

A Comprehensive Model for Specific Learning Disability Evaluations



Using the *Building Blocks Brain Model* of Development to Understand and Assess Learning Disabilities

Peter Thompson, Ed.S., Ph.D.

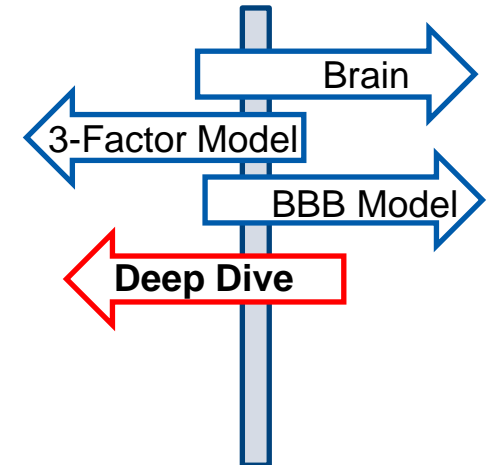




Module 2.1 Guidepost 4

The Building Blocks Brain Model

A DEEPER DIVE: The Fundamental Processes



Important Note

The information, concepts, and models provided in this presentation are intended to give practitioners a framework when conducting special education evaluations. It is emphasized that nothing in this presentation is meant to be directive or prescriptive. Professionals are free to use some, or all of the information presented, but they are not required to do so in their practice. **Always consult with your special education director for clarity around district policies and expectations for special education evaluations.**



IMPORTANT 

Learning Outcomes

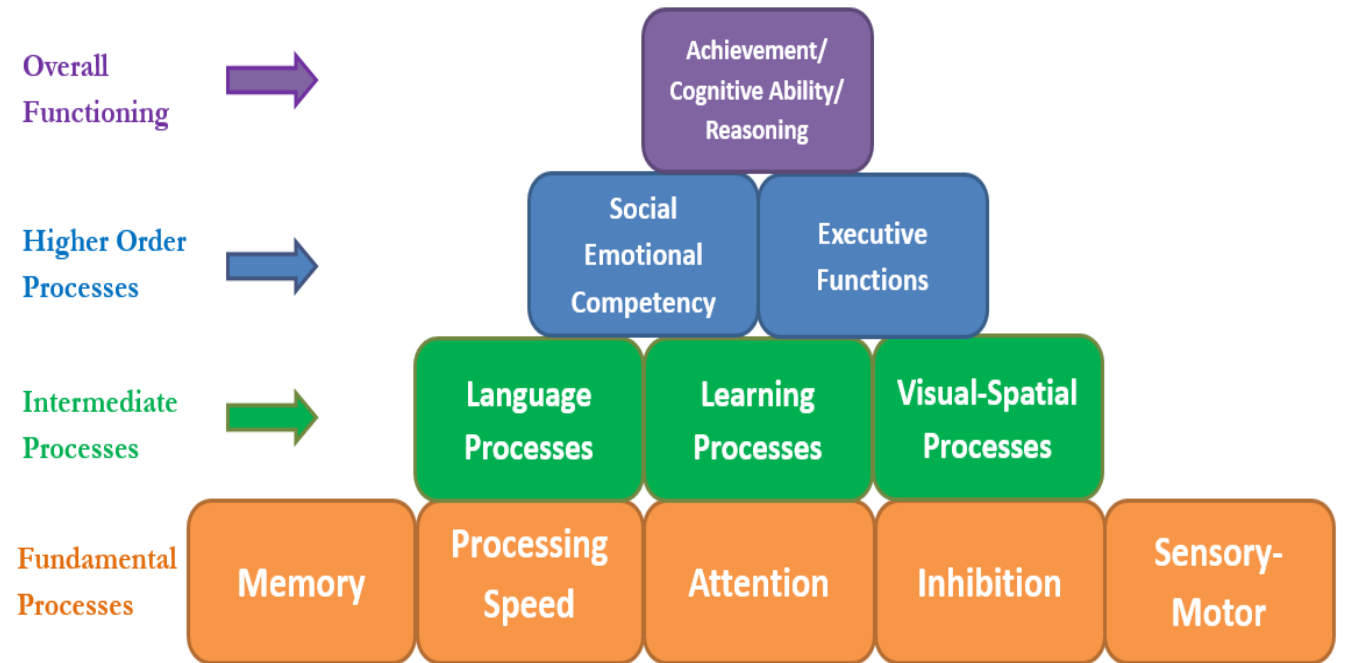
- Importance of the Foundation Blocks
- Five Basic Blocks Explained
- 3-Factors to Consider for All Modules



Key Points

- All learning disabilities are brain-based disorders
- Each level is necessarily dependent on each other
- Most assessments should account for “Fundamental Processes”

Building Blocks of Brain Development ©



The Hierarchy of Neurocognitive Functioning © - created by Peter Thompson, Ph.D. 2013, adapted from the works of Miller 2007; Reitan and Wolfson 2004; Hale and Fiorello 2004.

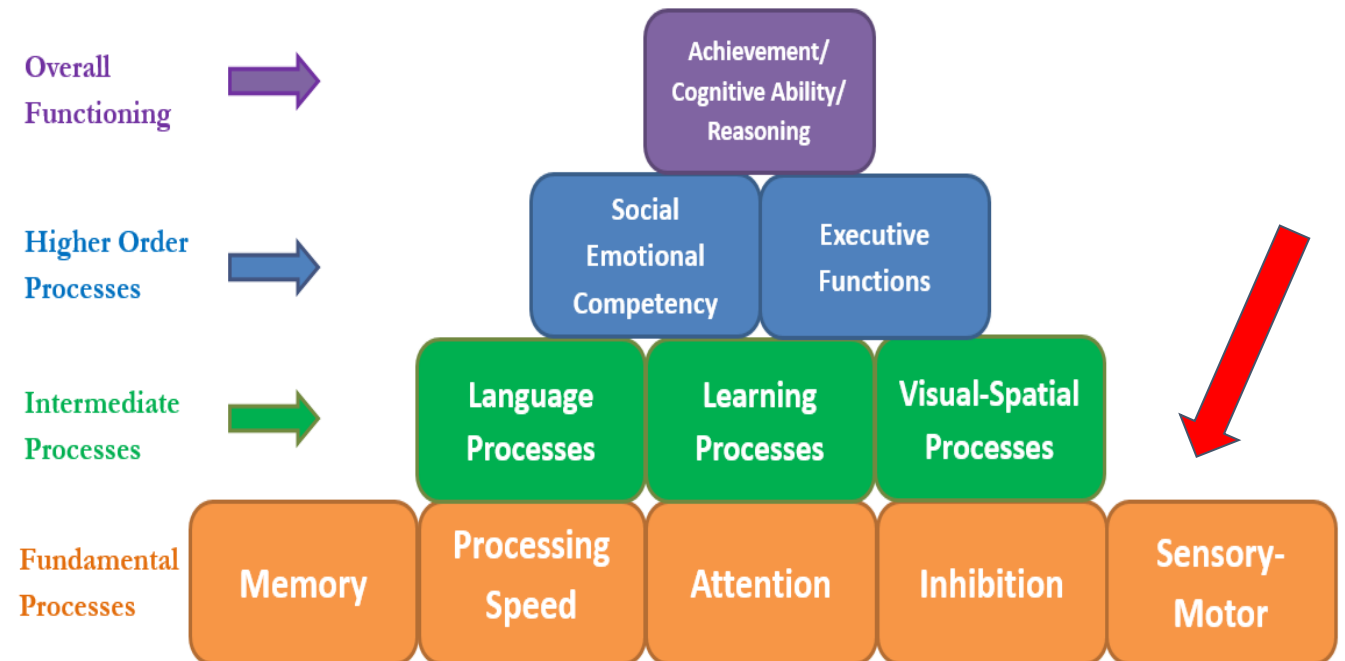
The Building Blocks of Brain Development © – further adapted by the CO Brain Injury Steering Committee, 2016.



Key Points

- Basic processes needed for reasoning and learning
- Fundamental level integrates with other blocks
- SLD typically involves a “crack” in one or more of the foundation blocks

Essential Fundamental Brain Processes



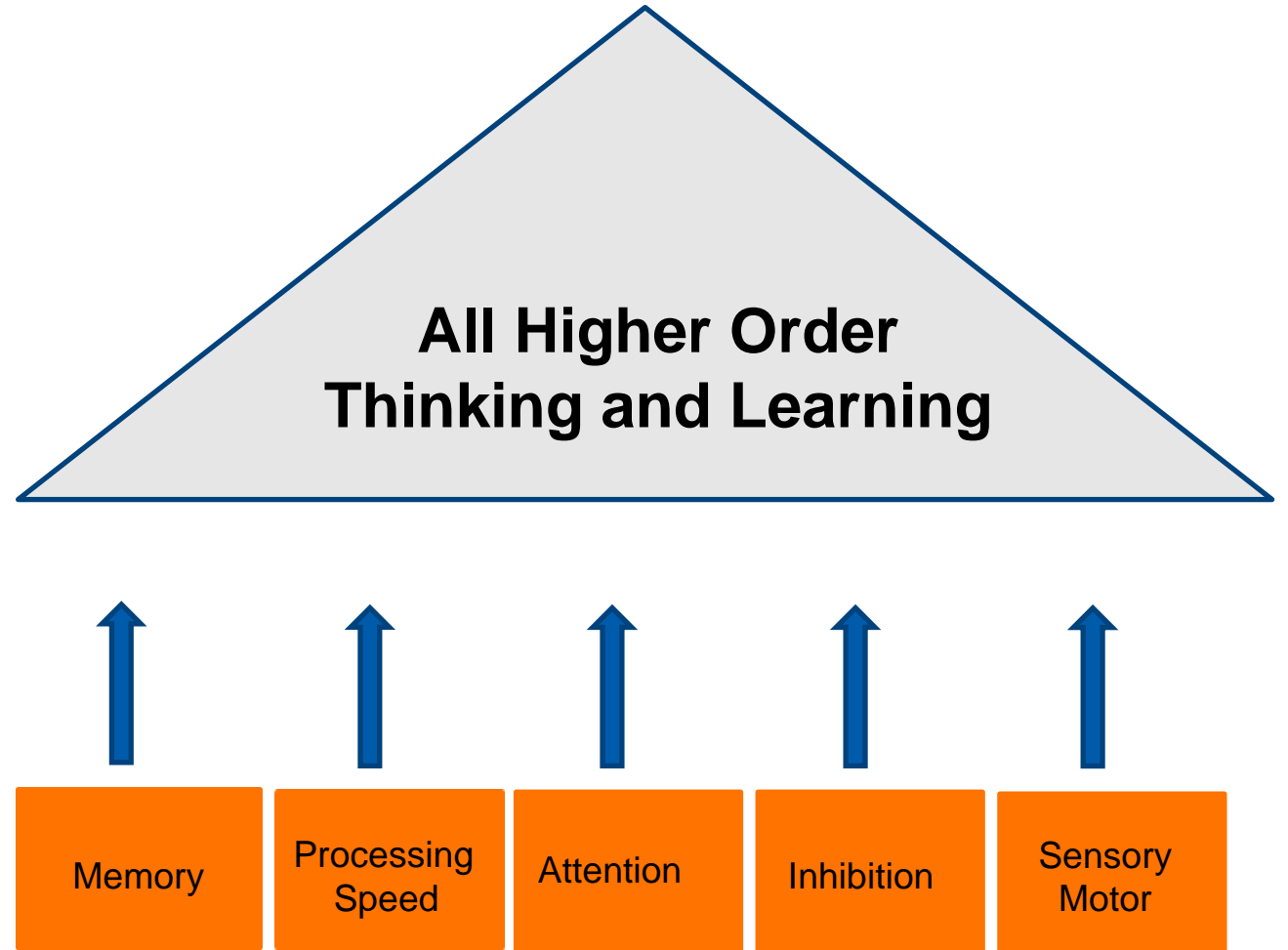
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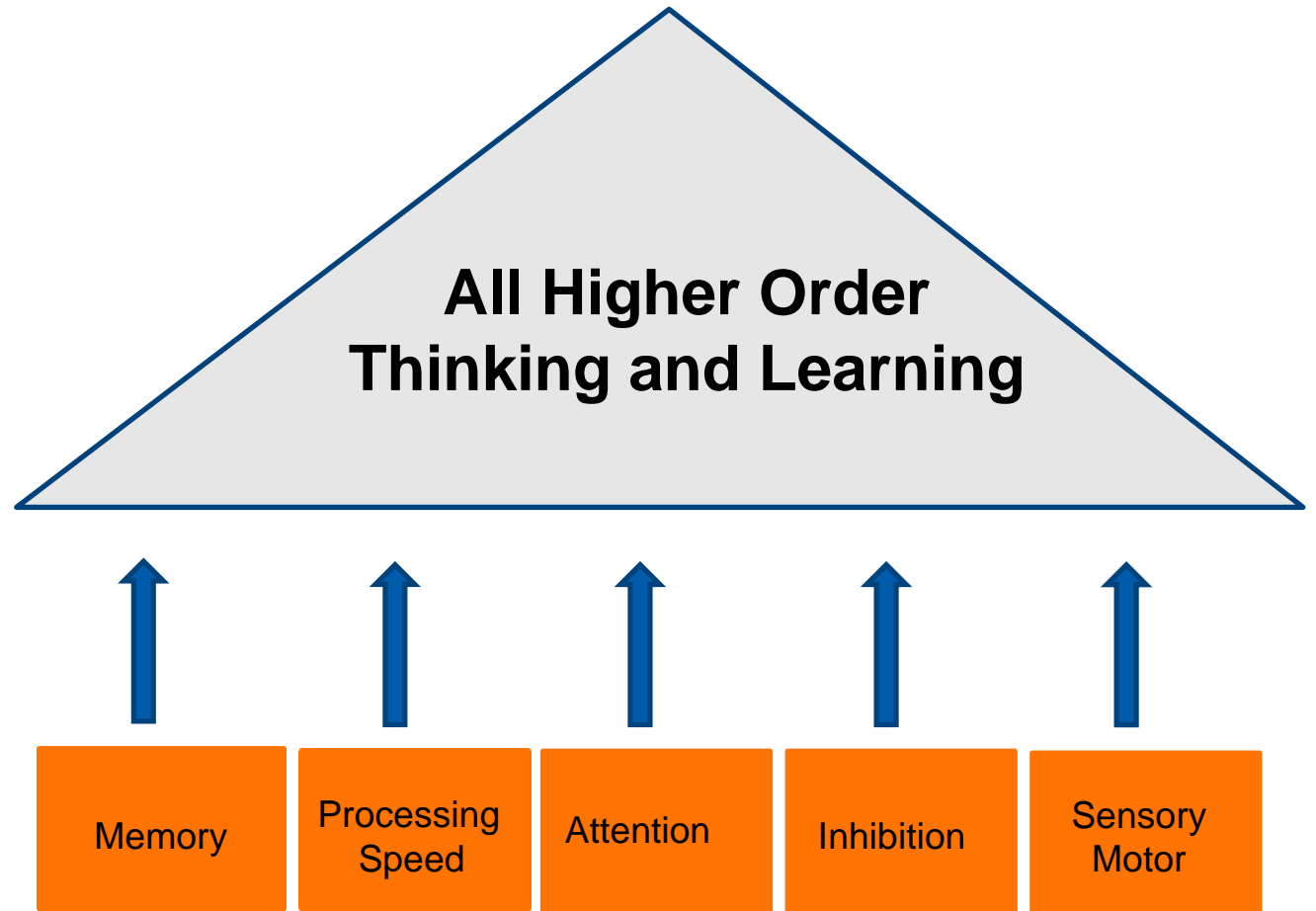
The Basic Blocks Explained

- **Memory**—Long term storage of knowledge and experiences
- **Processing Speed**-Least specialized, but very sensitive. Indicates communication efficiency within the brain
- **Attention**-Allows for input--“neurocognitive doorway”
- **Inhibition**-Control (Part of Executive Function)
- **Sensory-Motor**-Allows access to environment



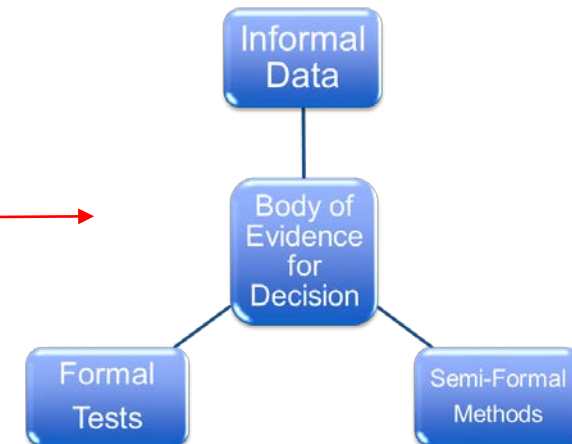
Key Points

- **SLD evaluations should account for most fundamental building blocks**
- **Other higher blocks may also be assessed, but first examine the basic blocks**



The BBB Model Explained: 3 Factors

- All BBB Blocks (Modules) Examined with 3 Factors
 1. Behavioral Impact (Look-Fors)
 2. Academic Impact (Look-Fors)
 3. Assessment Suggestions
 - Based on 3-Factor Model



Summary

Fundamental Level of the BBBM

1. The fundamental or basic level is critical as many issues related to SLDs can be traced to “cracks” in this lower-level area.
2. There are 5 fundamental building blocks that support higher learning process: Memory, Processing Speed, Attention, Inhibition, Sensory / Motor.
3. For all blocks, view them through the lens of behavioral impacts, academic impacts, and three assessment approaches.





End of Module 2.1

Thanks For Listening



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and Assess Learning Disabilities**

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