

Chapter 2: The Legislative Foundation of Services for Special Populations

In 2010, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers launched Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.org). The mission statement of the CCSS states the following:

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

The Web site for the CCSS reported that 43 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the CCSS, as of April 2016. The following states have not adopted the CCSS: Alaska, Indiana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia. Minnesota has adopted English-language arts only, and the territory of Puerto Rico has not adopted CCSS.

ESSA (§ 1111 [c][2]) requires that states disaggregate their data and report on the following subgroups:

- a. Students from major racial and ethnic subgroups
- b. Economically disadvantaged students
- c. Students with disabilities
- d. English Learners

Including students with disabilities in the state testing system is fundamental to the accountability movement. Most students with disabilities spend most of their time in the general education classroom. The importance of ensuring that the educational system is responsible for the achievement of these learners is noteworthy. Inclusion of students with disabilities and the mandates for academic results are also being emphasized in the new accountability framework for special education, known as *results driven accountability*, announced in June 2014 (USDE, 2014). Further information for speech–language pathologists and other special educators on the practice implications of including students with disabilities in statewide assessments is included in Chapter 3.

With the advent of new standards, new assessment systems were also needed. Because CCSS provided common standards that can be used in every state, new assessments were also being developed to assess how students were meeting the common core. The ESSA also allows states to determine which assessments to use, in addition to which standards to use. However, prior to the law’s enactment, assessment consortia were established to develop new assessment systems. These included the following:

General Assessment Systems

- Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) (www.parcconline.org)
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) (www.smarterbalanced.org)

Four Essential Questions for Functional Outcomes in School-Based Service

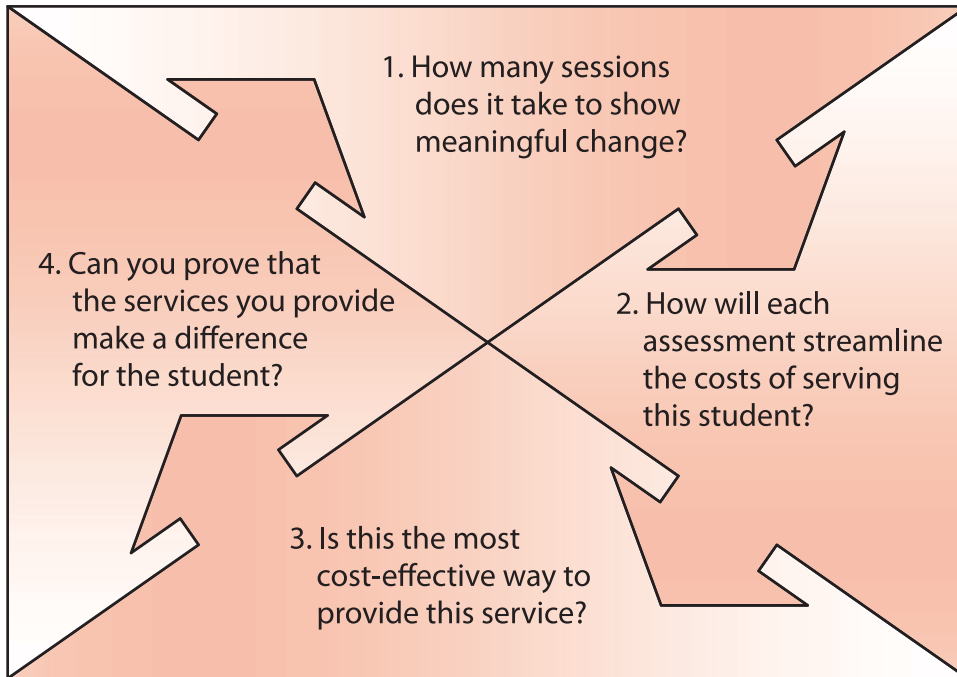


FIGURE 5.1. Four essential questions for functional outcomes in school-based service.

and payer’s expectancies, which leads to greater customer satisfaction and more consistent remuneration for speech–language pathologists. Although tying speech–language services so closely to the payment system has been considered lacking in professionalism, it is precisely this results-based approach that demonstrates the speech–language pathologist’s value in health care and schools. Keeping track of the individual’s functional outcomes (academic learning), instead of reporting more trivial changes in discrete communication skills or comparing scaled scores on pre- and posttests, has demonstrated that the speech–language pathologist was applying resources wisely.

Speech–language pathologists in schools must align their intervention with students’ academic or developmental progress. Results must document increased functional performance levels for students who receive speech–language services. Increasingly, the functional outcome that is needed is academic achievement. For students with more significant disabilities, other types of functional outcomes will be sought and measured, which is equally functional for them. This means that the assessments to determine areas of need should also be functional (see Figure 5.2). The measure of value-added service is currently realized in terms of grades, promotion, participation in the academic curriculum, a high school exit exam, and a high school diploma, as well as social skills and transition skills.

tive school-based speech–language pathologist must give careful thought to the service delivery environment. This chapter will offer other ways for professionals to make clinical decisions in the educational workplace.

ASHA Workload Approach

In 2002, ASHA promoted a new concept in caseload and service delivery management: *workload*. Central to this approach is the understanding that although providing services to students is the main function of a speech–language pathologist, there are many other duties and responsibilities that are demanding, necessary, and time-consuming. These activities are accounted for in Figure 6.1.

The ASHA position statement on workload (www.asha.org/policy/PS2002-00122/) does not include a recommended maximum caseload number. Any arbitrary caseload maximum is inconsistent with a workload analysis approach to setting caseload standards. Instead, it is necessary for education agencies to consider how the amount of time available in each school day, week, or month can be

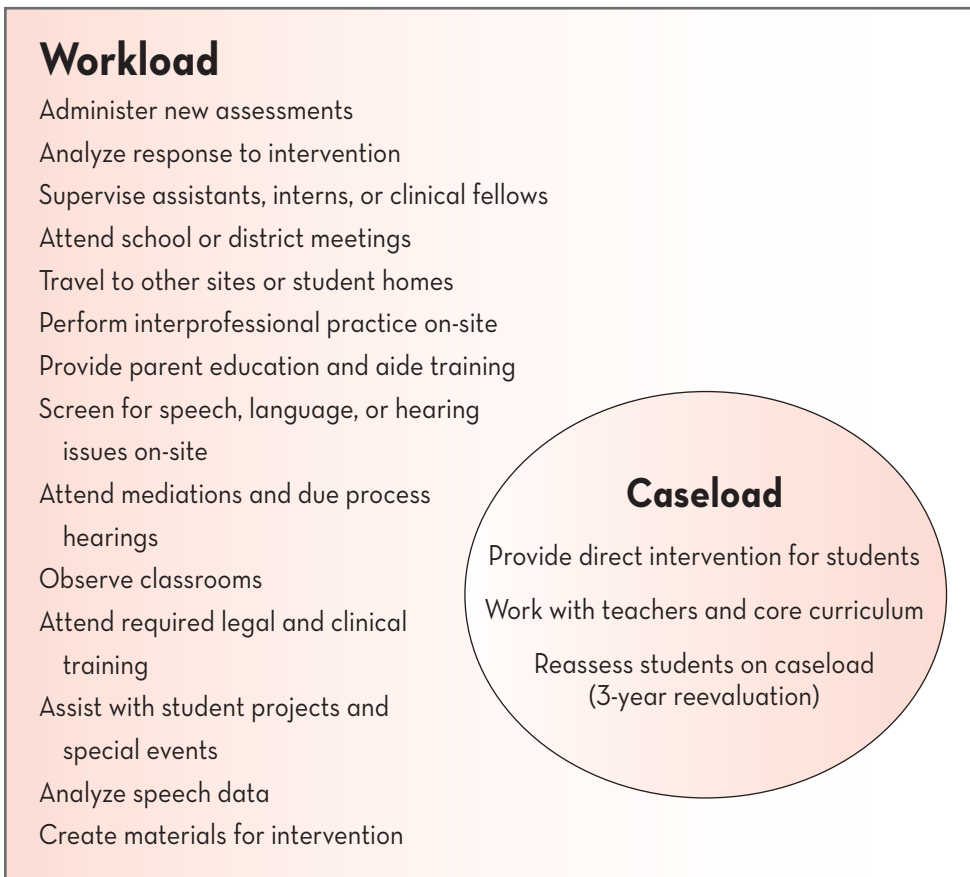


FIGURE 6.1. Workload vis-à-vis caseload of speech–language pathologists.

TABLE 10.1. Comparisons of Old Models and New Models in Special Education Services

Old model beliefs	Old model actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are somehow different internally and instructionally. • Students with disabilities are not capable of learning higher level concepts. • Programs for students with disabilities should be separate from general education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment searched for within-learner deficits. • Tasks in intervention worked on processes rather than content. • Provided students with watered-down curricula that does not include challenging content. • Did not expect students to succeed academically, socially, or vocationally, so there was no need to provide those opportunities (low expectations). • There were separate funding systems. • There was separate service delivery (e.g., pull-out, separate classes).
New model beliefs	New model actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students need good solid core instruction; students who are struggling need more. • All students should master standards and grade-level curricula. • Have high expectations for all learners, including students with disabilities, English Learners, and those from minority and low-socioeconomic backgrounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment guides how the environment should be changed to support the learner (i.e., materials, delivery of service, instructional supports, intensity of instruction). • Tasks in intervention work on learning the material of the classroom. • Special education services should be designed to support students within the general education classroom where the core instruction occurs. • Funding should be blended to support student needs; up to 15% of IDEA funds can and should be spent on prereferral activities.

worldview calls for a learning system that will significantly change the way education occurs, focusing on personalized learning through technology and project-based learning. The previously discussed skills of communication and collaboration are essential to this learning system. In some ways, this personalization should seem familiar to speech–language pathologists and others who have supported students through Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for several decades. As has been discussed throughout this text, the separation of general education and special education is an old-model way of operating. What if the overall system of education was transformed to be learner-centric? In fact, some aspects of this type of teaching and learning are already present in our schools. (See “A Transformational Vision of Education in the U.S.” at <http://education-reimagined.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/A-Transformational-Vision-for-Education-in-the-US-2015-09.pdf>.)

