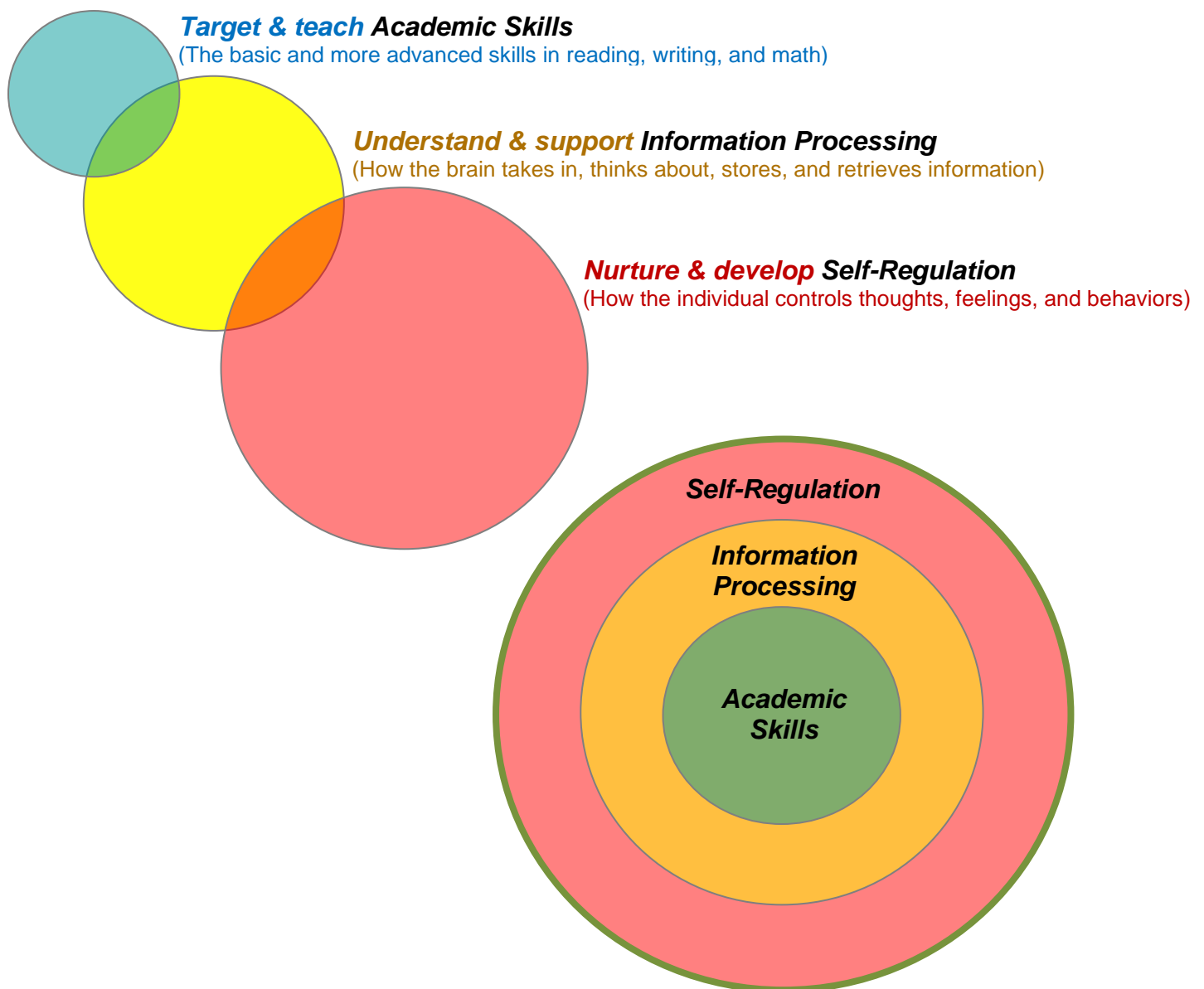


What Impacts Academic Performance? Evaluations at Lee Pesky Learning Center

At Lee Pesky Learning Center (LPLC), our primary mission is to **target & teach** Academic Skills. An evaluation (interview, records review, testing as needed) produces an individualized learning profile to help us also **understand & support** Information Processing and **nurture & develop** Self-Regulation. Our ultimate goal is to create **Self-Regulated Learners**.



Academic Skills

Evaluations at LPLC include comprehensive academic testing in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. A complete understanding of the student's academic development lets us tailor recommendations and strategies for support, accommodation, and intervention that will promote academic success. Each general area of academics includes several specific areas of skill:

Reading – 5 areas:

- **Phonemic Awareness** (processing spoken sounds in language)
- **Decoding** (sounding out and reading words)
- **Fluency** (reading connected text quickly and accurately)
- **Vocabulary** (understanding the meaning of words)
- **Comprehension** (understanding connected text)

Writing – 4 areas:

- **Spelling** (knowledge of sound-letter patterns and rules in written words)
- **Sentence Construction** (syntax and grammar rules in language)
- **Essay Composition** (paragraph writing)
- **Fluency** (producing writing quickly and accurately)

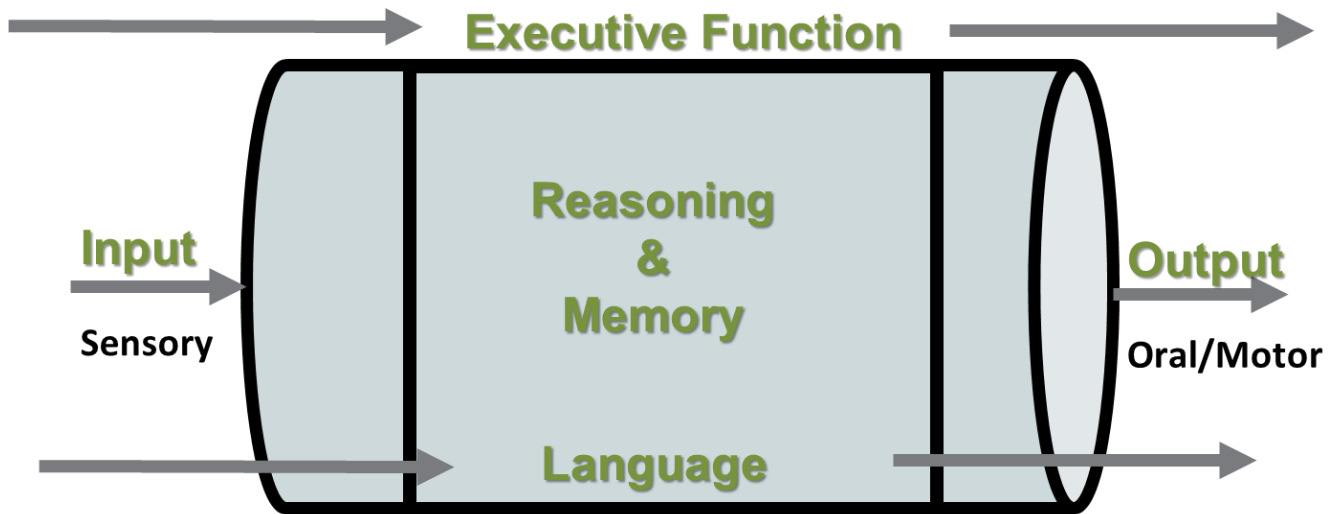
Mathematics – 5 areas:

- **Conceptual Understanding** (e.g., number sense, place value, vocabulary, geometry, etc.)
- **Mathematical Reasoning** (areas of information processing that are key to mathematics)
- **Procedural Knowledge** (the calculation steps taken to solve a problem)
- **Mathematical Connections** (interrelatedness of math topics and concepts)
- **Strategic Competence in Problem Solving** (understanding & solving math word problems)

Information Processing

Information processing refers to how the brain takes in, thinks about, stores, and retrieves information. There are many different pieces of information processing that together help define the individual's unique learning profile. Evaluations at LPLC include comprehensive testing of these many different aspects of information processing. Some of these include holding new information in mind (e.g., working memory); working with visual-spatial or verbal information; storing new information in long-term memory; and producing written or oral responses. The information processing portion of an evaluation might also include assessment of language, fine motor, and executive functions (the control processes in the brain that manage the flow of information).

Information Processing Analogy: Information “flows” through the learner’s mind like water through a pipe. When the ends of the pipe are as wide as the middle, information can flow smoothly into the learner’s mind to be used for reasoning or storing in memory, and flow back out again in the form of a written or oral response.



How Information Processing Impacts Academic Performance

Evaluating an individual’s pattern of information processing – both strengths and needs – helps us understand *why* there are academic struggles. This in turn can help parents and teachers understand how the student learns and how best to promote academic success.

Each specific area of processing contributes to learning, sometimes in predictable ways. For example, a student who has strong language skills might do well with reading comprehension. A student who has a hard time with visual-spatial thinking might struggle with putting together puzzles.

Although the impact of some strengths and needs is predictable, it is important to remember that all of the various aspects of processing work together. Any one student might accomplish a given task in a slightly different way than someone else. For example, some students use visual-spatial thinking to compute math facts; others rely more on language, counting to find the answer. Some students learn to compensate for shortcomings in processing by relying on their strengths in other areas. Therefore, a need in a specific area of processing does not always mean that there will be low achievement in any specific academic area.

Self-Regulation

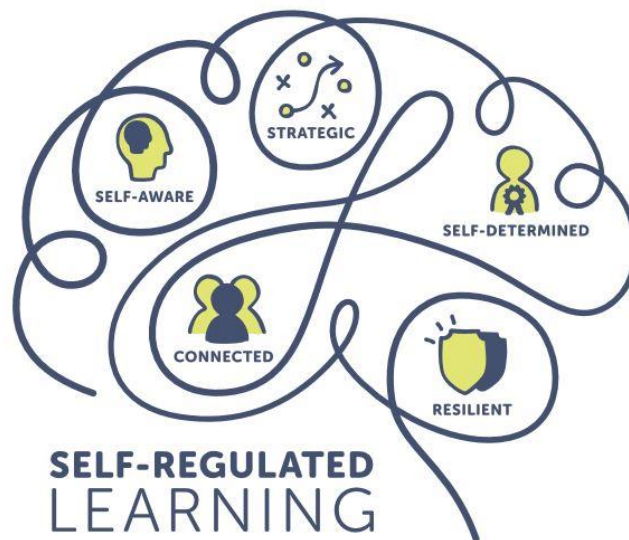
Assessment of self-regulation is also included as part of the comprehensive evaluation at LPLC. Many areas are assessed to better understand how the student manages thoughts, feelings, and behaviors at home and at school. Information is gathered about how the student functions as an individual, when interacting with others, and in meeting the demands of the environment.

This part of the evaluation is completed through interviews, observations, review of records, and completion of rating scales by the student, parents, and teachers. This part of the evaluation assesses the individual's ability to be:

- **Connected** to others who can help them learn;
- **Self-aware** of their own learning strengths and needs;
- **Self-determined** in setting and reaching their own learning goals;
- **Strategic** in their selection and use of tools for learning; and
- **Resilient** when faced with learning challenges.

Self-Regulated Learners

All learners need strategies to be successful. Students who face challenges with learning and attention are especially helped by having the tools they need to face those challenges on a daily basis. At the completion of an evaluation, a comprehensive report is written that discusses the test results in academic skills, information processing, and self-regulation. The integration of this information creates what we call the individual's "learning profile." The report provides tailored recommendations for accommodations, intervention, and strategies that leverage the strengths and support the needs of the unique individual, in order to create a more Self-Regulated Learner.



Please call the LPLC front desk (208-333-0008) with questions about the evaluation process.