to individual psychological or psychoeducational assessment. Assessment practices include the collection of and incorporation of data to be synthesized into findings and interpretation of those findings in context to make decisions about an individual by identifying strengths, weakness, neurological development, and mental processes. Assessment practices additionally include linking assessment data to intervention (Sattler, 2018; Slavia et al., 2017). This is often done within the context of special education assessments in schools.

No definition is provided for culturally responsive assessment, strengths-based assessment, or culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment. You may define for yourself what this type of practice means for you.

Q11 How many assessments for special education evaluations did you conduct in the 2021-2022 school year?

_____

Q19 How many of these assessment for special education evaluations were for initial evaluations in the 2021-2022 school year?

_____

Q12 Would you define your assessment practice as culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q13 Please define culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment from your understanding as it applies to your practice.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Q16 The following questions ask about your demographic information.

Q15 What is your gender?

Q17 What is your ethnicity?

- ○ Hispanic/Latino (1)
- ○ White/Caucasian (2)
- ○ Black/African-American (3)
- ○ American Indian or Alaskan Native (4)
- ○ Asian (5)
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (6)
- ○ Two or more ethnicity's (7)

Q18 Please select your highest degree earned:

- ○ M.A. or M.S. (1)
- ○ Ed.S. (2)
- ○ Psy.D. (3)
- ○ Ed.D. (4)
- ○ Ph.D. (5)

Q19 What age group(s) do you engage in assessment for in your current role?

- ☐ Early Childhood (0-5 years) (1)
- ☐ Elementary (K-5th grade) (2)
- ☐ Middle School (6th-8th grade) (3)
- ☐ High School (9th-12th grade) (4)
- ☐ Post-secondary (18-21 years old) (5)

Q21 How many years have you been practicing as a school psychologist?

_____

End of Block: Block 2

Appendix C
Recruitment Email

SUBJECT: Research Invention: Culturally Responsive and/or Strengths-Based Assessment

BODY:

Hello school psychologists,

I hope this email finds you well. I am conducting a qualitative research study exploring how school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practice as culturally responsive and/or strengths-based go about conducting assessment in special education evaluation. In order to do so, I am conducting a multiple case study project that will involve interviews, observations, and self-report measures. I am looking for school psychologists in your district who identify their practices as culturally responsive and/or strengths-based to participate in my study! Your participation in this study has the potential to provide a framework for how school psychologists can conduct culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment as well as illuminate contextual barriers and facilitators to employing culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment practices.

Participation would include two to three approximately 60-minute interviews, myself observing you conduct one initial special education evaluation (particularly any contact with a family, the eligibility determination meeting, and possible subsequent IEP meeting), and completion of two self-report surveys (one about the context within which you practice and the second about what practices). The research conducted has been approved the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Denver. Participant names and identification of their sites will not be included in the final report; however, there is potential risk or discomfort of speculation of a participant's identity. Participants will have the opportunity to review recordings and transcription and delete any portions of transcriptions they would like. Participations will also be given an $80 Visa giftcard upon completion of the study.

This project will take place throughout the fall and early winter of the 2022-2023 school year. If you have any questions, please reach out to me at eileen.cullen@du.edu. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Devadrita Talapatra, PhD, at Devadrita.talapatra@du.edu. If you are interested in participating, please complete the following screening survey: [insert screening survey link].

Thank you for your time and support in better understanding culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment.

Sincerely,

Eileen Cullen, M.A.

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interview 1

Protocol

Before Interview:

- Ensure copies of consent form are printed
- Ensure interview protocol is printed
- Test run recording device
- Test run back up recording device
- Consent processes already discussed with interviewee

After Interview:

- Ensure recording was successful
- Upload recording

Interview One:

[Greet interviewee, ask about their day, etc.] Thank you for your willingness to participate in this series of interviews. I am particularly interested in learning more about how school psychologists conduct special education assessments. Specifically, I am interested in school psychologists who self-identify their assessment practices as Culturally Responsive Assessment and/or Strengths-Based Assessment, such as yourself. For this interview series, assessment refers to individual psychological assessment or psychoeducational assessment conducted in a school setting for the purpose of special education evaluation. Assessment practices include the collection of and incorporation of data to be synthesized into findings and interpretating findings in context to make decisions about an individual by identifying strengths, weaknesses, neurological development, and mental processes (Sattler, 2018; Slavia et al., 2017). Assessment practices additionally include linking assessment data to intervention. Before we begin, I want to remind you that this interview is in no way an evaluation of your assessment practices; I am hoping to understand how you conduct assessment.

I will be using my phone and computer to record this interview. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. First off, tell me a bit of the school(s) your work in. **(2 &** my cases are bound to the school psychologist's assessment practices; however, I am considering the context within which they work as well)
    - *a.* How many schools? (following questions for each school)
    - *b.* School 1:
        - *i.* How much time at school?
        - *ii.* Which grade levels at school?
        - *iii.* What activities (e.g., assessment, intervention, consultation) do you engage in at school 1?
        - *iv.* Who else do you work with at school 1 (e.g., social worker, school counselor)?

v. Generally, what are the demographics of the students at school 1?
vi. Tell me a little bit about the community school 1 is a part of?

c. School 2:
i. How much time at school?
ii. Which grade levels at school?
iii. What activities (e.g., assessment, intervention, consultation) do you engage in at school 1?
iv. Who else do you work with at school 1 (e.g., social worker, school counselor)?
v. Generally, what are the demographics of the students at school 1?
vi. Tell me a little bit about the community school 1 is a part of?

2. Tell me about the assessments you conduct? *[follow up about how many, how much time they spend in them, what populations, initial/re-evaluation/triannual evaluations, inter/multidisciplinary work]* ***(1; 2)***
   a. How many?
   b. How much time do you spend on each?
   c. What populations? (disability categories, ELL, grade levels, etc.)
   d. How many initials?
   e. How many involve inter/multidisciplinary work? With whom?
3. As I mentioned, I'm interested in culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment practices; you identified your practices as [insert their definition of CRA or SBA submitted to screening form]. Tell me more about what that means to you? **(1; 2)**
   a. Tell me more about what that means for your assessment practice?
4. Why do you choose to employ these types of practices? **(2)**
5. What practices do you use that align with [their definition of CR/SBA]? **(2)**
   a. How does *[practice mentioned]* align with that?
   b. Are there anything's that make it difficult to implement these practices?
   c. Are there anything's that make it easy to implement these practices?
6. Tell me about your graduate training experience, you noted you earned a [enter degree they gave on survey] **(3)**
   a. What courses did you take in assessment?
      i. Did these cover topics of CRA/ SBA/ FSCP?
   b. What practica experiences did you have in assessment?
      i. Did you engage in CR/SBA/FSCP?
   c. What professional development have you engaged in related to assessment, if any?
      i. Did these address topics in CR/SBA/FSCP?
   d. Do your training experiences influence your assessment practices? If so, how?

For all of the interviews we do together, you're welcome to look at the transcript and let me know if there are any parts you would like to clarify. The next time we meet during the interview, I will ask follow ups about the observations and we are going to co-create a

visual flow chart of how you conduct assessment. Before we wrap up, do you have anything else you would like to add?

Interview 2

Protocol

Interview Two:

[Greet, ask about their day, etc.] The last time we met, we discussed how you define your assessment practice as CR/SBA and went through the process you use to conduct assessment. Now I've been able to observe [insert what observations were conducted]. Today, I want to take a deep dive into understanding how you conduct assessment and ask some follow up questions. Lets start by creating a visual flow chart of how you conduct assessment together. I've brought these pieces [points to papers labeling each step; papers say "referral;" "consent;" "conduct evaluation;" "eligibility determination;" "IEP planning"] to give us markers of steps in special education evaluation, but we can add any additional parts you feel are important! **(1)**

Key words and ideas are written onto post-it notes a placed by the appropriate paper for each step. The interview is additionally recorded. Possible follow up questions throughout each step:

- *Why did you do that?*
- *What were you considering there?*
- *Tell me about your thought process in that.*
- *Do you collaborate with another professional to do that? If so, how?*

[follow up questions at each step related to observations will be added after observations are conducted].

1. *Begin by laying out each paper marking each step across a table or other available open space.* Beginning with when you receive a referral, what do you do?
2. After the referral when you are review current data, what do you do?
3. Next when obtaining consent, what do you do?
4. Now for conducting the evaluation, we might spend more time on this one, what do you do first?
5. After having conducted the evaluation, for determining eligibility, what do you do?
6. Then if the student is determined to be eligibility, what do you do for IEP planning?
    a. How does data drive intervention?

Thank you so much for everything you've shared about. I've really enjoyed learning about your practice, and I appreciate your openness and willingness to share with me. Again, if you would like to review the transcripts, please let me know. Next, I'll be transcribing and analyzing the information you gave me in your interview. If you're interested, I'd love to share my findings with you to see what you think and ensure I've captured what you've told me accurately. Would this be something you might be willing

to do? Okay, thank you so much! You can contact me at eileen.cullen@du.edu. Lastly, I'll have you complete this self-report survey of which practices on this sheet you believe you employed during [insert student name's] initial evaluation.

Member-checking protocol

Protocol:

Before Interview:

- Ensure protocol is either up on computer or printed out
- Ensure cleaned version and original version of flow charts are available
- Ensure internet connection is good and zoom is working
- Test run recording device
- Test run backup recording device

After interview:

- Ensure recording was successful
- Memo and journal

[Greet interviewee, ask about their day, etc.] Thank you so much for being willing to review the flow chart and chat with me about it, my hope is accurately reflection your thoughts and your process, so your feedback is very important. This interview should only be about 20 minutes long. Again, I'll use my phone and computer to record the interview. Do you have any questions before we begin?

I'm going to share my screen with your flow chart. I went through what we created together in the second interview and I used the information you shared with me in your interviews to cleaned it up for readability and organization. I still want to be sure that this accurately reflects your process as to how you conduct culturally responsive and strengths-based assessment.

1. Tell me any initial thoughts you have after having reviewed it.
2. What would you add, if anything?
3. What would you remove, if anything?
4. What would you alter, if anything?
5. Do you feel that a flow chart like this is an accurate format to depict your process?
6. How do you define culture?

Thank you so much for your participation and being willing to review this chart, your reflections and feedback are very meaningful. Do you have any questions? Okay I'm going to stop the recording.

Appendix E

Self-Report PATP Behavioral Checklist with Alignment with Models

Evaluation Step		I did this	Another team member did this	I do this collaboratively with other team member(s)	Not done	Aligns with
Referral	Initiate contact with family					FSCP
	Initiate contact with teacher					FSCP
	Determine the family's preferred modality and language of communication for the purpose of the evaluation					
Review of Current data	Consider ecological factors					CRA
	Identify strengths in existing data					SBA; CRA
	Consider if pedagogy and curriculum are culturally responsive					CRA
	Introduce myself to the family					
Consent	Clearly communicate my role					CRA; FSCP
	Clearly communicate the purpose of the process and what the family can expect					CRA; FSCP
	Ask family what they expect in the process					CRA; FSCP
	Clearly communicate the bounds of confidentiality					CRA
	Encourage family to bring a liaison, advocate, or trusted supporter					FSCP
	Ensure the family has access to their					FSCP

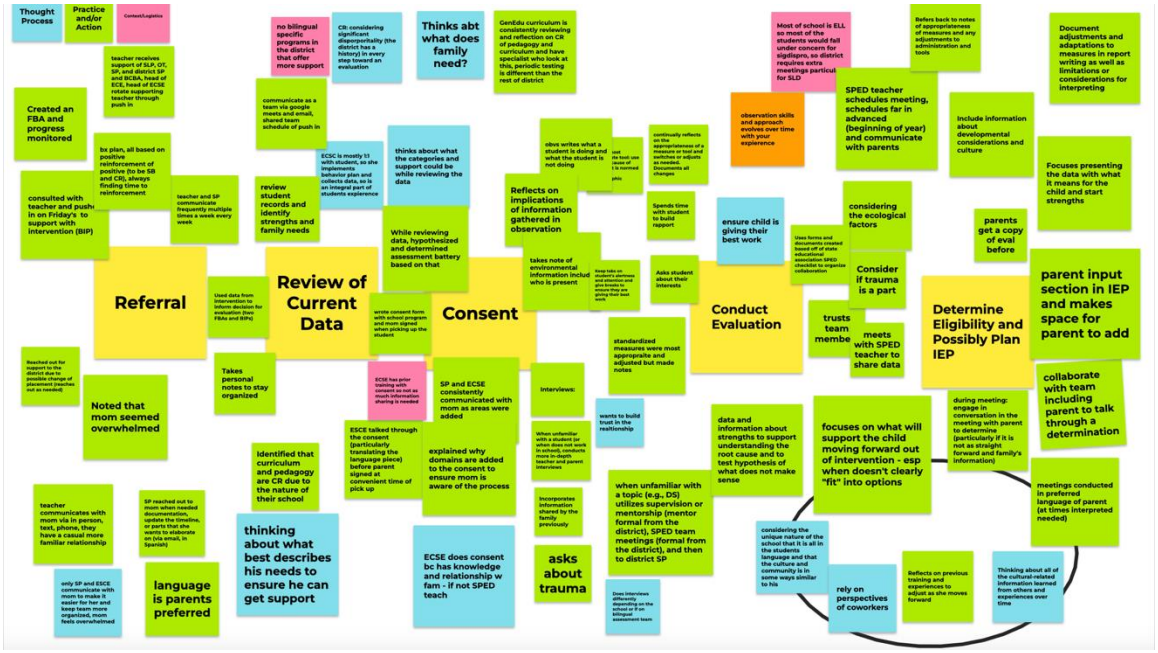
	rights in an easy-to-understand format					
Conduct Evaluation	High quality parent interview that includes identifying interpersonal and cultural strengths					CRA
	Let family know what to expect during the interview in advance					CRA; FSCP
	Adapt to the communication style of the family					CRA; FSCP
	Utilize CBM					CRA
	Utilize local norms					CRA
	Utilize standardized measures to identify strengths					SBA
	When conducting observations, consider if pedagogy and curriculum is culturally responsive					CRA
	When conducting observations, meet with teacher to review findings and build interpretation					CRA
	Offer to hold a meeting with the family to review assessment data					FSCP; CRA
	Share with the family that you intend to connect them with resources throughout the next steps					FSCP
	Active listening					FSCP; CRA
Determine Eligibility and Plan IEP	Ensure family has access to their rights in an easy-to-understand format					FSCP

	Build mutual understanding of expectations of meeting					FSCP
	Present holistic perspective of the child, including strengths					CRA; SBA; FSCP
	Consider grief and trauma responses to assessment results					FSCP
	Provide family connection to national and community resources					FSCP
	Consider if facilitated approach to meeting is appropriate					FSCP
	Invite family to bring an advocate, liaison, or trusted supporter					FSCP
	If appropriate, include student in IEP process					FSCP
	Share agenda with family ahead of meeting					FSCP
	Incorporate data of student's cultural, familial, school, interpersonal, and intrapersonal strengths into intervention					SBA; CRA; FSCP
	Use data to drive goal creation and intervention					
	Consider the intensity, complexity, and comprehensiveness of services necessary to plan communication with					

	family and other providers moving forward					

Appendix F

Monica's "raw" flowchart



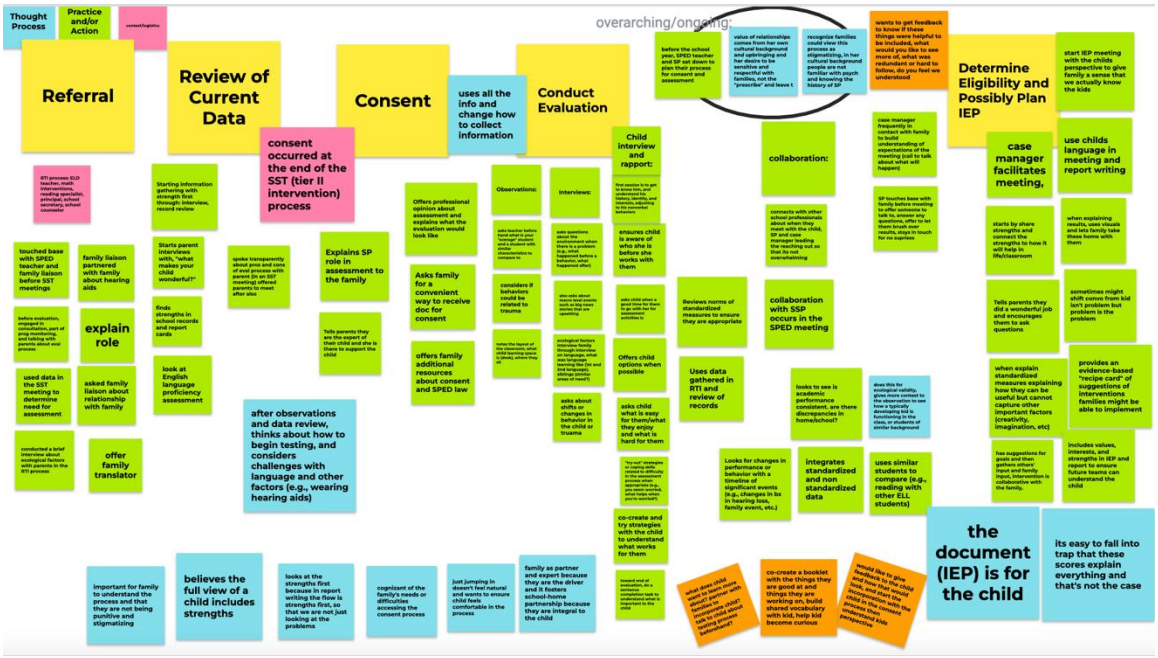
Monica's "clean" flowchart

Abby's "raw" flowchart

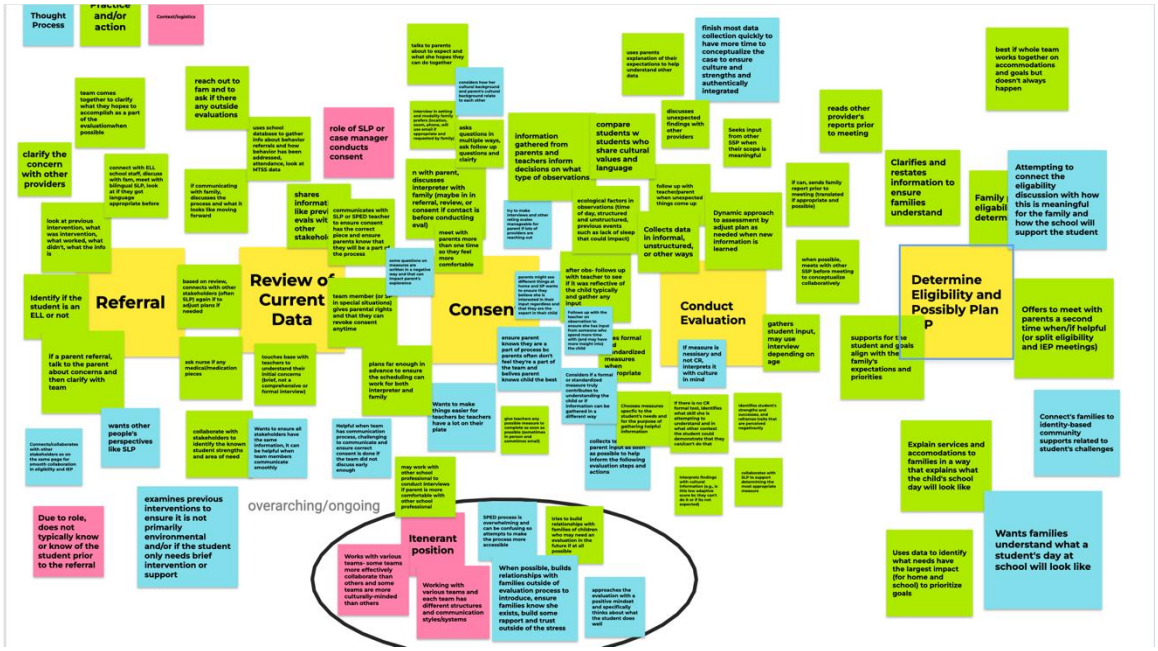
Abby's "clean" flowchart

Alex's "raw" flowchart

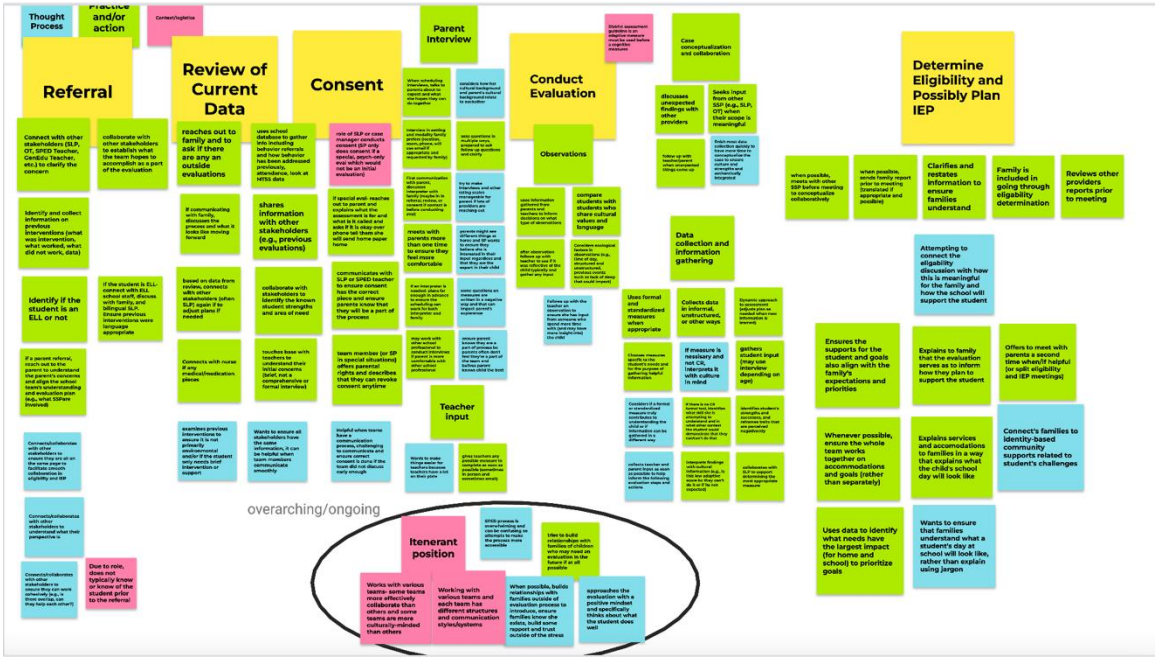
Alex's "clean" flowchart



Emily's "raw" flowchart



Emily's "clean" flowchart



Appendix G

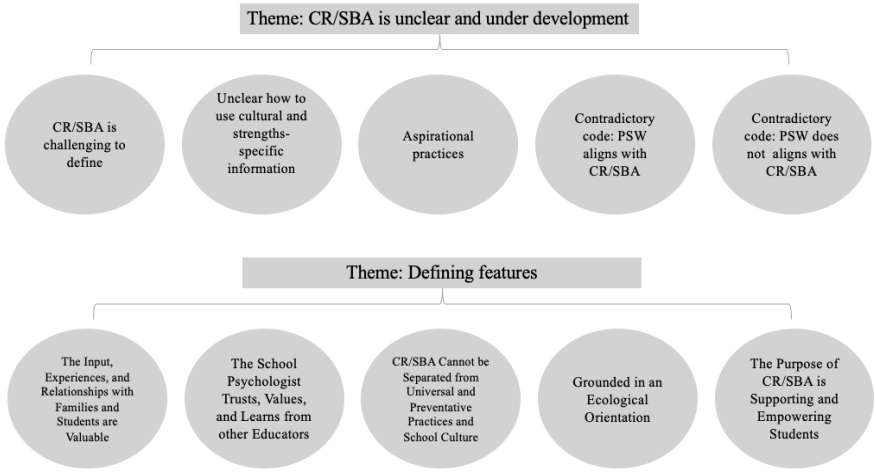
Brief Review of Integral Analysis Decisions and Memoing Rational

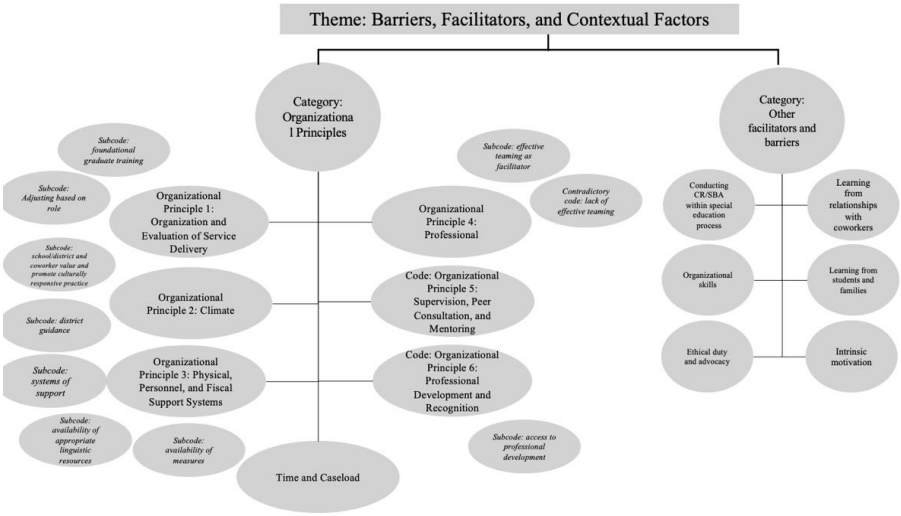
Analysis decision	Brief Rational
Data was coded in "units of meaning" (often sentences)	Participants described their process at length and units of meaning (rather than lines) allowed the research to capture nuance
Inductive subcodes created under deductive organizational principles codes	Organizational principles are broad, therefore specific subcodes were created to ensure findings were valid reflections of the data.
Process of identifying what practices participant's used that aligned with practices suggested in literature.	Initially the researcher attempted to use frequency counts and direct comparisons (i.e., yes or no did the participant use this practice from literature). When triangulating using interview data, the researcher found that some practices were similar to practices identified in literature but did not necessarily align. After sorting out practices that did align or did not align, the researcher completed an iterative process of memoing, returning to codebook practice definitions, interview data, and literature, and sorting similar practices.
Calculated interrater reliability of only inductive codes (i.e., leaving out organizational principles) in addition to entire codebook.	Memoing of the researcher and second coder indicated that the way the organizational principles are defined is broad and some principles overlap with others. Researcher was curious if this had a significant impact on validity of codebook.
Initially created the process diagram with the same flow chart format used in	During the second interview, each participant and the interviewer co-created a visual

interview two. Then, adjusted and recognized it in various ways before ending with final diagram.	describing the process they use to conduct CR/SBA. This visual had each step of the special education evaluation process as outlined in legislation and literature (i.e., referral, record review, consent, conduct assessment, and eligibility determination and possible IEP planning) and participants and the interviewer filled out what they do and their thought process at each step. The researcher's memoing identified that this structure (laying out each step) does not reflect the process some participants used and that the "process" is not necessarily linear, following each step one-by-one. Also, participants used different practices at different parts of the process.
A follow up question was added in interviews asking participants if they could further define their definition.	Participants either only listed practices in their definition or included many practice in their definition. Does a list of practices constitute a definition? Did participant's misinterpret the question in the survey? Asking them to further define their definitions may provide more clarify.
In order to address research question 2 and 2a, the researcher additionally categorized codes that referred to practices as falling outside of the provided definition of assessment.	During analysis, it became apparent that participants conceptualized assessment slightly differently than it has been defined in school psychology literature. Specifically, participants believe that all preventative (e.g., multi-tiered systems of support

	[MTSS]) and universal practices (e.g., curriculum and pedagogical practices) are a part of the assessment process.
No additional data was collected to attempt to answer research question three.	Participants were not able to describe their training in interviews and likely would not be able to accurately report them in another format. It was difficult to find documents from their training programs during the specific times they were there, so adding documents to answer the question is not a feasible option. This would be better studied in a different way.
The question "how do you define culture?" was asked in the member checking interview. Findings are not reported.	If participants are defining CR/SBA for themselves, it would be beneficial to also understand how they define "culture" as a construct. Therefore, the question "how do you define culture?" was asked in the member checking interview. Only one participant engaged in the member checking interview; therefore, data was insufficient to report.

Appendix H
Coding Trees






Theme: CR/SBA Practices
Category: rethinking assessment
Universal family partnership practices
Universal culturally responsive practices
Preventative intervention
Subcode: culturally responsive intervention
Category: collecting, interpreting, and sharing data and findings
Defines area of concern
Identifies and considers primary language
Gathers information about existing family partnerships
Gathers information about previous interventions
Multi-informant
Therapeutic assessment strategies
Informal information gathering
Conducts ecologically-informed observations
Individualized, evolving, holistic data collection
Gathers information about a student's strengths
Subcode: gather data to disprove hypothesis
Category: relational and collaborative assessment practices
Reframing in communication
Builds relationship with student
Subcategory: Fosters, maintains, and builds upon family-school partnership
Subcategory: Interdisciplinary work and teaming
Simplified, consistent communication with family
Asks for and incorporates family input at IEP meeting
Values and builds upon relationships that other educators have with family
Acknowledges differences and similarities between identity and culture of self and family
Connects family to identity-specific community resources and supports
Makes effort to ensure family understands the process
Adjusts to the needs of the family
Subcode: Adjusts to linguistic needs of family
Cultural learning
Interdisciplinary work
Effective teaming
Contradictory code: lack of effective teaming as a challenge
Ongoing self-reflection
Examines and uses most appropriate and useful measure
When not appropriate or necessary, does not use a standardized or formal measure
When not entirely appropriate, uses measure but makes some adjustments
Subcode: linguistic adjustments
Subcode: communicates limitations
Subcategory: standardized and formal measures
Gathers ecological and cultural information
Subcode: gathers ecological and cultural information in interview
Subcode: Gathers information about trauma and major life events
"Mixed-methods," holistic data interpretation
Subcode: interprets assessment data in the context of the student's culture and environment
Contradictory codes: unsure of what to do with cultural data
Utilizes data to inform intervention and recommendations
Subcode: offers family suggestions
Subcode: utilizes strengths-specific information to inform intervention
Include demographic information in the report
Communicates strengths
Cohesive communication
Contradictory code: Unsure of how to communicate and document strengths and cultural information

Closing Commentary

School psychologists dedicate a significant amount of time to conducting assessments (Goforth et al., 2020). These assessments have significant implications for students and their families; however, traditional assessment practices continue to be criticized as being deficit-based, focused on "labeling" students, and possibly contributing to the disproportionate representation of students in special education across gender, race, and socioeconomic status (Sullivan & Bal, 2013; Sullivan, 2017). The training of school psychologists has significantly expanded from primarily assessment competencies to include competency in collaboration and consultation, family, school, community partnerships, promoting learning and mental and behavioral health for all students, and more. Culturally responsive assessment (CRA) and strengths-based assessment (SBA) aim to counter some of the critiques of traditional assessment, have significant overlap, and compliment the expanded skill set of school psychologist, making them a worthy topic of research. Still, these topics are understudied.

This dissertation integrates the history and current state of assessment in special education evaluation and school psychology as a field to examine how CRA and SBA can be realistically implemented in practice. This is meaningful because these models can shift school psychologist's assessment practices to better align with the strengths-based, socially just ideals that the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) hold.

CRA and SBA is presented and studied in tandem as culturally responsive and/or strengths-based assessment (CR/SBA).

Manuscript one presents the Partnerships as the Path to Conducting Culturally Responsive and/or Strengths-based Assessment (PATP-CR/SBA), an implementation guide for school psychologists (or ideally, school psychologists and the special education teams the work with to use together). The guide outlines how to use family, school, community, partnership practices to create a path to use CRA and SBA practices more easily.

Manuscript two then investigates how school psychologists conduct CR/SBA in the context of their real practice. This multiple case study revealed how participants define CR/SBA, what practices they use as a part of CR/SBA, and what acts as facilitators and barriers to using CR/SBA. NASP presents a model for school psychological practice that suggests that school psychologists can use all of their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential when certain contextual factors are present (2020). These contextual factors were used to analyze data so that findings can be meaningfully applied to the field. Then, an inductive coding process similar to a grounded theory approach to analysis was used to create a diagram to illustrate the process school psychologists use to conduct CR/SBA. Within-case findings present four vignettes that detail how each participant conceptualizes and uses CR/SBA and how contextual factors impact their practice and act as barriers and facilitators.

Findings support that CR/SBA remains unclear and that practitioner's conceptualizations of CR/SBA in some ways differ from each other and differ from how assessment has been commonly defined in scholarship. Although their conceptualizations

differ in some ways, several defining features of CR/SBA were consistent across cases. Additionally, some aspects of how school psychologists conduct CR/SBA are consistent across cases and the process they all used is illustrated in a diagram. Shared defining features and the initial framework contribute understanding the perspective of practitioners and a starting place for this model to be further studied.

This dissertation offers a unique initial exploration of culturally responsive and strengths-based assessments in schools. Future studies should investigate how school psychologists work with others to form family relationships, how these concepts apply to training, the potential integration of CRA and FSCP to create realistic, meaningful recommendations for assessment practice, and how qualitative assessment data is integrated with quantitative data. Lastly, these manuscripts contribute to studying school psychological practice in the context of the "real world" in order to bridge scholarship and practice.