

## TRC - Fact Sheet



### Processing Speed/Naming Speed Weakness + Dyslexia

**Some kids are just naturally fast**, talking, running, drawing, reading, writing, and cleaning a room all happen quickly and without mistakes. Other kids just cannot keep up the speed; finishing the same tasks but simply taking much longer to get things done. To the parents who know their child is very smart but slow, parents become frustrated and confused wondering what the problem is.

**Processing speed affects how the brain organizes information.** It is what allows the brain to shift from one activity to another. The brain receives information in many ways; in the school setting, the two most common ways are listening and seeing. Processing speed allows the learner to quickly and effectively perform tasks based on that information. **Naming speed measures students'** ability to quickly retrieve the name of a symbol including letters, words and numbers. The speed with which students can retrieve labels of symbols is highly predictive of the automaticity with which they will read words and passages.

**When information is processed slowly**, it takes the learner much longer to complete tasks. The learner may fall behind the speed that the classroom curriculum is being presented. In addition, the learner will fall behind peers that are moving at a faster pace.

**Another factor with a slower processing speed** is a lack of ability to block out distracting and interfering sounds and movements in the learner's immediate environment. This creates a situation where the learner is losing information that he/she is attempting to learn due to competition from distractions. A slower processing speed allows more distractions to move into the moment-to-moment learning.

**For students with processing speed issues**, examples of tasks that involve all out speed in responses (orally reading word in isolation, reading text orally and silently, responding quickly to writing prompts connected to text, note taking, rote math facts) are difficult to achieve quickly. Accuracy in responses can be affected if the student attempts to speed up beyond capacity. In addition, multiple, complex problems can be particularly confusing and frustrating for students with a processing speed weakness. These tasks (reading a story and then responding to text questions in writing, listening to spelling words dictated and then writing them correctly, work on a unit of material over more than one day) can be overwhelming for learners with processing speed issues.

**Finally**, completing tests and assignments within the usual time constraints can also be difficult for the learner with slow processing speed, even when the student has adequate skills and knowledge.

**Tests - WIAT-III** (Wechsler Ind. Achievement Test) **CTOPP-2** (Comp. Test of Phonological Processing) **RAN/RAS-1** (Rapid Automatic Naming) and **SDMT** (Symbol Digit Modalities Test), **FAR** – Feifer Assessment for Reading.

#### Information compiled from:

Dr. Ellen Braaten and Dr. Brian Willoughby – Bright Kids Who Can't Keep Up  
Dr. Merridee Michelsen and Karen Vaught – Facts About Processing Speed  
Understood.org – Processing Speed